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RIVERSIDE LITERATURE SERIES

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A
COUNTRY CHURCHYARD
AND OTHER POEMS

BY
THOMAS GRAY

JOHN GILPIN
AND OTHER POEMS

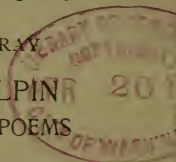
BY
WILLIAM COWPER

*WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES*



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ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-
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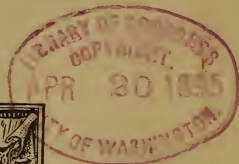
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THOMAS GRAY.	
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	5
ELEGY, WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.	
Introductory Note	12
Elegy	14
ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.	
Introductory Note	22
Ode	24
HYMN TO ADVERSITY	
Hymn	28
ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT	
Ode	31
THE PROGRESS OF POESY.	
Introductory Note	33
Ode	35
THE BARD	
Ode	42
WILLIAM COWPER.	
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	50
THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN	55
ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE	66
VERSES SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK	70
ON OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE	73
REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE	74
PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED	76
THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOWWORM	79
ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE	81
THE NEEDLESS ALARM	83
EPITAPH ON A HARE	88
THE TREATMENT OF HIS HARES	90

THOMAS GRAY.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

THOMAS GRAY was born in London, December 26, 1716, and died in Cambridge, July 30, 1771. Thus a full hundred years separated him from Milton, and what a difference there was in the two centuries in which these two poets lived! Each was a scholar in his tastes, and each was a poet who wrote not because he was a scholar and loved poetry, but because he knew himself possessed of the spark divine, and made his scholarship tributary to his poetry. But when Milton began to write the sky was warm with the afterglow of the great Elizabethans; when Gray came forward the sky was lighted by the cold splendor of Pope's aurora. Milton passed quickly into the tempestuous period of the English civil war; Gray dwelt in the placid days which seemed scarcely to know any change in the barometer presaging the storms which swept over Europe shortly after his death.

And yet Gray, living apparently a timid life in the shelter of a university, and pleasing himself with literature, was one of the makers of English poetry. That is, he not only passed the torch along, but he fed it with new oil so that the poets who followed him wrote better and differently because of his influence. The details of his life are soon told; the life of an unmarried scholar in times of peace has few adven-

tures. His father, Philip Gray, who inherited a good fortune, was a shrewd man of business, but apparently a violent and not over kind person, with such prejudices against liberal education that the boy was in effect taken out of his hands by his mother and her family and sent first to Eton to school and afterward to the University of Cambridge.

At Eton, Gray formed a friendship which was to play a considerable part in his life. Horace Walpole, slightly his junior, was a schoolfellow, and Walpole came of a family which was in high favor at court and deep in political intrigues. He was himself to be a showy figure in English social life. In his Eton poem, Gray refers to the games of boys at school, but it is pretty clear that he himself was not a sturdy fellow, and even in schooldays cared more for his books than for his bat; with Horace Walpole and two other congenial companions, he walked and sauntered about, playing with poetic fancies and carrying his studies into the hours for sport. To-day Eton, though honoring athletics more than in Gray's time, knows what lustre a poet's name casts on the school where he was trained, and the boy who finishes his studies there is given a souvenir in the form of some copy of Gray's poems.

It is not easy to understand the neglect which Gray suffered at the hands of his father. Mr. Gosse, who has written the most careful study of Gray's life, thinks that Philip Gray may have been half insane. The fact of more importance is that the poet's mother, out of her own earnings, — for with her sister she carried on a milliner's shop, — not only gave him his schooling at Eton, but maintained him at the University. Gray repaid this motherly love by a constant

filial affection and by repeating in his own life her patience and steadfastness and silent endurance.

When his college days were over Gray, like Milton, returned to his home; he did not make so long a stay, however, but like Milton set out for a journey on the continent. He was more fortunate than his great predecessor. No upheaval of England called him back, and he spent three years in leisurely travel in France, Switzerland, and Italy. His companion was Horace Walpole; indeed it was at Walpole's instance and by his means that he went abroad, for the younger man had a generous passion for his friend, and not only wanted his companionship but insisted on furnishing the common purse, while yet refusing to act as if he were conferring a favor. Some one has said that you never know the worst side of your friend till you have taken a voyage with him; it is equally true that the best side of a person may be shown under the same condition. More confidently we may say that the intimate intercourse which springs from travel is quite sure to test the unselfishness of friendship. Near the end of their three years' tour Gray and Walpole quarreled. Walpole said, when Gray was dead, that it was his fault; Gray kept silence. They made up three years later, and maintained a form of friendship afterward, but their ways in life parted, and it was probably never easy to recover their old relations. The point to notice is that Gray never gave any intimation of the cause of the quarrel. His reserve was that of a man who has himself well in hand.

The three years spent thus in travel are full of interest to the lover of Gray, because his writings both at the time and later show how fresh was his

observation of what he saw and how his experience quickened his judgment and broadened his sympathies. Three English poets, each in his way, were more effectively English because of travel-experience early in life, — Milton, Gray, and Goldsmith. What especially distinguished Gray was the openness of his sight to the picturesque. It would seem strange to-day to call attention to a poet's delight in Swiss mountains, valleys, and glaciers; every one knows that Swiss scenery is picturesque. But in a way Gray discovered all this for himself. In his time the Swiss mountains were called horrid, and the wild scenes which artists try to reproduce on canvas were repugnant to minds which had been bred to measure everything by the standards of decorous good taste. The fastidious lady who objected to rocks laid bare by the outgoing tide because they looked untidy would have been at home in the middle of the eighteenth century, and her sentiments would have been applauded.

Whether or not this capacity for seeing life independently would have been Gray's if he had always stayed at home, it certainly was enlarged by his travel abroad. He became, in a conventional age, a keen discriminator of beauty, and not only read his classics as everybody else did, but read them with a power to choose what was great and lasting, instead of accepting everything as equally fine because it was classic. He read Shakespeare also, as men of his day did not, for they thought him a half barbaric writer, and he was able to see the strength and passion in early English poetry and in Norse literature. In all these matters, Gray was apart from his own generation, an independent scholar and a man of genuine, not simply proper, taste.

It may be asked why, if Gray had so clear a vision and so penetrative a scholarship, he did not express himself more fully in poetry, since poetry was his native form of expression. The whole of his contribution to English verse, printed by himself, could be got into a book of the size of this little volume, and what was left over and collected by his friends would make not half as much again. Gray once wrote to Walpole : "As to what you say to me civilly, that I ought to write more, I will be candid and avow to you, that till fourscore and upwards, whenever the humor takes me, I will write ; because I like it, and because I like myself better when I do so. If I do not write much it is because I cannot." That, perhaps, is as near as we can get to a simple answer. Gray knew himself, and the critical faculty which was so strongly developed in him was exercised on his own powers of production. He criticised his poetry before he wrote it, and therefore wrote little. If he had been passionate like Milton, his poetry would constantly have burst bounds. As it was, he led a still, reserved life, and when the spirit moved him to write poetry, he wrote. Besides, though he had one or two friends who were able to care for the same things that he did, he found people for the most part unable to take the same kind of pleasure in life and art, and so he was driven farther into his shell.

It is a curious illustration of this that when the *Elegy* at once became very popular, Gray felt a sort of contempt for it. Some of the natural reasons for its popularity are pointed out in the Introduction to the poem. Gray's own interest was that of an artist who lingers over the delicate touches. He took a commonplace theme, as a painter might take the

subject for instance, of a mother holding a child, and as the painter by his genius would make a picture which every one born of woman could admire and enjoy, while yet it would stir deeply those who felt and saw as the painter did, so Gray wrote a poem which the many could at once be pleased with, and a few could appreciate at its real valuation.

Into the little poetry which he wrote Gray put a nature which was true, and by its careful training able to discriminate between that which was poetic through and through, and that which was mere surface versification. In doing this he gave a great impetus to English verse. English poetry in the period before him was a bird shut up in a cage, and singing. Gray let the bird loose; it was not quite the native warbler that it was when Burns sang, but its escape from the cage to the free air put new breath into its notes.

When Gray was about twenty-five years of age he went back to Cambridge to live. His father had died, and his mother and his sisters went into the country to a little village called Stoke Pogis, where they lived their lives out. At Cambridge he was in the midst of books which he cared for, and he could work quietly at his studies. There he lived for thirty years, occasionally going off on journeys in England, and spending part of his time in London near the British Museum, having a few devoted friends, reading, making notes on what he read, writing letters, and talking with those who could repay him with intelligence and affectionate appreciation. He shrank from publicity. There was besides his reserve a vein of timidity in his nature. For one thing he was terribly afraid of fire, and always kept a rope-ladder in his room at college that he might escape if suddenly overtaken. He was a victim

of gout, and suffered from ill-health all his days. Nevertheless, as his letters show, he had a playful temper, and thus, though he was out of keeping with much of his age, he is one of the distinct figures in it. He seems like a man with a candle out of doors in a windy night, carefully shielding the light. The light has burned on with a steady glow, and is likely to shed its kindly rays through many generations of lovers of English poetry. Those who would make a fuller acquaintance with Gray should read Gosse's life in the English Men of Letters Series. A good order to follow would be, to read this little book, to commit the Elegy to memory, then to read Gosse's sketch, and afterward to read James Russell Lowell's paper on Gray in the volume of his writings entitled "Latest Literary Essays and Addresses."

