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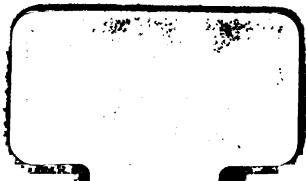
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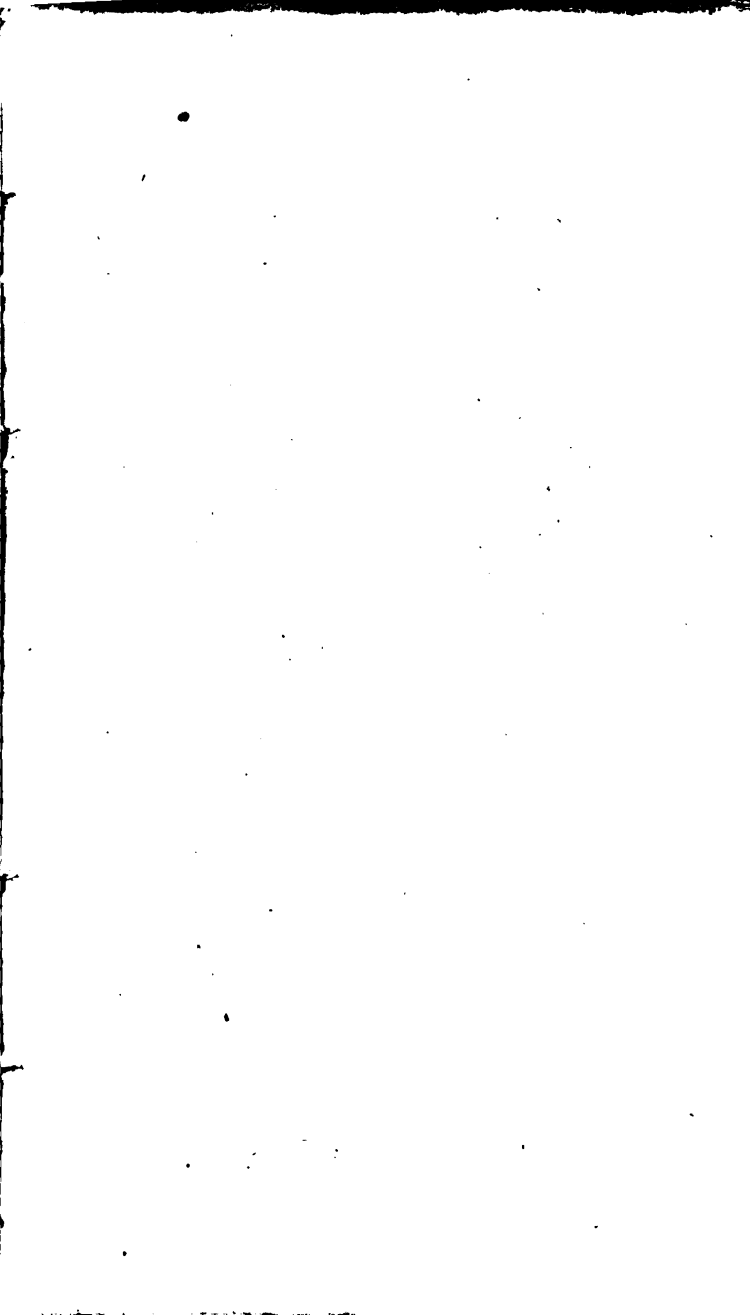


**THE
SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.**

&c.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET STREET.





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AUGUST.

Published April 20, 1827, by John Taylor, Waterloo Place.

THE
SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR;

WITH
VILLAGE STORIES,
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY JOHN CLARE,

AUTHOR OF "POEMS ON RURAL LIFE AND SCENERY."--"THE
VILLAGE MINSTREL," &c.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED FOR JOHN TAYLOR, WATERLOO PLACE,

BY JAMES DUNCAN, PATERNOSTER ROW;

AND SOLD BY J. A. HESSEY, 93, FLEET STREET.

1827.





TO
THE MOST NOBLE
THE MARQUIS OF EXETER,
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF
UNMERITED FAVOURS,
THESE POEMS
ARE, WITH PERMISSION,
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY HIS LORDSHIP'S FAITHFUL
AND DEVOTED SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

PREFACES are such customary things, and so often repeated, that I think good ones cannot always be expected; and I am glad that they are so, for it gives me an opportunity of saying something which I am anxious to say, and at the same time leaves me the hope that I shall be pardoned for saying it so ill. I feel desirous to return thanks to my friends, who, I am happy to say, are too numerous to speak of here in any other than a general manner. To the Public, also, I return my hearty acknowledgments; and, however awkwardly I may write them here, I feel them at heart as sincerely as any one can do; in fact, I ought, for I have met

with a success that I never dare have hoped to realize, before I met it.

I leave the following Poems to speak for themselves,—my hopes of success are as warm as ever, and I feel that confidence in my readers' former kindness, to rest satisfied, that if the work is worthy the reward it is seeking, it will meet it; if not, it must share the fate of other broken ambitions, and fade away. I hope my low station in life will not be set off as a foil against my verses, and I am sure I do not wish to bring it forward as an excuse for any imperfections that may be found in them. I cannot conclude without making an apology for the long delay in publishing these Poems, which, I am sure will be readily forgiven when it is known that severe illness was the cause.

JANUARY.

WITHERING and keen the Winter comes,
While Comfort flies to close-shut rooms,
And sees the snow in feathers pass
Winnowing by the window-glass ;
Whilst unfelt tempests howl and beat
Above his head in chimney-seat.

Now, musing o'er the changing scene,
Farmers behind the tavern-screen
Collect;—with elbow idly press'd
On hob, reclines the corner's guest,
Reading the news, to mark again
The bankrupt lists, or price of grain ;

Or old Moore's annual prophecies
Of flooded fields and clouded skies ;
Whose Almanac's thumb'd pages swarm
With frost and snow, and many a storm,
And wisdom, gossip'd from the stars,
Of politics and bloody wars.
He shakes his head, and still proceeds,
Nor doubts the truth of what he reads :
All wonders are with faith supplied,—
Bible, at once, or weather-guide.
Puffing the while his red-tipt pipe,
He dreams o'er troubles nearly ripe ;
Yet, not quite lost in profit's way,
He'll turn to next year's harvest-day,
And, Winter's leisure to regale,
Hope better times, and—sip his ale.

The schoolboy still, with dithering joys,
In pastime leisure hours employs,
And, be the weather as it may,
Is never at a loss for play :

Making rude forms of various names,
Snow-men, or aught his fancy frames ;
Till, numb'd and shivering, he resorts
To brisker games and warmer sports—
Kicking, with many a flying bound,
The football o'er the frozen ground ;
Or seeking bright glib ice, to play
And slide the wintry hours away,
As quick and smooth as shadows run,
When clouds in autumn pass the sun.
Some, hurrying rambles eager take
To skait upon the meadow lake,
Scaring the snipe from her retreat,
From shelving banks in frozen seat ;
Or running brook, where icy spars,
Which the pale sun-light specks with stars,
Shoot crizzling o'er the restless tide,
To many a likeness petrified.
The moor-hen, too, with fear opprest,
Starts from her reedy shelter'd rest,
As skaiting by, with curving springs,
And arms outspread like heron's wings,

They race away, for pleasure's sake,
With hunter's speed along the lake.

Blackening through the evening sky,
In clouds the starlings daily fly
To Whittlesea's reed-wooded mere,
And osier holts by rivers near ;
Whilst many a mingled swarthy crowd,—
Rook, crow, and jackdaw,—noising loud,
Fly to and fro to dreary fen,
Dull Winter's weary flight again ;
They flop on heavy wings away
As soon as morning wakens grey,
And, when the sun sets round and red,
Return to naked woods to bed.

The sun is creeping out of sight
Behind the woods—whilst running Night
Hastens to shut the Day's dull eye,
And grizzle o'er the chilly sky.
Now maidens, fresh as summer roses,
Journeying from the distant closes,

Haste home with yokes and swinging pail :
The thresher, too, sets by his flail,
And leaves the mice at peace again
To fill their holes with stolen grain ;
Whilst owlets, glad his toils are o'er,
Swoop by him as he shuts the door.

Bearing his hook beneath his arm,
The shepherd seeks the cottage warm ;
And, weary in the cold to roam,
Scenting the track that leads him home,
His dog goes swifter o'er the mead,
Barking to urge his master's speed ;
Then turns, and looks him in the face,
And trots before with mending pace,
Till, out of whistle from the swain,
He sits him down and barks again,
Anxious to greet the open'd door,
And meet the cottage-fire once more.

The shutter closed, the lamp alight,
The faggot chopt and blazing bright—

The shepherd now, from labour free,
Dances his children on his knee ;
While, underneath his master's seat,
The tired dog lies in slumbers sweet,
Starting and whimpering in his sleep,
Chasing still the straying sheep.
The cat 's roll'd round in vacant chair,
Or leaping children's knees to lair—
Or purring on the warmer hearth,
Sweet chorus to the cricket's mirth.—

The redcap, hanging over head,
In cage of wire is perch'd a-bed ;
Slumbering in his painted feathers,
Unconscious of the out-door weathers :
Ev'n things without the cottage walls
Meet comfort as the evening falls,—
As happy in the Winter's dearth
As those around the blazing hearth.—
The ass, (frost-driven from the moor,
Where storms through naked bushes roar,

And not a leaf or sprig of green,
On ground or quaking bush, is seen,
Save grey-vein'd ivy's hardy pride,
Round old trees by the common side)
Litter'd with straw, now dozes warm,
Beneath his shed, from snow and storm:
The swine are fed and in the sty;
And fowls snug perch'd in hovel nigh,
With head in feathers safe asleep,
Where foxes cannot hope to creep;
And geese are gabbling in their dreams
Of litter'd corn and thawing streams.—
The sparrow, too, a daily guest,
Is in the cottage eaves at rest:
And robin small, and smaller wren,
Are in their warm holes safe again
From falling snows, that winnow by
The hovels where they nightly lie,
And ague winds, that shake the tree
Where other birds are forc'd to be.—

The housewife, busy night and day,
Clears the supper-things away ;
The jumping cat starts from her seat ;
And stretching up on weary feet
The dog wakes at the welcome tones
That call him up to pick the bones.

On corner walls, a glittering row,
Hang fire-irons—less for use than show ;
With horse-shoe brighten'd, as a spell,
Witchcraft's evil powers to quell ;
And warming-pan, reflecting bright
The crackling blazes' flickering light,
That hangs the corner wall to grace,
Nor oft is taken from its place :
There in its mirror, bright as gold,
The children peep, and straight behold
Their laughing faces, whilst they pass,
Gleam on the lid as plain as glass.—

Supper removed, the mother sits,
And tells her tales by starts and fits.

Not willing to lose time or toil,
She knits or sews, and talks the while
Something, that may be warnings found
To the young listeners gaping round—
Of boys who in her early day
Stroll'd to the meadow-lake to play,
Where willows, o'er the bank inclined,
Shelter'd the water from the wind,
And left it scarcely crizzled o'er—
When one sank in, to rise no more!
And how, upon a market-night,
When not a star bestow'd its light,
A farmer's shepherd, o'er his glass,
Forgot that he had woods to pass :
And having sold his master's sheep,
Was overta'en by darkness deep.
How, coming with his startled horse,
To where two roads a hollow cross ;
Where, lone guide when a stranger strays,
A white post points four different ways,
Beside the woodride's lonely gate
A murdering robber lay in wait.

The frighten'd horse, with broken rein
Stood at the stable-door again ;
But none came home to fill his rack,
Or take the saddle from his back :
The saddle—it was all he bore—
The man was seen alive no more !—
In her young days, beside the wood,
The gibbet in its terror stood :
Though now decay'd, 'tis not forgot,
But dreaded as a haunted spot.—

She from her memory oft repeats
Witches' dread powers and fairy feats :
How one has oft been known to prance
In cowcribs, like a coach, to France,
And ride on sheep-trays from the fold
A race-horse speed to Burton-hold ;
To join the midnight mystery's rout,
Where witches meet the yews about :
And how, when met with unawares,
They turn at once to cats or hares,

And race along with hellish flight,
Now here, now there, now out of sight!—
And how the other tiny things
Will leave their moonlight meadow-rings,
And, unperceiv'd, through key-holes creep,
When all around have sunk to sleep,
To feast on what the cotter leaves,—
Mice are not reckon'd greater thieves.
They take away, as well as eat,
And still the housewife's eye they cheat,
In spite of all the folks that swarm
In cottage small and larger farm ;
They through each key-hole pop and pop,
Like wasps into a grocer's shop,
With all the things that they can win
From chance to put their plunder in ;—
As shells of walnuts, split in two
By crows, who with the kernels flew ;
Or acorn-cups, by stock-doves pluck'd,
Or egg-shells by a cuckoo suck'd ;
With broad leaves of the sycamore
They clothe their stolen dainties o'er :

And when in cellar they regale,
Bring hazel-nuts to hold their ale ;
With bung-holes bor'd by squirrels well,
To get the kernel from the shell ;
Or maggots a way out to win,
When all is gone that grew within :
And be the key-holes e'er so high,
Rush poles a ladder's help supply,
Where soft the climbers fearless tread,
On spindles made of spiders' thread.
And foul, or fair, or dark the night,
Their wild-fire lamps are burning bright :
For which full many a daring crime
Is acted in the summer-time ;—
When glow-worm found in lanes remote
Is murder'd for its shining coat,
And put in flowers, that Nature weaves
With hollow shapes and silken leaves,
Such as the Canterbury bell,
Serving for lamp or lantern well ;
Or, following with unwearied watch
The flight of one they cannot match,

As silence sliveth upon sleep,
Or thieves by dozing watch-dogs creep,
They steal from Jack-a-Lantern's tails
A light, whose guidance never fails
To aid them in the darkest night
And guide their plundering steps aright.
Rattling away in printless tracks,
Some, housed on beetles' glossy backs,
Go whisking on—and others hie
As fast as loaded moths can fly:
Some urge, the morning cock to shun,
The hardest gallop mice can run,
In chariots, lolling at their ease,
Made of whate'er their fancies please;—
Things that in childhood's memory dwell—
Scoop'd crow-pot-stone, or cockle-shell,
With wheels at hand of mallow seeds,
Where childish sport was stringing beads;
And thus equipp'd, they softly pass
Like shadows on the summer-grass,
And glide away in troops together
Just as the Spring-wind drives a feather.

As light as happy dreams they creep,
Nor break the feeblest link of sleep :
A midge, if in their road a-bed,
Feels not the wheels run o'er his head,
But sleeps till sunrise calls him up,
Unconscious of the passing troop.—

Thus dame the winter-night regales
With wonder's never-ceasing tales ;
While in a corner, ill at ease,
Or crushing 'tween their father's knees,
The children—silent all the while—
And e'en repressed the laugh or smile—
Quake with the ague chills of fear,
And tremble though they love to hear ;
Starting, while they the tales recall,
At their own shadows on the wall :
Till the old clock, that strikes unseen
Behind the picture-pasted screen
Where Eve and Adam still agree
To rob Life's fatal apple-tree,

Counts over bed-time's hour of rest,
And bids each be Sleep's fearful guest.
She then her half-told tales will leave
To finish on to-morrow's eve.—
The children steal away to-bed,
And up the ladder softly tread;
Scarce daring—~~from~~ their fearful joys—
To look behind or make a noise;
Nor speak a word! but still as sleep
They secret to their pillows creep,
And whisper o'er, in terror's way,
The prayers they dare no louder say;
Then hide their heads beneath the clothes,
And try in vain to seek repose:
While yet, to fancy's sleepless eye,
Witches on sheep-trays gallop by,
And fairies, like a rising spark,
Swarm twittering round them in the dark;
Till sleep creeps nigh to ease their cares,
And drops upon them unawares.

Oh! Spirit of the days gone by—
Sweet childhood's fearful ecstasy!
The witching spells of winter nights,
Where are they fled with their delights?
When list'ning on the corner seat,
The winter evening's length to cheat,
I heard my mother's memory tell
Tales Superstition loves so well:—
Things said or sung a thousand times,
In simple prose or simpler rhymes!
Ah! where is page of poesy
So sweet as this was wont to be?
The magic wonders that deceived,
When fictions were as truths believed;
The fairy feats that once prevail'd,
Told to delight, and never fail'd:
Where are they now, their fears and sighs,
And tears from founts of happy eyes?
I read in books, but find them not,
For Poesy hath its youth forgot:
I hear them told to children still,
But fear numbs not my spirits chill:

I still see faces pale with dread,
While mine could laugh at what is said ;
See tears imagined woes supply,
While mine with real cares are dry.
Where are they gone?—the joys and fears,
The links, the life of other years ?
I thought they twined around my heart
So close, that we could never part ;
But Reason, like a winter's day,
Nipp'd childhood's visions all away,
Nor left behind one withering flower
To cherish in a lonely hour.
Memory may yet the themes repeat,
But Childhood's heart hath ceased to beat
At tales, which Reason's sterner lore
Turns like weak gossips from her door :
The Magic Fountain, where the head
Rose up, just as the startled maid
Was stooping from the weedy brink
To dip her pitcher in to drink,
That did its half-hid mystery tell
To smooth its hair, and use it well ;

Which, doing as it bade her do,
Turn'd to a king and lover too.
The tale of Cinderella, told
The winter through, and never old:
The pumpkin that, at her approach,
Was turn'd into a golden coach;
The rats that fairies' magic knew,
And instantly to horses grew;
The coachmen ready at her call,
To drive her to the Prince's ball,
With fur-changed jackets silver lined,
And tails hung 'neath their hats behind;
The golden glove, with fingers small,
She lost while dancing in the hall,
That was on every finger tried,
And fitted hers, and none beside,
When Cinderella, soon as seen,
Was woo'd and won, and made a Queen.
The Boy that did the Giant slay,
And gave his mother's cows away
For magic mask, that day or night,
When on, would keep him out of sight.

The running bean,—not such as weaves
Round poles the height of cottage eaves,
But magic one,—that travell'd high
Some steeple's journey up the sky,
And reach'd a giant's dwelling there,
A cloud-built castle in the air :
Where, venturing up the fearful height,
That served him climbing half the night,
He search'd the giant's coffers o'er,
And never wanted riches more ;
While, like a lion scenting food,
The giant roar'd, in hungry mood,
A storm of threats that might suffice
To freeze the hottest blood to ice.

I hear it now, nor dream of woes ;
The storm is settled to repose.
Those fears are dead !—What will not die
In fading Life's mortality ?
Those truths have fled, and left behind
A real world and doubting mind.

FEBRUARY.

I.

THE snow has left the cottage top ;
The thatch-moss grows in brighter green ;
And eaves in quick succession drop,
Where grinning icicles have been ;
Pit-patting with a pleasant noise
In tubs set by the cottage-door ;
While ducks and geese, with happy joys,
Plunge in the yard-pond brimming o'er.

II.

The sun peeps through the window-pane ;
Which children mark with laughing eye,
And in the wet street steal again,
To tell each other Spring is nigh :

Then, as young hope the past recalls,
In playing groups they often draw,
To build beside the sunny walls
Their spring-time huts of sticks or straw.

III.

And oft in pleasure's dreams they hie
Round homesteads by the village side,
Scratching the hedgerow mosses by,
Where painted pooty shells abide;
Mistaking oft the ivy spray
For leaves that come with budding Spring,
And wond'ring, in their search for play,
Why birds delay to build and sing.

IV.

The milkmaid singing leaves her bed,
As glad as happy thoughts can be,
While magpies chatter o'er her head
As jocund in the change as she:
Her cows around the closes stray,
Nor ling'ring wait the foddering-boy;
Tossing the mole-hills in their play,
And staring round with frolic joy.

V.

The shepherd now is often seen
Near warm banks o'er his hook to bend ;
Or o'er a gate or stile to lean,
Chattering to a passing friend :
Ploughmen go whistling to their toils,
And yoke again the rested plough ;
And, mingling o'er the mellow soils,
Boys shout, and whips are noising now.

VI.

The barking dogs, by lane and wood,
Drive sheep a-field from foddering ground ;
And Echo, in her summer mood,
Briskly mocks the cheering sound.
The flocks, as from a prison broke,
Shake their wet fleeces in the sun,
While, following fast, a misty smoke
Reeks from the moist grass as they run.

VII.

No more behind his master's heels
The dog creeps on his winter-pace ;
But cocks his tail, and o'er the fields
Runs many a wild and random chase,

Following, in spite of chiding calls,
The startled cat with harmless glee,
Scaring her up the weed-green walls,
Or mossy mottled apple tree.

VIII.

As crows from morning perches fly,
He barks and follows them in vain ;
E'en larks will catch his nimble eye,
And off he starts and barks again,
With breathless haste and blinded guess,
Oft following where the hare hath gone ;
Forgetting, in his joy's excess,
His frolic puppy-days are done !

IX.

The hedgehog, from his hollow root,
Sees the wood-moss clear of snow,
And hunts the hedge for fallen fruit—
Crab, hip, and winter-bitten sloe ;
But often check'd by sudden fears,
As shepherd-dog his haunt espies,
He rolls up in a ball of spears,
And all his barking rage defies.

X.

The gladden'd swine bolt from the sty,
And round the yard in freedom run,
Or stretching in their slumbers lie
Beside the cottage in the sun.

The young horse whinneys to his mate,
And, sickening from the thresher's door,
Rubs at the straw-yard's banded gate,
Longing for freedom on the moor.

XI.

The small birds think their wants are o'er,
To see the snow-hills fret again,
And, from the barn's chaff-litter'd door,
Betake them to the greening plain.
The woodman's robin startles coy,
Nor longer to his elbow comes,
To peck, with hunger's eager joy,
'Mong mossy stulps the litter'd crumbs.

XII.

'Neath hedge and walls that screen the wind,
The gnats for play will flock together ;
And e'en poor flies some hope will find
To venture in the mocking weather ;

From out their hiding-holes again,
With feeble pace, they often creep
Along the sun-warm'd window-pane,
Like dreaming things that walk in sleep.

XIII.

The mavis thrush with wild delight,
Upon the orchard's dripping tree,
Mutters, to see the day so bright,
Fragments of young Hope's poesy :
And oft Dame stops her buzzing wheel
To hear the robin's note once more,
Who tootles while he pecks his meal
From sweet-briar hips beside the door.

XIV.

The sunbeams on the hedges lie,
The south wind murmurs summer soft ;
The maids hang out white clothes to dry
Around the elder-skirted croft :
A calm of pleasure listens round,
And almost whispers Winter by ;
While Fancy dreams of Summer's sound,
And quiet rapture fills the eye.

XV.

Thus Nature of the Spring will dream
While south winds thaw ; but soon again
Frost breathes upon the stiff'ning stream,
And numbs it into ice: the plain
Soon wears its mourning garb of white ;
And icicles, that fret at noon,
Will eke their icy tails at night
Beneath the chilly stars and moon.

XVI.

Nature soon sickens of her joys,
And all is sad and dumb again,
Save merry shouts of sliding boys
About the frozen furrow'd plain.
The foddering-boy forgets his song,
And silent goes with folded arms ;
And croodling shepherds bend along,
Crouching to the whizzing storms.

