

TO MR. S. TUCKER.

By Mr. MENDES.

THE sons of man, by various passions led,  
 The paths of bus'ness or of pleasure tread ;  
 The florist views his dear carnation rise,  
 And wonders who can doat on Flavia's eyes ;  
 The lover sees, unmov'd, each gaudy streak,  
 And knows no bloom but that on Daphne's cheek :  
 While some grow pale o'er Newton, Locke, or Boyle,  
 Miss reads romances, and my lady Hoyle ;  
 Thus inclination binds her fetters strong,  
 And, just as judgment marks, we're right or wrong :

Fair are those hills where sacred laurels grow,  
 Rul'd by the pow'r who draws the golden bow ;  
 But see how few attain the dang'rous road,  
 How few are born to feel th' inspiring god !  
 Yet all, to reach the arduous summit try,  
 From soaring Pope to reptile Ogleby.  
 Among the rest, your friend attempts to climb,  
 But ah, how diff'rent poesy and rhyme !

The mid-night bard, reciting to his bell,  
 Who breaks our rest, and tolls the muses knell,  
 Is just a poet matchless and divine,  
 As he a Raphael, who, on ale-house sign,



Seats his bold George in attitude so quaint,  
That none can tell the dragon from a saint.

Reckon each sand in wide New-market plain,  
Mount yon blue vault, and count the starry train;  
But numbers ne'er can comprehend the throng  
Of retail dealers in the art of song.  
Like summer flies they blot the solar ray,  
And, like their brother insects, live a day.  
Am I not blasted by some friendless star,  
To know my wants, yet wage unequal war?  
I own I am; and dabbling thus in rhyme,  
'Tis folly's bell that rings the pleasing chyme;  
Bit by the bard's tarantula I swell,  
Write off the raging fit, and all is well.

And yet, perhaps, to lose my time this way  
Is better far than some mis-spend the day.  
The fatal dice-box never fill'd my hand,  
By me no orphan weeps his ravish'd land;  
What ward can tax me with a deed unjust?  
What friend upbraids me with a broken trust?  
(Some few except, whom pride and folly blind,  
I found them chaff, and give them to the wind)  
Like a poor bird, and one of meanest wing,  
Around my cage I flutter, hop, and sing.  
Unlike in this my brethren of the bays,  
I sue for pardon, and they hope for praise;  
And when for verse I find my genius warm,  
Like infants sent to school, I keep from harm.

What



What time the dog-star with unbating flames  
 Cleaves the parch'd earth, and sinks the silver Thames;  
 While the shrill tenant\* of the sun-burnt blade,  
 (A poet he, and singing all his trade)  
 Tears his small throat, I brave the sultry ray,  
 And deep-embower'd, escape the rage of day.  
 Thrice blest'd the man, who, shielded from the beam,  
 Sings lays melodious to the sacred stream;  
 Thrice blest'd the stream, who views his banks of flow'rs,  
 Crown'd with the Muse's or imperial tow'rs,  
 Whose limpid waters as they onwards glide,  
 See humble oziers nod, or threat'ning squadrons ride.

Health to my friend, and to his partner, peace,  
 A good long life, and moderate increase;  
 May Dulwich garden double treasures share,  
 And be both Flora and Pomona's care.  
 Ye Walton naiads, guard the fav'rite child,  
 Drive off each marsh-born fog; ye zephyrs mild,  
 Fan the dear innocent; ye fairies, keep  
 Your wonted distance, nor disturb his sleep;  
 Nor in the cradle, while your tricks you play,  
 The changeling drop, and bear our boy away.  
 However chance may chalk his future fate,  
 Or doom his manhood to be rich or great,  
 Is not our care; oh, let the guiding pow'r  
 Decide that point, who rules the natal hour;  
 Nor shall we seek, for knowledge to enrich,  
 The Delphic tripod, or your Norwood witch.

\* The grasshopper.

But



But Tucker doubts, and "if not rich," he cries,  
 "How can the boy reward the good and wise?  
 Give him but gold, and merit ne'er shall freeze,  
 But rise from want to affluence and ease:  
 The Guido's touch shall warm his throbbing heart,  
 The patriot's bust shall speak the sculptor's art;  
 But if from Danae's precious show'r debar'd,  
 The Muse he may admire, but ne'er reward."

All this I grant; but does it follow then,  
 That parts have drawn regard from wealthy men?  
 Did Gay receive the tribute of the great?  
 No, let his tomb be witness of his fate:  
 For Milton's days are too long past to strike;  
 The rich of all times ever were alike.

