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Pains of the Imagination



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PAINS OF THE IMAGINATION,

A POEM,

READ BEFORE THE

PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY,

AT

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE,

AUGUST 19, 1824.

By Nathaniel W. Carter.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following poem is of a character so peculiar, that its author is unwilling it should go forth to the public, unaccompanied by a few remarks explanatory of its subject and its principles. He is fully aware, that both the plan and execution are liable to objections and criticisms, of which he would not himself be thought insensible.

The poem was intended as a counterpart of THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION, by Dr. Akenside, although it was written without a single recurrence to the pages of that work, or indeed to any other, with the exception of a passage in Virgil, for the purpose of ascertaining the correctness of a classical allusion. This circumstance is not set down to the score of merit, but may plead in extenuation of the faults of the performance, some of which might perhaps have been avoided by a fuller analysis of the subject, and an examination of analogous productions. It is proper to remark, that the word *imagination* is used in the vague and popular sense, sanctioned by the authority of standard writers, who employ the term as synonymous with *fancy*, comprehending under it nearly the whole mind, instead of restricting it with metaphysical precision to that faculty, which compounds or combines ideas already received through the senses, and thus forms new creations and images of its own.

In the admirable papers of the Spectator, on the Pleasures of the Imagination, of which Dr. Akenside's poem is little more than a fanciful and splendid paraphrase, Mr. Addison speaks of what he terms "*the imperfections of nature*," and in his concluding number remarks:—"We have now discovered the several originals of those pleasures that gratify the fancy; and here, perhaps, it would not be very difficult to cast under their proper heads those contrary objects, which are apt to fill it with distaste and terror; for the imagination is as liable to pain as pleasure." This passage fully explains the ground-work of the following poem, although it did not suggest the subject, the author having finished and delivered his exercise, before the papers in the Spectator were consulted.

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PAINS OF THE IMAGINATION.

To other bards I leave the gayer themes,
Which fancy prompts, amidst elysian dreams ;
Hope's smiling visions, Memory's sober hues,
And PLEASURES hallowed by the cheerful muse :
Mine be the task, to sing in plaintive strains,
The dark reverse—IMAGINATION'S PAINS.

Genius of Melancholy, sad and pale,
Attendant spirit of my being, hail !
Thee only I invoke, dread power, whose wrath
Hath oft with clouds o'erspread life's dreary path :
Thou that hast ruin'd many an hour of bliss,
Be present, and forsake me not in this.
With all thy blackening train of horrors, come,
And shroud my lyre in congregated gloom,
While o'er its chords a languid hand I fling,
And wake to woe the heart-responsive string.

Oh! guide my footsteps to the rugged glen,
Far from the world, the busy haunts of men,
To the deep recess of some frowning wood,
Where solitude and silence ever brood,
And Superstition, in Cimmerian cells,
Recounts her tales, and weaves her mystic spells.

There as I sit the live-long day alone,
 Mute as a fragment of the mountain stone,
 While fancy, roving on excursive wings,
 Gleans for her song the shadowy hues of things,
 Prompt thou her musings, and attend her flight,
 Through regions mantled in eternal night,
 O'er barren rocks, waste waters, desert isles,
 And Lybian sands, where nature never smiles;
 Aid her to mount to heaven's remotest star,
 Trace, as it wheels, the comet's fiery car,
 Or point her view to lurid realms below,
 Where Plegethon and black Cocytus flow.

'Tis done: I hear thy soul-depressing wail,
 Moan in the murmurs of the eastern gale;
 Thy gathering spectres throng before my eyes,
 And fiend-like forms on every side arise;
 Thy dark divinity my prayer hath blest,
 And all thy spirit labors in my breast.

To me hadst thou, sweet bard of Tyne,* bequeath'd
 Thy heaven-born gifts, in lofty numbers breath'd;
 Oh! could some favoring muse, like thine, inspire
 Such high imaginings, as woke thy lyre;
 Then should this verse descend to future age,
 Companion of thine own immortal page!

Look through this boundless, universal frame,
 In matter, mind; in nature, art, the same,

*Dr. Akenside.