MARCH.

MARCH, month of "many weathers," wildly comes
In hail, and snow, and rain, and threatening hums,
And floods;—while often at his cottage-door
The shepherd stands, to hear the distant roar
Loosed from the rushing mills and river-locks,
With thundering sound and overpowering shocks.
From bank to bank, along the meadow lea,
The river spreads, and shines a little sea;
While, in the pale sunlight, a watery brood
Of swopping white birds flock about the flood.

Yet Winter seems half weary of his toil;
And round the ploughmen, on the elting soil,
Will thread a minute's sunshine wild and warm,
Through the ragg'd places of the swimming storm;

And oft the shepherd in his path will spy
The little daisy in the wet grass lie,
That to the peeping sun uncloses gay,
Like Labour smiling on a holiday ;
And where the steep bank fronts the southern sky,
By lanes or brooks where sunbeams love to lie,
A cowslip-peep will open faintly coy,
Soon seen and gather'd by a wondering boy.

A tale of Spring around the distant haze
Seems muttering pleasures with the lengthening
days ;
Morn wakens, mottled oft with May-day stains ;
And shower-drops hang the grassy sprouting plains,
Or on the naked thorns of brassy hue
Drip glistening, like a summer-dream of dew.
The woodman, in his pathway down the wood,
Crushes with hasty feet full many a bud
Of early primrose ; yet if timely spied ;
Shelter'd some old half-rotten stump beside,
The sight will cheer his solitary hour,
And urge his feet to stride and save the flower.

The hedger's toils oft scare the doves, that browse
The chocolate berries on the ivy boughs,
Or flocking fieldfares, speckled like the thrush,
Picking the berry from the hawthorn bush,
That come and go on Winter's chilling wing,
And seem to share no sympathy with Spring.
The ploughmen now along the doughy sloughs
Will often stop their songs, to clean their ploughs
From teasing twitch, that in the spongy soil
Clings round the coulter, interrupting toil.
The sower o'er his heavy hopper leans,
Strewing with swinging arms the pattering beans,
Which, soon as April's milder weather gleams,
Will shoot up green between the furrow'd seams.
The driving boy, glad when his steps can trace
The swelling headland as a resting-place,
Flings from his clotted shoes the dirt around,
And fain would rest him on the solid ground.
Not far behind them struts the nauntly crow,
And daw, whose head seems powder'd o'er with snow,
Seeking the worms: the rook, a noisy guest,
That on the wind-rock'd elms prepares her nest,

On the fresh furrow often drops, to pull
The twitching roots, or gather sticks and wool,
From trees whose dead twigs litter to the wind,
And gaps where stray sheep left their coats behind ;
While ground-larks, on a swinging clump of rushes,
Or on the top twigs of the scatter'd bushes,
Chirp their "cree-creery" note, that sounds of Spring ;
And sky-larks meet the sun with fluttering wing.

The shepherd-boy, that hastens now and then
From hail and snow beneath his sheltering den
Of flags, or file-leaved sedges tied in sheaves,
Or stubble shocks, oft as his eye perceives
Sun-threads shrink out in momentary smiles,
With fairy thoughts his loneliness beguiles ;
Thinking the struggling Winter howling by,
As down the edges of the distant sky
The hail-storm sweeps ;—and while he stops to strip
The stooping hedgebriar of its lingering hip,
He hears the wild geese gabble o'er his head ;
Then, pleased with fancies in his musings bred,
He marks the figured forms in which they fly,
And pausing, follows with a wondering eye,

Likening their curious march, in curves or rows,
To every letter which his memory knows ;
While, far above, the solitary crane
Swings lonely to unfrozen dykes again,
Cranking a jarring melancholy cry
Through the wild journey of the cheerless sky.

Often, at early seasons, mild and fair
March bids farewell, with garlands in her hair
Of hazel tassels, woodbine's bushy sprout,
And sloe and wild-plum blossoms peeping out
In thick-set knots of flowers, preparing gay,
For April's reign, a mockery of May.
The old dame then oft stills her humming wheel—
When the bright sun-beams through the windows
steal
And gleam upon her face, and dancing fall
In diamond shadows on the pictur'd wall ;
While the white butterfly, as in amaze,
Will settle on the glossy glass to gaze—
And smiling, glad to see such things once more,
Up she will get and totter to the door,

And look upon the trees beneath the eaves—
Sweetbriar and lad's-love—swelling into leaves ;
And, stooping down, cull from her garden beds
The early blossoms perking out their heads,
In flower-pots on the window-board to stand,
Where the old hour-glass spins its thread of sand.
And while the passing clown remarks, with pride,
Days lengthen in their visits a "cock's stride,"
She cleans her candlesticks and sets them by,
Glad of the make-shift light that eves supply !

The boy, retiring home at night from toil,
Down lane and close, o'er footbrig, gate, and stile,
Oft trembles into fear, and stands to hark
The waking fox renew his short gruff bark ;
And shepherds—that within their hulks remain
Night after night upon the chilly plain,
To watch the dropping lambs, that at all hours
Come in the quaking blast like tender flowers—
When in the nightly watch they chance to hear
The badger's shrieks, can hardly stifle fear ;
Likening the cry, from woodland's dark recess,
To that of helpless woman in distress :

For Superstition hath a thousand tales
To people all her midnight woods and vales ;—
And the dread spot from whence the dismal noise
Mars the night-musings of their dark employs,
Owns its sad tale to realize their fear—
A tale their hearts in boyhood ached to hear.
A maid, at night, by treacherous love decoy'd,
Was in that shrieking wood, years past, destroy'd.
She went, 'twas said, to meet the waiting swain ;
But home and friends ne'er saw her face again !
'Mid brake and thorns that crowded round the dell,
And matting weeds that had no tongue to tell,
He murder'd her alone at dead midnight,
While the pale moon threw round her sickly light.
Loud screams assail'd the thicket's slumbers deep,
But only scared the little birds from sleep ;
When the pale murderer's terror-frowning eye
Told its dread errand—that the maid should die.—
'Mid thick black thorns her secret grave was made ;
And there the unresisting corpse was laid,
When no one saw the deed but God and he,
And moonlight sparkling through the sleeping tree.

The Robin-redbreast might at morning steal
There, for the worm to meet his early meal,
In fresh-turn'd moulds which first beheld the sun—
Nor know the deed that dismal night had done.
Such is the tale that Superstition gives;
Which in her midnight memory ever lives;
Which makes the boy run by with wild affright,
And shepherds startle on their rounds at night.

Now love-teazed maidens, from the droning wheel,
At the red hour of sun-set, sily steal
From scolding dames, to meet their swains again;
Though water checks their visits o'er the plain:
They slive where no one sees, some wall behind,
Or orchard apple-tree that stops the wind,
To talk about Spring's pleasures hovering nigh,
And happy rambles when the roads get dry.

The insect-world, now sunbeams higher climb,
Oft dream of Spring, and wake before their time.
Bees stroke their little legs across their wings,
And venture short flights where the snow-drop hings

Its silver bell, and winter aconite
Its butter-cup-like flowers that shut at night,
With green leaf furling round its cup of gold,
Like tender maiden muffled from the cold :
They sip, and find their honey-dreams are vain,
Then feebly hasten to their hives again.—
The butterflies, by eager hopes undone,
Glad as a child come out to greet the sun,
Beneath the shadow of a sudden shower
Are lost—nor see to-morrow's April flower.

APRIL.

I.

Now infant April joins the Spring,
And views the watery sky,
As youngling linnet tries its wing,
And fears at first to fly ;
With timid step she ventures on,
And hardly dares to smile,
Till blossoms open one by one,
And sunny hours beguile.

II.

But finer days are coming yet,
With scenes more sweet to charm,
And suns arrive that rise and set
Bright strangers to a storm :

Then, as the birds with louder song
Each morning's glory cheer,
With bolder step she speeds along,
And loses all her fear.

III.

In wanton gambols, like a child,
She tends her early toils,
And seeks the buds along the wild,
That blossoms while she smiles ;
Or, laughing on, with nought to chide,
She races with the Hours,
Or sports by Nature's lovely side,
And fills her lap with flowers.

IV.

The shepherd on his pasture walks
The first fair cowslip finds,
Whose tufted flowers, on slender stalks,
Keep nodding to the winds.
And though the thorns withhold the May,
Their shades the violets bring,
Which children stoop for in their play
As tokens of the Spring.

V.

Those joys which childhood calls its own,
Would they were kin to men !
Those treasures to the world unknown,
When known, are wither'd then!
But hovering round our growing years,
To gild Care's sable shroud,
Their spirit through the gloom appears
As suns behind a cloud.

VI.

Since thou didst meet my infant eyes,
As through the fields I flew,
Whose distance, where they meet the skies,
Was all the world I knew ;
That warmth of Fancy's wildest hours,
Which fill'd all things with life,
Which heard a voice in trees and flowers,
Has swoon'd in Reason's strife.

VII.

Sweet Month ! thy pleasures bid thee be
The fairest child of Spring ;
And every hour, that comes with thee,
Comes some new joy to bring :

The trees still deepen in their bloom,
Grass greens the meadow-lands,
And flowers with every morning come,
As dropt by fairy hands.

VIII.

The field and garden's lovely hours
Begin and end with thee ;
For what's so sweet, as peeping flowers
And bursting buds to see,
What time the dew's unsullied drops,
In burnish'd gold, distil
On crocus flowers' unclosing tops,
And drooping daffodil ?

IX.

To see thee come, all hearts rejoice ;
And, warm with feelings strong,
With thee all Nature finds a voice,
And hums a waking song.
The lover views thy welcome hours,
And thinks of summer come,
And takes the maid thy early flowers,
To tempt her steps from home.

X.

Along each hedge and sprouting bush
The singing birds are blest,
And linnet green and speckled thrush
Prepare their mossy nest ;
On the warm bed thy plains supply,
The young lambs find repose,
And 'mid thy green hills basking lie
Like spots of ling'ring snows.

XI.

Thy open'd leaves and ripen'd buds
The cuckoo makes his choice,
And shepherds in thy greening woods
First hear his cheering voice :
And to thy ripen'd blooming bowers
The nightingale belongs ;
And, singing to thy parting hours,
Keeps night awake with songs !

XII.

With thee the swallow dares to come,
And cool his sultry wing ;
And, urged to seek his yearly home,
Thy suns the martin bring.

Oh ! lovely Month ! be leisure mine
Thy yearly mate to be ;
Though May-day scenes may brighter shine,
Their birth belongs to thee.

XIII.

I waked me with thy rising sun,
And thy first glories viewed,
And, as thy welcome hours begun,
Their sunny steps pursued.
And now thy sun is on thee set,
Like to a lovely eve,
I view thy parting with regret,
And linger loth to leave.—

XIV.

Though at her birth the northern gale
Come with its withering sigh ;
And hopeful blossoms, turning pale,
Upon her bosom die ;
Ere April seeks another place,
And ends her reign in this,
She leaves us with as fair a face
As e'er gave birth to bliss !

M A Y.

COME, Queen of Months! in company
With all thy merry minstrelsy :—
The restless cuckoo, absent long,
And twittering swallows' chimney-song ;
With hedge-row crickets' notes, that run
From every bank that fronts the sun ;
And swarthy bees, about the grass,
That stop with every bloom they pass,
And every minute, every hour,
Keep teasing weeds that wear a flower ;
And Toil, and Childhood's humming joys !
For there is music in the noise
When village children, wild for sport,
In school-time's leisure, ever short,

Alternate catch the bounding ball ;
Or run along the church-yard wall,
Capp'd with rude figured slabs, whose claims
In time's bad memory have no names ;
Or race around the nooky church ;
Or raise loud echoes in the porch ;
Throw pebbles o'er the weather-cock,
Viewing with jealous eyes the clock ;
Or leap o'er grave-stones' leaning heights,
Uncheck'd by melancholy sights,
Though green grass swells in many a heap
Where kin, and friends, and parents sleep.
They think not, in their jovial cry,
The time will come, when they shall lie
As lowly and as still as they ;
While other boys above them play,
Heedless, as they are now, to know
The unconscious dust that lies below.

The driving boy, beside his team,
Of May-month's beauty now will dream,
And cock his hat, and turn his eye
On flower, and tree, and deepening sky ;

And oft burst loud in fits of song,
And whistle as he reels along ;
Cracking his whip in starts of joy—
A happy, dirty, driving boy.
The youth, who leaves his corner stool
Betimes for neighbouring village-school,
Where, as a mark to guide him right,
The church spire's all the way in sight,
With cheerings from his parents given,
Beneath the joyous smiles of Heaven
Saunters, with many an idle stand,
With satchel swinging in his hand,
And gazes, as he passes by,
On every thing that meets his eye.
Young lambs seem tempting him to play,
Dancing and bleating in his way ;
With trembling tails and pointed ears
They follow him, and lose their fears ;
He smiles upon their sunny faces,
And fain would join their happy races.
The birds, that sing on bush and tree,
Seem chirping for his company ;—

And all—in fancy's idle whim—
Seem keeping holiday, but him.
He lolls upon each resting stile,
To see the fields so sweetly smile—
To see the wheat grow green and long ;
And lists the weeder's toiling song,
Or short note of the changing thrush
Above him in the white-thorn bush,
That o'er the leaning stile bends low
Its blooming mockery of snow.

Each hedge is cover'd thick with green ;
And where the hedger late hath been,
Young tender shoots begin to grow
From out the mossy stumps below.
But woodmen still on Spring intrude
And thin the shadow's solitude ;
With sharpen'd axes felling down
The oak-trees budding into brown,
Which, as they crash upon the ground,
A crowd of labourers gather round.
These, mixing 'mong the shadows dark,
Rip off the crackling, staining bark ;

Depriving yearly, when they come,
The green woodpecker of his home,
Who early in the Spring began,
Far from the sight of troubling man,
To bore his round holes in each tree
In fancy's sweet security;
Now, startled by the woodman's noise,
He wakes from all his dreary joys.
The blue-bells too, that thickly bloom
Where man was never known to come;
And stooping lilies of the valley,
That love with shades and dews to dally,
And bending droop on slender threads,
With broad hood-leaves above their heads,
Like white-robed maids, in summer hours,
Beneath umbrellas shunning showers;—
These, from the bark-men's crushing treads,
Oft perish in their blooming beds.
Stripp'd of its boughs and bark, in white
The trunk shines in the mellow light
Beneath the green surviving trees,
That wave above it in the breeze,

And, waking whispers, slowly bend,
As if they mourn'd their fallen friend.

Each morning, now, the weeders meet
To cut the thistle from the wheat,
And ruin, in the sunny hours,
Full many a wild weed with its flowers;—
Corn-poppies, that in crimson dwell,
Call'd "Head-achs," from their sickly smell;
And charlocks, yellow as the sun,
That o'er the May-fields quickly run;
And "Iron-weed," content to share
The meanest spot that Spring can spare—
E'en roads, where danger hourly comes,
Are not without its purple blooms,
Whose leaves, with threat'ning thistles round
Thick set, that have no strength to wound,
Shrink into childhood's eager hold
Like hair; and, with its eye of gold
And scarlet-starry points of flowers,
Pimpernel, dreading nights and showers,
Oft call'd "the Shepherd's Weather-glass,"
That sleeps till suns have dried the grass,

Then wakes, and spreads its creeping bloom
Till clouds with threatening shadows come—
Then close it shuts to sleep again :
Which weeders see, and talk of rain ;
And boys, that mark them shut so soon,
Call “ John that goes to bed at noon :”
And fumitory too—a name
That Superstition holds to fame—
Whose red and purple mottled flowers
Are cropp'd by maids in weeding hours,
To boil in water, milk, and whey,
For washes on a holiday,
To make their beauty fair and sleek,
And scare the tan from Summer's cheek ;
And simple small “ Forget-me-not,”
Eyed with a pin's-head yellow spot
I' the middle of its tender blue,
That gains from poets notice due :—
These flowers, that toil by crowds destroys,
Robbing them of their lowly joys,
Had met the May with hopes as sweet
As those her suns in gardens meet ;

And oft the dame will feel inclined,
As Childhood's memory comes to mind,
To turn her hook away, and spare
The blooms it loved to gather there !
—Now young girls whisper things of love,
And from the old dames' hearing move ;
Oft making "love-knots" in the shade,
Of blue-green oat or wheaten blade ;
Or, trying simple charms and spells
Which rural Superstition tells,
They pull the little blossom threads
From out the knotweed's button heads,
And put the husk, with many a smile,
In their white bosoms for a while,—
Then, if they guess aright the swain
Their loves' sweet fancies try to gain,
'Tis said, that ere it lies an hour,
'Twill blossom with a second flower,
And from their bosom's handkerchief
Bloom as it ne'er had lost a leaf.
—But signs appear that token wet,
While they are 'neath the bushes met ;

D



The girls are glad with hopes of play,
And harp upon the holiday:—
A high blue bird is seen to swim
Along the wheat, when skies grow dim
With clouds; slow as the gales of Spring
In motion, with dark-shadow'd wing
Beneath the coming storm he sails:
And lonely chirp the wheat-hid quails,
That come to live with Spring again,
But leave when Summer browns the grain;
They start the young girl's joys afloat,
With "wet my foot"—their yearly note:—
So fancy doth the sound explain,
And oft it proves a sign of rain!

The thresher, dull as winter days,
And lost to all that Spring displays,
Still 'mid his barn-dust forced to stand,
Swings round his flail with weary hand;
While o'er his head shades thickly creep,
That hide the blinking owl asleep,

And bats, in cobweb-corners bred,
Sharing till night their murky bed.
The sunshine trickles on the floor
Through ev'ry crevice of the door:
This makes his barn, where shadows dwell,
As irksome as a prisoner's cell ;
And, whilst he seeks his daily meal,
As school-boys from their task will steal,
So will he stand with fond delay
To see the daisy in his way,
Or wild weeds flowering on the wall ;—
For these to memory still recall
The joys, the sports that come with Spring,—
The twirling top, the marble ring,
The jingling halfpence hustled up
At pitch and toss, the eager stoop
To pick up *heads*, the smuggled plays
'Neath hovels upon sabbath-days,—
The sitting down, when school was o'er,
Upon the threshold of the door,
Picking from mallows, sport to please,
Each crumpled seed he call'd a cheese,

And hunting from the stack-yard sod
The stinking henbane's belted pod,
By youth's warm fancies sweetly led
To christen them his loaves of bread.
He sees, while rocking down the street
With weary hands and crimpling feet,
Young children at the self-same games,
And hears the self-same boyish names
Still floating on each happy tongue :
Touch'd with the simple scene so strong,
Tears almost start, and many a sigh
Regrets the happiness gone by ;
Thus, in sweet Nature's holiday,
His heart is sad while all is gay.

How lovely now are lanes and balks,
For lovers in their Sunday-walks !
The daisy and the butter-cup—
For which the laughing children stoop
A hundred times throughout the day,
In their rude romping Summer play—
So thickly now the pasture crowd,
In a gold and silver sheeted cloud,

As if the drops of April showers
Had woo'd the sun, and changed to flowers.
The brook resumes her Summer dresses,
Purling 'neath grass and water-cresses,
And mint and flagleaf, swording high
Their blooms to the unheeding eye ;
The Summer tracks about its brink
Are fresh again where cattle drink ;
And on its sunny bank the swain
Stretches his idle length again ;
While all that lives enjoys the birth
Of frolic Summer's laughing mirth.

J U N E.

Now Summer is in flower, and Nature's hum
Is never silent round her bounteous bloom ;
Insects, as small as dust, have never done
With glitt'ring dance, and reeling in the sun ;
And green wood-fly, and blossom-haunting bee,
Are never weary of their melody.
Round field and hedge, flowers in full glory twine,
Large bind-weed bells, wild hop, and streak'd wood-
bine,
That lift athirst their slender throated flowers,
Agape for dew-falls, and for honey showers ;
These o'er each bush in sweet disorder run,
And spread their wild hues to the sultry sun.
The mottled spider, at eve's leisure, weaves
His webs of silken lace on twigs and leaves,

Which ev'ry morning meet the poet's eye,
Like fairies' dew-wet dresses hung to dry.
The wheat swells into ear, and hides below
The May-month wild flowers and their gaudy show,
Leaving, a school-boy's height, in snugger rest,
The leveret's seat, and lark, and partridge nest.

The mowers now bend o'er the beaded grass,
Where oft the gipsy's hungry journeying ass
Will turn his wishes from the meadow paths,
List'ning the rustle of the falling swaths.
The ploughman sweats along the fallow vales,
And down the sun-crack'd furrow slowly trails ;
Oft seeking, when athirst, the brook's supply,
Where, brushing eagerly the bushes by
For coolest water, he disturbs the rest
Of ring-dove, brooding o'er its idle nest.
The shepherd's leisure hours are over now ;
No more he loiters 'neath the hedge-row bough,
On shadow-pillowed banks and lolling stile ;
The wilds must lose their summer friend awhile.

With whistle, barking dogs, and chiding scold,
He drives the bleating sheep from fallow fold
To wash-pools, where the willow shadows lean,
Dashing them in, their stained coats to clean ;
Then, on the sunny sward, when dry again,
He brings them homeward to the clipping pen,
Of hurdles form'd, where elm or sycamore
Shut out the sun—or to some threshing-floor.
There with the scraps of songs, and laugh, and tale,
He lightens annual toil, while merry ale
Goes round, and glads some old man's heart to praise
The threadbare customs of his early days :
How the high bowl was in the middle set
At breakfast time, when clippers yearly met,
Fill'd full of furrnety, where dainty swum
The streaking sugar and the spotting plum.
The maids could never to the table bring
The bowl, without one rising from the ring
To lend a hand ; who, if 'twere ta'en amiss,
Would sell his kindness for a stolen kiss.
The large stone pitcher in its homely trim,
And clouded pint-horn with its copper rim,

X Were there ; from which were drunk, with spirits
high,

Healts of the best the cellar could supply ;
While sung the ancient swains, in uncouth rhymes,

X Songs that were pictures of the good old times.

Thus will the old man ancient ways bewail,
Till toiling shears gain ground upon the tale,
And break it off—for now the timid sheep,

X His fleece shorn off, starts with a fearful leap,
Shaking his naked skin with wond'ring joys,
While others are brought in by sturdy boys.

Though fashion's haughty frown hath thrown aside

X Half the old forms simplicity supplied,

Yet there are some pride's winter deigns to spare,
Left like green ivy when the trees are bare.

And now, when shearing of the flocks is done,

X Some ancient customs, mix'd with harmless fun,
Crown the swain's merry toils. The timid maid,

Pleased to be praised, and yet of praise afraid,

Seeks the best flowers ; not those of woods and fields,

But such as every farmer's garden yields—

Fine cabbage-roses, painted like her face ;
The shining pansy, trimm'd with golden lace ;
The tall topp'd larkheels, feather'd thick with flow-
ers ;
The woodbine, climbing o'er the door in bowers ;
The London tufts, of many a mottled hue ;
The pale pink pea, and monkshood darkly blue ;
The white and purple gilliflowers, that stay
Ling'ring, in blossom, summer half away ;
The single blood-walls, of a luscious smell,
Old-fashion'd flowers which housewives love so well ;
The columbines, stone-blue, or deep night-brown,
Their honeycomb-like blossoms hanging down,
Each cottage-garden's fond adopted child,
Though heaths still claim them, where they yet
grow wild ;
With marjoram knots, sweet-brier, and ribbon-grass,
And lavender, the choice of ev'ry lass,
And sprigs of lad's-love—all familiar names,
Which every garden through the village claims.
These the maid gathers with a coy delight,
And ties them up, in readiness for night ;

Then gives to ev'ry swain, 'tween love and shame,

Her "clipping posies" as his yearly claim.

