



O D E V.

Hymn to CHEARFULNESS,

The Author Sick.

HOW thick the shades of evening close!

How pale the sky with weight of snows!

Haste, light the tapers, urge the fire,

And bid the joyless day retire!

—Alas, in vain I try within

To raise the dull, dejected scene,

While rous'd by grief these fiery pains

Tear the frail texture of my veins;

While winter's voice, that storms around,

And yon deep death-bell's groaning sound

Renew my mind's oppressive gloom,

'Till starting horror shakes the room!

Is there in nature no kind pow'r
 To sooth affliction's lonely hour?
 To blunt the edge of dire disease,
 And teach these wintry shades to please?
 Come, CHEARFULNESS, triumphant fair,
 Shine thro' the painful cloud of care;
 O sweet of language, mild of mien,
 O virtue's friend and pleasure's queen!
 Assuage the flames that burn my breast,
 Attune my jarring thoughts to rest;
 And while thy gracious gifts I feel,
 My song shall all thy praise reveal.

As once ('twas in ASTRÆA'S reign)
 The vernal pow'rs renew'd their train,
 It happen'd that immortal LOVE
 Was ranging thro' the spheres above,
 And downward hither cast his eye
 The year's returning pomp to spy,

He saw the radiant God of day
 Lead round the globe the rosy MAY;
 The fragrant AIRS and genial HOURS
 Were shedding round him dews and flow'rs;
 Before his wheels AURORA past,
 And HESPER's golden lamp was last.
 But, fairest of the blooming throng,
 When HEALTH majestic mov'd along
 All gay with smiles, to see below
 The joys which from her presence flow,
 While earth inliven'd hears her voice,
 And fields, and flocks, and swains rejoice;
 Then mighty LOVE her charms confess'd,
 And soon his vows inclin'd her breast,
 And, known from that auspicious morn,
 The pleasing CHEARFULNESS was born.

Thou, CHEARFULNESS, by heav'n design'd
 To rule the pulse, that moves the mind,
 Whatever fretful passion springs,
 Whatever chance or nature brings

To strain the tuneful poize within,
 And disarrange the sweet machine,
 Thou, Goddess, with a master-hand
 Dost each attemper'd key command,
 Refine the soft and swell the strong,
 Till all is concord, all is song.

Fair guardian of domestic life,
 Best banisher of homebred strife,
 Nor fullen lip, nor taunting eye
 Deform the scene where thou art by:
 No sick'ning husband damns the hour
 That bound his joys to female pow'r;
 No pining mother weeps the cares
 That parents waste on hopeless heirs:
 Th' officious daughters pleas'd attend;
 The brother rises to the friend:
 By thee their board with flow'rs is crown'd,
 By thee with songs their walks resound,
 By thee their sprightly mornings shine,
 And evening-hours in peace decline.

Behold

Behold the youth, whose trembling heart
 Beats high with love's unpitied smart ;
 Tho' now he strays by rills and bow'rs,
 And weeping wears the lonely hours,
 Or, if the nymph her audience deign,
 Shames the soft story of his pain
 With slavish looks, discolour'd eyes,
 And accents falt'ring into sighs ;
 Yet thou, auspicious pow'r, with ease,
 Can'st yield him happier arts to please,
 Exalt his mien to manlier charms,
 Instruct his tongue with nobler arms,
 With more commanding passion move,
 And teach the dignity of love.

Friend to the Muse and all her train,
 For thee I court the Muse again ;
 And may the votive lay disclose
 How much to thy fair aid she owes !
 See, when thy touch reveals her mine,
 How pure the stores of fancy shine !

Hark, when thy breath her song impells,
 How full the tuneful current swells!
 Let melancholy's plaintive tongue
 Instruct the nightly strains of Y—;
 But thine was HOMER'S ancient might,
 And thine victorious PINDAR'S flight:
 Thy myrtles crown'd the * Lesbian meads;
 Thy voice awak'd † Sicilian reeds;
 Thy breath perfumes the ‡ Teian rose,
 And Tibur's vine spontaneous flows
 While HORACE wantons in thy quire;
 The gods and heroes of the lyre.

See where the pale, the sick'ning sage
 (A prey perhaps to fortune's rage,
 Perhaps by tender griefs oppress'd,
 Or glooms congenial to his breast)
 Retires in desert-scenes to dwell,
 And bids the joyless world farewell.
 Alone he treads th' autumnal shade,
 Alone beneath the mountain laid,

He

* ALCÆUS and SAPPHO. † THEOCRITUS. ‡ ANACREON.

He sees the nightly damps arise,
 And gath'ring storms involve the skies ;
 He hears the neighb'ring furies roll,
 And raging thunders shake the pole ;
 Then, struck by every object round,
 And stunn'd by every horrid sound,
 He pants to traverse nature's ways :
 His evils haunt him thro' the maze :
 He views ten thousand dæmons rise
 To wield the empire of the skies,
 And chance and fate assume the rod,
 And malice blots the throne of GOD.
 — O thou, whose pleasing pow'r I sing !
 Thy lenient influence hither bring ;
 Compose the storm, dispell the gloom,
 Till nature wear her wonted bloom,
 Till fields and shades their sweets exhale,
 And music swell each opening gale :
 Then o'er his breast thy softness pour,
 And let him learn the timely hour

To

To trace the world's benignant laws,
 And judge of that presiding cause,
 Who founds in discord beauty's reign,
 Converts to pleasure every pain,
 Subdues the hostile forms to rest,
 And bids the universe be blest.

O thou, whose pleasing pow'r I sing!
 If right I touch the votive string,
 If equal praise I yield thy name,
 Still govern thou thy poet's flame;
 Still with the Muse my bosom share,
 And sooth to peace corroding care.
 But most exert thy genial pow'r
 On friendship's consecrated hour;
 And while my AGRIS leads the road
 To fearless wisdom's high abode,
 Or, warm in freedom's sacred cause,
 Pursues the light of Græcian laws,
 Attend, and grace our gen'rous toils
 With all thy garlands, all thy smiles.

But if, by fortune's stubborn sway,
 From him and friendship torn away,
 I court the muse's healing spell
 For griefs that still with absence dwell,
 Do thou conduct my fancy's dreams
 To such indulgent, tender themes
 As just the struggling breast may cheer,
 And just suspend the starting tear,
 Yet leave that charming sense of woe,
 Which none but friends and lovers know.