The philosophic eye, turn where it will,
 Surveys a checquered scene of good and ill,
 The world's great panoramic scene array'd
 In varying tints of sunshine and of shade.
 What contradictions in our beings jar,
 Mysterious contrasts, elemental war!
 The soul ethereal, image of its God,
 Chained to the grossness of an earthly clod;
 Powers that to glory's heights aerial climb,
 Spurn at control, and conquer space and time,
 Blended with weakness, which degrades the man
 To childhood's wants, and mocks each generous plan;
 Frailties that cloud the bright celestial spark,
 And leave its prison cheerless, bleak, and dark;
 Passions for high and god-like objects born,
 Or prone to baseness, infamy, and scorn;
 Affections pure as seraph bosoms swell,
 Or fierce as rend the raging fiends of hell.

Grant that God's works, when fully understood,
 Are all harmonious, perfect, fair, and good;
 That nought was left unfinished by his hand,
 When rose the universe at his command;
 That jarring principles our optics see,
 Survey'd aright, in symmetry agree,
 And parts discordant finite views descry,
 Are beauteous all in his omniscient eye.
 So when from earth, at heaven's bright train we gaze,
 And trace our system's planetary maze,
 Orbit by orbit to the view seems cross'd,
 And wandering worlds in gay confusion lost:

Not thus the tenant of the central sun
 Beholds the orbs in splendid circles run;
 Thence mark'd, the whole in paths concentric dance,
 And wheel harmonious through the blue expanse;
 World after world, to Herschel's farthest bound,
 Rolls on resplendent in eternal round.

Grant that all moral evil may arise,
 Alike for purposes both good and wise;
 That pain and sickness, penury and distress,
 Are mercies in disguise, design'd to bless;
 To blinded man unreal wrong appears,
 When vice exults, and virtue pines in tears;
 That all the scourges earth is doom'd to feel,
 The conqueror's sword, th' assassin's gory steel,
 War, pestilence, and famine's shrivell'd band,
 Fell Discord's torch, the incendiary's brand,
 Power's blood-stain'd robe, the proud oppressor's rod,
 May turn to blessings in the hand of God.
 E'en death itself, the last of human woes,
 May kindly come, life's weary way to close,
 And ope the portals to eternal joys,
 While earth's frail hopes his withering hand destroys.

So holy Faith, bright spirit of the sky,
 Fixes on heaven, her meek uplifted eye,
 Her own blind will to chasten, humbly learns,
 Some just design in weal or woe discerns,
 Subjects to Providence rebellious pride,
 And bids vain man in God alone confide.

Clear is the light her vision sheds around,
 No schemes perplex, no mysteries confound,
 In all she sees, celestial wisdom blends,
 And present ill in future blessing ends,
 Judgment and mercy in her trials meet,
 And every wish lies prostrate at her feet.

But to the happy few alone is given,
 This bright perspective of the ways of heaven;
 And man too oft, with sordid passions blind,
 Creates those evils, which he does not find :
 Thus life, how bright so'er its current flows,
 Teems with its thousand visionary woes.
 Imagination, like the wizard's glass,
 Imparts its hues to objects as they pass,
 And grave or gay, the changing scene depends,
 Most on the colors, which the medium lends.

Oft pallid fear the craven mind o'erspreads,
 Her sickly influence on the vision sheds,
 Discolors, mars, distorts, and magnifies,
 The goodliest forms and images that rise.
 Suspicion's credulous, distrustful eye,
 Self-torturing envy, base-born jealousy,
 Each to imagination lends a shade,
 And shifts the prospect, through her lens survey'd.
 Still deeper tints black melancholy throws
 O'er human life, and doubles all its woes ;
 And thus the meaner passions, feelings tend,
 To swell the ills, that with our being blend.

Nor these alone ; but circumstance oft flings
 A varying shadow o'er our views of things :
 Disease's pale and ghastly group may come,
 Unnerve the soul, and shed a cheerless gloom ;
 Misfortune, want, and hopeless penury scan,
 With clouded ken, the checquered lot of man ;
 Dark Superstition's myriad phantoms dance,
 In fearful shapes, before her votary's glance,
 And teach his heart, that penance, pain, and ill
 Were meant his earthly pilgrimage to fill.
 Vice too, the monster arm'd with scorpion stings,
 Mantles with shade Imagination's wings,
 Amidst life's joys, his Gorgon front uprears,
 The guilty breast o'erwhelms with conscious fears,
 To heaven, to earth imparts a sombre cast,
 And shrouds in night the future and the past.