ELEGY, WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE significant title of this poem hints at the underlying theme, and accounts for the popularity which it has enjoyed from the start. If one considers that the great people of the parish were buried under the church itself, and the plain, mostly unlettered folk lay under the common turf outside, he will see that the poet here makes himself one of the undistinguished multitude. From the very first stanza Gray enlists the sympathy of all who toil, and at the same time leads the reader into that twilight land which is the home of reflective poetry. It would be interesting for one to read along with this poem Bryant's "Thanatopsis," and see how in another way the American poet manages to connect death with nature.

Gray, as has been pointed out, was a scholar and at home in the great ancient classics as also in the English. Any one who chooses can find editions of the *Elegy* in which almost every line is referred to some other line of Greek, Latin, or English verse. To the casual reader of such an annotated edition, it would seem as if the *Elegy* were a mere patchwork of other poets' phrases. More truly, Gray was so saturated with good poetry that when he wrote he used a language which had been formed on poetic reading; probably in most cases, he was quite uncon-

scious that he was drawing upon classic or contemporaneous phrases. Since he was, however, an ardent admirer of Milton, some of the coincidences between his verse and Milton's have been pointed out in the notes.

The notes, however, are of a purpose meagre. There is little that calls for explication. Yet the poem flows so limpidly that its ease is a little deceptive. One may miss delicate tones by the simplicity of the language, but it has not seemed to the editor that it is the best use to which notes can be put when they are made to supply the reader with ready-made appreciation. He would add that in his judgment the best criticism would come through a memorizing of the poem, and the best annotation through a perfect vocal rendering.

ELEGY, WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-
YARD.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

5 Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds ;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,
10 The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
15 Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,

1. Parting. Compare line 4 of Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*.

12. Reign = realm.

The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 20 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

25 Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;
 How jocund did they drive their team afield !
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 30 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
 35 Await alike th' inevitable hour.
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

27. Drive their team afield. See Milton's *Lycidas*, line 27.

36. "For two full hours the procession of boats, borne on the current, steered silently down the St. Lawrence. The stars were visible, but the night was moonless and sufficiently dark. The general was in one of the foremost boats, and near him was a young midshipman, John Robison, afterwards professor of natural philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. He used to tell in his later life how Wolfe, with a low voice, repeated Gray's *Elegy in a Country Church-yard* to the officers about him. Probably it was to relieve the intense strain of his thoughts. Among the rest was the verse which his own fate was soon to illustrate, —

“ ‘The paths of glory lead but to the grave.’ ”

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
 If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
 Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
 40 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
 Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death?

45 Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
 Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
 50 Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
 Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
 55 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
 The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,

'Gentlemen,' he said, as his recital ended, 'I would rather have written those lines than take Quebec.' None were there to tell him that the hero is greater than the poet." Parkman's *Montcalm and Wolfe*, ii. 285.

40. **Pealing.** See *Il Penseroso*, 161.

41. **Storied.** See *Il Penseroso*, 159.

51. **Rage** is not anger, but, as we say the fire raged, so here rage is kindled spirit.

Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
 60 Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
 And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

65 Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
 Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
 70 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

60. In an early form of his poem, Gray wrote:—

“Some village Cato, who, with dauntless breast
 The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,
 Some mute inglorious Tully here may rest,
 Some Cæsar guiltless of his country's blood.”

Gray was, as we have said, a scholar and a very delicate one, and he stepped into this form naturally; but he was also an Englishman keenly interested even in the antiquities of England, and the change he made was not only in accordance with his more deliberate judgment, it was a sign that English literature was on its way out of academic inclosures; no one did more to set it free than Gray, with his own strong academic taste.

72. After this verse, in Gray's first MS. of the poem, were the four following stanzas:—

“The thoughtless world to majesty may bow,
 Exalt the brave, and idolize success;
 But more to innocence their safety owe,
 Than pow'r or genius e'er conspired to bless.

“And thou who mindful of th' unhonour'd dead
 Dost in these notes their artless tale relate,

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray ;
 75 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd
 80 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
 The place of fame and elegy supply ;
 And many a holy text around she strews,
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

85 For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
 Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind ?

By night and lonely contemplation led
 To wander in the gloomy walks of fate :

“Hark, how the sacred calm, that breathes around,
 Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease :
 In still small accents whisp'ring from the ground,
 A grateful earnest of eternal peace.

“No more, with reason and thyself at strife,
 Give anxious cares and endless wishes room ;
 But through the cool sequester'd vale of life
 Pursue the silent tenour of thy doom.”

And here the poem was originally intended to conclude. Though he discarded the verses, Gray retained some of the phrases for use in the following stanzas.

77. **These bones.** Gray has the whole scene so vividly in mind, from the first intimation in line 16, that *these* comes simply and naturally to him.

85. **To dumb Forgetfulness a prey.** There has been some

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
 90 Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
 Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
 Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;
 95 If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
 Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate, —

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
 “ Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
 100 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn :

“ There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
 That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
 His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
 And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

discussion over this stanza, but if these words are interpreted as meaning that the departing soul overtaken by death knows that he is to become dumb, and loses all memory, then the rest follows naturally.

99. See *Paradise Lost*, v. 429.

100. After this stanza, in his first MS., followed these lines: —

“ Him have we seen the greenwood side along,
 While o'er the heath we hied, our labour done,
 Oft as the woodlark pip'd her farewell song,
 With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.”

“ I rather wonder (says Mason) that he rejected this stanza, as it not only has the same sort of Doric delicacy which charms us peculiarly in this part of the poem, but also completes the account of his whole day : whereas, this evening scene being omitted, we have only his morning walk, and his noon-tide repose.”

105 “ Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
 Mutt’ring his wayward fancies he would rove ;
 Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
 Or craz’d with care, or cross’d in hopeless love.

“ One morn I miss’d him on the custom’d hill,
 110 Along the heath, and near his fav’rite tree ;
 Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he ;

“ The next, with dirges due in sad array,
 Slow through the church-way path we saw him
 borne : —
 115 Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
 Grav’d on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.”

THE EPITAPH.

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
 A youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown :
 Fair Science frown’d not on his humble birth,
 120 And Melancholy mark’d him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
 Heav’n did a recompense as largely send ;

111. Another, i. e., day.

116. “ Before the Epitaph,” says Mason, “ Gray originally inserted a very beautiful stanza, which was printed in some of the first editions, but afterwards omitted, because he thought that it was too long a parenthesis in this place. The lines, however, are in themselves exquisitely fine, and demand preservation : —

“ ‘ There scatter’d oft, the earliest of the year,
 By hands unseen are show’rs of violets found ;
 The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
 And little footsteps lightly print the ground.’ ”

He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('t was all he wish'd) a
friend.

125 No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS was the first of Gray's English poems to appear in print. It was written in August, 1742. At that time Gray was in his twenty-sixth year. He had come home from his travels, his father had died, he was in an unsettled condition, uncertain just what he should do, and seeing the companions of his boyhood already bustling into the great world. He had just come out of a great grief, for his most cherished friend, Richard West, had died. Gray had gone down to visit his mother's relatives at Stoke Pogis, and there in the country was in a mood to be touched with melancholy. A short saunter from Stoke Pogis would bring him to a low hill, from the top of which he could look over the valley of the Thames, and descry the distant spires and antique towers of Windsor and Eton. A young man, reflecting on youth and age, is much more likely to be pensive and to shake his head than an old man, and Gray was no exception. The truth is, imaginary suffering and disappointment, suggested not by long and bitter experience, but by some temporary mood of disquiet, is the obverse of day dreams, and as the young indulge themselves in rosy-colored visions of what is known to them only faintly in experience, so they indulge themselves in the luxury of painful imagina-

tion. Thus this poem is rather the offspring of a mood than the strong picture of life which comes from one who sees clearly into the heart of things, and the stanza which has to do with the sports of childhood has a beauty of reality and memory which is in contrast to the unreal exaggeration of the later stanzas. Yet the melody of the ode, and the choice English in which it is couched, carry it well along in men's memories.

ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.

Ἀνθρωπος, ἰκανὴ πρόφασις εἰς τὸ δυστυχεῖν.

MENANDER.

YE distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the wat'ry glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Henry's holy shade ;
5 And ye, that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
10 His silver-winding way :

Ah, happy hills ! ah, pleasing shade !
Ah, fields belov'd in vain !
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
A stranger yet to pain !
15 I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing
My weary soul they seem to soothe,

The motto, from Menander, a Greek writer of comedies in the fourth century before Christ, but whose writings have come down to us in fragments or in adaptations for the Roman stage, may be read in English : "To be a man is reason enough to expect ill-fortune."

4. Henry VI., whom Shakespeare calls Holy King Henry, founded Eton College.

And, redolent of joy and youth,
 20 To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen
 Full many a sprightly race
 Disporting on thy margent green,
 The paths of pleasure trace ;
 25 Who foremost now delight to cleave
 With pliant arm thy glassy wave ?
 The captive linnet which enthral ?
 What idle progeny succeed
 To chase the rolling circle's speed,
 30 Or urge the flying ball ?

While some on earnest business bent
 Their murm'ring labours ply
 'Gainst graver hours that bring constraint
 To sweeten liberty :
 35 Some bold adventurers disdain
 The limits of their little reign,
 And unknown regions dare descry :
 Still as they run they look behind,
 They hear a voice in every wind,
 40 And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
 Less pleasing when possess ;
 The tear forgot as soon as shed,

21. **Say, Father Thames.** It should be remembered that Gray is writing an ode, and the formal dignity which belongs to that order of composition permits an address which otherwise might seem pompous.

23. **Margent green.** See Milton's *Comus*, 232.

36. **Reign.** See note on the *Elegy*, l. 12.

40. **Snatch** in Gray's time had not the grotesque notion it now carries.

