
T R U T H.

Pensetur trutinâ. HOR.

MA N on the dubious waves of error tofs'd,
His ship half founde'r'd and his compass lost,
Sees far as human optics may command,
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land:
Spreads all his canvass, ev'ry finew plies,
Pants for it, aims at it, enters it, and dies.
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
His well-built systems, philosophic dreams,

Deceit-

Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell !

He reads his sentence at the flames of hell.

Hard lot of man ! to toil for the reward
Of virtue, and yet lose it—wherefore hard ?

He that would win the race, must guide his horse

Obedient to the customs of the course,

Else, though unequall'd to the goal he flies,

A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.

Grace leads the right way, if you chuse the wrong,

Take it and perish, but restrain your tongue ;

Charge not, with light sufficient and left free,

Your willful suicide on God's decree.

Oh how unlike the complex works of man,

Heav'n's easy, artless, unincumber'd plan !

No meretricious graces to beguile,

No clust'ring ornaments to clog the pile,

From ostentation as from weakness free,

It stands like the cærulean arch we see,

Majestic in its own simplicity.

Inscrib'd above the portal, from afar

Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,

Legible only by the light they give,
 Stand the foul-quick'ning words—BELIEVE AND
 LIVE.

Too many shock'd at what should charm them most,
 Despise the plain direction and are lost.
 Heav'n on such terms ! they cry with proud disdain,
 Incredible, impossible, and vain—
 Rebel because 'tis easy to obey,
 And scorn for its own sake the gracious way.
 These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
 Some thought of immortality remains ;
 The rest too busy or too gay, to wait
 On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
 Sport for a day and perish in a night,
 The foam upon the waters not so light.

Who judg'd the Pharisee ? What odious cause
 Expos'd him to the vengeance of the laws ?
 Had he seduc'd a virgin, wrong'd a friend,
 Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end ?
 Was blasphemy his sin ? Or did he stray
 From the strict duties of the sacred day ?

Sit long and late at the carousing board ?

(Such were the sins with which he charg'd his Lord)

No—the man's morals were exact, what then ?

'Twas his ambition to be seen of men ;

His virtues were his pride ; and that one vice

Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price ;

He wore them as fine trappings for a show,

A praying, synagogue frequenting beau.

The self-applauding bird, the peacock see—

Mark what a sumptuous Pharisee is he !

Meridian sun-beams tempt him to unfold

His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold ;

He treads as if some solemn music near,

His measur'd step were govern'd by his ear,

And seems to say, ye meaner fowl, give place,

I am all splendor, dignity and grace.

Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,

Though he too has a glory in his plumes.

He, christian like, retreats with modest mien,

To the close copse or far sequester'd green,

And shines without desiring to be seen.

The

The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,
 Heav'n turns from with abhorrence and disdain;
 Not more affronted by avow'd neglect,
 Than by the mere dissemblers feign'd respect.
 What is all righteousness that men devise,
 What, but a sordid bargain for the skies?
 But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,
 As stoop from heav'n to sell the proud a throne.

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock,
 Book, beads, and maple-dish his meagre stock,
 In shirt of hair and weeds of canvass dress'd,
 Girt with a bell-rope that the Pope has bless'd,
 Aduft with stripes told out for ev'ry crime,
 And sore tormented long before his time,
 His pray'r preferr'd to saints that cannot aid,
 His praise postpon'd, and never to be paid,
 See the sage hermit by mankind admir'd,
 With all that bigotry adopts, inspir'd,
 Wearing out life in his religious whim,
 'Till his religious whimsy wears out him.

His

His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd,
 You think him humble, God accounts him proud;
 High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
 Of all his conduct, this the genuine sense—
 My penitential stripes, my streaming blood
 Have purchas'd heav'n, and prove my title good.

Turn eastward now, and fancy shall apply
 To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
 The Bramin kindles on his own bare head
 The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade,
 His voluntary pains, severe and long,
 Would give a barb'rous air to British song,
 Nor grand inquisitor could worse invent,
 Than he contrives to suffer, well content.