On themes like these, 'twere tedious to prolong
 The philosophic, dry, didactic song,
 Explore each hidden source, each secret cause,
 The mind's immutable, eternal laws,
 Those changeless principles, whence heaven ordains,
 Shall spring our joys, our pleasures, and our pains,
 Dull metaphysics hence ! and let me choose
 Topics more grateful to the devious muse,
 Who heavenward first directs her daring view,
 To boundless voids and liquid fields of blue.
 What though unnumber'd images may throng
 Around her lyre, and court a nobler song—
 The sun, great source of light and life below,
 Whose golden streams from founts perennial flow,

The moon's cold orb, with silver phases bright,
 And stars that gem the canopy of night—
 What though delighted fancy here might rove,
 And tune the string to pleasure, joy, and love ;
 Yet e'en amidst resplendent worlds on high,
 Do not her wayward musings oft descry
 Shadows, that veil the bright ethereal plains,
 And themes to swell imagination's pains ?

Monarchs have mark'd, with dire forebodings sad,
 Yon solar orb, at noon, in sack-cloth clad,
 While o'er their thrones portentous twilight spread,
 And smote the hosts of guilty power with dread.
 Oft too the moon, as up the eastern skies,
 Her ruddy disk, full-orbed, is seen to rise,
 Or when mid heaven, she peerless rides alone,
 And looks in splendor from her cloudless throne,
 While through the shoreless, blue expanse she sails,
 Plunges in shade, and all her beauty veils.
 Mortals no more survey her silver horn,
 Now a dull globe, of light and glory shorn ;
 No more the mountains, valleys, woods, and streams,
 Bask in the lustre of her tranquil beams,
 But o'er the earth a dusky gloom she throws,
 To Fancy's dream presaging future woes.

Far in the west, behold yon baleful star,
 Herald of famine, pestilence, and war !
 Who marks but thinks, as onward in his course
 He drives his car, with blind, resistless force,

Perchance to earth his burning wheels may rush,
 And this fair globe to mighty ruins crush !
 E'en astronomic science may not deem,
 Such fears as these a visionary dream,
 Since countless orbs, in lawless mazes run,
 Rush round the earth, and hail the parent sun.

Oh ! who hath not, in melancholy mood,
 Musing at eve, in some sequestered wood,
 Or where the torrent's foaming waters pour,
 Or ocean's billows murmur on the shore ;—
 Oh ! who hath not in such a moment gaz'd,
 As heaven's bright hosts in cloudless glory blaz'd,
 And felt a sadness steal upon his heart,
 To think that he with this fair scene must part !
 That while those billows heave, those waters flow,
 Those garnish'd skies refulgent still shall glow,
 He that once watch'd them shall have pass'd away,
 His name forgot, his ashes blent with clay,
 Unlike those glittering orbs, those quenchless fires,
 Ordain'd to roll, till time itself expires !

But see afar, through sultry tracts of air,
 Streaming in angry forms, red meteors glare ;
 Athwart the sky, their hissing tresses flash,
 Then down to earth, the molten masses dash ;
 The burning ruin sweeps along the ground,
 And loud the welkin echoes with the sound.

Lo ! where the horizon mingles with the deep,
 Pillowed in clouds, the infant thunders sleep ;

Silence and night precede the coming storm,
 And mid the gloom pale terror lifts his form :
 Now bursts the gathered tempest : torrents pour,
 And hollow winds through shatter'd forests roar ;
 Far through the storm the vivid flashes gleam,
 From cloud to cloud careering volleys stream,
 And thick and fast upon the prostrate world,
 With vengeance wing'd, the angry bolts are hurl'd.

On ocean's cliff, see beauty wild and pale,
 Watching alone the fury of the gale :
 Amid the dangers of the rugged coast,
 She marks her sailor's gallant vessel tost ;
 Frantic with grief, her sunny locks she tears,
 As the red lightning on the breakers glares,
 And o'er the tumult of the boiling deep,
 Mad whirlwinds howl, and dark tornadoes sweep.
 Shall she, delighted, hear the tempest rave,
 And list the murmurs of the dashing wave !
 Think ye the grandeur of the scene can charm
 Her heart, that throbs at every gust alarm !