The sunshine of the breast :
 45 Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
 Wild wit, invention ever new,
 And lively cheer of vigour born ;
 The thoughtless day, the easy night,
 The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
 50 That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas ! regardless of their doom,
 The little victims play ;
 No sense have they of ills to come,
 Nor care beyond to-day :
 55 Yet see, how all around 'em wait
 The ministers of human fate,
 And black Misfortune's baleful train !
 Ah, shew them where in ambush stand,
 To seize their prey, the murth'rous band !
 60 Ah, tell them, they are men !

These shall the fury Passions tear,
 The vultures of the mind,
 Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
 And Shame that skulks behind ;
 65 Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
 Or Jealousy with rankling tooth
 That inly gnaws the secret heart ;
 And Envy wan, and faded Care,
 Grim-visag'd comfortless Despair,
 70 And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
 Then whirl the wretch from high,

60. **Men** ; and therefore doomed to ill-fortune, as in the motto.

61. **The murth'rous band** in the next twenty lines is resolved into its members.

To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
 And grinning Infamy.

75 The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
 And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,
 That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow ;
 And keen Remorse with blood defil'd,
 And moody Madness laughing wild
 80 Amid severest woe.

Lo! in the vale of years beneath
 A grisly troop are seen,
 The painful family of Death,
 More hideous than their queen :
 85 This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
 That every labouring sinew strains,
 Those in the deeper vitals rage :
 Lo! Poverty, to fill the band,
 That numbs the soul with icy hand,
 90 And slow-consuming Age.

To each his suff'rings : all are men,
 Condemn'd alike to groan ;
 The tender for another's pain,
 Th' unfeeling for his own.
 95 Yet, ah! why should they know their fate,
 Since sorrow never comes too late,
 And happiness too swiftly flies?
 Thought would destroy their paradise.
 No more ; — where ignorance is bliss,
 100 'T is folly to be wise.

81. As the band stood in ambush, so these later enemies are down below in the valley whither the Etonians are to descend.

86. It is worth while to read this line slowly to note why Gray used the words he did.

HYMN TO ADVERSITY.

— Ζῆνα —

Τὸν φρονεῖν Βροτοῦς ὀδῶ-
σαντα, τῷ πάθει ναθῶν
Θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

ÆSCHYLUS, *Agamemnon*, 181.

DAUGHTER of Jove, relentless power,
Thou Tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and tort'ring hour
The bad affright, afflict the best !
5 Bound in thy adamantine chain,
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple Tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy sire to send on earth
10 Virtue, his darling child, design'd,
To thee he gave the heav'nly birth,
And bade to form her infant mind.
Stern rugged nurse ! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore :

The lines in Greek are thus rendered by Plumptre :—

“ Yea, Zeus who leadeth men in wisdom's way,
And fixeth fast the law
Wisdom by pain to gain.”

3. “ — when the *scourge*
Inexorably, and the *torturing hour*,
Calls us to penance.”

Paradise Lost, ii. 90.

15 What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
 And from her own she learn'd to melt at others'
 woe.

Scar'd at thy frown terrific, fly
 Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
 Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
 20 And leave us leisure to be good.
 Light they disperse, and with them go
 The summer friend, the flatt'ring foe ;
 By vain Prosperity receiv'd,
 To her they vow their truth, and are again believ'd.

25 Wisdom in sable garb array'd,
 Immers'd in rapt'rous thought profound,
 And Melancholy, silent maid,
 With leaden eye that loves the ground,
 Still on thy solemn steps attend :
 30 Warm Charity, the gen'ral friend,
 With Justice, to herself severe,
 And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh! gently on thy suppliant's head,
 Dread goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand !
 35 Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
 Not circled with the vengeful band
 (As by the impious thou art seen)

18. See *Il Penseroso*, lines 1, 2, and *L'Allegro*, lines 25-29.

25. "O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue."

Il Penseroso, 16.

28. "With a sad leaden downward cast,
 Thou fix them on the earth as fast."

Ibid., 43, 44.

35. "Medusa with Gorgonian terrors."

Paradise Lost, ii. 611.

With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning mien,
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
40 Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty :

Thy form benign, oh goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic train be there
To soften, not to wound, my heart.
45 The gen'rous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are, to feel, and know myself a Man.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE
CAT,

DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD FISHES.

'T WAS on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dy'd
The azure flowers that blow ;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
5 The pensive Selima reclin'd,
Gaz'd on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declar'd ;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
10 Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw ; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gaz'd ; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
15 The Genii of the stream :
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Through richest purple to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw :
20 A whisker first and then a claw,

1. Walpole, after the death of Gray, placed the China Vase on a pedestal at Strawberry Hill, with a few lines of the Ode for its inscription.

With many an ardent wish,
 She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize.
 What female heart can gold despise?
 What Cat's averse to fish?

25 Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
 Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
 Nor knew the gulf between.
 (Malignant Fate sat by, and smil'd.)
 The slipp'ry verge her feet beguil'd,
 30 She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood,
 She mew'd to ev'ry wat'ry God,
 Some speedy aid to send.
 No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd:
 35 Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard.
 A fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye beauties, undeceiv'd,
 Know, one false step is ne'er retriev'd,
 And be with caution bold.
 40 Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
 And heedless hearts, is lawful prize,
 Nor all that glisters gold.

31. Why eight?

42. Gray used, he did not make, this proverb.

THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS and the poem which follows, "The Bard," were entitled by Gray Pindaric odes. They were deliberate attempts at transferring into English the spirit and something of the form which Gray had found in the great Greek poet Pindar. It is not necessary to have read Pindar to understand something of the structure of these two odes, nor is it necessary to understand the structure of these to perceive and enjoy the beauty of the verse, but it is worth while to look for a moment at this structure, since it has been adopted into English poetry and will be met with in other poets, though not often in such perfect form. Lowell's odes, for example, are carefully built, but they are not Pindaric.

The numbers which mark off the stanzas serve as guides. There are three general divisions, divided regularly into three stanzas each, the first two stanzas in each division having twelve lines each, and the third seventeen. The rhyme endings of each set of stanzas follow the same precise order. There is thus a rigid form in which the ode is inclosed, but the variation in the rhymes breaks up the formality. Again it will be noticed that the third stanza has certain feminine rhymes, that is, the last two syllables agree and the accent is on the first. This gives still further variation. The printing of the lines will help the

reader to see these variations ; lines having the same rhyme endings begin at the same point on the margin of the page. Still other variations will be noted, as in accent, but these variations will be found to agree in the corresponding stanzas. The point to be observed is a fixed, regular form, permitting a regular range of variations, and this is characteristic of this form of the ode. It borrows something of its structure from musical suggestion, and from dance movement. The Greeks called the three stanzas the strophe, the anti-strophe, and the epode. The strophe or turn denoted the movement of the chorus from one side of the stage to the other ; the anti-strophe or counter-turn was the reverse movement ; the epode or after-song was what was sung after these two movements. But not only in the verse form is this idea carried out ; the attentive reader will discover that the successive themes of the several stanzas have an inner correspondence with this outward form.

Inasmuch as Gray himself annotated these two odes, the editor leaves them in Gray's hands. All the notes, therefore, which follow are the poet's own. The Greek motto from Pindar may be translated in prose, "they have a voice for the wise, but for the multitude they need interpreters," a suggestive word, for Gray's "Ode on The Progress of Poesy" is really a poet's song for poets.

THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

A PINDARIC ODE.

Φωνᾶντα οννεοῖσιν ἐς
Δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμηνέων
Χαρίζει.

PINDAR, *Olympiad* II. v. 152.

I. 1.

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs

A thousand rills their mazy progress take :
5 The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along,
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Thro' verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign ;
10 Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour ;
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

Pindar styles his own poetry, with its musical accompaniments, Æolian song, Æolian strings, the breath of the Æolian flute.

The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are united. The various sources of poetry, which gives life and lustre to all it touches, are here described ; its quiet majestic progress enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers ; and its more rapid and irresistible course, when swoln and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions.

1. "Awake, my glory : awake, lute and harp."

David's *Psalms*.

I. 2.

Oh! Sov'reign of the willing soul,
 Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
 15 Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares
 And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.
 On Thracia's hills the Lord of War
 Has curb'd the fury of his car,
 And dropt his thirsty lance at thy command.
 20 Perching on the sceptred hand
 Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king
 With ruffled plumes and flagging wing:
 Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie
 The terrors of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

I. 3.

25 Thee the voice, the dance, obey,
 Temper'd to thy warbled lay.
 O'er Idalia's velvet-green
 The rosy-crownèd Loves are seen
 On Cytherea's day
 30 With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures,
 Frisking light in frolic measures;
 Now pursuing, now retreating,
 Now in circling troops they meet:
 To brisk notes in cadence beating,
 35 Glance their many-twinkling feet.
 Slow melting strains their Queen's approach de-
 clare:

13. Power of harmony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul. The thoughts are borrowed from the first Pythian of Pindar.

20. This is a weak imitation of some incomparable lines in the same ode.

25. Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body.

Where'er she turns, the Graces homage pay.
 With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
 In gliding state she wins her easy way :
 40 O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom, move
 The bloom of young Desire and purple light of
 Love.

II. 1.

Man's feeble race what ills await!
 Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
 Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
 45 And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate!
 The fond complaint, my song, disprove,
 And justify the laws of Jove.
 Say, has he giv'n in vain the heav'nly Muse?
 Night, and all her sickly dews,
 50 Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry,
 He gives to range the dreary sky ;
 Till down the eastern cliffs afar
 Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of
 war.

42. To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the Muse was given to mankind by the same Providence that sends the day, by its cheerful presence, to dispel the gloom and terrors of the night.

52. " Or seen the morning's well-appointed star
 Come marching up the eastern hills afar."

Cowley.