He rises, to obtain the custom'd kiss :—

With stifed smiles, half hankering after bliss,

She shrinks away, and blushing, calls it rude ;

Yet turns to smile, and hopes to be pursued ;

While one, to whom the hint may be applied,

Follows to gain it, and is not denied.

The rest the loud laugh raise, to make it known,—

She blushes silent, and will not disown !

Thus ale, and song, and healths, and merry ways,

Keep up a shadow still of former days ;

But the old beechen bowl, that once supplied

The feast of furmety, is thrown aside ;

And the old freedom that was living then,

When masters made them merry with their men ;

When all their coats alike were russet brown,

And his rude speech was vulgar as their own—

All this is past, and soon will pass away

The time-torn remnant of the holiday.

JULY.

•

JULY, the month of Summer's prime,
Again resumes his busy time ;
Scythes tinkle in each grassy dell,
Where solitude was wont to dwell ;
And meadows, they are mad with noise
Of laughing maids and shouting boys,
Making up the withering hay
With merry hearts as light as play.
The very insects on the ground
So nimbly bustle all around,
Among the grass, or dusty soil,
They seem partakers in the toil.
The landscape even reels with life,
While 'mid the busy stir and strife

Of industry, the shepherd still
Enjoys his summer dreams at will ;
Bent o'er his hook, or listless laid
Beneath the pasture's willow shade,
Whose foliage shines so cool and gray
Amid the sultry hues of day,
As if the morning's misty veil
Yet linger'd in its shadows pale ;
Or lolling in a musing mood
On mounds where Saxon castles stood,
Upon whose deeply-buried walls
The ivy'd oak's dark shadow falls,
He oft picks up with wond'ring gaze
Some little thing of other days,
Saved from the wrecks of time—as beads,
Or broken pots among the weeds,
Of curious shapes—and many a stone
From Roman pavements thickly strown,
Oft hoping, as he searches round,
That buried riches may be found,
Though, search as often as he will,
His hopes are disappointed still ;

Or watching, on his mossy seat,
The insect world beneath his feet,
In busy motion here and there
Like visitors to feast or fair,
Some climbing up the rush's stem,
A steeple's height or more to them,
With speed, that sees no fear to stop,
Till perch'd upon its spiry top,
Where they awhile the view survey,
Then prune their wings, and flit away,—
And others journeying to and fro
Among the grassy woods below,
Musing, as if they felt and knew
The pleasant scenes they wander'd through,
Where each bent round them seems to be
Huge as a giant timber-tree.
Shaping the while their dark employs
To his own visionary joys,
He pictures such a life as their's,
As free from Summer's sultry cares,
And only wishes that his own
Could meet with joys so thickly sown :

Sport seems the all that they pursue,
And play the only work they do.

The cow-boy still cuts short the day,
By mingling mischief with his play ;
Oft in the pond, with weeds o'ergrown,
Hurling quick the plashing stone
To cheat his dog, who watching lies,
And instant plunges for the prize ;
And though each effort proves in vain,
He shakes his coat, and dives again,
Till, wearied with the fruitless play,
He drops his tail, and sneaks away,
Nor longer heeds the bawling boy,
Who seeks new sports with added joy :
Now on some bank's o'erhanging brow
Beating the wasp's nest with a bough,
Till armies from the hole appear,
And threaten vengeance in his ear
With such determined hue-and-cry
As makes the bold besieger fly ;

Then, pelting with excessive glee
The squirrel on the woodland-tree,
Who nimbles round from grain to grain,
And cocks his tail, and peeps again,
Half-pleased, as if he thought the fray
Which mischief made, was meant for play,
Till scared and startled into flight,
He instant tumbles out of sight.
Thus he his leisure hour employs,
And feeds on busy meddling joys,
While in the willow-shaded pool
His cattle stand, their hides to cool.

Loud is the Summer's busy song,
The smallest breeze can find a tongue,
While insects of each tiny size
Grow teasing with their melodies,
Till noon burns with its blistering breath
Around, and day dies still as death.
The busy noise of man and brute
Is on a sudden lost and mute ;

Even the brook that leaps along
Seems weary of its bubbling song,
And, so soft its waters creep,
Tired silence sinks in sounder sleep.
The cricket on its banks is dumb,
The very flies forget to hum ;
And, save the waggon rocking round,
The landscape sleeps without a sound.
The breeze is stopt, the lazy bough
Hath not a leaf that dances now ;
The tottergrass upon the hill,
And spiders' threads, are standing still ;
The feathers dropt from moorhen's wing,
Which to the water's surface cling,
Are steadfast, and as heavy seem
As stones beneath them in the stream ;
Hawkweed and groundsel's fanning downs
Unruffled keep their seedy crowns ;
And in the oven-heated air,
Not one light thing is floating there,
Save that to the earnest eye,
The restless heat seems twittering by.

Noon swoons beneath the heat it made,
And flowers e'en wither in the shade,
Until the sun slopes in the west,
Like weary traveller, glad to rest,
On pillowed clouds of many hues ;
Then nature's voice its joy renews,
And chequer'd field and grassy plain
Hum, with their summer songs again,
A requiem to the day's decline,
Whose setting sunbeams coolly shine,
As welcome to day's feeble powers
As falling dews to thirsty flowers.

Now to the pleasant pasture dells,
Where hay from closes sweetly smells,
Adown the pathway's narrow lane
The milking maiden hies again,
With scraps of ballads never dumb,
And rosy cheeks of happy bloom,
Tann'd brown by Summer's rude embrace,
Which adds new beauties to her face,

And red lips never pale with sighs,
And flowing hair, and laughing eyes
That o'er full many a heart prevail'd,
And swelling bosom loosely veiled,
White as the love it harbours there,
Unsullied with the taunts of care.

The mower now gives labour o'er,
And on his bench beside the door
Sits down to see his children play,
Smoking a leisure hour away :
While from her cage the blackbird sings,
That on the woodbine arbour hings ;
And all with soothing joys receive
The quiet of a Summer's eve.

AUGUST.

HARVEST approaches with its busy day ;
The wheat tans brown, and barley bleaches grey ;
In yellow garb the oatland intervenes,
And tawny glooms the valley throng'd with beans.
Silent the village grows,—wood-wandering dreams
Seem not so lonely as its quiet seems ;
Doors are shut up as on a winter's day,
And not a child about them lies at play ;
The dust that winnows 'neath the breeze's feet
Is all that stirs about the silent street :
Fancy might think that desert-spreading Fear
Had whisper'd terrors into Quiet's ear,
Or plundering armies past the place had come
And drove the lost inhabitants from home.

The fields now claim them, where a motley crew
Of old and young their daily tasks pursue.
The reapers leave their rest before the sun,
And gleaners follow in the toils begun
To pick the litter'd ear the reaper leaves,
And glean in open fields among the sheaves.
The ruddy child, nursed in the lap of Care,
In Toil's rude strife to do its little share,
Beside its mother poddles o'er the land,
Sunburnt, and stooping with a weary hand,
Picking its tiny glean of corn or wheat,
While crackling stubbles wound its little feet ;
Full glad it often is to sit awhile
Upon a smooth green bank to ease its toil,
And fain would spend an idle hour in play
With insects, strangers to the moiling day,
Creeping about each rush and grassy stem,
And often wishes it were one of them :
Meanwhile the expecting mother stops to tie
Her handful up, and, waiting his supply,
Misses the idle youngker from her side ;
Then shouts of rods, and morts of threats beside

Picture harsh truths in his unpractised breast,—
How they, who idle in the harvest rest,
Shall well-deserving in the winter pine,
Or hunt the hedges with the birds and swine.
In vain he wishes that the rushes' height
Were tall as trees to hide him from her sight.
Leaving his pleasant seat, he sighs and rubs
His legs, and shows scratch'd wounds from piercing
 stubs,
To make excuse for play; but she disdains
His little wounds, and smiles while he complains;
And as he stoops adown in troubles sore,
She sees his grief, and bids him mourn no more,
For by and by, on the next Sabbath-day,
He shall have well-earn'd pence as well as play,
When he may buy, almost without a stint,
Sweet candied horehound, cakes, and peppermint,
At the gay shop, within whose window lie
Things of all sorts to tempt his eager eye:
Rich sugar-plums in phials shining bright,
In every hue, young fancies to delight;
Coaches and ladies of gilt gingerbread;
And downy plums, and apples streak'd with red.

Such promises all sorrow soon displace,
And smiles are instant kindled in his face ;
Scorning the troubles which he felt before,
He picks the trailing ears, and mourns no more.

The fields are all alive with sultry noise
Of labour's sounds, and insects' busy joys.
The reapers o'er their glittering sickles stoop,
Startling full oft the partridge coveys up ;
Some o'er the rustling scythe go bending on ;
And shockers follow where their toils have gone,
Heaping the swaths that rustle in the sun,
Where mice from Terror's dangers nimbly run,
Leaving their tender young in fear's alarm
Lapt up in nests of chimbled grasses warm,
Hoping for safety from their flight in vain ;
While the rude boy, or churlish-hearted swain,
Pursues with lifted weapons o'er the ground,
And spreads an instant murder all around.
In vain the anxious maiden's tender prayer
Urges the clown their little lives to spare ;
She sighs, while trailing the long rake along,
At scenes so cruel, and forgets her song.

When the Sun stoops to meet the western sky,
And Noon's hot hours have wander'd weary by,
Seeking a hawthorn bush or willow-tree
For resting-places that the coolest be,
Where baskets heaped and unbroached bottles lie,
Which dogs in absence watch'd with wary eye,
They catch their breath awhile, and share the boon
Which bevering-time allows their toil at noon.
Next to her favour'd swain the maiden steals,
Blushing at kindness which his love reveals ;
Making a seat for her of sheaves around,
He drops beside her on the naked ground.
Then from its cool retreat the beer they bring,
And hand the stout-hoop'd bottle round the ring.
Each swain soaks hard ; the maiden, ere she sips,
Shrieks at the bold wasp settling on her lips,
That seems determined only her's to greet,
As if it fancied they were cherries sweet !
The dog foregoes his sleep awhile, or play,
Springing at frogs that rustling jump away,
To watch each morsel carelessness bestows,
Or wait the bone or crust the shepherd throws ;

For shepherds are no more of ease possess,
But share in harvest-labours with the rest.

When day declines and others meet repose,
The bawling boy his evening journey goes ;
At toil's unwearied call the first and last,
He drives his horses to their night's repast,
In dewy close or meadow to sojourn ;
And often ventures, on his still return,
O'er garden pales, or orchard walls, to hie,
When sleep's safe key hath lock'd up danger's
eye,

All but the mastiff watching in the dark,
Who snuffs and knows him, and forbears to bark.
With fearful haste he climbs each loaded tree,
And picks for prizes, that the ripest be ;
While the pale moon, creeping with jealous light,
Fills empty shadows with the power to fright ;
And, from the barn-hole, pops and hurries by,
The grey owl, screaming with a fearful cry ;—
He hears the noise, and, hastening to escape,
Thinks each thing grows around a dismal shape.

Quick tumbling o'er the mossy mould'ring wall,
He loses half his booty in the fall ;
Where, soon as ever Morning opes its eyes,
The restless hogs will happen on the prize,
And crump adown the mellow and the green,
Making all seem as nothing e'er had been.

Amid the broils of harvest's weary reign,
How sweet the Sabbath wakes its rest again !
And on each weary mind what rapture dwells,
To hear once more the pleasant chiming bells,
That from each steeple, peeping here and there,
Murmur a soothing lullaby to care.
The shepherd, journeying on his morning rounds,
Pauses awhile to hear the pleasing sounds,
While the glad children, free from toil's employ,
Mimic the "ding dong" hums, and laugh for joy.
The fields themselves seem happy to be free,
Where insects chatter with unusual glee ;
While Solitude, the grass and stubs among,
Appears to muse and listen to the song.
In quiet peace awakes the welcome morn ;
Men tired, and children with their gleaning worn,

Weary and stiff, lie round the doors all day,
To rest themselves, with little heart for play.
In calm delight the Sabbath wears along ;
Yet round the Cross, at noon, a tempted throng
Of little younkers, with their pence, repair
To buy the downy plum and luscious pear
That melts i' th' mouth, which gardeners never fail,
For gain's strong impulse, to expose for sale ;
Placed on the circling Cross-steps in the sun,
What time the parson has his sermon done.
There, soon the boy his sore-earn'd penny spends ;
And he the while, that pennyless attends,
In sullen, silent mood, approaching nigh,
Full often drops a keen, desiring eye
Upon each loaded basket, to perceive
What makes his little fingers itch to thieve ;—
But, close at hand, the stocks in terror shine,
And temptings strong, to stronger fears resign.
Thus Sunday's leisure passes swiftly by
In rest, soft peace, and home-tranquillity,
Till Monday morning doth its cares pursue,
Rousing the harvest's busy toils anew.

SEPTEMBER.

HARVEST awakes the morning still,
And toil's rude groups the valleys fill ;
Deserted is each cottage hearth
To all life, save the cricket's mirth ;
Each burring wheel its sabbath meets,
Nor walks a gossip in the streets ;
The bench beneath the eldern bough,
Lined o'er with grass, is empty now,
Where blackbirds, caged from out the sun,
Would whistle while their mistress spun :
All haunt the thronged fields, to share
The harvest's lingering bounty there.

As yet, no meddling boys resort
About the streets in idle sport ;

The butterfly enjoys its hour,
And flirts, unchased, from flower to flower ;
The humming bees, which morning calls
From out the low hut's mortar walls,
And passing boy no more controls—
Fly undisturb'd about their holes ;
The sparrows in glad chirpings meet,
Unpelted in the quiet street.
None but imprison'd children now
Are seen, where dames with angry brow
Threaten each younker to his seat,
Who, through the window, eyes the street ;
Or from his hornbook turns away,
To mourn for liberty and play.

Yet loud are morning's early sounds ;
The farm or cottage yard abounds
With creaking noise of opening gate,
And clanking pumps, where boys await
With idle motion, to supply
The thirst of cattle crowding nigh.
Upon the dovecote's mossy slates,
The pigeons coo around their mates ;

And close beside the stable wall,
Where morning sunbeams earliest fall,
The basking hen, in playful rout,
Flaps the powdery dust about.
Within the barn-hole sits the cat
Watching to seize the thirsty rat,
Who oft at morn its dwelling leaves
To drink the moisture from the eaves;
The red-breast, with his nimble eye,
Dares scarcely stop to catch the fly,
That, tangled in the spider's snare,
Mourns in vain for freedom there.
The dog beside the threshold lies,
Mocking sleep, with half-shut eyes—
With head crouch'd down upon his feet,
Till strangers pass his sunny seat—
Then quick he pricks his ears to hark,
And bustles up to growl and bark;
While boys in fear stop short their song,
And sneak in startled speed along;
And beggar, creeping like a snail,
To make his hungry hopes prevail

O'er the warm heart of charity,
Leaves his lame halt and hastens by.

The maid afield now leaves the farm,
With dinner basket on her arm,
Loitering unseen in narrow lane,
To be o'ertook by following swain,
Who, happy thus her truth to prove,
Carries the load and talks of love.
Soon as the dew is off the ground,
Rumbling like distant thunder round,
The waggons haste the corn to load,
And hurry down the dusty road ;
While driving boy with eager eye
Watches the church clock passing by—
Whose gilt hands glitter in the sun—
To see how far the hours have run ;
Right happy, in the breathless day,
To see time wearing fast away.
But now and then a sudden shower
Will bring to toil a resting hour ;

Then, under sheltering shocks, a crowd
 Of merry voices mingle loud,
 Draining, with leisure's laughing eye,
 Each welcome, bubbling bottle dry ;
 Till peeping suns dry up the rain,
 Then off they start to toil again.

Anon the fields are getting clear, ⁷⁴
 And glad sounds hum in labour's ear ;
 When children halloo " Here they come !"
 And run to meet the Harvest Home,
 Cover'd with boughs, and throng'd with boys, ⁷⁴
 Who mingle loud a merry noise,
 And, when they meet the stack-throng'd yard
 Cross-buns and pence their shouts reward.
 Then comes the harvest-supper night,
 Which rustics welcome with delight ;
 When merry game and tiresome tale,
 And songs, increasing with the ale,
 Their mingled uproar interpose,
 To crown the harvest's happy close ;

While Mirth, that at the scene abides,
Laughs, till she almost cracks her sides.

Now harvest's busy hum declines,
And labour half its help resigns.
Boys, glad at heart, to play return ;
The shepherds to their peace sojourn,
Rush-bosom'd solitudes among,
Which busy toil disturb'd so long.
The gossip, happy all is o'er,
Visits again her neighbour's door,
On scandal's idle tales to dwell,
Which harvest had no time to tell ;
And free from all its sultry strife,
Enjoys once more her idle life.
A few, whom waning toil reprieves,
Thread the forest's sea of leaves,
Where the pheasant loves to hide,
And the darkest glooms abide,
Beneath the old oaks moss'd and grey,
Whose shadows seem as old as they ;

Where time hath many seasons won,
Since aught beneath them saw the sun ;
Within these brambly solitudes,
The ragged, noisy boy intrudes,
To gather nuts, that, ripe and brown,
As soon as shook will patter down.

Thus harvest ends its busy reign,
And leaves the fields their peace again ;
Where Autumn's shadows idly muse
And tinge the trees in many hues :
Amid whose scenes I'm fain to dwell,
And sing of what I love so well.
But hollow winds, and tumbling floods,
And humming showers, and moaning woods,
All startle into sudden strife,
And wake a mighty lay to life ;
Making, amid their strains divine,
Unheard a song so mean as mine.

OCTOBER.

NATURE now spreads around, in dreary hue,
A pall to cover all that summer knew ;
Yet, in the poet's solitary way,
Some pleasing objects for his praise delay ;
Something that makes him pause and turn again,
As every trifle will his eye detain :—
The free horse rustling through the stubble field ;
And cows at lair in rushes, half conceal'd ;
With groups of restless sheep who feed their fill,
O'er clear'd fields rambling wheresoe'er they will ;
The hedger stopping gaps, amid the leaves,
Which time, o'er-head, in every colour weaves ;
The milkmaid pausing with a timid look,
From stone to stone, across the brimming brook ;

The cotter journeying with his noisy swine,
Along the wood-side where the brambles twine,
Shaking from mossy oaks the acorns brown,
Or from the hedges red haws dashing down ;
The nutters, rustling in the yellow woods,
Who tease the wild things in their solitudes ;
The hunters, from the thicket's avenue,
In scarlet jackets, startling on the view,
Skimming a moment o'er the russet plain,
Then hiding in the motley woods again ;
The plopping gun's sharp, momentary shock,
Which echo bustles from her cave to mock ;
The bawling song of solitary boys,
Journeying in rapture o'er their dreaming joys,
Haunting the hedges in their reveries,
For wilding fruit that shines upon the trees ;
The wild wood music from the lonely dell,
Where merry Gipseys o'er their raptures dwell,
Haunting each common's wild and lonely nook,
Where hedges run as crooked as the brook,
Shielding their camps beneath some spreading oak,
And but discovered by the circling smoke

Puffing, and peeping up, as wills the breeze,
Between the branches of the coloured trees :—
Such are the pictures that October yields,
To please the poet as he walks the fields ;
While Nature—like fair woman in decay,
Whom pale consumption hourly wastes away—
Upon her waning features, winter chill,
Wears dreams of beauty that seem lovely still.
Among the heath-furze still delights to dwell,
Quaking, as if with cold, the harvest bell ;
And mushroom-buttons each moist morning brings,
Like spots of snow-shine in dark fairy rings.
Wild shines each hedge in autumn's gay parade ;
And, where the eldern trees to autumn fade,
The glossy berry picturesquely cleaves
Its swarthy bunches 'mid the yellow leaves,
On which the tootling robin feeds at will,
And coy hedge-sparrow stains its little bill.
The village dames, as they get ripe and fine,
Gather the bunches for their " eldern wine ;"
Which, bottled up, becomes a rousing charm,
To kindle winter's icy bosom warm ;

And, with its merry partner, nut-brown beer,
Makes up the peasant's Christmas-keeping cheer.

Like to a painted map the landscape lies ;
And wild above, shine the cloud-thronged skies,
That chase each other on with hurried pace,
Like living things, as if they ran a race.
The winds, that o'er each sudden tempest brood,
Waken like spirits in a startled mood ;
Flirting the sear leaves on the bleaching lea,
That litter under every fading tree ;
And pausing oft, as falls the patting rain ;
Then gathering strength, and twirling them again,
Till drops the sudden calm :—the hurried mill
Is stopt at once, and every noise is still ;
Save crows, that from the oak trees quawking spring,
Dashing the acorns down with beating wing,
Waking the wood's short sleep in noises low,
Patting the crimpt brakes withering brown below ;
And whirr of starling crowds, that dim the light
With mimic darkness, in their numerous flight ;

Or shrilly noise of puddocks' feeble wail,
As in slow circles round the woods they sail ;
While huge black beetles, revelling alone,
In the dull evening hum their heavy drone.
These trifles linger through the shortening day,
To cheer the lone bard's solitary way ;
Till surly Winter comes with biting breath,
And strips the woods, and numbs the scene with
 death ;
Then all is still o'er wood and field and plain,
As nought had been, and nought would be again.

NOVEMBER.

THE landscape sleeps in mist from morn till noon ;
And, if the sun looks through, 'tis with a face
Beamless and pale and round, as if the moon,
When done the journey of her nightly race,
Had found him sleeping, and supplied his
place.

For days the shepherds in the fields may be,
Nor mark a patch of sky—blindfold they trace,
The plains, that seem without a bush or tree,
Whistling aloud by guess, to flocks they cannot
see.

The timid hare seems half its fears to lose,
Crouching and sleeping 'neath its grassy lair,
And scarcely startles, tho' the shepherd goes
Close by its home, and dogs are barking there ;
The wild colt only turns around to stare
At passer by, then knaps his hide again ;
And moody crows beside the road, forbear
To fly, tho' pelted by the passing swain ;
Thus day seems turn'd to night, and tries to wake
in vain.

The owlet leaves her hiding-place at noon,
And flaps her grey wings in the doubling light ;
The hoarse jay screams to see her out so soon,
And small birds chirp and startle with affright ;
Much doth it scare the superstitious wight,
Who dreams of sorry luck, and sore dismay ;
While cow-boys think the day a dream of night,
And oft grow fearful on their lonely way,
Fancying that ghosts may wake, and leave their
graves by day.

Yet but awhile the slumbering weather flings
Its murky prison round—then winds wake loud;
With sudden stir the startled forest sings
Winter's returning song—cloud races cloud,
And the horizon throws away its shroud,
Sweeping a stretching circle from the eye ;
Storms upon storms in quick succession crowd,
And o'er the sameness of the purple sky
Heaven paints, with hurried hand, wild hues of
every dye.