Behold yon volumes of sulphurous smoke,
 Roll in black wreaths, and heaven with vapour choke !
 The mountain trembles, and the earth afar
 Feels the dread shock of elemental war ;
 Loud roars the ocean, and the mingled din
 Breaks on the ear from rumbling caves within :
 Then flames the crater : to the skies aspire
 The liquid gushes of volcanic fire.

Aghast the peasant of Campania stands,
 And mourns his ruin'd cot, his deluged lands,
 Perchance his wife, his children's hapless doom,
 Buried in flame, and hurried to the tomb.
 While his lorn bosom is with anguish wrung,
 Cares he what bards the scene sublime have sung?
 How many Plinies once admired the sight,
 Its grandeur trac'd, then perish'd in delight?

But hark!—in southern climes along the ground,
 Like distant thunders, runs a hollow sound :
 Wide and more wide extends the sullen jar,
 As when conflicting chariots rush to war ;
 Rocks, woods, and plains the wild commotion feel,
 And the tall Andes to their bases reel ;
 In mountain waves, the undulating lea
 Heaves, like the tossings of a troubled sea ;
 Impending ruin mocks the force of art,
 And ghastly terror seizes every heart.
 Then yawns the fathomless abyss, and down
 At once are hurled the works of old renown,
 The monuments of ages ; all that man,
 His genius, taste, and luxury could plan :
 All, all in one promiscuous grave repose,
 O'er which the earth, and gushing waters close,
 And hence along the stagnant lake and plain,
 Shall solitude and desolation reign.

Oh ! who hath not in fancy trod alone,
 The trackless deserts of the burning zone,

Nor felt a dreariness oppress his soul,
 To mark the sands in eddies round him roll,
 Like ocean's billows, threatening to o'erwhelm,
 His wilder'd march, through many a weary realm ?
 No verdure smiles, no crystal fountains play,
 To quench the arrows of the god of day,
 No breezy lawns, no cool, meandering streams,
 Allay the fervor of his torrid beams ;
 No whispering zephyrs fan the glowing skies ;
 But o'er long tracts the mournful siroc sighs,
 Whose desolating march, whose withering breath
 Sweeps through the caravan with instant death :
 The wandering Arab, startled at the sound,
 Mantles his face, and presses close the ground,
 Till o'er his prostrate, weary limbs hath pass'd,
 In sullen gusts, the poison-wafting blast.

'Tis night : but there the sparkling heavens diffuse
 No genial showers, no soft-distilling dews ;
 In the hot sky, the stars, of lustre shorn,
 Burn o'er the pathway of the wanderer lorn,
 And the red moon, from Babelmandel's strand,
 Looks, as she climbs, through pyramids of sand,
 That whirl'd aloft, and gilded by her light,
 Blaze the lone beacons of the desert night.
 From distant wilds is heard the dismal howl
 Of hideous monsters, that in darkness prowl :
 Urg'd by gaunt famine from his lair and home,
 Along the waste, the tiger's footsteps roam,

And from afar, the fierce hyena's scream
At midnight breaks the traveller's fitful dream.

Hence let us haste—from torrid climes like these,
To frozen regions and to arctic seas,
Where the pale sun emits his feeble light,
Or hides his orb, and leaves the world in night :
Realms where the glittering ice-berg, tempest-tost,
Tumbles and thunders round the polar coast,
And bound by frost, the adventurous bark in vain,
Steers for her home, across the wintry main.
Athwart her way, tremendous mountains roll,
And storms of sleet come driving from the pole :
Pierc'd by the keenness of the biting air,
To heaven the sea-boy lifts his suppliant prayer,
Then sinks forever in the angry surge,
The deep his grave, the sigh of winds his dirge.

In climes more blest, may not the wayward mind
Themes for imagination's tortures find ?
Come, thrud with me the Oronoco's swamps,
And breathe its noisome, pestilential damps—
Fens, where the basking alligator sleeps,
The serpent hisses, and the lizard creeps—
Pools mantling thick, with loathsome reptiles rife,
Whose stagnant waters teem with nascent life,
Whence countless swarms of animalcules spring,
Warm into day, and warp upon the wing.