[Gray here condenses, apparently from Cowley, who wrote:—

" One would have thought 't had heard the moving crowd
 Or seen her well-appointed star
 Come marching up the Eastern Hill afar."

ED.]

II. 2.

In climes beyond the solar road,
 55 Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
 The Muse has broke the twilight-gloom
 To cheer the shiv'ring native's dull abode.
 And oft, beneath the od'rous shade
 Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
 60 She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,
 In loose numbers wildly sweet,
 Their feather-cinctur'd chiefs and dusky loves.
 Her track, where'er the goddess roves,
 Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
 65 Th' unconquerable Mind, and freedom's holy flame.

II. 3.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
 Isles that crown th' Ægean deep,
 Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
 Or where Mæander's amber waves
 70 In lingering lab'rinth creep,
 How do your tuneful echoes languish,
 Mute, but to the voice of anguish !
 Where each old poetic mountain
 Inspiration breath'd around ;

54. Extensive influence of poetic genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations : its connection with liberty and the virtues that naturally attend on it.

66. Progress of Poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer was not unacquainted with the writings of Dante or of Petrarch. The Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt had traveled in Italy, and formed their taste there. Spenser imitated the Italian writers ; Milton improved on them : but this school expired soon after the Restoration, and a new one arose on the French model, which has subsisted ever since.

75 Ev'ry shade and hallow'd fountain
 Murmur'd deep a solemn sound :
 Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour,
 Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
 Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
 80 And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
 When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
 They sought, oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled
 coast.

III. 1.

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
 In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,
 85 What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
 To him the mighty mother did unveil
 Her awful face: the dauntless child
 Stretch'd forth his little arms and smiled.
 "This pencil take (she said), whose colours clear
 90 Richly paint the vernal year :
 Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
 This can unlock the gates of Joy ;
 Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
 Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears."

III. 2.

95 Nor second He, that rode sublime
 Upon the seraph-wings of Extasy,
 The secrets of th' abyss to spy.
 He pass'd the flaming bounds of Place and Time :

84. "Nature's darling." Shakespeare.

"The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
 The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose."

Milton, *Sonnet on May Morn.*

95. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vi. 771.

98. "Flammantia mœnia mundi." Lucretius, i. 74.

The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
 100 Where angels tremble while they gaze,
 He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
 Clos'd his eyes in endless night.
 Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car
 Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
 105 Two coursers of ethereal race,
 With necks in thunder cloth'd, and long-resounding
 pace.

III. 3.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
 Bright-eyed Fancy, hov'ring o'er,
 Scatters from her pictur'd urn
 110 Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
 But ah! 't is heard no more —

99. "For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. And above the firmament that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone. This was the appearance of the glory of the Lord." *Ezekiel*, i. 20, 26, 28.

106. "Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?" *Job*. — This verse and the foregoing are meant to express the stately march and sounding energy of Dryden's rhymes.

110. "Words that weep, and tears that speak." Cowley, *Prophet*, i. 113. [Again Mr. Gosse points out the exact form of the quotation, which is, —

"Tears which shall understand and speak."

ED.]

111. We have had in our language no other odes of the sublime kind, than that of Dryden on St. Cecilia's Day; for Cowley, who had his merit, yet wanted judgment, style, and harmony, for such a task. That of Pope is not worthy of so great a man. Mr. Mason, indeed, of late days, has touched the true chords, and with a masterly hand, in some of his choruses; above all in the last of *Caractacus* : —

"Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread?" etc.

Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
 Wakes thee now? Tho' he inherit
 Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
 115 That the Theban eagle bear,
 Sailing with supreme dominion
 Thro' the azure deep of air:
 Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
 Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray,
 120 With orient hues, unborrow'd of the sun:
 Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
 Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
 Beneath the Good how far—but far above the
 Great.

115. Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιθα φειον, *Olymp.* ii. 159. Pindar compares himself to that bird, and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamor in vain below, while it pursues its flight, regardless of their noise.

THE BARD.

A PINDARIC ODE.

The following Ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the Bards that fell into his hands to be put to death.

I. 1.

“RUIN seize thee, ruthless King ;
Confusion on thy banners wait ;
Tho’ fann’d by Conquest’s crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state.

5 Helm, nor hauberk’s twisted mail,
Nor e’en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria’s curse, from Cambria’s tears !”
Such were the sounds that o’er the crested pride
10 Of the first Edward scatter’d wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon’s shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array.

4. “Mocking the air with colours idly spread.”

King John, Act v. Sc. 1.

5. The hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail that sat close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion.

9. “The crested adder’s pride.”

Dryden, *Indian Queen*.

11. Snowdon was a name given by the Saxons to that mountainous tract which the Welsh themselves call Craigian-eryri : it included all the highlands of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, as far east as the river Conway.

Stout Glo'ster stood aghast in speechless trance :
 "To arms!" cried Mortimer, and couch'd his
 quiv'ring lance.

I. 2.

15 On a rock whose haughty brow
 Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
 Robed in the sable garb of woe,
 With haggard eyes the Poet stood ;
 (Loose his beard, and hoary hair
 20 Stream'd, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
 And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
 Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.
 "Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
 Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath !
 25 O'er thee, oh King ! their hundred arms they wave,
 Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe ;
 Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
 To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I. 3.

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
 30 That hush'd the stormy main :

13. Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, son-in-law to King Edward.

14. Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore.

They both were Lord Marchers, whose lands lay on the borders of Wales, and probably accompanied the king in this expedition.

19. The image was taken from a well-known picture of Raphael, representing the Supreme Being in the vision of Ezekiel. There are two of these paintings, both believed to be originals, one at Florence, the other in the Duke of Orleans' collection at Paris.

20. "Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind."

Paradise Lost, i. 535.

Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed :
 Mountains, ye mourn in vain
 Modred, whose magic song
 Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topt head.

35 On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
 Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale :
 Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail ;
 The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by.
 Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
 40 Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
 Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
 Ye died amidst your dying country's cries —
 No more I weep. They do not sleep.
 On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,
 45 I see them sit, they linger yet,
 Avengers of their native land :
 With me in dreadful harmony they join,
 And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.

II. 1.

“ Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
 50 The winding sheet of Edward's race.

35. The shores of Caernarvonshire, opposite the isle of Anglesey.

38. Camden and others observe that eagles used annually to build their aerie among the rocks of Snowdon, which from thence (as some think) were named by the Welsh *Craigian-eryri*, or the crags of the eagles. At this day, I am told, the highest point of Snowdon is called the Eagle's Nest. That bird is certainly no stranger to this island, as the Scots and the people of Cumberland, Westmoreland, etc., can testify ; it even has built its nest upon the peak of Derbyshire. [See Willoughby's *Ornithol.* by Ray.]

40. “ As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
 That visit my sad heart.”

Julius Caesar, Act. ii. Sc. 1.

Give ample room, and verge enough
 The characters of hell to trace.
 Mark the year, and mark the night,
 When Severn shall re-echo with affright
 55 The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roof that ring,
 Shrieks of an agonizing king!
 She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
 That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
 From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
 60 The scourge of heav'n. What terrors round him
 wait!
 Amazement in his van, with flight combin'd,
 And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

II. 2.

"Mighty victor, mighty lord!
 Low on his funeral couch he lies!
 65 No pitying heart, no eye, afford
 A tear to grace his obsequies.
 Is the sable warrior fled?
 Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
 The swarm, that in thy noontide beam were born?
 70 Gone to salute the rising morn.
 Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr blows,
 While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
 In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;

55. Edward the Second, cruelly butchered in Berkley Castle.

57. Isabel of France, Edward the Second's adulterous queen.

60. Triumphs of Edward the Third in France.

64. Death of that king, abandoned by his children, and even robbed in his last moments by his courtiers and his mistress.

67. Edward the Black Prince, dead some time before his father.

71. Magnificence of Richard the Second's reign. See Froisart, and other contemporary writers.

Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm ;
 75 Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
 That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening
 prey.

II. 3.

“ Fill high the sparkling bowl,
 The rich repast prepare,
 Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast :
 80 Close by the regal chair
 Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
 A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
 Heard ye the din of battle bray,
 Lance to lance, and horse to horse ?
 85 Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
 And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way.
 Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
 With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
 Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,
 90 And spare the meek usurper's holy head.
 Above, below, the rose of snow,

77. Richard the Second, as we are told by Archbishop Scroop and the confederate Lords in their manifesto, by Thomas of Walsingham, and all the older writers, was starved to death. The story of his assassination by Sir Piers of Exon is of much later date.

83. Ruinous wars of York and Lancaster.

87. Henry the Sixth, George Duke of Clarence, Edward the Fifth, Richard Duke of York, etc., believed to be murdered secretly in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Cæsar.

89. Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her husband and her crown ; Henry the Fifth.

90. Henry the Sixth, very near being canonized. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the crown.

91. The white and red roses, devices of York and Lancaster.

Twin'd with her blushing foe, we spread :
 The bristled boar in infant-gore
 Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
 95 Now, brothers, bending o'er the accursed loom,
 Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III. 1.

“ Edward, lo ! to sudden fate
 (Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)
 Half of thy heart we consecrate.
 100 (The web is wove. The work is done.)
 Stay, oh stay ! nor thus forlorn
 Leave me unbles's'd, unpitied, here to mourn :
 In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
 They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
 105 But oh ! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
 Descending slow their glitt'ring skirts unroll ?
 Visions of glory, spare my aching sight !
 Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul !
 No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.
 110 All hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail !

93. The silver boar was the badge of Richard the Third ; whence he was usually known in his own time by the name of the Boar.

99. Eleanor of Castile died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The heroic proof she gave of her affection for her lord is well known. The monuments of his regret and sorrow for the loss of her are still to be seen at Northampton, Gaddington, Waltham, and other places.