At length it comes among the forest oaks,
With sobbing ebbs, and uproar gathering high ;
The scared, hoarse raven on its cradle croaks,
And stockdove-flocks in hurried terrors fly,
While the blue hawk hangs o'er them in the sky.—
The hedger hastens from the storm begun,
To seek a shelter that may keep him dry ;
And foresters low bent, the wind to shun,
Scarce hear amid the strife the poacher's muttering
gun.

The ploughman hears its humming rage begin,
And hies for shelter from his naked toil ;
Buttoning his doublet closer to his chin,
He bends and scampers o'er the elting soil,
While clouds above him in wild fury boil,
And winds drive heavily the beating rain ;
He turns his back to catch his breath awhile,
Then ekes his speed and faces it again,
To seek the shepherd's hut beside the rushy plain.

The boy, that scareth from the spiry wheat
The melancholy crow—in hurry weaves,
Beneath an ivied tree, his sheltering seat,
Of rushy flags and sedges tied in sheaves,
Or from the field a shock of stubble thieves.
There he doth dithering sit, and entertain
His eyes with marking the storm-driven leaves ;
Oft spying nests where he spring eggs had ta'en,
And wishing in his heart 'twas summer-time
again.

Thus wears the month along, in checker'd moods,
Sunshine and shadows, tempests loud, and calms;
One hour dies silent o'er the sleepy woods,
The next wakes loud with unexpected storms;
A dreary nakedness the field deforms—
Yet many a rural sound, and rural sight,
Lives in the village still about the farms,
Where toil's rude uproar hums from morn till night
Noises, in which the ears of Industry delight.

At length the stir of rural labour's still,
And Industry her care awhile foregoes;
When Winter comes in earnest to fulfil
His yearly task, at bleak November's close,
And stops the plough, and hides the field in
snows;
When frost locks up the stream in chill delay,
And mellows on the hedge the jetty sloes,
For little birds—then Toil hath time for play,
And nought but threshers' flails awake the dreary
day.

DECEMBER.

GLAD Christmas comes, and every hearth
 Makes room to give him welcome now,
E'en want will dry its tears in mirth,
 And crown him with a holly bough ;
Though tramping 'neath a winter sky,
 O'er snowy paths and rimy stiles,
The housewife sets her spinning by
 To bid him welcome with her smiles.

Each house is swept the day before,
 And windows stuck with ever-greens,
The snow is besom'd from the door,
 And comfort crowns the cottage scenes.

Gilt holly, with its thorny pricks,
And yew and box, with berries small,
These deck the unused candlesticks,
And pictures hanging by the wall.

Neighbours resume their annual cheer,
Wishing, with smiles and spirits high,
Glad Christmas and a happy year,
To every morning passer-by ;
Milkmaids their Christmas journeys go,
Accompanied with favour'd swain ;
And children pace the crumping snow,
To taste their granny's cake again.

The shepherd, now no more afraid,
Since custom doth the chance bestow,
Starts up to kiss the giggling maid
Beneath the branch of misletoe
That 'neath each cottage beam is seen,
With pearl-like berries shining gay ;
The shadow still of what hath been,
Which fashion yearly fades away.

The singing wates, a merry throng,
At early morn, with simple skill,
Yet imitate the angels song,
And chant their Christmas ditty still ;
And, 'mid the storm that dies and swells
By fits—in hummings softly steals
The music of the village bells,
Ringing round their merry peals.

When this is past, a merry crew,
Bedeck'd in masks and ribbons gay,
The " Morris-dance," their sports renew,
And act their winter evening play.
The clown turn'd king, for penny-praise,
Storms with the actor's strut and swell ;
And Harlequin, a laugh to raise,
Wears his hunch-back and tinkling bell.

And oft for pence and spicy ale,
With winter nosegays pinn'd before,
The wassail-singer tells her tale,
And drawls her Christmas carols o'er.

While 'prentice boy, with ruddy face,
And rime-bepowder'd, dancing locks,
From door to door with happy pace,
Runs round to claim his " Christmas box

The block upon the fire is put,
To sanction custom's old desires ;
And many a fagot's bands are cut,
For the old farmers' Christmas fires ;
Where loud-tongued Gladness joins the throng,
And Winter meets the warmth of May,
Till feeling soon the heat too strong,
He rubs his shins, and draws away.

While snows the window-panes bedim,
The fire curls up a sunny charm,
Where, creaming o'er the pitcher's rim,
The flowering ale is set to warm ;
Mirth, full of joy as summer bees,
Sits there, its pleasures to impart,
And children, 'tween their parent's knees,
Sing scraps of carols o'er by heart.

And some, to view the winter weathers,
Climb up the window-seat with glee,
Likening the snow to falling feathers,
In Fancy's infant ecstasy ;
Laughing, with superstitious love,
O'er visions wild that youth supplies,
Of people pulling geese above,
And keeping Christmas in the skies.

As tho' the homestead trees were drest,
In lieu of snow, with dancing leaves ;
As tho' the sun-dried martin's nest,
Instead of i'cles hung the eaves ;
The children hail the happy day—
As if the snow were April's grass,
And pleas'd, as 'neath the warmth of May,
Sport o'er the water froze to glass.

Thou day of happy sound and mirth,
That long with childish memory stays,
How blest around the cottage hearth
I met thee in my younger days !

Harping, with rapture's dreaming joys,
On presents which thy coming found,
The welcome sight of little toys,
The Christmas gift of cousins round.

The wooden horse with arching head,
Drawn upon wheels around the room;
The gilded coach of gingerbread,
And many-colour'd sugar plum ;
Gilt cover'd books for pictures sought,
Or stories childhood loves to tell,
With many an urgent promise bought,
To get to-morrow's lesson well.

And many a thing, a minute's sport,
Left broken on the sanded floor,
When we would leave our play, and court
Our parents' promises for more.
Tho' manhood bids such raptures die,
And throws such toys aside as vain,
Yet memory loves to turn her eye,
And count past pleasures o'er again.

Around the glowing hearth at night,
The harmless laugh and winter tale
Go round, while parting friends delight
To toast each other o'er their ale ;
The cotter oft with quiet zeal
Will musing o'er his Bible lean ;
While in the dark the lovers steal
To kiss and toy behind the screen.

Old customs ! Oh ! I love the sound,
However simple they may be :
Whate'er with time hath sanction found,
Is welcome, and is dear to me.
Pride grows above simplicity,
And spurns them from her haughty mind,
And soon the poet's song will be:
The only refuge they can find.



VILLAGE STORIES.



THE SORROWS OF LOVE ;

OR, THE BROKEN HEART.

“ Good shepherd, tell this youth what ’tis to love.
It is to be all made of sighs and tears ;
 All made of faith and service ;
All made of passion, and all made of wishes ;
All humbleness—all patience, and impatience.

SHAKSPEARE.

To sober with sad truths the laughing mirth
Of rosy daughters round the cottage hearth,
And pass the winter’s lengthen’d eve away,
A mother told the tale of SALLY GREY :—
“ How time,” she said, “ and pleasure vanish by !”
Then stopp’d to wipe the tear-drops from her eye ;—
“ Time gains upon us distance unawares,
Stealing our joys and changing them to cares :

'Tis nine-and-thirty years ago,"—the date
To prove, she look'd above her where she sat,
And pull'd the Bible down—that certain guide
When boys and girls were born, and old friends
died—

That lay with penny stories rustling near,
And almanacks preserved for many a year ;
Stopping her story till she found the place,
Pulling her glasses from their leathern case—

'Twas right : and from her lap, in sadden'd vein,
She took her knitting and went on again.—
“ Poor thing ! she died, heart-broken and distress'd,
Through love. The doctors, who should know the
best,

Said 'twas decline that wasted life away :
But truth is truth ; and be it as it may,
She ne'er did aught that malice could reprove ;—
Her only failing was the fault of love !
'Tis hard enough when Innocence is hurl'd
On the cold bosom of a heartless world ;
When Mockery and stony-hearted Pride
Reveal the failings Pity strives to hide,

And with sad cruel taunt and bitter jest
Lay thorns to pillow Trouble's broken rest ;
But when a poor young thing like SALLY dies
For love, and only love—where are the eyes
Can look in Memory's face without a tear ?
Ev'n Scorn no longer turns aside to sneer,
But silent stands ; while Pity shakes her head,
And thinks tears just herself declines to shed.
'Twas by another's failings that she fell,
Whose wanton follies were her passing bell :
A clown, as wild as young colts free from plough,
Who saw a prison in a marriage-vow,
Had won her heart, and kept it in his power,
As the rude bindweed clasps the tender flower—
A clown, as shifting as the summer wind,
To whom her heart and love were all resign'd.
Poor girl ! I felt in trouble for her end—
A next-door neighbour and an early friend :
Her father kept a cottage next to ours ;
He was a gardener, and he dealt in flowers,
And SALLY'S beau would buy his flowers the while
With double prices—money and a smile ;

And many a whisper of love's cheating powers—
Calling her fairest of her father's flowers.

Such ways, like spring-hopes, youngling blood did
move,

And by and by got ripen'd into love.

He then the wishes of his mind express'd,

And was receiv'd—a lover, welcome guest !

Go where we would, him we were sure to meet,

Or on the pasture or about the street ;

And oft on summer-eves or sabbath-days

He'd join our walks and surfeit her with praise :

Nay, she could scarcely to the church repair,

But he held out his arm to lead her there.

Then to her father's house he often went,

Who welcome gave, and deemed it kindly meant,

And talk'd of goods and savings o'er his ale—

Things he had earned by his spade and flail ;—

And often show'd with fatherly regard,

The pigs and poultry in his little yard ;

How this and that, as matters closer led,

Were marriage-portions when his daughters wed.

The children then, her little sisters three,
Began to know him, and would climb his knee
To whisper little stories in his ear ;
They call'd him brother, which he smiled to hear,
And, to reward them for each pretty way,
He promised bride-cake on the wedding-day ;
And with love's keep-sakes brought from fair or wake,
He ne'er forgot the children's toys or cake.
I mark'd these things, for I was often by,
And even thought the wedding-day was nigh :
For, as a neighbour, oft by night and day
I took my work in, to pass time away ;
And oft without it on a winter's eve
I've stole away, nor ask'd a mother's leave,
To play at cards, and talk of dress beside—
For wench's heads are ever after pride.
No holiday e'er came but he was there :
For him the father left his corner-chair ;
Her mother bless'd them as she touch'd the glass,
And wish'd him luck, and nodded to the lass ;
And all beheld him, when the freak begun,
In kindred prospect as a promised son.—

Thus for awhile his fawning love did burn,
But soon doubts rose at every touch and turn :
If she but nodded at a fair or wake
To youths she knew, it made his bosom ache ;
Or said " Good morning !" to a passer-by,
She always had a rival in her eye.
Then jealousy would seemingly complain,
And urge to vows ere all was right again :
But when he found her heart indeed his own,
He quickly made his foolish follies known ;
And, like a young bird children nurse in play,
He teased and plagued her till she pined away.—
He still loved on, but thought it mighty fun
To prove her fondness when the maid was won.
From every night to once a week they met,
And then excuses made it longer yet :
Sometimes he could not stay as heretofore,
But call'd her out to whisper at the door ;
And turn'd away and smiled, self-satisfied
To see the tear-drops which she strove to hide.
He danced with other girls, his pride to please,
And seem'd to glory in the chance to teaze ;

Then look'd around him with a leering eye,
And drank their healths while she was sitting by :
Deep blushes came across her face the while,
And tears would start while she essay'd to smile.
And oft when nigh a soldier he has sat,
He'd laugh, and put the colours on his hat ;
But he too great a coward was to go,
For none but cowards do use women so :
'Twas only to perplex the heart he'd won,
For no one cause but insolence and fun.
Thus did he wound her, though she loved him still,
And patiently put up with every ill ;
Nursing the venom of that speckled snake
About her heart, 'till it was like to break.
Yet, when I caution'd her of love's distress,
And bade her notice the wild fellow less,
Saying she show'd her love too much by half,—
' Mary, you jest !' she said, and made a laugh.

Frequent on sabbath-days, in pleasant weather,
We went to walk, and talk of love together ;
And often sought a hut beside the wood,
That from the town a gossip's minute stood.

Here an old woman, for some small rewards,
Would tell our fortunes both by cups and cards.
Some call'd her witch, and whisper'd all they dare
Of mighty things that had been noticed there ;
Witches of every shape, that used to meet
To count the stars, or mutter'd charms repeat.
Woodmen, in winter, as they pass'd the road,
Have vow'd they've seen some crawling like a toad ;
And some like owlets veering over-head,
Shrieking enough to fright the very dead.
Yet she to us appear'd like other folks,
A droll old woman, full of tales and jokes ;
And if the old dame's tales were darkly meant,
I ne'er perceived it, though I often went.
Deal as she might with Satan's evil powers,
She read her Bible, and was fond of flowers.
She went to church as other people may,
And knelt and pray'd—though witches cannot pray :
She had her ague-charms, and old receipts
For wounds and bruises labour often meets ;
And gather'd wild-flowers in her summer-toils,
To make an ointment that was famed for miles ;

And many a one hath own'd her lowly skill,
Who dared not run a doctor's longer bill.
But as to ill-got knowledge of the sky,
She was as innocent as you or I.
She might, no doubt, with pointed finger show
The Shepherd's Lamp, which even children know ;
And doubtless loved, when journeying from the
town,
To see it rising soon as day was down.
The Tailor's Yard-band, which hangs streaming high,
The pale Night-waggon driving through the sky,
And Butcher's cleaver, or the Seven Stars,
With shooting North-lights, 'tokening bloody wars ;
She might know these, which, if 'tis sin to know,
Then every body is a witch below.
—Well, those are good that never stoop to wrong,
And bless'd are they that 'scape an evil tongue.—
Thus to young hopes she would her fortunes tell,
But SALLY quickly knew her own too well !
Her tears and sighs did all too fruitless prove,
To keep the SHEPHERD to his vows of love :
He came to vex her oft, and would not stay,
But shut the door again and laugh'd away.

As she was spotless and a maiden still,
Conscience ne'er told him that the deed was ill ;
And he made promises, to give her pain,
Just for the sake of breaking them again.
On winter's nights for hours I've known her stand,
Listening, with door half open in her hand ;
Till, what with colds and an uneasy mind,
Her beauty faded, and her health declined :
The rose, that lovers call so, left her face,
And the pale sickly lily took its place.
Thus she went on, poor melancholy thing !
Just like a bud that 's injured in the spring,
That ~~may~~ live on to see the coming day—
A feeble blossom leaning on decay.
She sorrow'd on, and worse and worse she grew,
And strength declined its labour to pursue :
Yet, wishing still her sorrows to conceal,
She turn'd with feeble hand her spinning-wheel ;
Till, weak, and weary, when no one was by,
She 'd lean her backward in her chair to cry.

At length her parents, though with added fears,
Saw through her heart-throbs and her secret tears ;

And when they found the only crime was love,
They joked at times, and would at times reprove—
Saying, if that were all the world possess'd
For causing troubles, few would be distress'd.
But all was vain ! she put her best looks on
When they were there, and grieved when they were
gone ;
Till toil and fretting brought her down so low,
That she was forced her labour to forego.
Her friends, no longer with false hopes beguiled,
Fear'd for the danger of their troubled child :
Her children-sisters oft hung round her chair,
In which she lean'd in silence and despair ;
Her troubled looks they could not understand,
But tried to raise her head from off her hand,
And ask'd the reason why she sat so still,
Or if aught wrong'd her that had made her ill ?
She kiss'd their prattling lips with struggling sighs,
While anguish rush'd for freedom to her eyes ;
Then would she turn away from friends and kin,
To hide the trouble that her heart was in.

They eked her sorrow with her lover's name,
Asking the reason why he never came ;
Bringing up childish memories to her cost—
Things they had miss'd, and pleasures she had lost.
Thus they would urge—ending with scornful brow—
' A naughty man ! he brings us nothing now.'
She stopp'd their mouths with kisses and with sighs,
And turn'd her face again to hide her eyes.
Her mother talk'd of patience all in vain,
And read Job's troubles o'er and o'er again ;
Then turn'd to love, and read the book of Ruth,
Making excuses for the faults of youth ;
Saying, how she in life's young joys was cross'd,
And both a lover and a husband lost ;
Yet still hop'd on, and overlook'd the past,
And loved her mother, and was bless'd at last.—
And if (said she) you trust in God and pray,
You may be happy in the end as they.—
Then she herself would often try to read
The Bible's comforts in the hour of need ;
But soon she fail'd its cheering truths to look,
And grew so weak she scarce could lift the book.

Life to a spider's web was worn and spun,
And e'en her hands, if lifted to the sun,
Were both so wasted that, to fancy's view,
The light would almost seem to glimmer through.—
Her lover, by and by, his folly mourn'd ;
His conscience prick'd him, or his love return'd :
He begg'd and pray'd, and wish'd again to be
Once more admitted to her company.

The parents thought 'twould save their sinking child,
For trouble's hopes are quickly reconcil'd—
So let him come. I sat beside her bed :
He asked her how she was, and hung his head :
The tears burst from her eyes ; she could not speak.
Upon her hand her sorrow-wasted cheek
She lean'd ; and, when he did his sins recall,
She kiss'd him fondly, and forgave him all,—
Then smiled, and bowed her faded face to weep,
And, wearied out, sank down like one asleep ;
Then rose again like one awoke from pain,
And gazed on him, and me—and wept again ;
Then on her bosom laid her wasted hand,
Sighing a language brutes might understand !

Yet hopes were fed, though but the mask of pain,
And she recovered, and got out again.
She seem'd so well, they e'en began to name
The wedding-day. 'Twas set, but ere it came,
The gossips, when they met, would still agree
To shake their heads and say, 'twould never be !
Muttering o'er doubts they would not urge aloud.
Saying her bride-dress would turn out a shroud.
God knows, they but too truly prophecied ;
For, ere it came, she sickened, sunk and died !
Upon that very morn that was to see
The wedding sunshine and festivity,
Death did so gently his cold fingers lay
Upon her bosom, that she swoon'd away
Without a groan ; and, but for us that wept
About her bed, you might have thought she slept.
For marriage-greetings parents' sorrows fell,
And marriage-peals changed to a passing bell !
Her young sun set 'neath sorrow's gloomy cloud :
Wed to the grave, her bride-sheets were a shroud.
And I, instead of joining in the throng
Of merry faces, and a wedding song—

Instead of seeing her a bride become,
I bore the pall up to her last long home ;
And heard the old clerk's melancholy stave,
Who sang the psalm bareheaded by her grave.

Thus died poor SALLY on her wedding-day—
An April bud that could not see the May.
I often stand to gaze upon the stone,
Whene'er I journey to the church alone,
Where gold-wing'd cherubs hold a flowery wreath
Over a prayer-book open underneath ;
Upon whose leaves was writ at her request,
In golden letters—" Here the weary rest."
Last Sabbath-day but one, I loiter'd there,
Before the bells had chimed the hour of prayer :
Stopping, as pity seemly did demand,
I wrapp'd my apron corner round my hand,
And pull'd the nettles that had overgrown
The verse, and rambled half way up the stone ;
And then at eve, when ye were at the door,
Whisp'ring with sweethearts your love-secrets o'er,

I took my glasses to amuse myself,
And reach'd the Bible down from off the shelf
To read the text, and look the psalms among,
To find the one that at her grave was sung.
The place had long been doubled down before,
And much I wish that ye would read it o'er :
Your father read it to me many a time
When ye were young, and on our laps would climb :
Nay, keep your work—'tis not worth while to leave,
I'll sit and hear it on to-morrow eve ;
For even if the night would time allow,
My heart's too sad—I cannot bear it now.

I've talk'd till I have almost tired my tongue,
Folks say old women's tales are always long,
So here I'll end ; and, like it as you may,
I wish you better luck than SALLY GREY.—
She ceased her tale, and snuff'd the candle wick,
Lifting it up from burning in the stick,
Then laid her knitting down, and shook her head,
And stoop'd to stir the fire, and talk of bed.

JOCKEY AND JENNY ;

OR, THE PROGRESS OF LOVE.

WHERE over many a stile, 'neath willows grey,
The winding footpath leaves the public way,
Free from the dusty din, and ceaseless chime
Of bustling waggons in the summer time,
Beyond a brook, where braving storms in vain
Two willows fell and still for brigs remain,
A humble cot, a sheltering hedge beside,
Lifts on the eye its solitary pride.
Its thatch, with houseleek flowers is yellow o'er,
Where flock the bees from hives against the door ;
Trees, towering round it, hide returning rooks,
And twittering swallows seek its chimney nooks ;
In peace, the sparrow chirps his joyous calls,
And takes the feather to its creviced walls ;

Nor fail the harmless robin and the wren
To seek those sweet, secluded haunts again.

Here Jenny lived to grace the lovely scenes,
Fair as the spring-tide, blushing in her teens.
And 'mid her flowers, and linnets whistling nigh,
She often met the stranger's passing eye
Beneath her bower of elder, in the cool,
Knitting her hose, or winding at her spool ;
The fairest village maid around for miles,
Mingling by turns her ditties and her smiles.
Her parents' joy she was, their hearts to glad,
Their only hope, for she was all they had :
Nor once their warmest wishes she deceived,
But heard their counsels, and their truth believed ;
With their advice, through life she journeyed on,
Nor did a wrong, unless to love be one.

Though in a humble way, her friends lived well,
And had their butter and their eggs to sell ;
And such-like errands fell to Jenny's share,
Who weekly went to market with her ware,
Gracefully drest, some lover's eye to win,
For Jenny's bosom felt that harmless sin,

Nor fail'd she long, though little done by dress,
To crown her artless wishes with success.
Once journeying thither, Jockey met her view,
Opening the gate as she was passing through ;
She blush'd surprise, he bended o'er his hook,
And as she left him, turn'd him round to look
Her cheek was rosy, for the day was warm,
Her hat untied, and basket on her arm.
She felt his look, but never turn'd again,
She'd long been caution'd not to stare at men ;
And as her hand, that kept, with jealous trust,
Her folded gown from sweeping in the dust,
Let go with modest fears its hold behind,
He felt more touch'd, and blest her in his mind.
But though she nimbly glided from his sight,
Her face and manners left a fix'd delight ;
And in his bosom found a lasting place,
Which neither time nor change could e'er efface :
And Jenny felt, she knew not scarcely how,
A fluttering something never known till now ;
She wonder'd what the stranger's look could mean
And thought she liked him best of all she'd seen :

Nor ceased she wishing, in her reason's spite,
He'd still be there returning home at night.

Meanwhile the swain, with melancholy speed,
Pursued his toils, and drove his flocks to feed.
Go where he would, his mind was hard to please,
His heart was wandering, and but ill at ease.
The hat untied, the rosy-burning cheek,
Were with him all the day and all the week :
Nor would they leave him while the night sojourn'd ;
In dreams the teasing pleasures still return'd.