Hence, at what time the sultry Sirian star
Wheels o'er the world his pestilential car,

Or when in torrents pour autumnal rains,
 Deluge the earth, and steam from stagnant plains,
 Hence pale disease, and death terrific come,
 Their victims hurrying to a timeless tomb ;
 And chief, the throng of fevers, hideous band !
 Scourge of the south, that desolate the land :
 Hence have I seen, the foremost of the train,
 The furious conqueror* hold his dismal reign,
 Along those waste, depopulated shores,
 Where to the sea, the silver Hudson pours,
 And the proud city lifts its gorgeous pile
 Of domes and spires, to crown the wave-girt isle.
 Humbled to dust, in that disastrous hour,
 Sunk all her pride, her glory, pomp, and power :
 No more the joyous crew their canvas furl'd,
 Rich with the gather'd commerce of the world,
 Nor leap'd the sailor, eager of the land,
 To greet his kindred, on his native strand ;
 But every gale, and every tainted breeze,
 Breath'd pestilence, and wafted fell disease.
 From street to street, the dire contagion sped,
 Before its march, the crowd afrighted fled,
 Nor lingering paused to take a last farewell
 Of friends and kindred, who around them fell.
 Sad scene !—the cheerful, busy din no more
 Was heard beside the solitary shore ;
 No bustling throng, intent on pleasure, rush'd ;
 But thoughtless gaiety and mirth were hush'd,

* Yellow Fever.

And through deserted dwellings, drear and lone,
 Dull silence reign'd, or rung the hollow groan.
 Frequent by night was heard the rumbling jar
 Of the black hearse, or mercenary car,
 That weary of its loathsome burden, sped,
 And hurried to the grave th' unhonored dead.

Behold yon ruin!—once 'twas beauty's form,
 With life, with hope, with animation warm,
 A father's joy, a mother's darling pride,
 Dearer to one, than all the world beside!
 The rose has wither'd : sallow paleness now
 Sits on that faded cheek, that polish'd brow ;
 No more those eyes shall sparkle with a tear,
 No more the accents of those lips endear ;
 Nor that pure bosom, spotless as its snow,
 Heave with the sigh of sympathetic woe !
 From raging pestilence, while others fled,
 Her angel form still hover'd round the bed,
 To soothe the couch of anguish and despair,
 And cheer the parting spirit with her prayer !

But much too long in NATURE's field, the muse
 From scene to scene, her devious path pursues :
 Hence let her turn, and briefly in her strain,
 Rehearse the MORAL SOURCES of our pain.

O ! thou eternal Being, pure and bright !
 Who dwell'st on high, in uncreated light,
 Around whose throne the hymning seraphs sing,
 And choirs of angels sweep the golden string ;

Who, crown'd with glory, sitt'st above the spheres,
 Unchanged, unchangeable by rolling years,
 And from the fountain of exhaustless love,
 Pour'st down thy streams of mercy from above !
 Sole refuge of the mind, when cares distress,
 And on the heart life's thickening sorrows press,
 How hast thyself, obscurely seen below,
 Been made by man the bitter source of woe !
 Through reason's glass, perfections half discern'd,
 Are lost in shade, or into dimness turn'd,
 And what the image wants, when thus descry'd,
 Is promptly sketch'd in tints of human pride.

Hence Superstition has in every clime,
 Those structures rear'd, which triumph over time,
 And stand as beacons age has left behind,
 To mark the blindness, folly, of mankind,
 Who, lost in darkness, hew'd their gods of stone,
 And rais'd their tyrant idols to a throne,
 Or form'd them deities, whom fear had made,
 In lawless kings and despots they obey'd.
 Hence rose that mighty fabric of the mind,
 By Egypt's priests, and Grecian bards design'd,
 Which, like the frowning pyramids of Nile,
 Survives a rude and antiquated pile.
 Luxuriant Fancy, favor'd by a clime,
 Where all she saw was beauteous or sublime,
 Half grave, half sportive, wantoning in thought,
 Those mythologic dreams and fictions wrought ;
 Or in a barbarous age, perchance reviv'd
 Glimmerings of truth, from other lands deriv'd.