109. It was the common belief of the Welsh nation that King Arthur was still alive in Fairyland, and would return again to reign over Britain.

110. Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied that the Welsh should regain their sovereignty over this island ; which seemed to be accomplished in the house of Tudor.

III. 2.

“ Girt with many a baron bold
 Sublime their starry fronts they rear ;
 And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
 In bearded majesty, appear.
 115 In the midst a form divine !
 Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line ;
 Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
 Attemper’d sweet to virgin-grace.
 What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
 120 What strains of vocal transport round her play
 Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear ;
 They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
 Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
 Waves in the eye of Heav’n her many-colour’d wings.

III. 3.

125 “ The verse adorn again
 Fierce War, and faithful Love,
 And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
 In buskin’d measures move
 Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
 130 With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.

117. Speed, relating an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzialinski, ambassador of Poland, says : “ And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the malapert orator no less with her stately port and majestic deporture than with the tartnesse of her princelie checkes.”

121. Taliessin, chief of the bards, flourished in the sixth century. His works are still preserved, and his memory held in high veneration among his countrymen.

126. “ Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song.”
 Spenser, *Proëme to the Faerie Queene*.

128. Shakespeare.

A voice, as of the cherub-choir,
 Gales from blooming Eden bear ;
 And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
 That lost in long futurity expire.
 135 Fond impious man, think'st thou yon sanguine
 cloud,
 Rais'd by thy breath, has quench'd the orb of
 day ?
 To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
 And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
 Enough for me ; with joy I see
 140 The different doom our fates assign.
 Be thine Despair, and sceptred Care ;
 To triumph, and to die, are mine."

He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
 Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless
 night.

131. Milton.

133. The succession of poets after Milton's time.

144. [The original argument of this ode, as Gray set it down
 in one of the pages of his common-place book, was as follows :]
 The army of Edward I., as they march through a deep valley
 (and approach Mount Snowdon, MS.), are suddenly stopped by
 the appearance of a venerable figure seated on the summit of an
 inaccessible rock, who, with a voice more than human, re-
 proaches the king with all the misery and desolation (desolation
 and misery, MS.) which he had brought on his country ; fore-
 tells the misfortunes of the Norman race, and with prophetic
 spirit declares, that all his cruelty shall never extinguish the
 noble ardour of poetic genius in this island ; and that men shall
 never be wanting to celebrate true virtue and valour in immor-
 tal strains, to expose vice and infamous pleasure, and boldly
 censure tyranny and oppression. His song ended he precipitates
 himself from the mountain, and is swallowed up by the river
 that rolls at its foot.

WILLIAM COWPER.¹

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

COWPER was twenty years old when Gray's *Elegy* was published, for he was born November 26, 1731. A few years after Gray's death Cowper, then forty-six years old, wrote to a friend: "I have been reading Gray's works, and think him the only poet since Shakespeare entitled to the character of sublime." Probably he was thinking of Gray's odes when he wrote thus; he himself had a temperament and a poetic gift which might make him admire sublimity in others without a particle of regret for the lack of it in his own verse. Gray wrote his odes in the grand style; he was a scholar who kept up the traditions of great poetry. Cowper, with a similar early training in classical literature, lived away from universities and cities, in a flat pastoral country, and wrote his poems partly for diversion, partly because in the leisure he had this was an agreeable occupation to which his friends urged him, but most of all because his poetic nature gently stirred him. He wrote under the influence of a placid country life and a strong though not always tranquil religious feeling, and the simplicity of his themes found in his truthful, conscientious spirit a simple expression, so that he was a forerunner in some ways of Wordsworth. He was a

¹ Pronounced *Cooper*, some members of the family so spelling the name.

contemporary of Goldsmith, and they had in common a directness and naturalness in poetry, but Goldsmith even when writing of rural scenes was a town poet. Cowper was a country poet who looked from a distance and without much personal sympathy on town life.

He was born of a gentle family, with noble descent, though one is tempted to reckon more on his mother's inheritance of the poetic wealth of Donne than of the royalty of Henry III. He was six years old when his mother died, and though the poem which he wrote years after, on receiving her portrait, is an expansion by the imagination of the fact which memory brings to mind, there is no doubt that the child suffered keenly through the loss, for he was a timid, shrinking boy and at this early age was sent to a large boarding-school, where he suffered untold misery. Some boys, thrown thus into a rough world, come out toughened by the experience; others are driven into solitary, secretive habits. Cowper, looking back on his boyish life, pleaded earnestly for the shelter of home when children were still young. He was sent to Westminster, one of the great public schools, and there finished his formal education. He could not have been wholly unhappy at school, for some of his longer poems have bright pictures of schoolboy life.

At eighteen he began the study of law, but he had little interest in the profession. He lived, however, after he was twenty-one and till he was thirty-two in the Temple, one of the great lawyers' houses in London, which in those days were the resort of young unmarried men of whom a few practiced law diligently, but many lived socially with a slight show of work. Cowper was one of these latter. With a few others

whose names are scarcely remembered he formed a literary club, and they all wrote nonsense verses and played with literature. It is quite possible that Cowper's name would have been as little known to-day as those of his companions, but for a sudden change in his life.

His father had died a few years after Cowper began the study of law, and the money which he left his son was nearly gone, when an occasion came to which the idle lawyer had looked forward. He had thought it not unlikely he would secure one of the public offices in the gift of the government through family influence, and so it turned out. A vacancy occurred, that of clerk of the Journals of the House of Lords, and the place was to be disposed of by one Major Cowper, a kinsman, who offered it to the young lawyer. Possibly if he had been spending the past ten years in hard work, he would have been quite ready to take the office; but his idleness was both the effect and cause of a general melancholy which had crept over him. He had led, we may say, a restless, unhealthy sort of life; a physical disorder underlay it, but also his training had not given him the will to resist. And so, when this opportunity came, he was seized with a kind of terror. All sorts of difficulties sprang up which he could not seem to meet. He read the Journals which he was to keep and the task loomed up in frightful proportions. He became so deranged by all this that he tried in various ways to kill himself. He was defeated sometimes by circumstance, sometimes by his own irresolution at the last moment. At last in trying to hang himself he fell, a servant came in, and Cowper, sending for Major Cowper, broke down completely, surrendered his appointment, and went to a private asylum for the insane.

After eighteen months, Cowper was discharged, and his property being now nearly all gone, his relatives subscribed money enough to take care of him, supposing he would live out a life of uselessness. He went into the country, to Huntingdon near Cambridge, and there he fell in with a family named Unwin who befriended him and with whom he went to live. The Reverend William Unwin was a clergyman whose wife, much younger, was but seven years older than Cowper, and whose son was preparing for the ministry. Between Cowper and the Unwins there sprang up a most affectionate relation, and when two years later the old clergyman died, his widow went to live in the little village of Olney, and Cowper followed her there as one of her family.

The principal reason for their going to Olney was the presence there of the Rev. John Newton, who was an important figure in the religious revival of the time, the revival which was led by Wesley and Whitefield, and much admired both by Mrs. Unwin and Cowper. Newton had a strong influence over Cowper, and was largely the inspirer of the many hymns which Cowper wrote, some of which, like

“God moves in a mysterious way”

and

“Oh, for a closer walk with God,”

are found in most hymn-books to-day.

It was not long after taking up his life in Olney that Cowper again fell into a period of insanity, and was long and faithfully attended by Mrs. Unwin. He recovered and thenceforth led a quiet, retired life in the country, in the companionship chiefly of women, Mrs. Unwin, his cousin Lady Hesketh, and a friend,

Lady Austen. Mrs. Unwin, with a woman's bright instinct, suggested occupation for him in verse-making, and Cowper, now nearly fifty years old, took up the instrument he had played with, and since the old themes of his idle life in the Temple had no charms for him, he took his new, more serious thought and turned it into verse, writing a number of satires to which he gave the name of "Truth," "Table Talk," "Expostulation," "Hope," "Conversation," etc. These were more than mere exercises in verse, but they lacked spontaneity. This came later when under the general head of "The Task" he wrote a number of rambling, graceful, light though serious poems into which he poured his best thought. His poetry, it may be believed, cured him of much of his melancholy, and as he grew healthier, so he wrote wholesome, sweet verse, now and then, as in "John Gilpin," breaking into laughter. He played with his pets, he worked in his garden, he translated Homer, and little by little his old friends in London found that the person whom they supposed had been thrown aside as good for nothing, was a famous man. He wrote from his seclusion most delightful letters which have been published since his death. People now go back to Cowper as they like to go into the country and see clear streams, limpid lakes, and gentle, rolling country. His poetry is full of rest and peace. He died April 25, 1800.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN.

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME HOME SAFE AGAIN.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

5 John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding day,
10 And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
15 Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
20 Therefore it shall be done.

16. Mrs. Gilpin had a better ear for rhyme than she had knowledge of grammar.

“ I am a linendraper bold,
 As all the world doth know,
 And my good friend the calender
 Will lend his horse to go.”

25 Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, “ That ’s well said ;
 And for that wine is dear,
 We will be furnished with our own,
 Which is both bright and clear.”

John Gilpin kiss’d his loving wife ;
 30 O’erjoyed was he to find,
 That, though on pleasure she was bent,
 She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
 But yet was not allow’d
 35 To drive up to the door, lest all
 Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay’d,
 Where they did all get in ;
 Six precious souls, and all agog
 40 To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
 Were never folks so glad,
 The stones did rattle underneath,
 As if Cheapside were mad.

45 John Gilpin at his horse’s side
 Seized fast the flowing mane,

23. As John Gilpin was a linendraper, he could safely count on the friendship of a man whose business it was to press and smooth out cloth in a machine.