And Jenny too was often waked from sleep,
With clapping gates, and noise of roving sheep ;
And startling shepherds every now and then
Crossing her path, and holding gates again.
Each market morning, as she pass'd the place,
Past recollections reddened in her face.
The stranger's look rose burning in her mind,
And made her often turn to look behind ;
While virgin fears, in matters yet untried,
Would fain forget it, but the heart denied :
As when, in dreams, the stranger shepherd came,
She seem'd to fly, and hide her head for shame ;

Yet soon awoke, the startling vision by,
To find a dream, she could not help but sigh.

Thus weeks and months, with Jockey and with Jane,
Finish'd their rounds, and toil'd them o'er again ;
Filling each heart with blindfold hopes the same,
And leaving heavier every time they came.
Each felt and wish'd what neither dared pursue,
And each as warmly loved, but neither knew.
Jockey, who knew her name e'er since the day
He met the damsel on her market way,
E'er since he held the gate in hopes to please,
And for his kindness lost his heart and ease,
Of passing folks had made enquiries good,
Both who she was, and where her cottage stood ;
And oft essay'd to go—when doubts delay'd,
Spoiling but every resolution made,
As reason turn'd him round to think awhile,
Dropt on a hill, or leaning o'er a stile ;
Judging how vain such follies to pursue,
To be a fool, and then declare it too,
By seeking one he never knew before,
And ask admittance at a stranger's door ;

Where jealous dames and grannies might reside,
And take his visits on the blackest side,
Thinking him one who came with vile excuse
Their artless Jenny's ignorance to seduce ;
For most old women have a jealous fear,
Doubting e'en tokens that are most sincere,
Deeming the ways that wooers have to win,
A dangerous poison in a gilded skin ;
And lovers oft, from their suspicious doubt,
Have mountains, as it were, to climb about,
And ere they gain their wishes, meet from hence
The worst of pains attending on suspense.
Thus Jockey thought, as onward he sojourn'd,
Proceeded often, and as oft return'd :
He doubted much, and dreaded to attend
Love's fickle footsteps to its journey's end ;
Till on a Sunday, fully bent he rose
To mend, or bring the matter to a close :
And thus attired in his best hopes and dress,
His heart warm'd often, thinking on success,
Then damp'd again, but whether fail or speed,
He journey'd on, determined to proceed.

Soon Jenny's cottage rose upon his sight,
Enquiry question'd, and it was the right.
A boy was tending horses near the spot,
Who shew'd the pathway leading to the cot,
And answer'd things that Jockey loved to hear,
Reviving hopes, and lessening many a fear—
As how the friends of Jenny were as free
As any people living need to be ;
And as for her, she 'd every body's praise,
For modest manners and good-natured ways.
Thus far, as wish'd, had Jockey matters found,
And to the point continued veigling round,
'Bout who kept Jenny company, and that :
The boy guess'd matters,—cock'd his napless hat,
Then leering, 'gan a nameless tune to bawl,
And hardly stopt to tell him " none at all."
'Twas quite enough, just as he wish'd forsooth,
Far as boys' stories might be ta'en for truth ;
It lighten'd up his heart such things to find,
Making him hope success was in the wind.

The cottage door was now upon his view,
The twisting woodbines round the window grew ;

The birds were whistling—ah! how blest they seem'd,
To be so near the object he esteem'd.

A single cow fed on the neighbouring moor,
And three cadd lambs were playing near the door,
Which lived by tender care, and tamely stood
To sip from Jenny's hand their daily food.

Now past remembrance 'gan to flutter high,
To think the lovely stranger was so nigh ;
While former doubts rose topmost in their sway,
And hopes, on point to blossom, died away.

Fear whisper'd in his heart to wander by,
And wait till chance might better hopes supply.

The dog 'gan barking as he cross'd the moor,
The poultry noised, and open came the door ;
Trifles alarm in such a lonely place,

Where even birds dislike a stranger's face :
A side glance on the dwelling Jockey cast,
To see who noticed as he saunter'd past.

Ah! now thy courage, Love—'twas past with him,
A shivering ague trembled every limb ;
His heart, with past sensations of delight,
E'en flutter'd like a bird, as well it might ;

That self-same look, which beauty's lingering beams
Kept bright so long by fancies and by dreams,
That very face which he one morning met,
And thought the loveliest he had seen as yet,
That lovely girl was now before his eyes,
For whom the gate was ope'd and shut with sighs.
What must he say? fear fix'd him to the spot ;
He would have made excuse, but had it not.
Love is so timid while it is so young,
He could not own it how his heart was wrung :
Yet only wish'd the while that she but knew
What he could tell so tender and so true.
His looks had meaning, but young loves are shy,
And plainest questions prompt a first reply ;
False hopes are pleasant till the test is tried,
Nor durst he speak for fear of being denied ;
Though Jenny's sweet simplicity and grace
Denied ill-nature in her lovely face,
And half confirm'd it, as he pass'd along,
To hear " Good morning !" tremble from her tongue.
He felt the chance, but dared not yet pursue
The little hazards which in love he knew.

His heart's flush'd wish, his faltering tongue forbore,
He turned to speak, but only look'd the more ;
And as he twirl'd his stick, and saunter'd on,
He left his blessing where his heart was gone.
Then lost in anguish, as he homeward went,
O'er gate and stile conjecturingly he bent,
Making resolves, as soon as he could find
A chance renew'd, to boldly speak his mind,
Deeply repenting over what was past,
To be so foolish as let slip the last.
Great was the conflict labouring in his breast,
Which only lovers may explain the best ;
Concerns of love are dangerously deferr'd—
Ere equal opportunity occur'd
A bolder lover might drop in the while,
And all the present hopes entirely spoil.
He knew it well, and dreaded what he knew ;
A maid so blooming, and so lovely too,
Urged every eye with tempting gaze to turn,
And left some hearts with quicker pulse to burn.
In sleepless pain, that night was pass'd away,
His heart had left him and his thoughts astray ;

Fancy was picturing in his wandering head
How Jane was sleeping in her peaceful bed,
Unconscious there of all he felt and knew,
Of how he loved, and dreaded to pursue :
He toss'd and turn'd, while coward conscience chid,
To meet such chance, and pass it as he did.
But all in vain ; the past was past as then,
And too far travell'd to be call'd again.
Yet ere he bent his weary mind to rest,
These wilder wishes left his aching breast :
“ Ah ! powerful Night, were but thy chances mine,
Had I but ways to come at joys like thine !
Spite of thy wizard look, and sable skin,
The ready road to bliss 'tis thine to win ;
All nature owns of beautiful and sweet,
In thy embraces now unconscious meet :—
Young Jenny, ripening into womanhood,
That hides from day, like lilies while in bud,
To thy grim visage blooms in all her charms,
And comes, like Eve, unblushing to thy arms.
Of thy black mantle could I be possest,
How would I pillow on her panting breast,

And try those lips where trial rude beseems,
Breathing my spirit in her very dreams :
That ne'er a thought might wander from her heart,
But I possess'd it, or ensured a part.
Of all the blessings that belong to thee,
Had I this one, how happy should I be."

Beauty, thou sunshine of the passing hour,
At once so lovely and so frail a flower,
Gilt toy of life, with which all play their part,
Thou universal empress of the heart,
Who would not wish for heart's ease in thy room,
Of less delightful but of longer bloom ?
Could Love, while doating on thy looks so fair,
But turn to days when Time shall meddle there ;
And but reflect on its ill-fated spell,
Pleased to undo what nature did so well ;
To chill that cheek and all its sweets deform,
Which youth had flush'd so luscious and so warm ;
To dim those eyes, and all their darts destroy,
That brightening glow with mysteries of joy ;
And damp those smiles that breathe of silent bliss,
To miss whose tasting seems a heaven to miss :

Could Love but waken from its golden dreams,
And see this shade, which there a substance seems,
Sure he would think those heart-aches and those sighs
Too dear a purchase for so false a prize.
But Love wears looks of Heaven while he smiles ;
And Jockey's heart, like others he beguiles,
Was warm'd too much at beauty's blushing sun,
To cool in reason when it once was won :
Jane's haunting memory claim'd his every thought,
Days came and went, but little joy they brought ;
While absent hopes, and intermingling fears,
Made hours to linger with the length of years.
In vain the summer time his toil beguiles
With all her wild-wood harmony, and smiles ;
All disregarded, Jockey pass'd them by,
And nothing claim'd the notice of his eye ;
For he had feelings of no common kind,
And look'd on nature with a kindred mind :
Musing in joy, ere love disturb'd his rest,
Through woods and wilds their solitary guest ;
Watching the brook toil on its simmering tide,
And gath'ring wild flowers blooming by its side ;

Listening the moaning wind, and pleased to see
The grass in billows rolling o'er the lea.
But love came o'er him, with its burning bloom,
And o'er past pleasures cast a sullen gloom :
As silver moonbeams, in effulgence shed,
Deepen night's darkness where they cannot spread,
So joys behind him darken'd seem and sour,
Lost in the sweetness of a brighter flower.
In vain did mirth excite him to forget,
In vain at dances on the green he met,
Where lovely faces might be seen again,
Which but revived the image of his Jane :
Though girls were there, as fair and sweet to see,
Where Jane was not, there pleasure could not be ;
Save the thrill'd raptures that to hopes would cling,
For pains have pleasures when from love they spring.
But if blind Love were bless'd with eyes to see,
How many a pain might then a stranger be !
How many hearts that nature made to bind,
Without a sigh or heart-ache might be join'd !
And short had been his cares, had he but known
Her heart dwelt there, a neighbour with his own :

For ever since the day he pass'd her door,
She deem'd that earnest which she guess'd before,
And expectation, every now and then,
Would warm in hopes to see him once again ;
Yet, with uneasy doubts, her fears were free
To hint such notions might mistaken be,
Which often urged a melancholy sigh
To check her blushing hopes when raised too high.

Jane in these reveries pursued her way
With musing silence many a market day,
Nor ever could the lonely lovely spot
Where Jockey stood, be wander'd by forgot ;
As oft as through the gate she went or came,
A sigh or look would busy memory claim ;
And passing by, hopes oft her bosom burn'd,
That she might meet him as she home return'd ;
But they deceived her still, and many a day,
With lonely thoughts she went her lonely way :
For never seem'd a spot so lonely yet
As that where absent Jockey first was met,
And ne'er shone sun so sadly on her eye,
As smiled that morning when he pass'd her by.

Even her home had now no bliss to spare,—
Love claim'd her heart, and Care pursued her there.
Beneath the elder she was heard no more
Making toil light with singing, as before ;
In melancholy speed days went and came,
Her hopes were doubtful, and her peace the same ;
The laughing pleasures that were such before
Were now in mourning, and could please no more ;
The song of birds that used to urge her own,
But told her now of pleasures she had known ;
The blooming flowers that used to please her eye,
Now lived as proofs of happiness gone by.
Toil turn'd a burthen—shyness ill conceal'd
The painful feelings that such ways reveal'd :
At night and morn in silence she was seen,
With folded arms, to saunter down the green ;
No flower enticed her as she sought the cow,
And woodbines wreathed neglected round the bough ;
While in her path the lambs would often stand,
Bleating complaints of her neglecting hand.
But fancied joys, that to the future cling,
Gleam'd oft, like sunshine through the clouds of
spring ;

And hopes were budding with a future day,
That now and then half drove despair away.
Some weeks to come, a village feast would be,
When Jenny hoped the stranger's face to see ;
'Twas from her cottage scarcely half a mile,
And might full well her artless thoughts beguile ;
When if he loved her, as she hoped he did,
Such chance to meet from him would not be hid.
So Jenny judged, and to her heart's delight
Found all her wishes, when it came, were right ;
Nor fruitless were her prayers, for on that day
Suns shone as wished, and rain kept far away ;
Paths were as clean as wishes could desire,
Nor dirt, nor dew, could sully her attire.
Her Sunday dress that evening she put on,
With warmest hopes to win and to be won.
A gay straw hat, with ribbons on the peak,
Of rosy hue, like that upon her cheek ;
O'er her white bosom, love's delicious bed,
A silken handkerchief was loosely spread,
That hid its swelling sweets in careless ways,
And still left room for amorous eyes to gaze :

A fine new gown, round bodice tightly laced,
Flow'd to the wind, and clasp'd her slender waist ;
While dust to shun, she held it to her side,
Disclosing beauties which she seem'd to hide :
A slender ankle, clad in stocking white,
That swell'd in sweet proportion out of sight ;
And jet black was her shoe, and polish'd high,
Tied with black ribbon in a graceful tye.
Thus in her best, on tiptoe to be seen,
With bosom warm'd its hopes and fears between,
She left her cot, half wean'd from lingering care,
To seek the dance, in hopes to meet him there ;
And sure enough, as wish'd, her wishes came,
For Jockey's hopes that evening were the same :
He, at an earlier hour from toil released,
Folded his sheep, and hasten'd to the feast,
Anxious and hopeful, as he paced the street,
'Neath every hat the stranger's face to meet ;
Then to the dance, with hopes improved as yet,
He went, and look'd, and there the face was met.
'Tween hopes and fears his courage flutter'd chill,
Then warm'd again, but doubted strongly still ;

Glances he ventured, and would looks repeat,—
Jane blush'd before him, but she kept her seat.
Embolden'd thus, love from its silence broke,
Seizing her hand, yet trembling while he spoke ;
He hoped, to be his partner she 'd consent,
Nor deem him rude where rudeness was not meant.
“ Yes !” beat her bosom, 'mid its throbs and sighs,
Fond to reveal, but modest to disguise ;
Her eyes met his, a smile half blush'd to view,
And glow'd more tender when he urged anew :
His suit he moved with fonder freedom still,
When Jenny rose, as if against her will,
Half shrinking from herself with fears and bliss,
Ne'er urged till now, and now not urged amiss ;
For though her coyness downward look'd the while,
From Jockey's eye she could not hide the smile
Which gave consent, and plainly told the rest,
That hopes half speeded, and would soon be blest ;
Though he, as yet, had ventured not to move
His suit so far to tell her it was love.
But speaking eyes have language in their way,
Whose looks oft seem to chide the tongue's delay,

And Jenny's oft beneath her bonnet's brim,
When others look'd not, turn'd to gaze on him ;
And oh ! so sweet, so languishing the while,
'Tween blushing coyness and a dimpling smile,
They seem'd to ask him, ere they turn'd aside,
To kiss those lips, that redden'd to be tried ;
But Jockey persevered with modesty,
Nor urged too much for fear of being too free.
He led her down the dance with hopes beguiled,
And often press'd her hand and often smiled,
'Till evening's end proclaim'd the night too nigh,
That left its admonitions with a sigh
On more than Jenny, when with many a maid
The dance must stop, and parents be obey'd.
She sought her shawl, which caution loosely threw
Around her neck, to guard against the dew,
And left the dance, and for her home sojourn'd,
But turned a look on Jockey as she turn'd,
Who sued to walk as guardian by her side,
Nor seem'd she to consent, nor yet denied ;
Still Jockey tried successes to pursue,
Seized her white arm, and brush'd the nightly dew,

Offering assistance o'er each stile and brook,
And felt the joy to find it kindly took ;
Adventuring often, on their lonely way,
By closer hints his meaning to convey,
While Jenny's meek and modest sighs reveal'd
The timid fondness which her tongue conceal'd.
Pity it is, that hours that bring us joy
Should lend that wings which follows to destroy ;
Time seems with grief to loiter and delay,
But flies from joy that wishes him to stay.
Soon came their journey's end, how much too soon !
Though quite contrary gleam'd the mounting moon,
That seem'd that night to gallop up the sky,
And told them plainly prudent hours were by ;
While as a check in sight her cottage rose,
And love's tale dropt when warmest to disclose :
For raptures now did all his fears efface,
And love was shown in many a warm embrace.
But hours of meeting, sweet as they begin,
Have parting ones that claim too near a kin ;
Glimmering through Jenny's window, lights did burn,
That show'd her parents waited her return ;

Fled were those early hours she used to keep,
Slumbering with midnight in its soundest sleep.
So they must part—still Jockey linger'd nigh,
And sigh'd, and urged—and Jenny could but sigh ;
Whatever wishes in her heart might burn,
Jane must retire, and Jockey must return ;
She dare not risk the hazard or the blame,
To take a stranger to a chiding dame.

- Jane begg'd to part, but Jockey sued again
For one more kiss, one minute more, and then
Press'd her soft hand—and much against his will,
Sigh'd one farewell, but held her prisoner still,
'Till thoughts of friends waked innocent alarms,
And forced the maiden from her lover's arms :
“ Farewell a little while,” exclaim'd the swain,
“ Till Sunday comes, and I 'll be here again.”
She sigh'd consent—he view'd his lonely way,
Then turn'd again, as wishing new delay ;
But Jenny, timid with the depth of night,
Open'd the door, and vanish'd from his sight,
Where the old folks her glad approach did wait,
Urging their questions of her being so late ;

But kept it secret what they guess'd the while,
And heard excuses 'tween a frown and smile :
They knew their daughter's manners up to this,
Nor fear'd her father she would act amiss,
Who, while he guess'd the late hour savour'd love,
Check'd the dame's frowns, nor ventured to reprove.
So all was right—Jane dreamt about her swain,
And counted hours when they should meet again ;
And surely nights did never seem so slow
To bring the sun, and bid the sun to go,
As those that pass'd between with lagging feet,
That eve's first meeting and the next to meet.

At length it came, and Jane oft turn'd her eye
Upon the window, watching passers by.
Her blushing hopes were startled into joys,
At every footstep and approaching noise :
Whene'er the gate clapt creaking on the moor,
She left her book and ventured to the door ;
For Jane had long been taught her God to fear,
Although there was no place of worship near ;
She knew what duty on that day required,
And always took her Bible as desired.

Still Jenny's Bible had not power to chide
Love's tempting charm, with innocence its guide.
Oft did she think of more than what she read,
And toward the window often turn'd her head.
Nor did she long those cheating hopes pursue,
Ere Jockey's presence proved his promise true.
In thoughtful mood, she mark'd him cross the moor,
Taking the path that winded to the door ;
Where soon a fearful rap warn'd Jane to move
Her best excuse, and intercede for love :
Let this suffice, she told the simple tale,
And told it true, the better to prevail.
They coolly heard it, but denied him not,
So he, half doubtful, enter'd in the cot,
Where Jenny smiling, as she set the chair,
Proved he by one was doubly welcome there ;
But soon his modest unassuming ways
Urged the old folk's opinions in his praise :
With each new visit grew increased esteem,
Proving sincere what first might doubtful seem.
And oft he came, and many a Sabbath day
They toy'd with bliss, and loved its hours away ;

Enjoying pleasure that retirement yields,
In peaceful rambles round the silent fields ;
Unseen, while wandering round each lonely dell,
Unheard, while talking what they loved to tell ;
Sitting to rest on creaking gate or stile,
Or sunny bank, to mutter tales awhile.
He oft, while wandering thus in summer's hours,
Would match her beauty with surrounding flowers,
Comparing some to blushes on her cheek,
Some to her lips when tinged with ruddier streak ;
And those more sweet, and whiter than the rest,
That to her breath, and this her swelling breast.
And then, half shrinking from his ardent gaze,
She'd yield a kiss as purchase for his praise.

Thus hours were spent, and time, as passing by,
Kept knitting love with closer, tenderer tie ;
No change creating, as is oft the case,
Kindling fresh fondness for a stranger face :
With Jockey's feelings change would ill agree ;
Though he saw faces that were sweet to see,
Yet warmest fancy always rose at will,
To picture absent Jenny fairer still.

By frequent visits, love at length was led
To bring up questions when they might be wed :
Their friends' consent was all that left delay ;
They asked, and had it, and then fix'd the day.
The friends of Jane had taught her how to live,
And Jockey's friends had little else to give ;
For though to decent living they attain'd,
Riches by them were neither prized nor gain'd.
Land they possess'd, but niggard was the soil,
And just return'd a recompense for toil.
Virtue and industry were most desired ;—
These Jane possess'd, and more was not required.
So all was fixed,—and soon the morning came
When Jane should be a bride, and change her name.
And Jockey's heart that morn with bliss was warm,
But Jenny trembled as she took his arm ;
His fondness could not overcome her fears :
She smiled as happy—but she smiled in tears ;
And when her husband urged the reason why,
She could not tell—unless it was for joy.

First love, how sweet ! ah, would it longer last :
Though Time remembers it when felt and past,

'Tis but a shadow of a substance gone,—
A setting sunbeam to a rising one.
Hopes feed on joy that fancies only give,
Which in this world as pictures only live:
Attempt it oft, half Care, half Joy, we find;
Possess it quite, and Care is left behind.
Love, as the plant call'd Sensitive, is such,
Fair to the eye and with'ring to the touch;
Revealing cares that marriage vows await,
Which bring repentance that is brought too late.
But Jane and Jockey little had to do
With this as yet, while honeymoons were new;
Bright in their infancy of raptured gleams,
No cares were yet to cloud such lovely dreams.
First love is theirs, what else may interpose;
Here they are blest, and here the tale shall close.

THE RIVALS ;

A PASTORAL.

BENEATH a meadow bridge, whose arch was dry,
Some swains sought shelter till a shower was by.
Upon its smooth half-circling roof of stone
Rude figured things in different colours shone,
Spread hands and birds, and self-imagined flowers,
Pastimes of boys imprison'd there by showers ;
Some made with ruddle, which the shepherd swain
Employs, that he may know his sheep again,
Others with fire-sticks, chance would haply find
About the spot, by gipsies left behind ;
And many a deeply-cut two letter name,
Where knives were spoilt to win an inch of fame,
Which linger on for years about the spot,
Brands of oblivion, living yet forgot.

Here the swains shelter'd till the storm was o'er,
Sitting on stones rolled in for seats before :
Some spent the hour in leisure's pleasant toil,
Making their apple-scoops of bone the while ;
One crimp't a knitting-sheath upon his knees,
To please a maiden whom he wish'd to please ;
An older swain did his wet hours employ
In making whistles for an anxious boy,
Who sat in eager watchings by his side,
Waiting their finish with exulting pride ;
While two young swains in love's discourings fell,
Lapping up love-knot plaits, and many a spell,
With broad green reed-blades, where the shelter'd
midge
Danced in their shadows by the mossy bridge.
The swallows, darting through the arch at play,
Heard the rude noise, and popt another way.

RICHARD.

My love forgets me never ; every spell
Links as I lap it, and betokens well.
When I was young, and went a weeding wheat,
We used to make them on our dinner seat :

We laid two blades across, and lapt them round,
Thinking of those we loved ; and if we found
Them linked together when unlapt again,
Our loves were true ; if not, the wish was vain :
I've heard old women, who first told it me,
Vow that a truer token could not be.

SIMON.

Three times I've lapt mine up, and still 'tis out ;
A fatal number, had I cause to doubt ;
But Mary Fieldflower still is fond and free,
And shows no token to dishearten me :
I care not what this foolish trifling tells,
For I can bring up better proofs than spells.

RICHARD.

Produce them, Simon ; for if she be true
To lover's vows, she has no room for two.
Ne'er feast on fancy, 'tis a dangerous food
To take as truth, and in a loving mood ;
She throws a rosy veil round self-conceit,
Which, like the canker to the heart, will eat,
Till nought is left to cherish her disguise,
Then, like worm-eaten fruit, it drops and dies

If I judge right, the maid you name is mine ;
Nor without proofs will I the maid resign.

