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Poems

Poems and fables

Gay, John

Edinburgh, 1773

Fables, in two parts. Part second

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE FABLES were finished by Mr GAY, and intended for the press, a short time before his death; when they were left, with his other papers, to the care of his noble friend and patron the Duke of QUEENSBERRY. His Grace has accordingly permitted them to the press, and they are here printed from the originals in the author's own hand-writing. We hope they will please equally with his former Fables, though mostly on subjects of a graver and more political turn. They will certainly show him to have been (what he esteemed the best character) a man of a truly honest heart, and a sincere lover of his country.

ADVERTISEMENT

THESE PAPERS were finished by Mr. GALT, and intended for the press, a short time before his death; when they were left, with his other papers, to the care of his noble friend and patron the Duke of GUNNERSBURGH. His Grace has accordingly permitted them to the press, and they are here printed from the originals in the author's own hand-writing. We hope they will please equally with his former Papers, though mostly on subjects of a grave and more political turn. They will certainly show him to have been (what he effected the best character) a man of a truly honest heart, and a sincere lover of his country.

F A B L E S,

PART SECOND.

F A B L E I.

The Dog and the Fox.

To a LAWYER.

I Know you lawyers can, with ease,
Twist words and meanings as you please;
That language, by your skill made pliant,
Will bend to favour ev'ry client;
That 'tis the fee directs the sense,
To make out either side's pretence.
When you peruse the clearest case,
You see it with a double face:
For scepticism's your profession;
You hold there's doubt in all expression.
Hence is the bar with fees supply'd;
Hence eloquence takes either side.
Your hand would have but poultry gleanings,
Could ev'ry man express his meaning.

VOL. II.

K

Who dares presume to pen a deed,
 Unless you previously are feed?
 'Tis drawn; and, to augment the cost,
 In dull prolixity ingross.
 And now we're well secur'd by law,
 Till the next brother find a flaw.

Read o'er a will. Was't ever known,
 But you could make the will your own?
 For when you read, 'tis with intent
 To find out meanings never meant.
 Since things are thus, *se defendendo*,
 I bar fallacious innuendo.

Sagacious Porta's skill could trace
 Some beast or bird in ev'ry face.
 The head, the eye, the nose's shape,
 Prov'd this an owl, and that an ape.
 When, in the sketches thus design'd,
 Resemblance brings some friend to mind,
 You show the piece, and give the hint,
 And find each feature in the print;
 So monstrous-like the portrait's found,
 All know it, and the laugh goes round.
 Like him I draw from gen'ral nature:
 Is't I or you then fix the satire?

So, Sir, I beg you spare your pains
 In making comments on my strains.
 All private slander I detest,
 I judge not of my neighbour's breast;
 Party and prejudice I hate,
 And write no libels on the state.

Shall not my fable censure vice,
 Because a knave is over-nice?

And, lest the guilty hear and dread,
 Shall not the decalogue be read?
 If I lash vice in gen'ral fiction,
 Is't I apply, or self-conviction?
 Brutes are my theme. Am I to blame,
 If men in morals are the same?
 I no man call an ape or ass;
 'Tis his own conscience holds the glass.
 Thus void of all offence I write:
 Who claims the fable, knows his right.

A shepherd's dog, unskill'd in sports,
 Pick'd up acquaintance of all sorts;
 Among the rest a fox he knew;
 By frequent chat their friendship grew.

Says Reynard, 'Tis a cruel case,
 That man should stigmatize our race.
 No doubt, among us rogues you find,
 As among dogs and human kind;
 And yet (unknown to me and you)
 There may be honest men and true.
 Thus slander tries, whate'er it can,
 To put us on the foot with man.
 Let my own actions recommend;
 No prejudice can blind a friend:
 You know me free from all disguise;
 My honour as my life I prize.

By talk like this, from all mistrust
 The dog was cur'd, and thought him just.

As on a time the fox held forth
 On conscience, honesty, and worth,
 Sudden he stopt; he cock'd his ear;
 Low dropt his brushy tail with fear.

K 2



Bless us ! the hupsters are abroad,
What's all that clatter on the road?