'Twas she that fill'd the skies, the earth, and seas
 With mystic powers, her own divinities,
 Till every mountain, every grove she trod,
 And every stream was haunted by a god :
 Folly ador'd, and Superstition knelt
 To imag'd passions bards had only felt.
 Imagination's gay or gloomy spell,
 Now made a paradise, and now a hell,
 Elysian isles, where joy forever reigns,
 Or realms resounding with eternal pains.
 Hence Pluto's shadowy throne and empire sprung,
 And fabled woes, by ancient poets sung,
 Orcus, and Styx, and lakes with burning shores,
 And walls of adamant, and brazen doors,
 The cup of Tantalus, with toils that mock
 His burning lip ; the vulture and the rock,
 The stone of Sisyphus, Ixion's wheel,
 And all the tortures damned spirits feel :
 These, and the thousand woes, by heathen creeds
 Ordained in punishment of guilty deeds,
 Are but the shadows genius has design'd,
 To paint that hell, which lives within the mind.

Thrice happy age, when truth's resistless sway
 Hath swept these wild, fantastic dreams away,
 And light unclouded, beaming from above,
 Reveals a faith of purity and love.
 Oh ! speed that epoch, that millennial time,
 When God's own word shall spread from clime to clime ;
 When the bright star of Bethlehem shall illumine
 The earth, scattering the darkness of the tomb,

The bloodless banner of the cross unfurl'd,
 Shall wave in triumph o'er the peaceful world,
 And from the rising to the setting sun,
 All realms, uniting, mingle into one !

Then Superstition shall erect no more
 Her pagan altars, stain'd with human gore ;
 No hecatombs shall burn, no victims bleed,
 No bloody rites fulfil a barbarous creed,
 But the pure incense of the heart shall rise,
 And breathe to heaven a grateful sacrifice.
 Then jarring sects from bitter strife shall cease,
 Forget their feuds, and harmonize in peace ;
 Nor then, as now, with rage and passion blind,
 A separate heaven, a variant godhead find.
 Man shall not then his brother doom to feel
 The bigots' scourge, the faggot, and the wheel,
 Or plunge in dungeons, hopeless and alone,
 Damn'd for a creed, not fashion'd like his own ;
 But in that day, discordant hearts shall blend,
 And all before one common altar bend,
 Till christian love, shall in her wide embrace,
 Hold as one brotherhood the human race.

Who without pain surveys the historic page,
 Black with ambition, tyranny, and rage,
 With ign'rance, error, luxury, lust, and pride,
 Virtue depress'd, and baseness deified !
 Tracts of long centuries, barren, waste, and drear,
 With few memorials to direct or cheer !—

Empires and realms, o'er which the wing of time
 Hath swept, and left no trace save that of crime—
 Cities in ruin sunk, despoil'd by war
 To swell the trophies of some conqueror's car ;
 Remnants of art and splendor, which the lust
 Of wanton rule hath trampled in the dust—
 Regions of desolation, fields of fame
 Crimsoned with blood, to win a hero's name.
 Such is the record of past ages, fill'd
 With tales of woe, by which the heart is chill'd,
 Deeds from whose dye recoils the sickened mind,
 And asks, are these the annals of mankind ?

E'en at this liberal epoch, when the light
 Of knowledge beams, and freedom claims her right,
 What relics still of barbarous times remain,
 And fill the philanthropic breast with pain !
 What hordes of slaves some lawless despot own,
 Bow to his rod, and crouch beneath his throne !
 What countless millions struggling to be free,
 Demand in vain the boon of Liberty !
 Such, hapless Naples ! such, inglorious Spain,
 Thy fate !—still doom'd to wear the oppressor's chain,
 Which hearts ignoble tamely sought to burst,
 By cowardice and treachery doubly curst !

E'en while I sing, war's hurtling tempest raves
 On Grecian plains, and o'er the Egean waves ;
 The flag of freedom from Olympus streams,
 Through Tempe's vale the blaze of cannon gleams,

Around Parnassus' brow the battle rings,
 And purple currents dye Castalian springs ;
 To new Plateas modern heroes rush,
 And new Thermopylæ with carnage gush.
 Oh ! be the conflict worthy of the sires,
 Whose altars blaz'd with freedom's holy fires ;
 Who spurning luxury's seductive charms,
 Flew to the field, and died in glory's arms.
 Still may their spirits urge the phalanx on,
 Till every plain becomes a Marathon ;
 Till sinks the crescent, and the cross shall wave
 Triumphant o'er the humbled Moslem's grave,
 And freedom, peace, and independence smile,
 On every hill, through every sea-born isle.