SIMON.

These I can give in plenty ; though, I own,
I never knew that she had kindness shown
To other shepherds than myself, till now,
Much less that she chain'd follies with a vow.
Last April fair, when I got bold with beer,—
I loved her long before, but had a fear
To speak—as by a stall she chanced to stand,
With kerchief full of fairings in her hand,
I ventured up, and tapt her on the arm :
She seem'd at first to startle with alarm ;
But when I begg'd a fairing at the wake,
She loosed her kerchief, and pull'd out a cake ;
And in return for her good-natured ways,
I offer'd ribbons which I heard her praise :
These she refused, and said she 'd plenty got,
But thank'd me kindly, though she took them not.

RICHARD.

Whene'er at Sunday feast, or noisy fair,
I go, and meet with rosy Mary there,

If my dog finds her first he rubs her clothes,
And wags his tail ; e'en she to him bestows
A ginger button, and quick turns again,
To wonder why I out of sight remain :
And when she finds me out, in manners free,
She comes unasked to offer things to me ;
Never refusing the returns I make,
But meanest trifles condescends to take.
Last Christmas' sports, I join'd the skating crew
That yearly race for hats with ribbons blue,
And flew away with young Hope's swiftest pace ;
Nor was I cheated, for I won the race :
I took the bunch of ribbons home at night
To Mary, who e'en trembled with delight ;
Nor once refused the proffered gift to take,
But said, " Well done ! I 'll keep it for your sake."

SIMON.

Once we, with others, at a neighbour's met
To play at cards, when she beside me sat ;
Although at first she edged her chair away,
She grew more fond as we began to play,

And soon as ever up my cards I took,
She smiled, and o'er my shoulder stole to look ;
To make believe, in true Love's fondling way,
She wish'd to know what cards I had to play.
And when, to try her love, I made pretence
To leave off playing for the want of pence,
She from her lap took out the penny fee,
And put it 'neath the candlestick for me.
Although she would not take, when we retired,
My arm, to guide her home, as I desired,
She often turn'd, as wishing I'd pursue,
And said, Good night ! and thank'd me kindly too.

RICHARD.

Last Michaelmas, at night, we join'd to play
A hand or two, and keep a holiday :
When we chose partners, not as love regards,
But by the fortunes of the lifted cards,
While Mary look'd at one she took in hand,
She smiled at me to make me understand ;
Pointing the colour in her flowery dress,
I took the hint, and well knew which to guess.

“ The colour'd card,” said I, “ my wishes seek,
Is something like the rose on Mary's cheek ;
A bonny red for me.”—She laugh'd outright,
And said, “ Then I'm your partner for the night.”
Blushing, she edged her chair up close to mine,
Paying, with joy, her kiss for every fine.
When time came on us with the hour to part,
Although 'twas late, she seemed as loath to start ;
And, though the full moon shone as bright as day,
She even ask'd me if I'd lead the way,
And took my arm without the least to do :
These are my proofs, and I have morts as true.

SIMON.

Once 'neath a huge ash tree she made a stop,
To view a magpie's nest upon the top.
I thought she wish'd the eggs, and up I went,
Nor paused to ask her what her looks had meant ;
The grain sway'd like a bulrush in the wind,
But I climb'd on, and left my fears behind.
She praised the spotted eggs, but seem'd in pain,
So up I took them to the nest again.

Poor birds! she sighed, to hear them caw and cry,
And more perhaps to think I climb'd so high.
I was embolden'd, from such shown regard,
To beg and take a kiss as my reward ;
Although behind her hands she hid her face,
She only blushed, nor frown'd at my embrace.

RICHARD.

Force gives no choice ; their own free-will is best ;
What we urge earnest, they but take in jest.
One day, while picking sprigs of hillock thyme,
A little pismire in the flowers did climb,
Which to her bosom proved a rebel guest,
And stung her as she placed it in her breast ;
Red pimples rose upon her snowy skin,
While sighs bespoke the anguish she was in :
But when she show'd it me with blushing face,
I bent with trembling heart and kiss'd the place,
Urging the charm as cure for all her pain,
She smiled, as wishing to be kiss'd again.

SIMON.

Once in the pasture lane, at evening's hour,
She stoop'd down to reach a water flower,

And sure enough, had I not caught her gown,
Headlong the venturing girl had toppled down !
I held her in my arms till danger's fright
Was calm'd, and then she thank'd me in delight ;
And smiling, promised as she walked away,
To dance with me on the next holiday.

RICHARD.

Once, from her choice black lamb, I stooped to pull
A bramble, that got tangled in the wool,
And pricked my hand ; she seem'd to feel the pain,
While with a pin I pick'd it out again :
Love-sighs the while did her white bosom swell,
And tears e'en started when she wish'd it well.
She seem'd to hope I'd let the wanderer be,
As she had rather it were hurt than me.

SIMON.

Ay, some delight to try a gossip's spell,
And flattery's honey suits some lovers well :
I 've took her milk full often o'er a stile,
She always thank'd me, and would often smile ;
And when she miss'd a lamb at morn's young light,
Thinking the fox had stole it off at night,

She 'd mourn and sigh, and seek it, and inquire,
Then I too search'd; oft pierced with thorn and briar;
And when she sorrow'd, though the lamb was free,
I might think too that she was grieved for me.

RICHARD.

Thoughts deal in fancies far away from truth,
And Folly's shadows shine like suns to youth;
But Reason's proofs are never urged in vain,
And what I've witness'd, I'll believe again.
Once 'neath this very bridge, when left alone,
I cut my name in full upon the stone:
'Twas weeding time, and she was toiling nigh,
With others cutting thistles from the rye.
The next day, coming to the place again,
Where they had been for shelter from the rain,
I saw her own name in full letters shine,
Scratch'd with a knife or bodkin close to mine,
And linked together with a true love's knot:
Mine lingers still upon the much-loved spot;
But some rude fool, with envy at his heart,
Has scratch'd hers out, and torn the links apart.

Well ! they may hide love's shadows how they will,
The maid that wrote it is my true-love still :
I told her of the proof with anxious pride,
And though she own'd it not, she ne'er denied.

SIMON.

On Plough-witch-Monday, I was in the barn
Tying up bundles there of foddering corn,
To take a-field for sheep, that round the stacks
Lay, with the small snow winnowing on their backs,
When in she ran, with cheeks as pale as death,
And scarce could speak the while for want of breath ;
“ Keep secrets, Sim,” she said, “ I need them now,
The witch-chaps come”—then skulk'd behind the
mow ;

And in they rush'd, and laugh'd and stared about,
Threat'ning rude kisses if they found her out,
While I to screen her, as she wish'd me, swore
That I had seen her bustle by the door :
So off they ran, when she came smiling out,
Saying she hated to be mawled about
With their black faces—but when I began
To urge my claims, she never shrieked, nor ran,

As from a snake or toad—but said the day
Was short, and Labour had no time for play.

RICHARD.

But hark ye, Simon, that 's in seasons gone,—
On last Plough-Monday I myself was one.
She saw us coming, and prepared to fly,
But me she noticed with a laughing eye,
Hiding like one that wishes to be found ;
And while the others search'd the house around,
I heard the creaking of the dairy door.
Knowing such secrets by her ways before,
I instant put her hiding-place to rout,
Nor did she hold the latch to keep me out.
She might my blacken'd face a little dread ;
“ You 'll spoil my Sunday cap,” was all she said :
And when I hoped my ways were not unkind,
“ Oh no,” she laughed, “ there 's water, never
mind.”

SIMON.

Some Sundays back, I 'd been to fold my sheep,
Just as the red sun down the woods did creep,

And looking back, while wand'ring home again,
I saw a girl come down the pasture lane ;
I slacken'd pace to pull a wild rose down,
That she might catch me 'ere we met the town ;
And turning round again, as near she drew,
'Twas Mary's self, who nodded " How do ye do ?"
She kept my pace, and chatted by my side,
Oft turning round my happy dog to chide,
Who chased the hares, that sat on clover knolls
At feed, and rabbits squatting by their holes.
She praised the blackbird at his evening song,
That in the hedgerow ranted all along
His old song " Draw the knave a cup of beer !
" Be quick, quick, quick !" in chorus plain and clear.
The path grew narrow as we rambled on,
And through the corn-field made but room for one :
Though she went first, still she would often turn,
The unheard answers of our talk to learn ;
Inquiries often urging with a smile,
As if she wish'd to bring up love the while.
I 'm sorry since, I tried not ways to woo,
Putting things forward, as a many do.

She let me climb stiles first, then made a stand,
As if she wish'd to offer me her hand ;
But I kept backward, wishing still to prove
Yet stronger signals of my Mary's love ;
And sure enough, all that have eyes may see,
Through this, the value that she has for me.

RICHARD.

They may indeed, and Mary in her mirth
Would say a farthing is of kindred worth.
Last May-day eve she sprained her foot at play ;
And when she found she could no longer stay,
She came to me in sorrow, yet in smiles :
And begg'd my aid to help her o'er the stiles :
Some said she feign'd it as excuse to go ;
Be as it would, I never sought to know,
But took her arm and went, and on our road
She many a token and a kiss bestow'd.
Once, as she leaned to rest upon a stile,
The pale moon hanging o'er her looks the while,
"Richard," she said, and laugh'd, " the moon is new,
And I will try if that old tale is true,

Which gossips tell, who say, that if as soon
As any one beholds the new May-moon,
They o'er their eyes a silken kerchief fling
That has been slided through a wedding-ring,
As many years as they shall single be,
As many moons they through that veil shall see ;
And I for once will try the truth I vow :
For this, that hangs about my bosom now,
Was drawn through one upon a bridal night,
When we were full of gossip and delight.
Old women, if they heard my talk, would call
Me fond, and think I wish'd the number small ;
E'en you may think me foolish, or too free :
Be as it will, I 'll take it off and see."
Then instant from her snowy neck she threw
It first o'er me, and bade me tell her true ;
And sure as I stand here, while that was o'er,
I saw two moons as plain as one before ;
And when my Mary took it off to try,
Herself saw two, the very same as I,
Although at first she did not like to own,
Saying in blushes she could see but one ;

Yet, as her kerchief round her neck she tied,
She smiled, and mutter'd "Now I 'm satisfied."
"Mary," I answer'd, "then it rests with you
To suit the tale, and make it false or true."
"Richard," she said, "where I find truth, I find
Nothing to make me of a different mind."
This was as plain a hint as she could say,
And other proofs were throwing words away ;
Yet she made promises that night to me,
That next year's summer may expect to see,
When round our hopes a love-knot shall be twined
As fast as rings and parsons' words can bind.

SIMON.

I'll not believe it, though such manners may
Much more of freedom than I wish betray ;
Still her good nature I will keep in mind,
And ne'er believe that Mary is unkind :
She always thanks me, very kind and free,
For help in toil, and that 's a proof for me.
Last live-long winter through, for such rewards,
I clean'd the paths from snow about the yards,

And litter'd straw in all the pudgy sloughs
About the hovel, where she milk'd her cows ;
Oft milking when I 'd any time in hand :
I 've from the heath brought many a load of sand,
Whene'er at plough or dung-cart I have been,
Her shining rows of pewter plates to clean ;
I 've risen up from my dinner many a day,
When master at the market was away,
For her a stolen pear or plumb to reach,
Or gait of water from the pump to fetch ;
And she has smiled, and thank'd me o'er and o'er,—
Love proves itself, I need relate no more :
Yet once, while clambering o'er the orchard wall,
I fell, and from my pocket in the fall
My knife was lost, and Mary, ever free,
Found it, and offered it as mine to me ;
But I denied it then, that mine was gone,
On purpose that the maid might keep it on ;
So she no more inquiries cared to make,
And I 'll be bound she keeps it for my sake.

RICHARD.

Well, though I had not time to tend her so,
Or milk her cows, or clean her paths from snow,
Love has no out-door charms for winter weather,—
'Twas spring and summer when we met together ;
Yet when a chance fell out—at her desire,
I 've waited on her at the kitchen fire,
And often made her evening labour light,
Taking the huge pot off the hooks at night
Brimful of milk the fattening calves to feed ;
And soon as chances left no eyes to heed,
In whispering ways she 'd o'er my shoulder lean,
While I took kisses for my toil unseen.
Whenever she sat up to bake or brew,
I 've strove to help her so that no one knew,
While she would of her own accord agree
To hunt the yard, and seek new eggs for me,
Ne'er dreading striding witch, nor sheeted ghost,
Lapping them up in the hot coals to roast :
Though she 'd no cellar-key a horn to fill,
I 've fill'd a sweet-wort dish, and drank at will :

If she drank nothing at those hours of stealth,
She 'd sip, and own it was to drink my health.
When summer's morns of blossoms ceased to bloom,
And time to take the honey up was come,
I would for her the brimstone torch alight
To smother in their hives the bees at night ;
Though she would call it cruelty, and sigh,
And often take her apron up to cry,
She thought, while troubled o'er each murder'd bee,
To save the whitest honeycomb for me.
Oft would she from her folded apron take
Gifts, venturing clowns had stolen for her sake,
Bidding me choose whate'er I might prefer ;
And oft, to prove, I left the choice to her,
When in a moment she'd begin to seek
A favourite apple with the reddest cheek,
Or plum that seem'd the mellowest, the while
Holding them out with many a sweeter smile :—
These are not only proofs of love, but speak
Things as plain as ever one may wish to seek.
As to the knife, there all your hopes must sink,
For knives cut love, not keep it, as you think.

One that she pick'd up once, you soon may see :
Such *gifts* are dang'rous, so she *sold* it me ;
There, own it : if you can, I 'll that resign,
But Mary Fieldflower still I claim as mine.
Ay, Simon, lad, why turn ye from the view,
Play with your watch-chain when you 've nought to
do ?

Look up and answer me, or else refrain,
And own you 've lost, and we 'll be friends again.

“ Ay,” said the old man, with a weary smile,
Who sat at rest to listen them awhile,
“ Though Love in choosing mates is often blind,
And steers with Folly's whims against the wind,
Poor Simon's baffled hopes have stood too long,
His proofs were seldom right, and often wrong ;
His chance is bad, I own, if all be true,
So make it up, and have no more to do ;
Throw down the foolish love ye long have nursed,
And cease, or else the rain will finish first.”

Simon, who from their gaze had turn'd around,
And with his hook progg'd holes about the ground,

Whistled his resting dog, coil'd up asleep,
And in the rain went seeking for his sheep,
Glad from a rival's triumph to retreat,
Yet ne'er acknowledged that himself was beat ;
While Richard turn'd his comrades' talk to join,
And proudly laugh'd to see his foe resign.

THE MEMORY OF LOVE ;

A TALE.

ONCE in the merry toil of clipping time,
When suns are hot, and summer in her prime,
An old man labouring, with his fellow men,
'Neath two broad walnuts shadowing o'er the pen,
To lighten labour, and make short the day,
Tuned ancient songs, and chatted time away.
Some boasted of the feats of younger years ;
Of quickness some to use the snipping shears ;
Others of strength and nimbleness the while,
When they could leap a ditch, or jump a stile ;
One told the history of his dog with pride,
That half asleep lay panting by his side ;
The younger harp'd o'er coming holidays,
And pretty maids and dances had their praise ;

'Twas thought no sin if hearts they only won ;
To make them ache, they deem'd it precious fun.
He heard their stories 'tween a sigh and smile,
And bade them listen to his own awhile.
They stopt, and choked the titter as he spoke,
Hearing the story as one hears a joke ;
Thinking him childish, as his mind would cling
With joy to every silly seeming thing :
The vulgar dregs of love were all they knew ;
What he had felt was tender, pure, and true.

“ My boys,” said he, “ I once was young and wild,
And urged my follies when a maiden smiled ;
Oft whispering marriage with a lying tongue,
And then excusing me still years too young.
I sought one beauty till the freak was past,
And then found others prettier than the last ;
I woo'd and won them, as a sort of pride,
Still seeking new ones till I was denied.
Laugh not, my boys, when slighted maidens mourn,
For fear your follies may be served in turn ;
And if in Beauty's net ye once should be,
Ye 'll find a puzzle ere your hearts are free.

At last a beauty won my wandering eye,
Binding my fancies with a troubled tie :
I tried to break it, but it would not bend,
So freaks, and lies, and follies, had their end.
Her very image startles on me yet,
She seem'd the loveliest I had ever met ;
Her face thrill'd through me, though 'twas only
fair,

And red, and rosy, as the many are ;
And though her bosom swell'd, and eyes were bright,
Like others, yet they overpower'd me quite :—
In every feature shone that witching spell,
That love adores, and language cannot tell.

“ The very day, when first her looks I met,
Haunts all my musings with its memory yet,
And every trifle then that met my eye
Time cannot pass its recollection by ;
Link'd with her name, it holds a pleasing power,
Like Spring, whose smile gives even weeds a flower.
Chance doomed us both at the same town to dwell,
When Youth's wild visions bade my heart farewell,

And left it Love's sick sorrows. Beauty's fame
Was hot about the village ere she came :
Maids' jealous whisperings did their doubtings raise,
While youths were eager, tho' by guess, to praise ;
And I, who meant a season's suit to prove,
Met with a sudden and a lasting love.
I went at Michaelmas, she came at May ;
A finer blossom never bloom'd that day.
On that same morn whose memory turns me chill,
I, with a cart, was journeying to the mill ;
The time was lovely, and down lane and balk
I went in joy, and mused along the walk ;
Gazing on prospects in a happy vein,
O'er fields fresh plough'd, and springing crops of grain.
The meadow-closes all about were lined
With cowslip bunches, nodding in the wind ;
In every lane, o'erhung with briar and thorn,
Thousands of daisies glitter'd in the morn.
My dog was pleased as I, and often rolled
His curly jacket in the fresh plough'd mould ;
Sheep would our happy walk a moment heed,
Leaving their lairs, and stooping down to feed.

The hare in mirth raced o'er the clover lea,
And birds were happy as a song can be ;
The redcap often from the hedge would drop,
Perching, and twittering on the thistle's top.
The groups of weeders sung their toil away ;
And while old women ask'd the time of day,
The young girls halloo'd, merrily and shrill,
If I would take a partner to the mill ?
Nor did I think a heart, as glad as theirs,
Had cause so near to change all joys to cares.

“ Beside the mill-brook, whose uneven tide
Grows now and then more than a horse can stride ;
Till from its roar releas'd, its windings creep
Narrow and soft, a green grasshopper's leap ;
I met the maid whose beauty made me sigh,
And turn upon her an admiring eye.
'Twas she, I thought, who wore the village fame,
And as I guess'd it proved the very same.
She asked the way, and with a timid smile
Turn'd back to thank me ere she skipt the stile.
Fill'd full of fancies to my journey's end,
I wish'd I'd spoke, then judg'd I might offend ;

And hoped in time a chance might come, to prove
A feeble shadow of my sudden love.

“ Within the foldings of her neckerchief
Appear'd a red pink, with its ruddy leaf ;
The little trifle gave my bosom pain,
I thought it given by some parting swain ;
Yet ever since my memory keeps awake,
To love the blossom for the owner's sake.
Each merry year, as clipping time comes round,
Whene'er I see one in our posies bound,
Though I am old, and love has lost its power,
I pause and sigh, and e'en could kiss the flower.

“ I often went on Sundays to the spot
Where she pass'd by, a trifle not forgot ;
The very stones she stept, to cross the stream,
I've sat for hours to muse upon, and dream :
The stile, too, over which I saw her climb,
Has made my foolish heart ache many a time ;
And though I'm old, my palsied memory still,
If I pass'd now, would turn my bosom chill.

“ On the next morning, as I cross'd the plain,
At milking hour, I saw the maid again ;

The cows stood round her in a wondering way,
And kept the stranger with her fears at bay ;
They tost their heads and snuff'd the morning gales,
Skewing at her : I gladly took the pails
And milk'd them all ; and more her fears to screen,
I took her yokes, and saw her o'er the green :
Then at the pasture gate, with fond delight,
I left a promise I would meet at night ;
Urging a kind return, that she 'd agree
My May-game partner in the dance to be.
She look'd consent, I even thought she smiled,
For Love sees double when by Hope beguiled ;
But when the cows grew reconciled and tame,
She always thank'd me and refused the claim.
It made me half my hopeful love resign,
And feel her heart had but small love for mine :
Yet I press'd on, and would my doubts reprove,
Thinking her fears might disbelieve my love.
I went to church each leisure Sabbath day,
For every purpose but the right—to pray.
Her seat was opposite to mine : in vain
I tried to read, turning to gaze again,

Till some old matron shook her serious head,
And urged my eye to what I should have read.
My book was open oft when prayers were done,
And I've kept reading till the Psalms begun ;
When the clerk's voice, unmusically deep,
Made memory startle as I'd been asleep.
I often tried what signals love would take,
But she seem'd strange to all I had to make ;
I often smiled whene'er she turn'd her eye,
But she would pause, as if she wonder'd why :
She seem'd to try to shun me in the street,
And I, scarce conscious, tried the maid to meet.

“ At length, some gipsies to our common came,
And, as a change to May-night's evening game,
Maids in the gipsies' nook proposed a dance,
Where I went too, and dream'd upon the chance.
For summer eves to servants then supplied
Sweet leisure hours, when toil was thrown aside ;
When we have play'd, and danced till day was by,
And the moon's horns crept half way up the sky—
Young miss and master, servant-man and maid ;
For none would scold, or question why we staid.

The maiden came, she whom I wish'd to see,
I ask'd her, trembling, if she'd dance with me ;
She smiled, then check'd it, and with half-turn'd eye
Paused for a moment ere she made reply :
Good manners seem'd to urge her to consent,
She blush'd and yielded, and away we went.
Oh ! the first time I touch'd her gentle hand,
I felt a joy you 'll never understand,
Unless ye thrill 'neath true love's ecstasy,
And then you 'll own the pleasant pain with me.
My heart sunk in me like a lump of clay ;
My feet e'en trembled as we danced away :
Then fears would leave, and feverish hopes in turn
In fluttering flushes made my bosom burn.
I view'd her face, where beauty ne'er could cloy,
And dream'd o'er raptures till I smiled for joy ;
She seem'd to greet my looks with tender eye,
But never smiled, and oft appear'd to sigh.

Soon as a finish to the sports had come,
I offer'd hints to see her safely home ;
She turn'd aside, yet did not answer " No !"
But thank'd my kindness, and prepared to go.

Brooding o'er raptures, picturing Fancy drew,
I led her homeward on the evening dew,
And ventured gradual hints, 'mid smiles and sighs,
To clear my passion of its thin disguise.
She seem'd confused at what she had to say,
Nor bade hopes live, nor wish'd my words away :
At length she tried, and having choak'd the sigh,
She gave me hints that made hopes hurry by.
'Nay, you may love,' she said, 'and I believe
If I had power—but why should I deceive?—'
Then paused, as loth the finish to relate,
And would have left me, but I held the gate.
She sigh'd to see me toy 'mid hopes and fears,
And made excuses to conceal her tears ;
While pushing the dark ringlets from her eye,
As shrinking from me, she exclaim'd ' Good bye !'
Bidding me cease to say she had my heart,
And struggling from me as resolved to part ;
'Your heart's not mine,' she said, 'and I must shun
Your urged returns, for mine s already won ;
Whatever proofs your vows or words make known,
I cannot give you what is not my own :''

I loosed the gate, she hurried to the door,
And I beheld her with Hope's eyes no more.