And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again ;

For saddletree scarce reach'd had he
50 His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came ; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
55 Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'T was long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
60 " The wine is left behind ! "

" Good lack ! " quoth he — " yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

65 Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
70 Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

52. It was the custom then in London, much more than now,
for a shopkeeper to live over his shop.

Then over all, that he might be
 Equipp'd from top to toe,
 75 His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
 He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
 Upon his nimble steed,
 Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
 80 With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
 Beneath his well shod feet,
 The snorting beast began to trot,
 Which gall'd him in his seat.

85 "So, fair and softly," John he cried,
 But John he cried in vain ;
 That trot became a gallop soon,
 In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
 90 Who cannot sit upright,
 He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
 And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
 Had handled been before,
 95 What thing upon his back had got
 Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought ;
 Away went hat and wig ;
 He little dreamt, when he set out,
 100 Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
 Like streamer long and gay,
 Till, loop and button failing both,
 At last it flew away.

105 Then might all people well discern
 The bottles he had slung;
 A bottle swinging at each side,
 As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
 110 Up flew the windows all;
 And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
 As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin — who but he?
 His fame soon spread around,
 115 "He carries weight! he rides a race!
 'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still as fast as he drew near,
 'T was wonderful to view,
 How in a trice the turnpike men
 120 Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
 His reeking head full low,
 The bottles twain behind his back
 Were shatter'd at a blow.

125 Down ran the wine into the road,
 Most piteous to be seen,

114. So did the honest people think our linendraper a man
 who rode for a wager, being handicapped for the trial.

Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
130 With leathern girdle braced ;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols did he play,
135 Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay ;

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
140 Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

145 " Stop, stop, John Gilpin ! — Here 's the house,"
They all at once did cry ;
" The dinner waits, and we are tired : "
Said Gilpin — " So am I ! "

But yet his horse was not a whit
150 Inclined to tarry there ;
For why ? — his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong ;
155 So did he fly — which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
160 His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbor in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him :

165 “ What news ? what news ? your tidings tell ;
Tell me you must and shall —
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all ? ”

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
170 And loved a timely joke ;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke :

“ I came because your horse would come ;
And, if I well forbode,
175 My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road.”

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
180 But to the house went in ;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig ;
 A wig that flow'd behind,
 A hat not much the worse for wear,
 Each comely in its kind.

185 He held them up, and in his turn
 Thus show'd his ready wit,
 " My head is twice as big as yours,
 They therefore needs must fit.

" But let me scrape the dirt away
 190 That hangs upon your face ;
 And stop and eat, for well you may
 Be in a hungry case."

Said John, " It is my wedding day,
 And all the world would stare,
 195 If wife should dine at Edmonton,
 And I should dine at Ware."

So turning to his horse, he said,
 " I am in haste to dine ;
 'T was for your pleasure you came here,
 200 You shall go back for mine."

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast !
 For which he paid full dear ;
 For, while he spake, a braying ass
 Did sing most loud and clear ;

205 Whereat his horse did snort, as he
 Had heard a lion roar,
 And gallopp'd off with all his might,
 As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
 210 Went Gilpin's hat and wig :
 He lost them sooner than at first,
 For why ? — they were too big.

Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw
 Her husband posting down
 215 Into the country far away,
 She pull'd out half a crown ;

And thus unto the youth she said,
 That drove them to the Bell,
 "This shall be yours, when you bring back
 220 My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
 John coming back amain ;
 Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
 By catching at his rein ;

220. Cowper wrote a little episode which he left out of the poem ; it would appear to have come in at this place, for it was as follows: —

Then Mrs. Gilpin sweetly said
 Unto her children three,
 " I'll clamber o'er the stile so high
 And you climb after me."

But having climbed unto the top,
 She could no farther go ;
 But sat to every passer-by
 A spectacle and show.

Who said : " Your spouse and you to-day
 Both show your horsemanship ;
 And if you stay till he comes back
 Your horse will need no whip."

This may have been one fragment only from a first draft. It is clear that it would have interrupted the gallop of the poem.

225 But not performing what he meant,
 And gladly would have done,
 The frighted steed he frighted more,
 And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
 230 Went postboy at his heels,
 The postboy's horse right glad to miss
 The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
 Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
 235 With postboy scampering in the rear,
 They raised the hue and cry : —

“ Stop thief ! stop thief ! — a highwayman ! ”
 Not one of them was mute ;
 And all and each that passed that way
 240 Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
 Flew open in short space ;
 The toll-men thinking as before,
 That Gilpin rode a race.

245 And so he did, and won it too,
 For he got first to town ;
 Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
 He did again get down.

236. To raise a hue and cry is the technical term in law for the assistance which chance passers-by render an officer of the law who is in pursuit of a rogue.

Now let us sing, “ Long live the king,
250 And Gilpin, long live he ; ”
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see !

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE
OUT OF NORFOLK, THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN
BODHAM.

O THAT those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine — thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me ;
5 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
“Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!”
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
10 To quench it!) here shines on me still the same.
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
15 I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own :
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
20 A momentary dream, that thou art she.
My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
25 Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss ;

Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss —
 Ah, that maternal smile! it answers — Yes.
 I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
 30 And, turning from my nursery window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
 But was it such? — It was. — Where thou art gone
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 35 The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern!
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
 40 By expectation every day beguiled,
 Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,
 I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
 45 But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
 Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
 Drew me to school along the public way,
 50 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,
 'T is now become a history little known,
 That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.
 Shortlived possession! but the record fair,
 55 That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
 Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
 That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;

60 Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd :
 All this, and more endearing still than all,
 65 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
 Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,
 That humour interposed too often makes ;
 All this still legible in memory's page,
 And still to be so to my latest age,
 70 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
 Not scorn'd in Heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
 75 When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
 The violet, the pink, the jessamine,
 I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and
 smile),
 80 Could those few pleasant days again appear,
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them
 here ?

I would not trust my heart ; — the dear delight
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.
 But no — what here we call our life is such,
 85 So little to be loved, and thou so much,
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast,
 (The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)
 90 Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,

There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
95 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;
So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reach'd the
shore,
“ Where tempests never beat nor billows roar ; ”
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.
100 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distress'd —
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
Sails ripp'd, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
105 Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet oh, the thought, that thou art safe, and he !
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;
110 But higher far my proud pretensions rise, —
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
And now, farewell ! Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
115 I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again ;
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine ;
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
120 Time has but half succeeded in his theft, —
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK,
DURING HIS SOLITARY ABODE IN THE ISLAND OF
JUAN FERNANDEZ.

I AM monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute ;
From the centre all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
5 O Solitude ! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face ?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
10 I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see ;
15 They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestow'd upon man,
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
20 How soon would I taste you again !

1. Selkirk is generally supposed to have been the actual shipwrecked Englishman whose narrative gave birth to Robinson Crusoe.

My sorrows I then might assuage
 In the ways of religion and truth,
 Might learn from the wisdom of age,
 And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

25 Religion ! what treasure untold
 Resides in that heavenly word !
 More precious than silver and gold,
 Or all that this earth can afford ;
 But the sound of the church-going bell
 30 These valleys and rocks never heard,
 Never sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
 Or smil'd when a sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
 Convey to this desolate shore
 35 Some cordial endearing report
 Of a land I shall visit no more.
 My friends, do they now and then send
 A wish or a thought after me ?
 O tell me I yet have a friend,
 40 Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind !
 Compared with the speed of its flight,
 The tempest itself lags behind,
 And the swift-wingèd arrows of light.
 45 When I think of my own native land,
 In a moment I seem to be there ;
 But alas ! recollection at hand
 Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the seafowl is gone to her nest,
 50 The beast is laid down in his lair ;

Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
55 Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

ON OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE
NOTE

RECORDED IN THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA.

OH, fond attempt to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
In vain, recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age :
5 Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand ;
Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.

So when a child, as playful children use,
10 Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire —
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson, oh illustrious spark!
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk.
14. The English still give clerk the sound *clark*.

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE,

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong ;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

5 So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of
learning ;
While chief baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

“ In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
10 And your lordship,” he said, “ will undoubtedly
find
That the nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.”

Then holding the spectacles up to the court —
“ Your lordship observes they are made with a
straddle,
15 As wide as the bridge of the Nose is ; in short,
Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

“ Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('T is a case that has happen'd, and may be again)
12. It is a saying that possession is nine parts of the law.

That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,

20 Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles
then ?

“ On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the
Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.”

25 Then shifting his side (as a lawyer knows how),
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes :
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally
wise.

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
30 Decisive and clear, without one if or but —
That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight — Eyes should be
shut !

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jaques Rousseau
If birds confabulate or no ;
'T is clear, that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable ;
5 And e'en the child who knows no better
Than to interpret, by the letter,
A story of a cock and bull,
Must have a most uncommon skull.

It chanced then on a winter's day,
10 But warm, and bright, and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a design
To forestall sweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
Assembled on affairs of love.

15 And with much twitter and much chatter
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bullfinch, who could boast

1. It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher that all fables, which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses ? — W. C.

7. There was a preposterous ghost story not long before Cowper's time about a cock and a bull, which gave rise to the expression, when one would ridicule such tales, of "a cock and bull story."

More years and wisdom than the most,
 Entreated, opening wide his beak,
 20 A moment's liberty to speak ;
 And, silence publicly enjoin'd,
 Deliver'd briefly thus his mind :
 " My friends! be cautious how ye treat
 The subject upon which we meet ;
 25 I fear we shall have winter yet."

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
 With golden wing and satin poll,
 A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
 What marriage means, thus pert replied :
 30 " Methinks the gentleman," quoth she,
 " Opposite in the apple tree,
 By his good will would keep us single
 Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,
 Or (which is likelier to befall)
 35 Till death exterminate us all.
 I marry without more ado ;
 My dear Dick Redcap, what say you ?"