Shade of departed genius ! can I turn
 From Greece, without a tribute to thine urn :
 Byron ! sad illustration of my theme !
 Haunted and curst by fancy's wildering dream ;
 With talents, learning, fortune, honors blest,
 The idol of the world, and yet its jest ;
 A peer, a vagrant ; husband without wife ;
 Lord of estates, a houseless bard for life ;
 Pride of thy friends, and of thy native land,
 A wandering exile on a foreign strand ;
 For greatness, usefulness, and glory born,
 First winning wreaths, then trampling them in scorn ;
 The friend of freedom, generous, bold, and brave,
 To nothing save thy wayward will a slave.
 Peace to thy shade !—thy troubled dreams are o'er :
 The world shall praise, condemn, admire no more.

But long thy memory shall be ador'd,
 In that fair land, for which thou drew'st thy sword,
 And Doric maidens, round thy Parian shrine,
 Their pæans chant, and wreaths of glory twine.

In our blest clime, in Freedom's own domain,
 Exist no wrongs, to give the bosom pain?—
 Hark! in the murmurs of the southern gale,
 Breaks on the ear, the negro's hollow wail.
 I hear the driver's lash, the dismal clank
 Of chains, resound along Missouri's bank,
 As on he hastens to the sable fold,
 His herd of victims, to be bought and sold :
 I see the slave, in mind, in soul akin—
 In all, beside the tincture of the skin,
 Doom'd, like the brute, to turn the arid soil,
 In hopeless, thankless, unrequited toil :
 I see him weary, at the beat of drum,
 His only curfew, hurried to his home,
 To find in dreams, upon his bed of straw,
 A land of right, of liberty, and law !
 Remorseless servitude, of ills the worst,
 Of crimes the deepest, with which earth is curst !
 Let the kind master mingle as he will
 The bitter chalice, it is slavery still !
 The hand of mercy cannot pluck the thorn,
 That arms the pillow of the wretch forlorn,
 Nor bland philanthropy assuage the pain,
 Or dry the tear, of him who wears a chain.
 Shame on progenitors, whose crimes entail'd
 A blot, a curse their children have bewail'd !

Shame that one man, who breathes th' inspiring air
 Of freedom, and who tastes her boon, should dare
 To lift his voice, the advocate of wrong,
 And seek, from sordid pretexts, to prolong
 This stain upon a country, great and free,
 Glorious in arts and arms, the home of Liberty!

No other blots are there, to mar the page
 Of our bright annals?—none upon this age?
 Who sees, without a pang, the feuds, the strife
 Of party burst the ties of social life—
 Those mutual, tender charities that cheer
 The generous breast, and man to man endear?
 Unmoved, who sees these sever'd, and the crowd
 Of venal politicians, boisterous, loud,
 In faction fierce, tumultuous, fired with zeal,
 More from self-interest, than the public weal?

Hence at some future day, perchance shall spring
 Fierce civil wars; the din of battle ring,
 Echoing from hill to hill, from flood to flood,
 State after state be drench'd in civic blood,
 Till liberty's proud fabric, which the world
 Admiring sees, to ruin shall be hurl'd;
 Our eagle cower from his aerial height,
 Fame, learning, glory, sink in Gothic night,
 Freedom expire, and o'er her wide domain,
 Some Alexander, or some Cæsar reign.

Behold the Patriot!—he, whose liberal mind
 Plans to promote the common weal design'd,

Who, toiling for his country, distant seas
 Together join'd, and taught the inland breeze,
 The freighted bark, from Huron's farthest shore,
 To waft new wealth, and golden commerce pour ;—
 He stands condemn'd, proscrib'd ; his laurels torn
 By envious hands, and by pretenders worn,
 While genius, virtue, worth, disdains to rise
 By little arts, which low ambition tries.