But often to the town her lover came,
And came at last the marriage day to name :
I went to church, not knowing what I did,
That very Sunday when the banns were bid ;
Lord help one's cares, I'd need enough to stay,
And think, when there, of better things, and pray ;
But when the parson brought the thing about,
I shut my book, and sigh'd, and loiter'd out,
Wandering I knew not where, to ease my pain,
Till broken hopes should settle calm again.
The marriage came, it was a woeful day,
And memory gave it an eternal stay :
I heard the bells ring as I cross'd the moor,
And never heard so sad a peal before.
I wish'd to see how she would look a bride,
And started off—and then my courage died ;
I would not go ; and then I ventured by
The church-yard wall, but nothing met my eye.
I now felt happy that the thing was o'er ;
And then was vex'd I did not go before :

THE MEMORY OF LOVE.

I hung my head along the street,
Walk with those my path would meet,
Would jeer me or bring up the day,
Spoke, I turn'd, and sneak'd away.
Upon her lovely face for years,
Feelings, almost kin to tears,
Reached with love. I cannot tell
Thought of her I loved so well ;
Sm'd to him that call'd her wife—
He was Memory for life.
In ways, in winning forms would steal,
In I never ceased to feel ;
He would Memory's partner be,
Enger'd in the sound with me.
His form was long about my sight,
As musing, or in sleep by night :
More constantly that pleasing pain,
For I loved and could not gain.
At first the noise of feast and fair,
Mult yet had joys to spare ;
Would sometimes join my lonely way,
In fields and meads, in summer clothing gay :

Half pleased, half sad, I mused o'er days to come,
And idly cropt the meadow flowers in bloom ;
Seeking for that which it was vain to find,
To loose the burthen from a troubled mind.
The dance and revel brought its joy no more ;
I hated pastimes which I loved before.
The walks on sabbath days with milking lass,
And every pastime on the summer grass ;
Where hunt-the-slipper past the hours away ;
And blindman's buff made every bosom gay,
When tittering maidens urged me which to seize :
These lost the relish and the power to please.
I saw no sports to claim an hour from sleep,
And none to care for but my dog and sheep ;
I shunn'd them all, the sports, and loves, and ways,
That used to please me in my younger days.
My Sunday's former pleasures I forsook ;
No more I rambled to the pasture brook,
Where in my youth, at Eastwell's fountain side,
Which winter never froze, nor summer dried,
Young men and maidens used to talk and play,
In the cool shadows of its willows grey ;

Drinking love healths in mugs of sugar'd drink,
On the soft swellings of its rushy brink ;
By the spring head whose water, winter-chill,
Boils up the white sand that is never still ;
Now swimming up in silver threads, and then
Slow siling down to bubble up again :
Where shepherds used to sit, and tell the while
Their tales and jokes to win each maiden's smile.
I shunn'd all these, which I had loved before,
And join'd the children's play-games on the moor,
Nicking the 'Nine-peg morris' in the grass,
Or tying garlands for some little lass ;
Or reaching roses from the hedge-row bowers,
While they fawn'd round me till I got the flowers ;
Turning my labours to their changing wills,
Now whistles cutting, and then water-mills :
And thus I tried to loiter time away,
Till they were weary of each idle play.
I was the play-king of the jocund clan,
And often wish'd I could forget the man :
They had but trifles happiness to spoil,
Play all their love, and all their trouble toil.

My partners as they past, would point and say,
'There's love-sick Robin with the boys at play !'
While maidens thought me justly served, and smiled
To see crost-love had made me twice a child.
Folks thought me crazed, and you may think the
same,

Who know of love no further than the name :
Think as you please, my childish tale is done,
'Tis time it were, for there's the setting sun.
Yet if you e'er should meet with my despair,
To love a girl that has no love to spare,
Then will your weakness to her beauty bow,
And feel the truth that I have told you now."



POEMS.



WANDERINGS IN JUNE.

THE season now is all delight,
Sweet smile the passing hours,
And Summer's pleasures, at their height,
Are sweet as are her flowers ;
The purple morning waken'd soon,
The mid-day's gleaming din,
Grey evening with her silver moon,—
Are sweet to mingle in.

While waking doves betake to flight
From off each roosting bough,
While Nature's locks are wet with night,—
How sweet to wander now !

Fast fade the vapours cool and grey,
The red sun waxes strong,
And streaks on labour's early way
His shadows lank and long.

Serenely sweet the Morning comes
O'er the horizon's sweep,
And calmly breaks the wakening hums
Of Nature's nightly sleep.
What rapture swells with every sound
Of Morning's maiden hours !
What healthful feelings breathe around !
What freshness opes the flowers !

Each tree and flower, in every hue
And varied green, are spread,
As fair and frail as drops the dew
From off each blooming head ;
Like to that beauty which beguiles
The eyes of wondering men,
Led blushing to perfection's smiles
And left to wither then.

How strange a scene has come to pass
Since Summer 'gan its reign !
Spring flowers are buried in the grass,
To sleep till Spring again :
Her dew-drops Evening still receives
To gild the morning hours ;
But dew-drops fall on open'd leaves
And moisten stranger-flowers.

The artless daisies' smiling face
My wanderings find no more ;
The king-cups that supplied their place,
Their golden race is o'er ;
And clover heads, with ruddy bloom,
That blossom where these fell,
Ere Autumn's fading mornings come
Shall meet their grave as well.

Life's every beauty fades away,
And short its worldly race ;
Change leads us round its varied day,
And strangers take our place :

On Summers past, how many eyes
Have waken'd into bliss,
That Death's eclipsing hand denies
To view the charms of this !

The open flower, the loaded bough,
The fields of spindling grain,
Were blooming then the same as now,
And so will bloom again :
When with the past my being dies,
Still summer suns shall shine,
And other eyes shall see them rise
When death has darkened mine.

Reflection, with thy mortal shrouds
When thou dost interfere,
Though all is gay, what gloomy clouds
Thy musings shadow here !
To think of summers yet to come,
That I am not to see !
To think a weed is yet to bloom
From dust that I shall be !

The misty clouds of purple hue
Are fading from the eye ;
And ruddy streaks, which morning drew,
Have left a dappled sky ;
The sun has call'd the bees abroad,
Wet with the early hour,
By toiling for the honey'd load
Ere dews forsake the flower.

O'er yonder hill, a dusty rout
Wakes solitude from sleep ;
Shepherds have wattled pens about,
To shear' their bleating sheep :
Less pleasing is the public way,
Traced with awaken'd toil ;
And sweet are woods shut out from day,
Where sunbeams never smile.

The woodbines, fresh with morning hours,
Are what I love to see :
The ivy-spreading darksome bowers,
Is where I love to be ;

Left there, as when a boy to lie
 And talk to flower and tree,
And fancy, in my ecstasy,
 Their silence answers me.

While some desire tumultuous joys,
 And shun what nature wears;
Give me the choice which they despise,
 And I'll not sigh for theirs ;—
The shady wild, the summer dreams
 Enjoying there at will,
The whispering voice of woods and streams
 That breathe of Eden still.

How sweet the fanning breeze is felt,
 Breathed through the dancing boughs !
How sweet the rural noises melt
 From distant sheep and cows !
The lovely green of wood and hill,
 The hummings in the air,
Serenely in my breast instil
 The rapture reigning there.

To me how sweet the whispering winds,
The woods again how sweet,—
To find the peace which freedom finds,
And from the world retreat ;
To stretch beneath a spreading tree,
That far its shadow shoots,
While by its side the water free
Curls through its twisted roots.

Such silence oft be mine to meet
In leisure's musing hours ;
Oft be a fountain's brink my seat—
My partners, birds and flowers :
No tumult here creates alarm,
No pains our follies find ;
Peace visits us in every calm,
Health breathes in every wind.

Now cool the wood my wanderings shrouds,
'Neath arbours Nature weaves,
Shut up from viewing fields and clouds,
And buried deep in leaves ;

The sounds without amuse me still,
Mixt with the sounds within,—
The scythe with sharpening tinkles shrill,
The cuckoo's soothing din.

The eye, no longer left to range,
Is pent in narrowest bound,
Yet Nature's works, unnamed and strange,
My every step surround ;
Things small as dust, of every dye,
That scarce the sight perceives,
Some clad with wings fly droning by,
Some climb the grass and leaves.

And flowers these darksome woodlands rear,
Whose shades they yearly claim,
That Nature's wond'rous mystery wear,
And bloom without a name :
What different shapes in leaves are seen
That o'er my head embower,
Clad in as many shades of green
As colours in the flower !

My path now gleams with fairer light,
The side approaches near,
A heath now bolts upon the sight,
And rabbit-tracks appear :
I love the heath, though 'mid the brakes
Fear shudders, trampling through,
Oft check'd at things she fancies snakes
Quick nestling from the view.

Yet where the ground is nibbled bare
By rabbits and by sheep,
I often fearless loiter there,
And think myself to sleep.
Dear are the scenes which Nature loves,
Where she untamed retires,
Far from the stretch of planted groves,
Which polish'd taste admires.

Here oft, though grass and moss are seen
Tann'd brown for want of showers,
Still keeps the ling its darksome green,
Thick set with little flowers ;

And yonder, mingling o'er the heath,
The furze delights to dwell,
Whose blossoms steal the summer's breath,
And shed a sultry smell.

Here threat'ning ploughs have tried in vain
To till the sandy soil ;
Yon slope, already sown with grain,
Shows Nature mocks the toil ;
The wild weeds choak the straggling ears,
And motley gardens spread ;
The blue-cap there in bloom appears,
And poppies, lively red.

But now my footsteps sidle round
The gently sloping hill,
Now falter over marshy ground,
Yet Nature charms me still :
Here moss, and grass, and flowers appear
Of different forms and hues ;
And insects too inhabit here,
Which still my wonder views.

Here horsetail, round the water's edge
In bushy tufts is spread,
With rush, and cutting leaves of sedge
That children learn to dread ;
Its leaves, like razors, mingling there
Oft make the youngster turn,
Leaving his rushes in despair,
A wounded hand to mourn.

What wonders strike my idle gaze,
As near the pond I stand !
What life its stagnant depth displays,
As varied as the land :
All forms and sizes swimming there,
Some, sheath'd in silvery den,
Oft siling up as if for air,
Then nimbling down again.

Now rising ground permits the plain
To change the restless view,
The pathways leading down the lane
My pleasures still renew.

The osier's slender shade is by,
And bushes thickly spread ;
Again the ground is firm and dry,
Nor trembles 'neath the tread.

On this side, ash or oak embowers ;
There, hawthorns humbler grow,
With goatsbeard wreath, and woodbine flowers,
That shade a brook below,
Which feebly purls its rippling moans
With summer draining dry,
Till struttles, as I step the stones,
Can scarcely struggle by.

Now soon shall end these musing dreams
In solitude's retreat ;
The eye that dwelt on woods and streams
The village soon shall meet :
Nigh on the sight the steeple towers ;
The clock, with mellow hum,
Counts out the day's declining hours,
And calls my ramblings home.

I love to visit Spring's young blooms
When wet with April showers ;
Nor feel less joy, when Summer comes,
To trace her darker bowers ;
I love to meet the Autumn winds
Till they have mourn'd their last ;
Nor less delight my journey finds
In Winter's howling blast.

TO * * * *

O LOVELY Maid! though thou art all
That Love could wish to find thee,
Of frailties that to charms may fall
Let modest hints remind thee.
Beauty's a shadow, Love's a name,
That often leave together ;
As flowers that with the summer came
Will fly at winter weather.

Sweet maid, with youth's fond blushes warm,
And gently swelling bosom,
Stealing to woman's witching form,
Sweet as the bud to blossom ;—

Be not too vain of Beauty's powers,
Nor scornful feelings cherish ;
Thou r't but a flower, with other flowers
Which only bloom to perish.

Thou lovely creature, though to thee
All earthly charms are given,
And Beauty vainly bids thee be
What Angels are in heaven ;
Pity,—thou more than mortals are,—
Aught mortal should belong thee !
But Nature made thee, Angel fair,
And Age awaits to wrong thee.

THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

Now once again, thou lovely Spring,
Thy sight the day beguiles ;
For fresher greens the fairy ring,
The daisy brighter smiles :
The winds, that late with chiding voice
Would fain thy stay prolong,
Relent, while little birds rejoice,
And mingle into song.

Undaunted maiden, thou shalt find
Thy home in gleaming woods,
Thy mantle in the southern wind,
Thy wreath in swelling buds :

And may thy mantle wrap thee round,
And hopes still warm and thrive,
And dews with every morn be found
To keep thy wreath alive.

May coming suns, that tempt thy flowers,
Smile on as they begin ;
And gentle be succeeding hours
As those that bring thee in :
Full lovely are thy dappled skies,
Pearl'd round with promised showers,
And sweet thy blossoms round thee rise
To meet the sunny hours.

The primrose bud, thy early pledge,
Sprouts 'neath each woodland tree,
And violets under every hedge
Prepare a seat for thee :
As maids just meeting woman's bloom
Feel love's delicious strife,
So Nature warms to find thee come,
And kindles into life.

Through hedge-row leaves, in drifted heaps
Left by the stormy blast,
The little hopeful blossom peeps,
And tells of winter past ;
A few leaves flutter from the woods,
That hung the season through,
Leaving their place for swelling buds
To spread their leaves anew.

'Mong wither'd grass upon the plain,
That lent the blast a voice,
The tender green appears again,
And creeping things rejoice ;
Each warm bank shines with early flowers,
Where oft a lonely bee
Drones, venturing on in sunny hours,
Its humming song to thee.

The birds are busy on the wing,
The fish play in the stream ;
And many a hasty curdled ring
Crimps round the leaping bream ;

The buds unfold to leaves space,
 Along the hedge-row bowers,
And many a child with rosy face
 Is seeking after flowers.

The soft wind fans the violet blue,
 Its opening sweets to share,
And infant breezes, waked anew,
 Play in the maidens' hair—
Maidens that freshen with thy flowers,
 To charm the gentle swain,
And dally, in their milking hours,
 With lovers' vows again.

Bright dews illumine the grassy plain,
 Sweet messengers of morn,
And drops hang glistening after rain
 Like gems on every thorn ;
What though the grass is moist and rank
 Where dews fall from the tree,
The creeping sun smiles on the bank
 And warms a seat for thee.

The eager morning earlier wakes
 To glad thy fond desires,
And oft its rosy bed forsakes
 Ere night's pale moon retires ;
Sweet shalt thou feel the morning sun
 To warm thy dewy breast,
And chase the chill mist's purple dun
 That lingers in the west.

Her dresses Nature gladly trims,
 To hail thee as her queen,
And soon shall fold thy lovely limbs
 In modest garb of green :
Each day shall like a lover come
 Some gifts with thee to share,
And swarms of flowers shall quickly bloom
 To dress thy golden hair.

All life and beauty warm and smile
 Thy lovely face to see,
And many a hopeful hour beguile
 In seeking joys with thee :

The sweetest hours that ever come
Are those which thou dost bring,
And sure the fairest flowers that bloom
Are partners of the Spring.

I've met the Winter's biting breath
In Nature's wild retreat,
When Silence listens as in death,
And thought its wildness sweet ;
And I have loved the Winter's calm
When frost has left the plain,
When suns that morning waken'd warm
Left eve to freeze again.

I've heard in Autumn's early reign
Her first, her gentlest song ;
I've mark'd her change o'er wood and plain,
And wish'd her reign were long ;
Till winds, like armies, gather'd round,
And stripp'd her colour'd woods,
And storms urged on, with thunder-sound,
Their desolating floods.

And Summer's endless stretch of green,
 Spread over plain and tree,
Sweet solace to my eyes has been,
 As it to all must be ;
Long I have stood his burning heat,
 And breathed the sultry day,
And walk'd and toil'd with weary feet,
 Nor wish'd his pride away.

But oft I've watch'd the greening buds
 Brush'd by the linnet's wing,
When, like a child, the gladden'd woods
 First lisp the voice of Spring ;
When flowers, like dreams, peep every day,
 Reminding what they bring ;
I've watch'd them, and am warn'd to pay
 A preference to Spring.

TO THE COWSLIP.

ONCE more, thou flower of childish fame,
Thou meet'st the April wind ;
The self-same flower, the very same
As those I used to find.
Thy peeps, tipt round with ruddy streak,
Again attract mine eye,
As they were those I used to seek
Full twenty summers by.

But I'm no more akin to thee,
A partner of the Spring ;
For Time has had a hand with me,
And left an alter'd thing :—

A thing that's lost thy golden hours,
And all I witness'd then,
Mix'd in a desert, far from flowers,
+ Among the ways of men.

Thy blooming pleasures, smiling, gay,
The seasons still renew ;—
But mine were doom'd a stinted stay,
Ah, they were short and few !
The every hour that hurried by,
To eke the passing day,
Lent restless pleasures wings to fly
Till all were flown away.

7
Blest flower ! with spring thy joys begun,
And no false hopes are thine ;
One constant cheer of shower and sun
Makes all thy stay divine.
But my May-morning quickly fled,
And dull its noon came on,—
And Happiness is past and dead
Ere half that noon is gone.

Ah! smile and bloom, thou lovely thing!

Though May's sweet days are few,

Still coming years thy flowers shall bring,

And bid them bloom anew.

Man's Life, that bears no kin to them,

Past pleasures well may mourn :

No bud clings to its withering stem—

No hope for Spring's return.

THE DREAM.

Thou scarest me with dreams.—JOB.

WHEN Night's last Hours, like haunting spirits,
creep
With listening terrors round the couch of sleep ;
And Midnight, brooding in its deepest dye,
Seizes on Fear with dismal sympathy ;
“ I dream'd a dream” something akin to Fate,
Which Superstition's blackest thoughts create,—
Something half natural to the grave that seems,
Which Death's long trance of slumber haply dreams ;
A dream of staggering horrors, and of dread,
Whose shadows fled not when the vision fled,
But clung to Memory with their gloomy view,
Till Doubt and Fancy half believed it true.

That time was come, or seem'd as it was come,
When Death no longer makes the grave his home ;
When waking spirits leave their earthly rest
To mix for ever with the damn'd or blest ;
When years, in drowsy thousands counted by,
Are hung on minutes with their destiny :
When Time in terror drops his draining glass,
And all things mortal, like to shadows, pass,
As 'neath approaching tempests sinks the sun—
When Time shall leave Eternity begun.
Life swoon'd in terror at that Hour's dread birth ;
As in an ague, shook the fearful Earth ;
And shuddering Nature seem'd herself to shun ;
Whilst trembling Conscience felt the deed was done.

A gloomy sadness round the sky was cast,
Where clouds seem'd hurrying with unusual haste ;
Winds urged them onward, like to restless ships ;
And Light dim faded in its last eclipse :
And Agitation turn'd a straining eye ;
And Hope stood watching like a bird to fly,
While suppliant Nature, like a child in dread,
Clung to her fading garments till she fled.

Then awful sights began to be reveal'd,
Which Death's dark dungeons had so long conceal'd ;
Each grave its doomsday-prisoner resign'd,
Bursting in noises like a hollow wind ;
And spirits, mingling with the living then,
Thrill'd fearful voices with the cries of men.
All flying furious, grinning deep despair,
Shaped dismal shadows on the troubled air :
Red lightning shot its flashes as they came,
And passing clouds seem'd kindling into flame ;
And strong and stronger came the sulphury smell,
With demons following in the breath of hell,
Laughing in mockery as the doom'd complain'd,
Losing their pains in seeing others pain'd.

Fierce raged Destruction, sweeping o'er the land,
And the last counted moment seem'd at hand :
As scales near equal hang the earnest eyes
In doubtful balance which shall fall or rise,
So, in the moment of that crashing blast,
Eyes, hearts, and hopes paused trembling for the last.
Loud burst the thunder's clap, and yawning rents
Gash'd the frail garments of the elements ;

Then sudden whirlwinds, wing'd with purple flame
And lightnings' flash, in stronger terrors came ;
Burning all life and nature where they fell,
And leaving earth as desolate as hell.

The pleasant hues of woods and fields were past,
And Nature's beauties had enjoyed their last :
The colour'd flower, the green of field and tree,
What they had been, for ever ceased to be :
Clouds, raining fire, scorch'd up the hissing dews ;
Grass shrivell'd brown in miserable hues ;
Leaves fell to ashes in the air's hot breath,
And all awaited universal Death.

The sleepy birds, scared from their mossy nest,
Beat through the evil air in vain for rest ;
And many a one, the withering shades among,
Waken'd to perish o'er its brooded young.
The cattle, startled with the sudden fright,
Sicken'd from food, and madden'd into flight ;
And steed and beast in plunging speed pursued
The desperate struggle of the multitude.
The faithful dogs yet knew their owners' face,
And cringing follow'd with a fearful pace,

Joining the piteous yell with panting breath,
While blasting lightnings follow'd fast with death ;
Then, as Destruction stopt the vain retreat,
They dropp'd, and dying lick'd their masters' feet.

When sudden thunders paus'd, loud went the
shriek,

And groaning agonies, too much to speak,
From hurrying mortals, who, with ceaseless fears
Recall'd the errors of their vanish'd years ;
Flying in all directions, hope-bereft,
Follow'd by dangers that would not be left ;
Offering wild vows, and begging loud for aid,
Where none was nigh to help them when they pray'd.
None stood to listen, or to soothe a friend,
But all complain'd, and sorrow had no end :
Sons from their fathers, fathers sons did fly,
The strongest fled, and left the weak to die ;—
Pity was dead :—none heeded for another,—
Brother left brother ; and the frantic mother
For fruitless safety hurried east and west,
And dropp'd the babe to perish from her breast :
All howling prayers that would be noticed never,
And craving Mercy that was fled for ever.

While earth, in motion like a troubled sea,
Open'd in gulphs of dread immensity,
Amid the wild confusions of despair,
And buried deep the howling and the prayer
Of countless multitudes, and closed—and then
Open'd, and swallow'd multitudes again.

Stars drunk with dread roll'd giddy from the
heaven,

And staggering worlds like wrecks in storms were
driven ;

The pallid moon hung fluttering on the sight,
As startled bird whose wings are stretch'd for flight ;
And o'er the east a fearful light begun
To show the sun rise—not the morning sun,
But one in wild confusion, doom'd to rise
And drop again in horror from the skies—
To heaven's midway it reel'd, and changed to blood,
Then dropp'd, and Light rush'd after like a flood.
The heaven's blue curtains rent and shrank away,
And heaven itself seem'd threaten'd with decay ;
While hopeless Distance with a boundless stretch
Flash'd on Despair the joy it could not reach,

A moment's mockery—ere the last dim light
Vanish'd, and left an everlasting Night :
And with that light Hope fled, and shriek'd fare-
well,

And Hell in yawning echoes mock'd that yell.