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
 Turning short round, strutting, and sideling,
 40 Attested, glad, his approbation
 Of an immediate conjugation.
 Their sentiments so well express'd
 Influenced mightily the rest,
 All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.
 45 But though the birds were thus in haste,
 The leaves came on not quite so fast,
 And destiny, that sometimes bears
 An aspect stern on man's affairs,
 Not altogether smiled on theirs.
 50 The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
 Now shifted east, and east by north ;

Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow ;
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
55 Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled.
Soon every father bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other,
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
60 And learn'd in future to be wiser,
Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses ! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry —
Choose not alone a proper mate,
65 But proper time to marry.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOWWORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheer'd the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
5 Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite ;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
10 And knew the glowworm by his spark ;
So stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent —
15 “ Did you admire my lamp,” quoth he,
“ As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong
As much as I to spoil your song ;
For 't was the selfsame Power Divine
20 Taught you to sing, and me to shine ;
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night.”
The songster heard his short oration,
And warbling out his approbation,
25 Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.

Hence jarring sectaries may learn
Their real interest to discern ;

That brother should not war with brother,
30 And worry and devour each other ;
But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting in each other's case
The gifts of nature and of grace.
35 Those Christians best deserve the name
Who studiously make peace their aim ;
Peace both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED.

TOLL for the brave !
The brave that are no more !
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore !

5 Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land breeze shook the shrouds,
10 And she was overset ;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave !
Brave Kempenfelt is gone ;
15 His last sea-fight is fought ;
His work of glory done.

4. The *Royal George*, 108 guns, one of Lord Howe's fleet, and commanded by Admiral Kempenfelt, after service in the war with America returned to Portsmouth, England, and requiring repair, was not put into dock, but heeled over, a common mode in those days. She was, however, heeled over too far ; the water rushed into the ports, and down she went with the loss by drowning of nine hundred out of the eleven hundred men, women, and children on board. The loss occurred August 29, 1782.

It was not in the battle ;
 No tempest gave the shock ;
 She sprang no fatal leak ;
 20 She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath ;
 His fingers held the pen,
 When Kempenfelt went down
 With twice four hundred men.

25 Weigh the vessel up,
 Once dreaded by our foes !
 And mingle with our cup
 The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
 30 And she may float again
 Full charged with England's thunder,
 And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
 His victories are o'er ;
 35 And he and his eight hundred
 Shall plough the waves no more.

36. After the disaster many of the guns were fished up, but no attempt was made to raise the ship. In 1817 divers made a fresh examination, but the ship could not be raised. In 1839 the hulk was blown up by gunpowder, and the harbor cleared of the obstruction.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass,
Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,
5 Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,
That he may follow them through brake and brier,
Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd,
10 Runs in a bottom, and divides the field ;
Oaks intersperse it that had once a head,
But now wear crests of oven wood instead ;
And where the land slopes to its watery bourn
Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn ;
15 Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago,
And horrid brambles intertwine below ;
A hollow scoop'd, I judge, in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.
Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
20 With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;
Nor Autumn yet had brush'd from every spray,
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away ;
But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack,
Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,
25 With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats
With a whole gamut fill'd of heavenly notes,

For which, alas! my destiny severe,
 Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The sun accomplishing his early march,
 30 His lamp now planted on Heaven's topmost arch,
 When, exercise and air my only aim,
 And heedless whither, to that field I came,
 Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
 Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
 35 Or with high-raised horn's melodious clang
 All Kilwick and all Dingleberry rang.

Sheep grazed the field; some with soft bosom
 press'd
 The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest;
 Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
 40 Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
 All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,
 To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,
 'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
 45 And from within the wood that crash was heard,
 Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,
 The sheep recumbent and the sheep that grazed,
 All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
 Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
 50 Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round
 again;

But recollecting, with a sudden thought,
 That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,
 They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,
 And thought again — but knew not what to think.

55 The man to solitude accustom'd long,
 Perceives in every thing that lives a tongue;
 Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
 Have speech for him, and understood with ease;

After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
60 He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all ;
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largess of the skies ;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of every locomotive kind ;
65 Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame ;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears ;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
70 And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premised was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mused ; surveying every face
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race ;
75 Their periwigs of wool and fears combined,
Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,
That sage they seem'd, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out ;
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
80 Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths ;
When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad address'd :

“ Friends ! we have lived too long. I never heard
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be fear'd.
85 Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
And from their prisonhouse below arise,
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
I could be much composed, nor should appear,
90 For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.
Yourselves have seen what time the thunders roll'd
All night, me resting quiet in the fold.

Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
 I could expound the melancholy tone ;
 95 Should deem it by our old companion made,
 The ass ; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,
 And being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,
 Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.
 But ah ! those dreadful yells what soul can hear,
 100 That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear ?
 Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-claw'd,
 And fang'd with brass the demons are abroad ;
 I hold it therefore wisest and most fit
 That, life to save, we leap into the pit."

105 Him answer'd then his loving mate and true,
 But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.
 " How ? leap into the pit our life to save ?
 To save our life leap all into the grave ?
 For can we find it less ? Contemplate first
 110 The depth how awful ! falling there, we burst :
 Or should the brambles, interposed, our fall
 In part abate, that happiness were small ;
 For with a race like theirs no chance I see
 Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.
 115 Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
 Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
 And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
 Of demons utter'd, from whatever lungs,
 Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,
 120 We have at least commodious standing here.
 Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
 From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last."

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
 For Reynard, close attended at his heels
 125 By panting dog, tired man, and spatter'd horse,
 Through mere good fortune, took a different course.

The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
Following, that led me to my own abode,
Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found
130 Such cause of terror in an empty sound
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor e'er heard huntsman's halloo ;

5 Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
10 His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw ;
15 Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads fail'd,
20 Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,

To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

25 His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moons
30 He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
35 My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
40 Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks,
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF

THE TREATMENT OF HIS HARES

WAS INSERTED BY COWPER IN THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE.

IN the year 1774, being much indisposed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myself either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made some diversion necessary, I was glad of anything that would engage my attention without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbour of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything ; it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining and growing leaner every day, should offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the prisoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I should find just that sort of employment which my case required. It was soon known among the neighbours that I was pleased with the present, and the consequence was, that in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have stocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is necessary that I should here distinguish by the names I gave them — Puss, Tiney, and Bess. Notwithstanding the two feminine appellatives, I must inform you that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houses to sleep in ; each had a separate apartment, so contrived that their ordure would pass through

the bottom of it; an earthen pan placed under each received whatsoever fell, which being duly emptied and washed, they were thus kept perfectly sweet and clean. In the daytime they had the range of a hall, and at night retired each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Puss grew presently familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temple. He would suffer me to take him up, and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen fast asleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nursed him, kept him apart from his fellows, that they might not molest him (for, like many other wild animals, they persecute one of their own species that is sick), and by constant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, restored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a sentiment which he most significantly expressed by licking my hand, first the back of it, then the palm, then every finger separately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unsaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a similar occasion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my custom to carry him always after breakfast into the garden, where he hid himself generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, sleeping or chewing the cud till evening; in the leaves also of that vine he found a favourite repast. I had not long habituated him to this taste of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of such expression, as it was

not possible to misinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull it with all his force. Thus Puss might be said to be perfectly tamed, the shyness of his nature was done away, and on the whole it was visible by many symptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human society than when shut up with his natural companions.

Not so Tiney; upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He too was sick, and in his sickness had an equal share of my attention; but if, after his recovery, I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt, strike with his fore feet, spring forward, and bite. He was, however, very entertaining in his way; even his surliness was matter of mirth, and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner, that in him too I had an agreeable companion.

Bess, who died soon after he was full grown, and whose death was occasioned by his being turned into his box, which had been washed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humour and drollery. Puss was tamed by gentle usage; Tiney was not to be tamed at all; and Bess had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after supper, when the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would frisk, and bound, and play a thousand gambols, in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the *Vestris*¹ of the party. One evening, the cat, being in the room, had the hardiness to pat Bess upon the

¹ A ballet-dancer of the time.

cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws, and hide herself.

I describe these animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their countenances were so expressive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is said that a shepherd, however numerous his flock, soon becomes so familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only, distinguish each from all the rest; and yet, to a common observer, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the same discrimination in the cast of countenances would be discoverable in hares, and am persuaded that among a thousand of them no two could be found exactly similar: a circumstance little suspected by those who have not had opportunity to observe it. These creatures have a singular sagacity in discovering the minutest alteration that is made in the place to which they are accustomed, and instantly apply their nose to the examination of a new object. A small hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the strictest scrutiny. They seem too to be very much directed by the smell in the choice of their favourites: to some persons, though they saw them daily, they could never be reconciled, and would even scream when they attempted to touch them; but a miller coming in engaged their affections at once; his powdered coat had charms that were irresistible. It is no wonder that my intimate acquaintance with these specimens of the kind has taught me to hold the sportsman's amusement in abhorrence; he little knows what

amiable creatures he persecutes, of what gratitude they are capable, how cheerful they are in their spirits, what enjoyment they have of life, and that, impressed as they seem with a peculiar dread of man, it is only because man gives them peculiar cause for it.

That I may not be tedious, I will just give a short summary of those articles of diet that suit them best.