Which is the faintlier worthy of the two?
 Past all dispute, yon anchorite say you.
 Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name?
 I say the Bramin has the fairer claim,
 If suff'rings scripture no where recommends,
 Devis'd by self to answer selfish ends

Give

Give faintship, then all Europe must agree,
Ten starvling hermits suffer less than he.

The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
And prejudice have left a passage clear)
Pride has attain'd its most luxuriant growth,
And poison'd every virtue in them both.
Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows lean ;
Humility may cloath an English Dean ;
That grace was Cowper's—his confess'd by all—
Though plac'd in golden Durham's second stall.
Not all the plenty of a Bishop's board,
His palace, and his lacqueys, and, my Lord !
More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
Than abstinence, and beggary and lice.
It thrives in misery, and abundant grows
In misery fools upon themselves impose.

But why before us Protestants produce
An Indian mystic or a French recluse ?
Their sin is plain, but what have we to fear,
Reform'd and well instructed ? You shall hear.

Yon

Yon antient prude, whose wither'd features show
 She might be young some forty years ago,
 Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,
 Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
 Her eye-brows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray
 To watch yon am'rous couple in their play,
 With boney and unkerchief'd neck defies
 The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
 And sails with lappet-head and mincing airs
 Duely at clink of bell, to morning pray'rs.
 To thrift and parsimony much inclin'd,
 She yet allows herself that boy behind ;
 The shiv'ring urchin, bending as he goes,
 With slipshod heels, and dew drop at his nose,
 His predecessors coat advanc'd to wear,
 Which future pages are yet doom'd to share,
 Carries her bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
 And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

She, half an angel in her own account,
 Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,

Though

Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
 But that she fasts, and item, goes to church.
 Conscious of age she recollects her youth,
 And tells, not always with an eye to truth,
 Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came,
 Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name,
 Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,
 And drank the little bumper ev'ry day.
 Of temper as invenom'd as an asp,
 Cenforious, and her every word a wasp,
 In faithful mem'ry she records the crimes
 Or real, or fictitious, of the times,
 Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
 And holds them dangling at arms length in scorn.

Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
 Of malice fed while flesh is mortified.
 Take, Madam, the reward of all your pray'rs,
 Where hermits and where Bramins meet with
 theirs,
 Your portion is with them : nay, never frown,
 But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.

Artist attend—your brushes and your paint—
 Produce them—take a chair—now draw a Saint,
 Oh sorrowful and sad ! the streaming tears
 Channel her cheeks, a Niobe appears.

Is this a Saint ? Throw tints and all away,
 True piety is chearful as the day,
 Will weep indeed and heave a pitying groan
 For others woes, but smiles upon her own.

What purpose has the King of Saints in view ?
 Why falls the gospel like a gracious dew ?
 To call up plenty from the teeming earth,
 Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth ?
 Is it that Adam's offspring may be sav'd
 From servile fear, or be the more enslav'd ?
 To loose the links that gall'd mankind before,
 Or bind them faster on, and add still more ?
 The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,
 Or if a chain, the golden one of love ;
 No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
 What fear he feels his gratitude inspires.

Shall

Shall he for such deliv'rance freely wrought,
 Recompense ill? He trembles at the thought :
 His masters int'rest and his own combin'd,
 Prompt ev'ry movement of his heart and mind ;
 Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,
 His freedom is the freedom of a Prince.

Man's obligations infinite, of course
 His life should prove that he perceives their force,
 His utmost he can render is but small,
 The principle and motive all in all.
 You have two servants—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,
 From top to toe the Geta now in vogue ;
 Genteel in figure, easy in address,
 Moves without noise, and swift as an express,
 Reports a message with a pleasing grace,
 Expert in all the duties of his place :
 Say, on what hinge does his obedience move?
 Has he a world of gratitude and love?
 No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharpeners play ;
 He likes your house, your housemaid and your pay ;

Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
Tom quits you, with, your most obedient Sir—

The dinner serv'd, Charles takes his usual stand,
Watches your eye, anticipates command,
Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail,
And if he but suspects a frown, turns pale;
Consults all day your int'rest and your ease,
Richly rewarded if he can but please,
And proud to make his firm attachment known,
To save your life would nobly risque his own.
Now, which stands highest in your serious
thought?

Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he
ought;

One act that from a thankful heart proceeds,
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.

Thus heav'n approves as honest and sincere,
The work of gen'rous love and filial fear,
But with averted eyes th'omniscient judge,
Scorns the base hireling and the slavish drudge.

Where

Where dwell these matchless Saints? Old

Curio cries—

Ev'n at your side, Sir, and before your eyes,
 The favour'd few, th' enthusiasts you despise.
 And pleas'd at heart because on holy ground,
 Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,
 Reproach a people with his single fall,
 And cast his filthy raiment at them all,
 Attend—an apt similitude shall show,
 Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.

See where it smoaks along the sounding plain,
 Blown all afloat, a driving dashing rain,
 Peal upon peal redoubling all around,
 Shakes it again and faster to the ground,
 Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,
 Swift beyond thought the light'nings dart away;
 Ere yet it came the traveller urg'd his steed,
 And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed,
 Now drench'd throughout, and hopeless of his
 case,

He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace;

Suppose, unlook'd for in a scene so rude,
 Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
 Some mansion neat and elegantly dress'd,
 By some kind hospitable heart possess'd,
 Offer him warmth, security and rest ;
 Think with what pleasure, safe and at his ease,
 He hears the tempest howling in the trees,
 What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,
 While danger past is turn'd to present joy.
 So fares it with the sinner when he feels,
 A growing dread of vengeance at his heels,
 His conscience like a glassy lake before,
 Lash'd into foaming waves begins to roar,
 The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
 Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong,
 Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,
 And death or restitution is the word ;
 The last impossible, he fears the first,
 And having well deserv'd, expects the worst
 Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home,
 Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come !

Crush me ye rocks, ye falling mountains hide,
 Or bury me in oceans angry tide—
 The scrutiny of those all seeing eyes
 I dare not—and you need not, God replies ;
 The remedy you want I freely give,
 The book shall teach you, read, believe and live :
 'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,
 Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore,
 And justice, guardian of the dread command,
 Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.
 A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise,
 Hence the complexion of his future days,
 Hence a demeanor holy and unspeck'd,
 And the world's hatred as its sure effect.

Some lead a life unblameable and just,
 Their own dear virtue, their unshaken trust.
 They never sin—or if (as all offend)
 Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
 The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
 A slight gratuity atones for all.

For though the Pope has lost his int'rest here,
 And pardons are not sold as once they were,
 No Papist more desirous to compound,
 Than some grave sinners upon English ground :
 That plea refuted, other quirks they seek,
 Mercy is infinite and man is weak,
 The future shall obliterate the past,
 And heav'n no doubt shall be their home at last.

Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear,
 He has no hope that never had a fear ;
 And he that never doubted of his state,
 He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare,
 Learning is one, and wit, however rare :
 The Frenchman first in literary fame,
 (Mention him if you please—Voltaire ? The same)
 With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied,
 Liv'd long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily and died :
 The scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon mots to gall the Christian and the Jew :

An infidel in health, but what when sick ?
 Oh then, a text would touch him at the quick :
 View him at Paris in his last career,
 Surrounding throngs the demi-god revere,
 Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
 And fum'd with frankincense on ev'ry side,
 He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
 And smother'd in't at last, is prais'd to death.

Yon cottager who weaves at her own door,
 Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
 Content though mean, and chearful, if not gay,
 Shuffling her threads about the live-long day,
 Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
 Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;
 She for her humble sphere by nature fit,
 Has little understanding, and no wit,
 Receives no praise, but (though her lot be such,
 Toilsome and indigent) she renders much ;
 Just knows, and knows no more, her bible true,
 A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,

And

And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.

Oh happy peasant ! Oh unhappy bard !
His the mere tinsel, her's the rich reward ;
He prais'd perhaps for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home ;
He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She safe in the simplicity of hers.

Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
In science, win one inch of heav'nly ground ;
And is it not a mortifying thought
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not ?
No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
One pleasure lost, lose heav'n without regret ;
Regret would rouse them and give birth to pray'r,
Pray'r would add faith, and faith would fix them
there.