But not from public wrong and outrage spring
 Life's deepest woes, and suffering's keenest sting :
Those, as a common lot, we lightly share,
 And from experience, habit, learn to bear ;
 While *these*, peculiar, private, all our own,
 Must rankling live, and be endur'd alone.
 The bitterest streams of pain and anguish flow
 From hidden fountains, few or none may know ;
 Or if reveal'd, can lenient friendship heal,
 Or sympathy assuage, the pang we feel ?—
 No : these are sorrows, rooted in the heart,
 That waste its core, and mock the power of art.

Such have I seen, in yon sequester'd dome,
 The abode of misery, the maniac's home.
 Hark ! from the dismal, solitary cell,
 The madden'd laugh, the shrieks of anguish swell,
 Low mutter'd words, the deep convulsive scream,
 At hideous spectres, in life's waking dream !

To yonder recess, haggard, wan, and wild,
 Shrinks the lorn shade of Nature's artless child !

Dishevell'd tresses veil her brow, her face,
 Where once enthron'd sat every nameless grace,
 And still where fancy might enamoured find,
 The lingering traces of a polished mind,
 Gilding at times each feature, like the ray
 Of sun-set, fading from some ruin grey.
 Chains and disordered garments bind her limbs,
 And her dark eye in frantic wildness swims,
 Her voice, whose silver tones erewhile could charm,
 Now fills the soul with horror and alarm !
 Such is her guise : Oh ! who can paint the rest,
 The scorpion passions writhing in her breast,
 Her brain, o'er which bewilder'd fancy flings
 Fantastic and disjointed shapes of things,
 Some cherish'd look, some half-remember'd thought,
 Mingled with images, by phrensy wrought !
 Ill-fated maniac !—once perchance she lov'd,
 And he that might have bless'd her, faithless prov'd ;
 Or both were lost by constancy too firm,
 A canker planted in the opening germ,
 By some relentless guardian, measuring worth
 By stocks and rents, by family and birth,
 Whose sordid soul ne'er rose above his pelf,
 Nor form'd a wish, which centred not in self,
 Devoid alike of feeling and of sense,
 Save just enough to reckon up his pence.
 Lives such a wretch ?—misfortune's curses light
 Upon his gold, his schemes of av'rice blight,
 Till want, his only devil, wring his brain,
 With pangs as keen, as cross'd affection's pain.

Along these haunted halls, these dreary walks,
 Mark where the living ghost of genius stalks,
 Muttering his wild vagaries, as he goes,
 Press'd by the load of heart-consuming woes.
 Perhaps his hand the minstrel harp hath strung,
 Or on his accents listening senates hung ;
 Perhaps his tongue hath thunder'd forth the law,
 And shook the forum, or the desk with awe ;
 Or bade the invaders of his country yield,
 To deeds of daring on the gory field :
 But what avails him now a glorious name,
 The meed of honor, or the wreath of fame !
 Reft from his brow, the wither'd bay is sere,
 And clustering laurels can no longer cheer :
 Yet still in life his mimic part he plays,
 As o'er him flits the dream of other days,
 Still wakes the lyre, harrangues the fancied throng,
 Or hurls the thunder-bolt of war along.

Brothers ! unsung, one only task remains,
 Last of Imagination's feverish pains—
 The conscious thought, which weighs upon my heart,
 That, hence in life to meet no more, we part !
 That with the social, literary few,
 Whose friendly presence cheers to-day my view,
 Hence shall I tread the academic scene
 No more, nor we in learning's halls convene ;
 But lingering, bid to Dartmouth's spires adieu ;
 And life's diverging, checquer'd paths pursue !

Ye rural walks, ye hills, sequester'd glades,
Ye haunted streams, and consecrated shades,
Groves hallowed by the muse, and classic bowers,
Scenes of my early, and my happiest hours,
Farewell!—to me your unalloy'd delights,
Those days of study, and those attic nights,
Philosophy and science, ancient lore,
And wisdom's lessons—shall return no more!
One bright reflection yields the parting tear,
That still the chosen few shall linger here,
Still o'er the Muses' vestal rites preside,
In generous friendship, high pursuits, allied,
Maintain our brotherhood, with generous aim,
And guard our ALPHA's, and our ALMA's fame.

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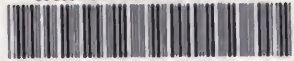
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