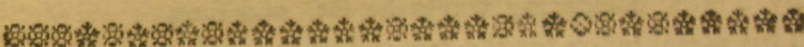


ORIENTAL ECLOGUES.

By Mr. WILLIAM COLLINS.



ECLOGUE I.

SELIM ; OR, THE SHEPHERD'S MORAL.

SCENE, A VALLEY NEAR BAGDAT.

TIME, THE MORNING.

YE Persian maids, attend your poet's lays,
 And hear how shepherds pass their golden days.
 Not all are blest, whom fortune's hand sustains
 With wealth in courts, nor all that haunt the plains :
 Well may your hearts believe the truths I tell ;
 'Tis virtue makes the bliss, where'er we dwell.

Thus Selim sang, by sacred Truth inspir'd ;
 Nor praise, but such as Truth bestow'd, desir'd :
 Wise in himself, his meaning songs convey'd
 Informing morals to the shepherd maid ;
 Or taught the swains that surest bliss to find,
 What groves nor streams bestow, a virtuous mind.

When sweet and blushing, like a virgin bride,
 The radiant morn resum'd her orient pride,
 When wanton gales along the valleys play,
 Breathe on each flower, and bear their sweets away ;
 By Tigris' wandering waves he sat, and sung
 This useful lesson for the fair and young.

Ye Persian dames, he said, to you belong,
 Well may they please, the morals of my song :
 No fairer maids, I trust, than you are found,
 Grac'd with soft arts, the peopled world around !
 The morn that lights you, to your loves supplies
 Each gentler ray delicious to your eyes :
 For you those flowers her fragrant hands bestow,
 And yours the love that kings delight to know.
 Yet think not these, all beauteous as they are,
 The best kind blessings heaven can grant the fair !
 Who trust alone in beauty's feeble ray,
 Boast but the worth Bassora's pearls display ;
 Drawn from the deep we own their surface bright,
 But, dark within, they drink no lustrous light :
 Such are the maids, and such the charms they boast,
 By sense unaided, or to virtue lost.

Self-flattering sex ! your hearts believe in vain
 That love shall blind, when once he fires the swain ;
 Or hope a lover by your faults to win,
 As spots on ermin beautify the skin :
 Who seeks secure to rule, be first her care
 Each softer virtue that adorns the fair ;
 Each tender passion man delights to find,
 The lov'd perfections of a female mind !

Blest were the days, when wisdom held her reign,
 And shepherds fought her on the silent plain ;
 With Truth she wedded in the secret grove,
 Immortal Truth, and daughters bless'd their love.

O haste, fair maids ! ye Virtues come away,
 Sweet Peace and Plenty lead you on your way !
 The balmy shrub, for you shall love our shore,
 By Ind excell'd or Araby no more.

Loft to our fields, for so the fates ordain,
 The dear deserters shall return again.
 Come thou, whose thoughts as limpid springs are clear,
 To lead the train, sweet modesty appear :
 Here make thy court amidst our rural scene,
 And shepherd girls shall own thee for their queen.
 With thee be Chastity, of all afraid,
 Distrusting all, a wise suspicious maid ;
 But man the most—not more the mountain doe
 Holds the swift falcon for her deadly foe.
 Cold is her breast, like flowers that drink the dew ;
 A silken veil conceals her from the view.

No wild desires amidst thy train be known,
 But Faith, whose heart is fix'd on one alone :
 Desponding Meekness, with her down-cast eyes,
 And friendly Pity, full of tender sighs ;
 And love the last : by these your hearts approve,
 These are the virtues that must lead to love.
 Thus sung the swain ; and ancient legends say,
 The maids of Bagdat verified the lay :
 Dear to the plains, the Virtues came along,
 The shepherds lov'd, and Selim blest'd his song.





E C L O G U E II.

HASSAN ; OR, THE CAMEL-DRIVER.

SCENE, THE DESERT.

TIME, MID-DAY.

IN silent horror o'er the boundless waste
 The driver Hassan with his camels past :
 One cruise of water on his back he bore,
 And his light scrip contain'd a scanty store ;
 A fan of painted feathers in his hand,
 To guard his shaded face from scorching sand.
 The sultry sun had gain'd the middle sky,
 And not a tree, and not an herb was nigh ;
 The beasts, with pain, their dusty way pursue,
 Shrill roar'd the winds, and dreary was the view !
 With desperate sorrow wild, th' affrighted man
 Thrice sigh'd, thrice struck his breast, and thus began :
 " Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
 " When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way !"
 Ah ! little thought I of the blasting wind,
 The thirst or pinching hunger that I find !

Bethink

Bethink thee, Hassan, where shall Thirst assuage,
 When fails this cruise, his unrelenting rage?
 Soon shall this scrip its precious load resign;
 Then what but tears and hunger shall be thine?

Ye mute companions of my toils, that bear
 In all my griefs a more than equal share!
 Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
 Or moss-crown'd fountains mitigate the day,
 In vain ye hope the green delights to know,
 Which plains more blest, or verdant vales bestow:
 Here rocks alone, and tasteless sands are found,
 And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around.

“ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,

“ When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!”

Curst be the gold and silver which persuade
 Weak men to follow far-fatiguing trade!
 The lilly peace outshines the silver store,
 And life is dearer than the golden ore:
 Yet money tempts us o'er the desert brown,
 To every distant mart and wealthy town.
 Full oft we tempt the land, and oft the sea:
 And are we only yet repay'd by thee?
 Ah! why was ruin so attractive made,
 Or why fond man so easily betray'd?
 Why heed we not, while mad we haste along,
 The gentle voice of peace, or pleasure's song?
 Or wherefore think the flowery mountain's side,
 The mountain's murmurs, and the valley's pride,

Why think we these less pleasing to behold,
Than dreary deserts, if they lead to gold ?

“ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,

“ When first from Schiraz’ walls I bent my way !”

O cease, my fears !—all frantic as I go,
When thought creates unnumber’d scenes of woe,
What if the lion in his rage I meet !—

Oft in the dust I view his printed feet :

And fearful ! oft, when day’s declining light

Yields her pale empire to the mourner night,

By hunger rous’d, he scours the groaning plain,

Gaunt wolves and sullen tygers in his train :

Before them death with shrieks directs their way,

Fills the wild yell, and leads them to their prey.

“ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,

“ When first from Schiraz’ walls I bent my way !”

At that dead hour the silent asp shall creep,
If aught of rest I find, upon my sleep :

Or some swollen serpent twist his scales around,

And wake to anguish with a burning wound.

Thrice happy they, the wise contented poor,

From lust of wealth, and dread of death secure !

They tempt no deserts, and no griefs they find ;

Peace rules the day, where reason rules the mind.

“ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,

“ When first from Schiraz’ walls I bent my way !”

O hapless youth ! for she thy love hath won,

The tender Zara will be most undone !

Big swell'd my heart, and own'd the powerful maid,
 When fast she dropt her tears, as thus she said :
 " Farewell the youth whom sighs could not detain,
 " Whom Zara's breaking heart implor'd in vain !
 " Yet as thou go'st, may every blast arise
 " Weak and unfelt as these rejected sighs !
 " Safe o'er the wild, no perils may'st thou see,
 " No griefs endure, nor weep, false youth, like me."
 O let me safely to the fair return,
 Say with a kiss, she must not, shall not mourn ;
 O ! let me teach my heart to lose its fears,
 Recall'd by Wisdom's voice, and Zara's tears.

He said, and call'd on heaven to bless the day,
 When back to Schiraz' walls he bent his way.





E C L O G U E III.

ABRA ; OR, THE GEORGIAN SULTANA.

SCENE, A FOREST.

TIME, THE EVENING.

IN Georgia's land, where Teflis' towers are seen,
 In distant view along the level green,
 While evening dews enrich the glittering glade,
 And the tall forests cast a longer shade,
 What time 'tis sweet o'er fields of rice to stray,
 Or scent the breathing maize at setting day ;
 Amidst the maids of Zagen's peaceful grove,
 Emyra sung the pleasing cares of love.

Of Abra first began the tender strain,
 Who led her youth with flocks upon the plain :
 At morn she came those willing flocks to lead,
 Where lillies rear them in the watery mead ;
 From early dawn the live-long hours she told,
 'Till late at silent eve she penn'd the fold.
 Deep in the grove, beneath the secret shade,
 A various wreath of odorous flowers she made :

Gay-motley'd pinks and sweet jonquils she chose,
 The violet blue that on the moss-bank grows;
 All-sweet to sense, the flaunting rose was there :
 The finish'd chaplet well-adorn'd her hair.

Great Abbas chanc'd that fated morn to stray,
 By love conducted from the chase away;
 Among the vocal vales he heard her song,
 And sought the vales and echoing groves among :
 At length he found, and woo'd the rural maid ;
 She knew the monarch, and with fear obey'd.

“ Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,

“ And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd !”

The royal lover bore her from the plain ;
 Yet still her crook and bleating flock remain :
 Oft as she went, she backward turn'd her view,
 And bad that crook and bleating flock adieu.
 Fair happy maid ! to other scenes remove,
 To richer scenes of golden power and love !
 Go leave the simple pipe, and shepherd's strain ;
 With love delight thee, and with Abbas reign.

“ Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,

“ And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd !”

Yet midst the blaze of courts she fix'd her love
 On the cool fountain, or the shady grove ;
 Still with the shepherd's innocence her mind
 To the sweet vale, and flowery mead inclin'd ;
 And oft as spring renew'd the plains with flowers,
 Breath'd his soft gales, and led the fragrant hours,

With sure return she sought the sylvan scene,
 The breezy mountains, and the forests green.
 Her maids around her mov'd, a duteous band !
 Each bore a crook all-rural in her hand :
 Some simple lay, of flocks and herds they sung ;
 With joy the mountain, and the forest rung.

“ Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,

“ And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd !”

And oft the royal lover left the care
 And thorns of state, attendant on the fair ;
 Oft to the shades and low-roof'd cots retir'd,
 Or sought the vale where first his heart was fir'd :
 A russet mantle, like a swain, he wore,
 And thought of crowns and busy courts no more.

“ Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,

“ And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd !”

Blest was the life, that royal Abbas led :
 Sweet was his love, and innocent his bed.
 What if in wealth the noble maid excel ;
 The simple shepherd girl can love as well.
 Let those who rule on Persia's jewell'd throne
 Be fam'd for love, and gentlest love alone ;
 Or wreath, like Abbas, full of fair renown,
 The lover's myrtle with the warrior's crown.
 O happy days ! the maids around her say ;
 O haste, profuse of blessings, haste away !

“ Be every youth, like royal Abbas, mov'd ;

“ And every Georgian maid, like Abra, lov'd !”



E C L O G U E IV.

AGIB AND SECANDER ; OR, THE FUGITIVES.

SCENE, A MOUNTAIN IN CIRCASSIA.

TIME, MIDNIGHT.

IN fair Circassia, where, to love inclin'd,
 Each swain was blest, for every maid was kind ;
 At that still hour, when awful midnight reigns,
 And none, but wretches, haunt the twilight plains ;
 What time the moon had hung her lamp on high,
 And past in radiance thro' the cloudless sky ;
 Sad o'er the dews, two brother shepherds fled,
 Where wildering fear and desperate sorrow led :
 Fast as they prest their flight, behind them lay
 Wide ravag'd plains, and vallies stole away.
 Along the mountain's bending sides they ran,
 'Till faint and weak Secander thus began :

SECANDER.

O stay thee, Agib, for my feet deny,
 No longer friendly to my life, to fly.
 Friend of my heart, O turn thee and survey,
 Trace our sad flight thro' all its length of way !

And

And first review that long-extended plain !
 And yon wide groves, already past, with pain !
 Yon ragged cliff, whose dangerous path we tried !
 And last this lofty mountain's weary side !

AGIB.

Weak as thou art, yet hapless must thou know
 The toils of flight, or some severer woe !
 Still as I haste, the Tartar shouts behind,
 And shrieks and sorrows load the saddening wind :
 In rage of heart, with ruin in his hand,
 He blasts our harvests, and deforms our land.
 Yon citron grove, whence first in fear we came,
 Droops its fair honours to the conquering flame :
 Far fly the swains, like us, in deep despair,
 And leave to ruffian bands their fleecy care.

SECANDER.

Unhappy land, whose blessings tempt the sword,
 In vain, unheard, thou call'st thy Persian lord !
 In vain thou court'st him, helpless, to thine aid,
 To shield the shepherd, and protect the maid !
 Far off, in thoughtless indolence resign'd,
 Soft dreams of love and pleasure sooth his mind :
 'Midst fair sultanas lost in idle joy,
 No wars alarm him, and no fears annoy.

AGIB.

Yet these green hills, in summer's sultry heat,
 Have lent the monarch oft a cool retreat.

Sweet to the sight is Zabran's flowery plain,
 And once by maids and shepherds lov'd in vain !
 No more the virgins shall delight to rove
 By Sargis' banks, or Irwan's shady grove ;
 On Tarkie's mountain catch the cooling gale,
 Or breathe the sweets of Aly's flowery vale :
 Fair scenes ! but, ah ! no more with peace possesst,
 With ease alluring, and with plenty blest.
 No more the shepherd's whitening tents appear,
 Nor the kind products of a bounteous year ;
 No more the date, with snowy blossoms crown'd !
 But ruin spreads her baleful fires around.

SECANDER.

In vain Circassia boasts her spicy groves,
 For ever fam'd for pure and happy loves :
 In vain she boasts her fairest of the fair,
 Their eye's blue languish, and their golden hair !
 Those eyes in tears their fruitless grief must send ;
 Those hairs the Tartar's cruel hand shall rend.

AGIB.

Ye Georgian swains that piteous learn from far
 Circassia's ruin, and the waste of war ;
 Some weightier arms than crooks and staves prepare,
 To shield your harvests, and defend your fair :
 The Turk and Tartar like designs pursue,
 Fix'd to destroy, and stedfast to undo.
 Wild as his land, in native deserts bred,
 By lust incited, or by malice led,

The villain Arab, as he prowls for prey,
 Oft marks with blood and wasting flames the way ;
 Yet none so cruel as the Tartar foe,
 To death inur'd, and nurst in scenes of woe.

He said ; when loud along the vale was heard
 A shriller shriek, and nearer fires appear'd :
 Th' affrighted shepherds thro' the dews of night,
 Wide o'er the moon-light hills renew'd their flight.



AN ODE TO FEAR.

BY THE SAME.

THOU, to whom the world unknown
 With all its shadowy shapes is shewn ;
 Who see'st appall'd th' unreal scene,
 While Fancy lifts the veil between :
 Ah Fear ! ah frantic Fear !
 I see, I see thee near.

I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye !
 Like thee I start, like thee disorder'd fly,
 For, lo what monsters in thy train appear !
 Danger, whose limbs of giant mold
 What mortal eye can fix'd behold ?
 Who stalks his round, an hideous form,
 Howling amidst the midnight storm,