Not that the Former of us all in this,
Or aught he does, is govern'd by caprice,
The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.

Not

Not so—the silver trumpet's heav'nly call,
 Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all;
 Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
 No slaves on earth more welcome were than they:
 But royalty, nobility, and state,
 Are such a dead preponderating weight,
 That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem)
 In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
 'Tis open and ye cannot enter—why?
 Because ye will not, Conyers would reply—
 And he says much that many may dispute
 And cavil at with ease, but none refute.
 Oh bless'd effect of penury and want,
 The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant!
 No soil like poverty for growth divine,
 As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
 Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
 To nourish pride or turn the weakest head:
 To them, the founding jargon of the schools,
 Seems what it is, a cap and bells for fools:

The

The light they walk by, kindled from above,
Shows them the shortest way to life and love :
They, strangers to the controversial field,
Where deists always foil'd, yet scorn to yield,
And never check'd by what impedes the wise,
Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.

Envy ye great the dull unletter'd small,
Ye have much cause for envy—but not all ;
We boast some rich ones whom the gospel sways,
And one that wears a coronet and prays ;
Like gleanings of an olive tree they show,
Here and there one upon the topmost bough.

How readily upon the gospel plan,
That question has its answer—what is man ?
Sinful and weak, in ev'ry sense a wretch,
An instrument whose chords upon the stretch
And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear,
Yield only discord in his maker's ear :
Once the blest residence of truth divine,
Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,

Where

Where in his own oracular abode,
 Dwelt visibly the light-creating God;
 But made long since like Babylon of old,
 A den of mischiefs never to be told :
 And she, once mistress of the realms around,
 Now scatter'd wide and no where to be found,
 As soon shall rise and re-ascend the throne,
 By native pow'r and energy her own,
 As nature at her own peculiar cost,
 Restore to man the glories he has lost.
 Go bid the winter cease to chill the year,
 Replace the wand'ring comet in his sphere,
 Then boast (but wait for that unhop'd-for hour)
 The self-restoring arm of human pow'r.
 But what is man in his own proud esteem?
 Hear him, himself the poet and the theme;
 A monarch cloath'd with majesty and awe,
 His mind his kingdom and his will his law,
 Grace in his mien and glory in his eyes,
 Supreme on earth and worthy of the skies,

Strength

Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a God.

So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and
form,

The song magnificent, the theme a worm :
Himself so much the source of his delight,
His maker has no beauty in his sight :
See where he sits contemplative and fixt,
Pleasure and wonder in his features mixt,
His passions tam'd and all at his controul,
How perfect the composure of his soul !
Complacency has breath'd a gentle gale
O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail :
His books well trimm'd and in the gayest stile,
Like regimented coxcombs rank and file,
Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
And teach him notions splendid as themselves :
The bible only stands neglected there,
Though that of all most worthy of his care,
And like an infant, troublesome awake,
Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.

What shall the man deserve of human kind,
 Whose happy skill and industry combin'd,
 Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
 The bible an imposture and a cheat?
 The praises of the libertine profess'd,
 The worst of men, and curses of the best.
 Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes,
 The dying, trembling at their awful close,
 Where the betray'd, forsaken and oppress'd,
 The thousands whom the world forbids to rest,
 Where should they find (those comforts at an end
 The scripture yields) or hope to find a friend?
 Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
 And seeking exile from the sight of men,
 Bury herself in solitude profound,
 Grow frantic with her pangs and bite the ground.
 Thus often unbelief grown sick of life,
 Flies to the tempting pool or felon knife,
 The jury meet, the coroner is short,
 And lunacy the verdict of the court:

Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
 Such lunacy is ignorance alone ;
 They knew not, what some bishops may not know,
 That scripture is the only cure of woe :
 That field of promise, how it flings abroad
 Its odour o'er the Christians thorny road ;
 The soul reposing on assur'd relief,
 Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
 Forgets her labour as she toils along,
 Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

But the same word that like the polish'd share
 Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
 Kills too the flow'ry weeds wheree'r they grow,
 That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
 Oh that unwelcome voice of heav'nly love,
 Sad messenger of mercy from above,
 How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
 Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear !
 His will and judgment at continual strife,
 That civil war imbitters all his life ;

In

In vain he points his pow'rs against the skies,
 In vain he closes or averts his eyes,
 Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware—
 And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.