Now Night resum'd her uncreated vest,
And Chaos came again, but not its rest ;
The melting glooms, that spread perpetual stains,
Kept whirling on in endless hurricanes ;
And tearing noises, like a troubled sea,
Broke up that silence which no more would be.

The reeling earth sank loosen'd from its stay,
And Nature's wrecks all felt their last decay.
The yielding, burning soil, that fled my feet,
I seem'd to feel; and struggled to retreat ;
And 'midst the dreads of horror's mad extreme
I lost all notion of its being a dream :
Sinking, I fell through depths that seem'd to be
As far from fathom as Eternity ;
While dismal faces on the darkness came,
With wings of dragons, and with fangs of flame,

Writhing in agonies of wild despairs,
And giving tidings of a doom like theirs.
I felt all terrors of the damn'd, and fell
With conscious horror that my doom was hell:
And Memory mock'd me, like a haunting ghost,
With light and life and pleasures that were lost.
As dreams turn night to day, and day to night,
So Memory flash'd her shadows of that light
That once bade morning suns in glory rise,
To bless green fields and trees and purple skies,
And waken'd life its pleasures to behold;—
That light flash'd on me, like a story told;
And days misspent with friends and fellow men,
And sins committed,—all were with me then.
The boundless hell, where tortures never tire,
Glimmer'd beneath me like a world on fire:
That soul of fire, like to its souls entomb'd,
Consuming on, and ne'er to be consumed,
Seem'd nigh at hand—where oft the sulphury damps
O'er-aw'd its light, as glimmer dying lamps,
Spreading a horrid gloom from side to side,
A twilight scene of terrors half descried.

Sad boil'd the billows of that burning sea,
And Fate's sad yellings dismal seem'd to be ;
Blue roll'd its waves with horrors uncontroll'd,
And its live wrecks of souls dash'd howling as they
roll'd.

Again I struggled, and the spell was broke,
And 'midst the laugh of mocking ghosts I woke ;
My eyes were open'd on an unhop'd sight—
The early morning and its welcome light,
And, as I ponder'd o'er the past profound,
I heard the cock crow, and I blest the sound.

LIFE, DEATH, AND ETERNITY.

A SHADOW moving by one's side,
That would a substance seem,—
That is, yet is not,—though descried—
Like skies beneath the stream ;
A tree that's ever in the bloom,
Whose fruit is never rife ;
A wish for joys that never come,—
Such are the hopes of Life.

A dark, inevitable night,
A blank that will remain ;
A waiting for the morning light,
Where waiting is in vain ;

A gulph, where pathway never led
 To show the depth beneath ;
A thing we know not, yet we dread,—
 That dreaded thing is Death.

The vaulted void of purple sky
 That every where extends,
That stretches from the dazzled eye,
 In space that never ends ;
A morning whose uprisen sun
 No setting e'er shall see ;
A day that comes without a noon, —
 Such is Eternity.

THE LAST OF AUTUMN.

COME, bleak November, in thy wildness come :

Thy mornings clothed in rime, thy evenings chill ;
E'en these have power to tempt me from my home,
E'en these have beauty to delight me still.

Though Nature lingers in her mourning weeds,
And wails the dying year in gusty blast,
Still added beauty to the last proceeds,
And wildness triumphs when her bloom is past.

Though long grass all the day is drench'd in dew,
And splashy pathways lead me o'er the greens ;
Though naked fields hang lonely on the view,
Long lost to harvest and its busy scenes ;

Yet in the distance shines the painted bough,
Leaves changed to every colour ere they die,
And through the valley rivers widen now,
Once little brooks which summer dribbled dry.

Here ragged boys, pleased with the change of scene,
Try new inventions of their infant skill,
Leaving their leap-frog races on the green,
To watch the waves and build the dashing mill ;
Or where the mole-hill island lifts its head,
There form the castle with its guarding moat,
And o'er the jumping waves, with little dread,
Turn nut-shell boats and paper ships afloat.

On bridge-wall sitting, by such scenes as these,
I meet with pleasures that can please for hours ;
Mix'd in the uproar of those little seas,
That roll their floods where summer left her
flowers.

A wild confusion hangs upon the ear,
And something half romantic meets the view ;
Arches half filled with wither'd leaves appear,
Where white foam stills the billow boiling through.

Those yellow leaves that litter on the grass,
'Mong dry brown stalks that lately blossom'd
there,

Instil a mournful pleasure as they pass :
For melancholy has its joy to spare,—
A joy that dwells in Autumn's lonely walks,
And whispers, like a vision, what shall be,
How flowers shall blossom on those wither'd stalks,
And green leaves clothe each nearly naked tree.

Oft in the woods I hear the thundering gun ;
And, through the brambles as I cautious creep,
A bustling hare, the threatening sound to shun,
Oft skips the pathway in a fearful leap ;
And spangled pheasant, scared from stumpy bush,
Oft blunders rustling through the yellow boughs ;
While farther off, from beds of reed and rush,
The startled woodcock leaves its silent sloughs.

Here Echo oft her Autumn ditty sings,
Mocking the cracking whip and yelping hounds,
While through the woods the wild disorder rings,
Chorus'd with hunter's horns of mellow sounds,

And bawling halloos of the sporting train,
Who dash through woodlands, in their gay parade,
And leap the ditch, and sweep the level plain,
Fresh wildness adding to the chequer'd shade.

The timid sheep that huddled from the wind
'Neath the broad oaks, beside the spinney rails,
Half mad with fear such hue and cry to find,
In rattling motion chase adown the vales :
And, falsely startled by unheeding dogs,
From where the acorns patter bright and brown,
Through the thorn hedges burst the random hogs,
Who grunt and scamper till they reach the town.

The playing boys, to eke the rude uproar,
Turn hunters some, some mock the yelping
hounds,
Whose real barkings urge their noise the more,
And keck-made bugles spout their twanging sounds,
But soon foot-founder'd, youngster hunters lag,
By mounted sportsmen distanced far away,
Yet still they chase the fancied fox or stag,
And feel as happy in the cheat as they

Ah! sweet is boyish joy in Memory's eye ;—
An artless tale with no attending pains,
Save the sad thought,—to feel such pleasures fly ;
And the vain hope,—to wish them back again,
How many Autumns brought the woods their guest,
With mimic horns, in hunting sports to join !
How many Autumns since that time have past,
Stretching the distance when such joys were mine !

Still joys are mine :—uncertain paths to take
Through the wild woods ; to hide and walk at will,
Rustling aside the brown and wither'd brake ;
To rest on roots, and think, and linger still.
Though trumpet-kecks are pass'd unheeded by,
Whose hollow stalks inspired such eager joy,
Still other trifles other sports supply,
Which manhood seeks as eager as the boy.

To meanest trifles Pleasure's hold will cling ;
'Tis even felt to view that greening moss ;
These simple wrecks of summer and of spring—
Like other children I regret their loss.

But there is something in that wind that mourns,
And those black clouds that hide the heav'n as well,
And in that sun, that gilds and glooms by turns,
Which leaves a pleasure that's unspeakable.

Though nuts have long been glean'd by many crews
Of shatter'd poor, who daily rambled there ;
And squirrels claim'd the remnant as their dues ;
Still to the woods the hungry boys repair ;
Brushing the long dead grass with anxious feet,
While round their heads the stirr'd boughs patter
down,
To seek the bramble's jet-fruit, lusher sweet,—
Or climbing service-berries ripe and brown.

Amidst the wreck of perishable leaves,
How fresh and fine appears the evergreen !
How box, or holly, garden-walks relieves !
How bright the ivy round the oak is seen !
And on old thorns the long-leaved mistletoe
Regains fresh beauties as its parent dies ;
While dark spurge-laurel, on the banks below,
In stubborn bloom the Autumn blight defies.

But garden shades have long been doom'd to fall,
Where naked fruit-trees drop their constant
showers :

All blooms are fled, save on the wet moss'd wall
As yet may peep some faded gilliflowers.
The mist and smoke, in shadows mingling deep,
Around each cottage hover all the day ;
Through the dim panes the prison'd children peep,
And look in vain for summer and for play.

ANTIQUITY.

ANTIQUITY ! thou dark sublime !

Though **Mystery** wakes thy song,
Thou dateless child of hoary **Time**,
Thy name shall linger long !
In vain **Age** bares **Destruction's** arm
To blight thy strength and fame ;
Learning still keeps thy embers warm,
And kindles them to flame.

Nay, **Learning's** self may turn to dust,
And **Ignorance** again
May leave its glimmering lamp to rust ;
Antiquity shall reign !

Creation's self thy date shall be,
And Earth's age be as thine ;
The Sun and Moon are types of thee,
Nor shall they longer shine,

Though Time may o'er thy memory leap,
And Ruin's frowns encroach ;
Eternity shall start from sleep
To hear thy near approach.

Though bounds are for thy station set,
Still, ere those bounds are past,
Thy fame with Time shall struggle yet,
And die with Time the last.

Whene'er I walk where thou hast been,
And still art doom'd to be,
Reflection wakens at the scene,
As at Eternity ;—

To think what days in millions by
Have bade suns rise and set,
O'er thy unwearied gazing eye,
And left thee looking yet !

While those that raised thy early fame
With Hope's persisting hand,
During as marble left thy name,
And graved their own on sand :
That same sun did its smiles impart,
In that same spreading sky,
When thou wert left ; and here thou art,
Like one that cannot die !

On the first page that Time unfurl'd,
Thy childhood did appear,
And now thy volume is the World,
And thou art—every where.
Each leaf is fill'd with many a doom
Of kingdoms past away,
Where tyrant Power in little room
Records its own decay.

Thy Roman fame o'er England still
Swells many a lingering scar,
Where Cæsars led, with conquering skill,
Their legions on to war :

And camps and stations still abide
On many a sloping hill ;
Though Time hath done its all to hide,—
Thy presence guards them still.

The moss that crowns the mountain stone,
The grass that greens the plain,
All love to make thy haunts their own,
And with thy steps remain.
And ivy, as thy lasting bower,
In gloomy grandeur creeps,
And, careless of life's passing hour,
Its endless summer keeps.

I walk with thee my native plains,
As in a nobler clime,
Rapt where thy memory still remains,
Disciple unto Time,
Whose foot in ruins crush'd Power's fame,
And left its print behind,
Till Ruin, weary of its name,
Their fate to thee resign'd.

And 'neath thy care, in mist sublime,

They reign and linger still ;—

Though ivy finds no wall to climb,

Grass crowns each swelling hill ;

Where slumbering Time will often find

His rebel deeds again,

And turn a wondering look behind

To see them still remain.

Thus through the past thy name appears,

All hoary and sublime,

Unburied in the grave of years,

To run its race with Time ;

While men, as sunbeams gild the brook,

Shine till a cloud comes on,

And then, ere Time a stride hath took,

Their name and all is gone.

Temple and tower of mighty name,

And monumental bust,

Neglect the errands of their fame,

And mingle with the dust :

The clouds of ruin soon efface
What pride had told in vain ;
But still thy genius haunts the place,
And long thy steps remain.

Lorn Silence o'er their mystery dreams,
And round them Nature blooms
Sad, as a May-flower's dwelling seems,
With solitary tombs !
'Round where their buried memory sleeps
Spring spreads its dewy sky,
In tender mood, as one that weeps
Life's faded majesty.

Time's frost may crumble stubborn towers,
Fame once believed its own ;
Thou still art reigning, past his powers,
And ruin builds thy throne :
When all is past, the very ground
Is sacred unto thee ;
When dust and weeds hide all around,
That dust thy home shall be.

POESY.

OH ! I have been thy lover long,
Soul-soothing Poesy ;
If 'twas not thou inspired the song,
I still owe much to thee :
And still I feel the cheering balm
Thy heavenly smiles supply,
That keeps my struggling bosom calm
When life's rude storms are high.

Oh ! in that sweet romance of life
I loved thee, when a boy,
And ever felt thy gentle strife
Awake each little joy :

To thee was urged each nameless song,
Soul-soothing Poesy ;
And as my hopes wax'd warm and strong,
My love was more for thee.

'Twas thou and Nature bound, and smil'd,
Rude garlands round my brow,—
Those dreams that pleased me when a child,
Those hopes that warm me now.
Each year with brighter blooms return'd,
Gay visions danced along,
And, at the sight, my bosom burn'd,
And kindled into song.

Springs came not, as they yearly come
To low and vulgar eyes,
With here and there a flower in bloom,
Green trees, and brighter skies :
Thy fancies flush'd my boyish sight,
And gilt its earliest hours ;
And Spring came wrapt in beauty's light,
An angel dropping flowers.

Oh ! I have been thy lover long,
Soul-soothing Poesy,
And sung to thee each simple song,
With witching ecstasy,
Of flowers, and things that claim'd from thee
Of life an equal share,
And whisper'd soft their tales to me
Of pleasure or of care.

With thee, life's errand all perform,
And feel its joy and pain ;
Flowers shrink, like me, from blighting storm,
And hope for suns again :
The bladed grass, the flower, the leaf,
Companions seem to be,
That tell their tales of joy and grief,
And think and feel with me.

A spirit speaks in every wind,
And gives the storm its wings ;
With thee all nature owns a mind,
And stones are living things ;

The simplest weed the Summer gives
Smiles on her as a mother,
And, through the little day it lives,
Owns sister, friend, and brother.

Oh ! Poesy, thou heavenly flower,
Though mine a weed may be,
Life feels a sympathising power,
And wakes inspired with thee ;
Thy glowing soul's enraptured dreams
To all a beauty give,
While thy impassion'd warmth esteems
The meanest things that live.

Objects of water, earth, or air,
Are pleasing to thy sight ;
All live thy sunny smiles to share,
Increasing thy delight ;
All Nature in thy presence lives
With new creative claims,
And life to all thy fancy gives
That were but shades and names.

Though cheering praise and cold disdain
My humble songs have met,
To visit thee I can't refrain,
Or cease to know thee yet ;
Though simple weeds are all I bring,
Soul-soothing Poesy,
They share the sunny smiles of Spring,
Nor are they scorn'd by thee.

THE END.

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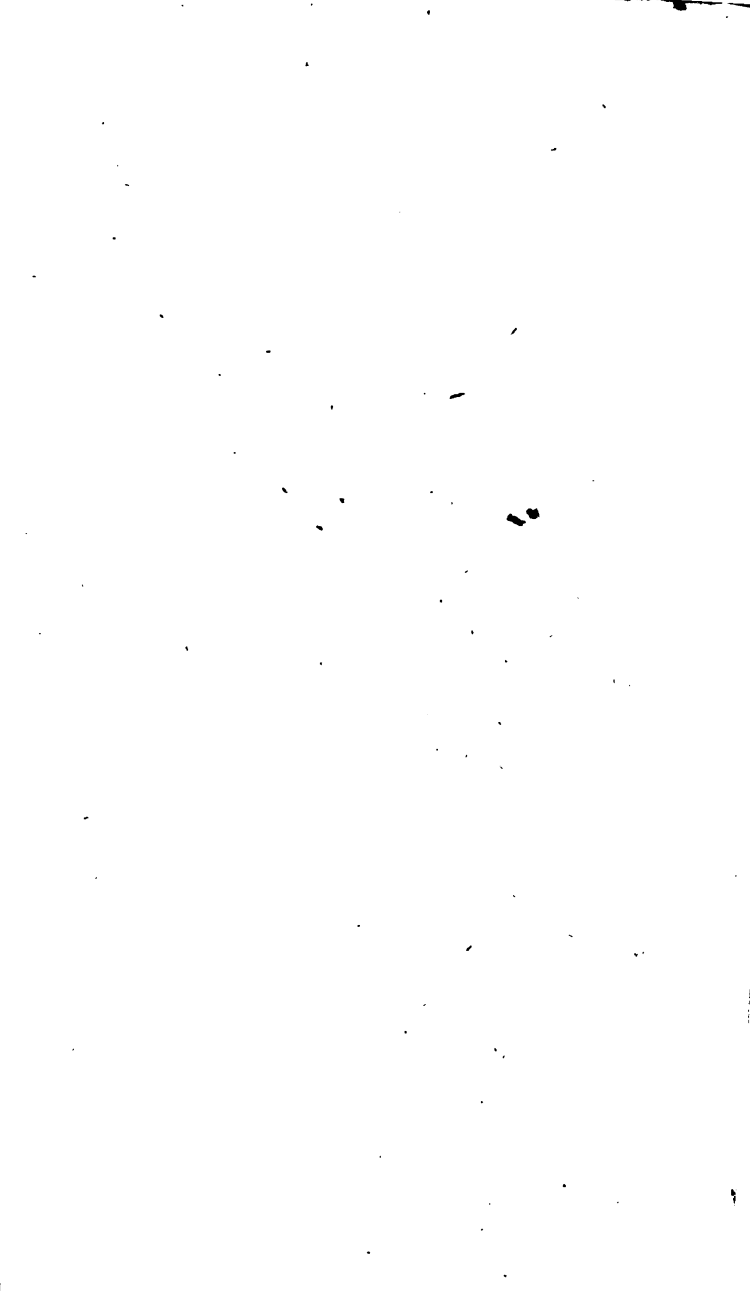
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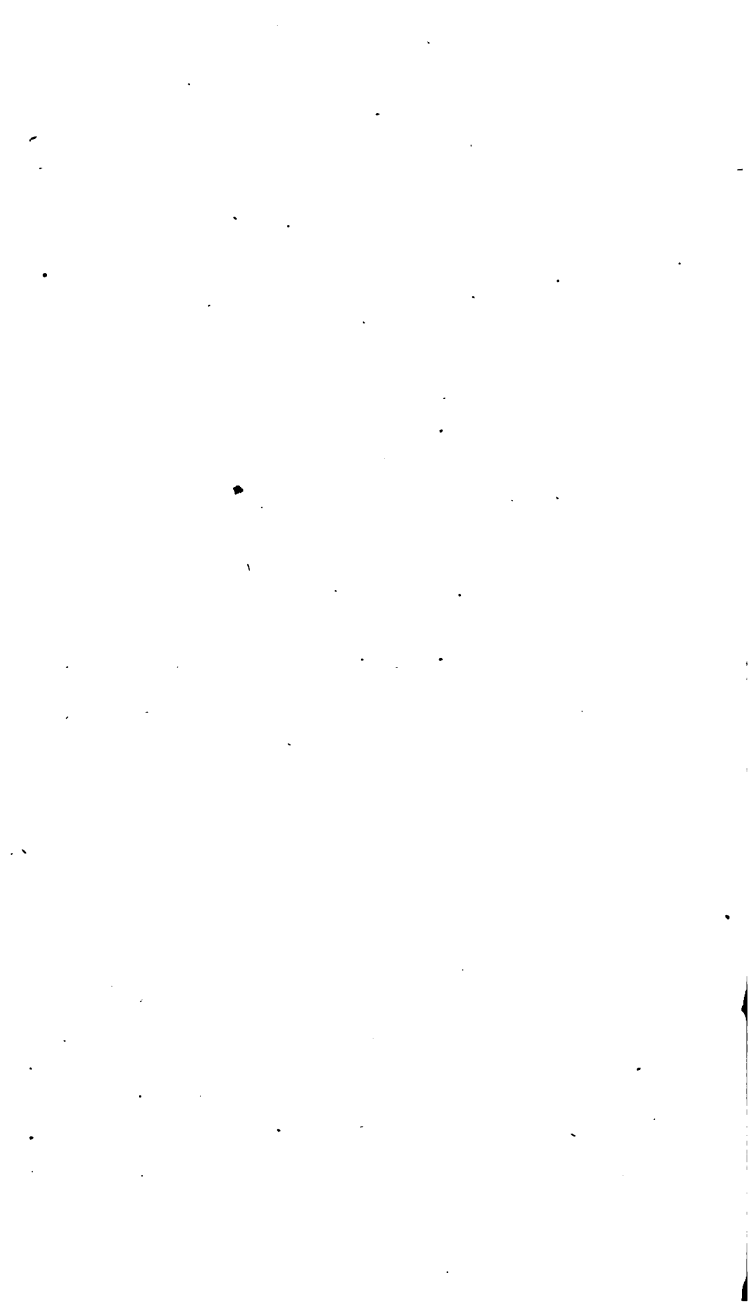
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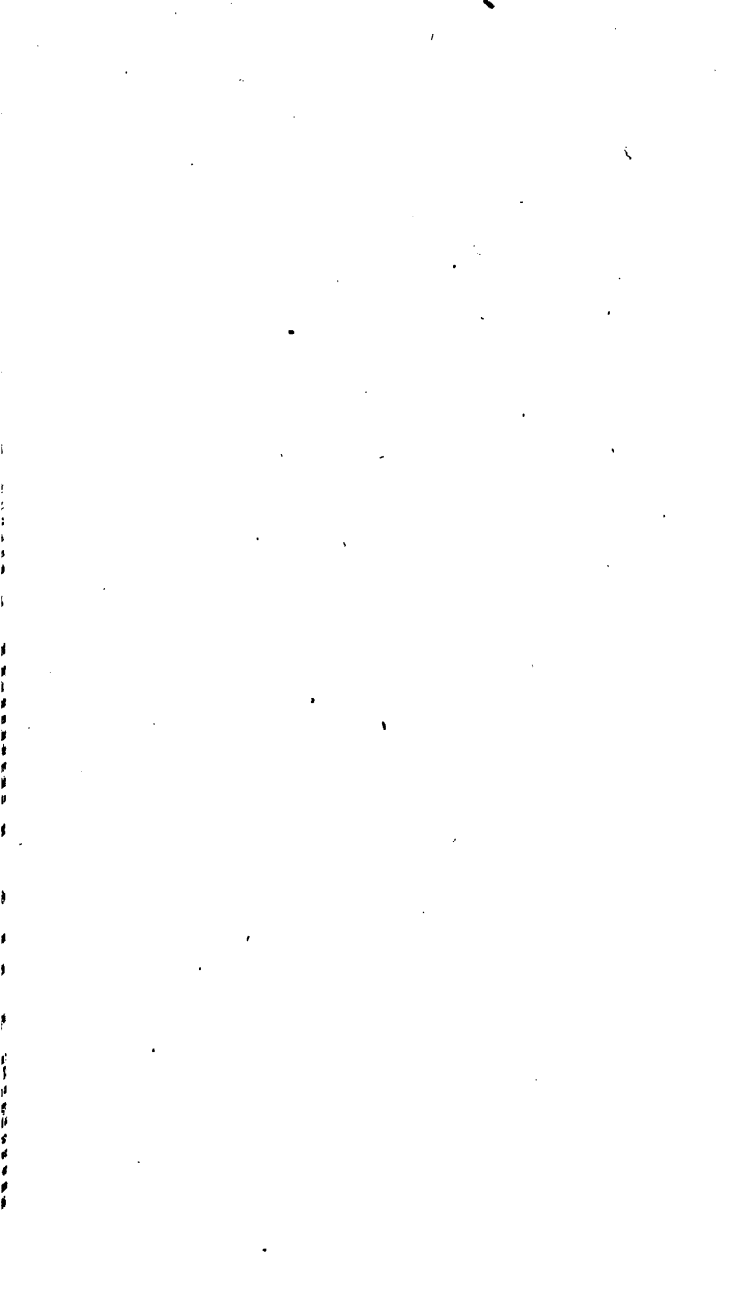
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