I take it to be a general opinion that they graze, but it is an erroneous one, at least grass is not their staple; they seem rather to use it medicinally, soon quitting it for leaves of almost any kind. Sowthistle, dandelion, and lettuce are their favourite vegetables, especially the last. I discovered by accident that fine white sand is in great estimation with them; I suppose as a digestive. It happened that I was cleaning a birdcage when the hares were with me; I placed a pot filled with such sand upon the floor, which being at once directed to by a strong instinct, they devoured voraciously; since that time I have generally taken care to see them well supplied with it. They account green corn a delicacy, both blade and stalk, but the ear they seldom eat: straw of any kind, especially wheat-straw, is another of their dainties; they will feed greedily upon oats, but if furnished with clean straw never want them; it serves them also for a bed, and, if shaken up daily, will be kept sweet and dry for a considerable time. They do not, indeed, require aromatic herbs, but will eat a small quantity of them with great relish, and are particularly fond of the plant called musk; they seem to resemble sheep in this, that, if their pasture be too succulent, they are very subject to the rot; to prevent which, I always made bread their principal nourishment, and, filling a pan with it, cut it into small squares, placed it every even-

ing in their chambers, for they feed only at evening and in the night ; during the winter, when vegetables were not to be got, I mingled this mess of bread with shreds of carrot, adding to it the rind of apples cut extremely thin ; for though they are fond of the paring, the apple itself disgusts them. These, however, not being a sufficient substitute for the juice of summer herbs, they must at this time be supplied with water ; but so placed that they cannot overset it into their beds. I must not omit that occasionally they are much pleased with twigs of hawthorn, and of the common brier, eating even the very wood when it is of considerable thickness.

Bess, I have said, died young ; Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last, I have reason to think, of some hurt in his loins by a fall ; Puss is still living, and has just completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay, nor even of age, except that he is grown more discreet and less frolicsome than he was. I cannot conclude without observing that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance, a spaniel that had never seen a hare to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Puss discovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the least symptom of hostility. There is, therefore, it should seem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it ; they eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly.

I should not do complete justice to my subject, did I not add that they have no ill scent belonging to them, that they are indefatigably nice in keeping them-

selves clean, for which purpose nature has furnished them with a brush under each foot; and that they are never infested by any vermin.

May 28, 1784.

MEMORANDUM FOUND AMONG MR. COWPER'S PAPERS.

Tuesday, March 9, 1786.

This day died poor Puss, aged eleven years eleven months. He died between twelve and one at noon, of mere old age, and apparently without pain.

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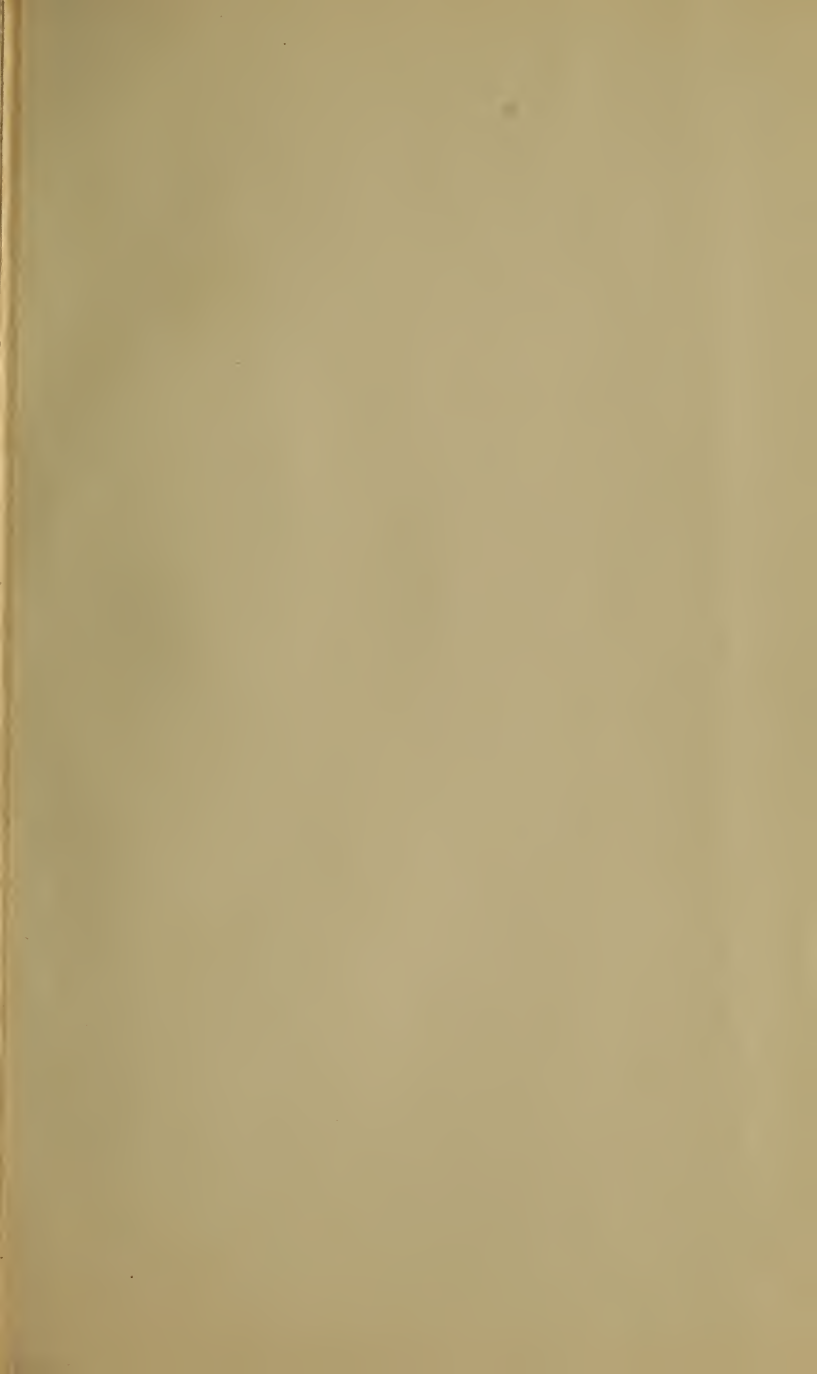
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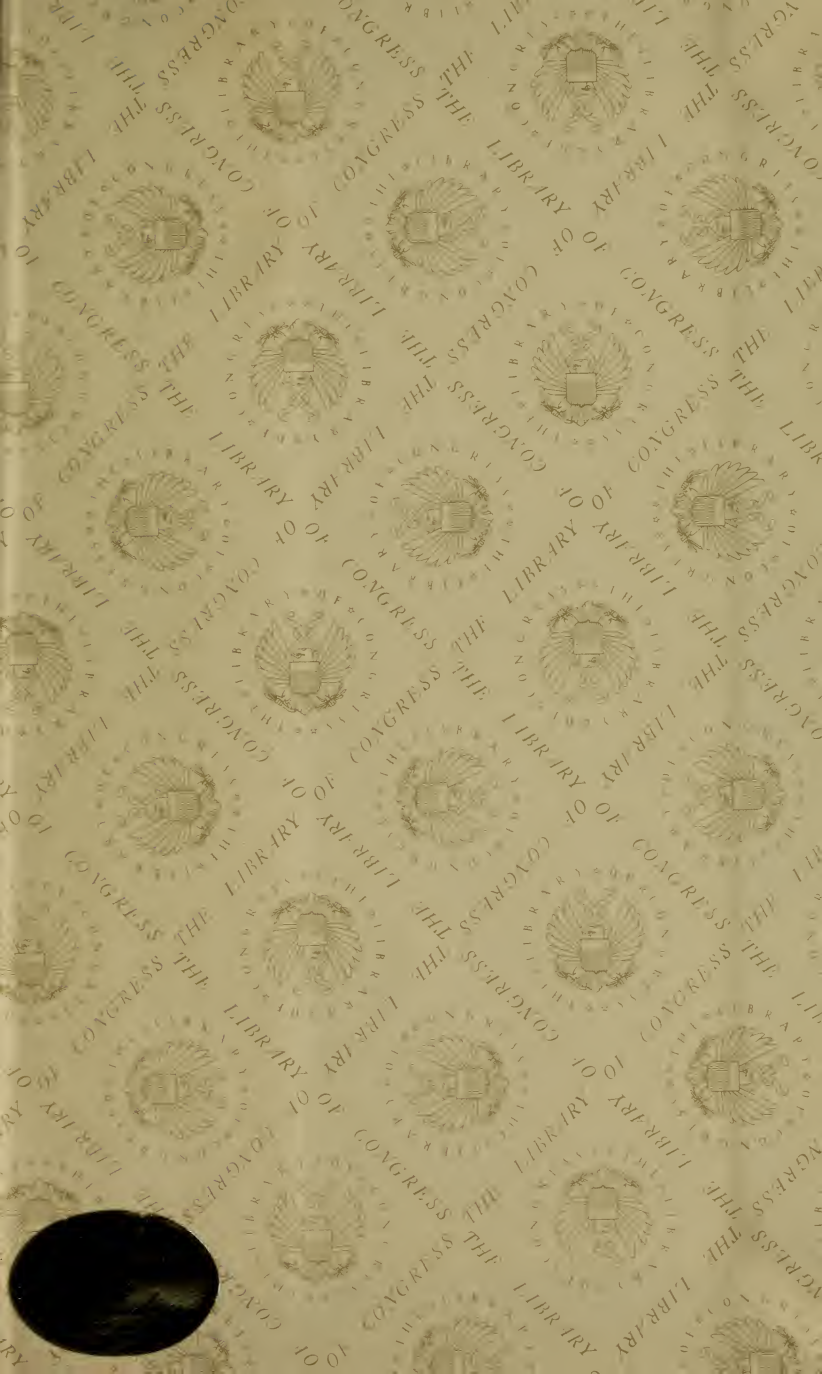


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