Though various foes against the truth combine,
 Pride above all opposes her design;
 Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
 The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest,
 Swells at the thought, and kindling into rage,
 Would hiss the cherub mercy from the stage.

And is the soul indeed so lost, she cries,
 Fall'n from her glory and too weak to rise,
 Torpid and dull beneath a frozen zone,
 Has she no spark that may be deem'd her own?
 Grant her indebted to what zealots call
 Grace undeserv'd; yet surely not for all—
 Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
 Some love of virtue and some pow'r to praise,
 Can lift herself above corporeal things,
 And soaring on her own unborrow'd wings,

Possess herself of all that's good or true,
 Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
 Past indiscretion is a venial crime,
 And if the youth, unmellow'd yet by time,
 Bore on his branch luxuriant then, and rude,
 Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,
 Maturer years shall happier stores produce,
 And meliorate the well concocted juice.
 Then conscious of her meritorious zeal,
 To justice she may make her bold appeal,
 And leave to mercy with a tranquil mind,
 The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.
 Hear then how mercy slighted and defied,
 Retorts th' affront against the crown of pride.

Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorr'd,
 And the fool with it that insults his Lord.
 Th' atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought
 Is not for you, the righteous need it not.
 Seest thou yon harlot wooing all she meets
 The worst out nuisance of the public streets,

Herself

Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
 Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn,
 The gracious show'r, unlimited and free,
 Shall fall on her, when heav'n denies it thee.
 Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift,
 That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.

Is virtue then, unless of christian growth,
 Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both,
 Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,
 For ignorance of what they could not know?
 That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,
 Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.
 Truly not I—the partial light men have,
 My creed persuades me, well employed may save,
 While he that scorns the noon-day beam perverse,
 Shall find the blessing, unimprov'd, a curse.
 Let heathen worthies whose exalted mind,
 Left sensuality and dross behind,
 Possess for me their undisputed lot,
 And take unenvied the reward they sought.

But still in virtue of a Savior's plea,
 Not blind by choice, but destin'd not to see,
 Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
 Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,
 Deriv'd from the same source of light and grace
 That guides the christian in his swifter race ;
 Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law,
 That rule pursued with rev'rence and with awe,
 Led them, however fault'ring, faint and slow,
 From what they knew, to what they wish'd to know ;
 But let not him that shares a brighter day,
 Traduce the splendor of a noon-tide ray,
 Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
 And deem his base stupidity no crime ;
 The wretch that flights the bounty of the skies,
 And sinks while favour'd with the means to rise,
 Shall find them rated at their full amount,
 The good he scorn'd all carried to account.

Marshalling all his terrors as he came,
 Thunder and earthquake and devouring flame,

From

From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law,
 Life for obedience, death for ev'ry flaw.
 When the great sov'reign would his will express,
 He gives a perfect rule ; what can he less ?
 And guards it with a sanction as severe
 As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear :
 Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,
 And man might safely trifle with his name :
 He bids him glow with unremitting love
 To all on earth, and to himself above ;
 Condemns th' injurious deed, the stand'rous tongue,
 The thought that meditates a brother's wrong ;
 Brings not alone, the more conspicuous part,
 His conduct to the test, but tries his heart.

Hark ! universal nature shook and groan'd,
 'Twas the last trumpet—see the judge enthron'd :
 Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
 Now summon ev'ry virtue, stand and plead.
 What, silent ? Is your boasting heard no more ?
 That self-renouncing wisdom learn'd before,

Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
That all your virtues cannot purchase now.

All joy to the believer ! He can speak—
Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek.

Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hop'd, but in thy righteousness divine :
My pray'rs and alms, imperfect and defil'd,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child,
Howe'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart :
Cleans'd in thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil and accept their good ;
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was, dependence upon thee ;
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now.

Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
Humility is crown'd, and faith receives the prize. }