See him, whose lines "in a fine frenzy roll,"  
 He comes to tear, to harrow up the soul;  
 Bear me, ye pow'rs, from his bewitching sprite,  
 My eye-balls darken at excess of light;  
 How my heart dances to his magic strain,  
 Beats my quick pulse, and throbs each bursting vein.  
 From Avon's bank with ev'ry garland crown'd,  
 'Tis his to rouse, to calm, to cure, to wound;  
 To mould the yielding bosom to his will,  
 And Shakespear is inimitable still:  
 Oppress'd by fortune, all her ills he bore,  
 Hear this ye Muses, and be vain no more.

Nor



Nor shall my \* Spenser want his share of praise,  
 The heav'n-sprung sisters wove the laureat's bays ;  
 Yet what avail'd his sweet descriptive pow'r,  
 The fairy warrior, or enchanted bow'r ?  
 Tho' matchless Sidney doated on the strain,  
 Lov'd by the learned † shepherd of the main,  
 Observe what meed his latest labours crown'd,  
 Belphebe ‡ smil'd not, and stern Burleigh frown'd.  
 If still you doubt, consult some well known friend,  
 Let Ellis speak, to him you oft attend,  
 Whom truth approves, whom candor calls her own,  
 Known by the God, by all the Muses known.  
 Where tow'r his hills, where stretch his lengths of vale,  
 Say, where his heifers load the smoaky pail ?  
 Oh may this grateful verse my debt repay,  
 If aught I know, he shew'd the arduous way ;  
 Within my bosom fan'd the rising flame,  
 Plum'd my young wing, and bade me try for fame.  
 Since then I scribbl'd, and must scribble still,  
 His word was once a sanction to my will ;  
 And I'll persist 'till he resume the pen,  
 Then shrink contented, and ne'er rhyme again.

Yet, ere I take my leave, I have to say,  
 That while in sleep my senses wasted lay,

\* He was rewarded with lands in Ireland, which he lost in the rebellion of the earl of Desmond. He came over to England to solicit a recovery of them ; but having attended long in vain, finished his days in grief and disappointment.

† Sir Walter Raleigh.

‡ Queen Elizabeth.



The waking soul, which sports in fancy's beam,  
 Work'd on my drowsy lids, and form'd a dream;  
 Then to my lines a due attention keep,  
 For oft when poets dream, their readers sleep.

On a wide champian, where the surges beat  
 Th' extended beach, then sullenly retreat,  
 A dismal cottage rear'd its turfy head,  
 O'er which a yew her baleful branches spread;  
 The owl profane his dreadful dirges sung,  
 The passing bell the foul night-raven rung;  
 No village cur here bay'd the cloudless moon,  
 No golden sunshine chear'd the hazy noon,  
 But ghosts of men by love of gold betray'd,  
 In silence glided thro' the dreary shade.  
 There sat pale Grief in melancholy state,  
 And brooding Care was trusted with the gate,  
 Within, extended on the cheerless ground,  
 An old man lay in golden fillet bound;  
 Rough was his beard, and matted was his hair,  
 His eyes were fiery red, his shoulders bare;  
 Down furrow'd cheeks hot tears had worn their way,  
 And his broad scalp was thinly strew'd with grey;  
 A weighty ingot in his hand he prest,  
 Nor seem'd to feel the viper at his breast.

Around the caitiff, glorious to behold,  
 Lay minted coinage, and historic gold; \*  
 High sculptur'd urns in bright confusion stood,  
 And streams of silver form'd a precious flood.

On

\* Medals.



On nails, suspended rows of pearls were seen,  
 Not such the pendants of th' Egyptian queen,  
 Who (joy luxurious swelling all her soul)  
 Quaff'd the vast price of empires in her bowl.

As seas voracious swallow up the land,  
 As raging flames eternal food demand,  
 So this vile wretch, unblest'd with all his store,  
 Repin'd in plenty, and grew sick for more;  
 Nor shall we wonder when his name I tell,  
 'Twas Avarice, the eldest born of hell.

But, hark! what noise breaks in upon my tale;  
 Be hush'd each sound, and whisper ev'ry gale;  
 Ye croaking rooks your noisy flight suspend,  
 Guess'd I not right how all my toil would end?  
 My heavy rhymes have jaded Tucker quite;  
 He yawns — he nods — he snores. Good night, good  
 night.