Hold, says the dog, we're safe from harm;
'Twas nothing but a false alarm.
At yonder town 'tis market-day;
Some farmer's wife is on the way:
'Tis so, (I know her pye-ball'd mare),
Dame Dobbins with her poultry-ware.

Reynard grew huff. Says he, this sneer
From you I little thought to hear:
Your meaning in your looks I see.

Pray, what's Dame Dobbins, friend, to me?
Did I e'er make her poultry thinner?
Prove that I owe the dame a dinner.

Friend, quoth the cur, I meant no harm:
Then why so captious? why so warm?
My words, in common acceptation,
Could never give this provocation.
No lamb, (for aught I ever knew),
May be more innocent than you.

At this, gall'd Reynard wine'd, and swore
Such language ne'er was giv'n before.

What's lamb to me? This faucey hint
Shows me, base knave, which way you squint.
If t'other night your master lost
Three lambs; am I to pay the cost?
Your vile reflections would imply
That I'm the thief. You dog, you lie.

Thou knave, thou fool; (the dog reply'd)
The name is just, take either side;
Thy guilt these applications speak;
Sirrah, 'tis conscience makes you squeak.

So saying, on the fox he flies,
The self-convicted felon dits.

F A B L E II.

The VULTURE, the SPARROW, and other Birds.

To a FRIEND in the Country.

ERE I begin, I must premise
Our ministers are good and wise;
So, though malicious tongues apply,
Pray, what care they, or what care I?
If I am free with courts; be't known,
I ne'er presume to mean our own.
If general morals seem to joke
Our ministers, and such like folk,
A captious fool may take offence;
What then? He knows his own pretence;
I meddle with no state-affairs,
But spare my jest, to save my ears.
Our present schemes are too profound,
For Machiavel himself to sound:
To censure 'em I've no pretension;
I own they're past my comprehension.
You say your brother wants a place,
'Tis many a younger brother's case,
And that he very soon intends
To ply the court, and teaze his friends.

If there his merits chance to find
 A patriot of an open mind,
 Whose constant actions prove him just
 To both a king's and people's trust;
 May he, with gratitude, attend,
 And owe his rise to such a friend.

You praise his parts, for bus'ness fit,
 His learning, probity, and wit;
 But those alone will never do,
 Unless his patron have 'em too.

I've heard of times, (pray God defend us,
 We're not so good but he can mend us),
 When wicked ministers have trod
 On kings and people, law and God;
 With arrogance they girt the throne,
 And knew no int'rest but their own.
 Then virtue, from preferment barr'd,
 Gets nothing but its own reward.
 A gang of petty knaves attend 'em,
 With proper parts to recommend 'em.
 Then, if his patron burn with lust,
 The first in favour's pimp the first.
 His doors are never clos'd to spies,
 Who cheer his heart with double lies;
 They flatter him, his foes defame,
 So lull the pangs of guilt and shame.
 If schemes of lucre haunt his brain,
 Projectors swell his greedy train;
 Vile brokers ply his private ear
 With jobs of plunder for the year;
 All consciences must bend and ply;
 You must vote on, and not know why:

Through thick and thin you must go on ;
 One scruple, and your place is gone.

Since plagues like these have curs'd a land,
 And fav'rites cannot always stand ;
 Good courtiers should for change be ready,
 And not have principles too steady :
 For, should a knave ingross the pow'r,
 (God shield the realm from that sad hour),
 He must have rogues, or slavish fools :
 For what's a knave without his tools ?

Wherever those a people drain,
 And strut with infamy and gain ;
 I envy not their guilt and state,
 And scorn to share the public hate.
 Let their own servile creatures rise,
 By screening fraud, and venting lies :
 Give me, kind Heav'n, a private station †,
 A mind serene for contemplation :
 Title and profit I resign ;
 The post of honour shall be mine.
 My fable read, their merits view,
 Then herd who will with such a crew.

In days of yore (my cautious rhimes
 Always except the present times)
 A greedy Vulture, skill'd in game,
 Inur'd to guilt, unaw'd by shame,

† ———— When impious men bear sway,
 The post of honour is a private station.

ADDISON.

Approach'd the throne in evil hour,
 And step by step intrudes to pow'r :
 When at the royal eagle's ear
 He longs to ease the monarch's care.
 The monarch grants. With pride elate,
 Behold him minister of state !
 Around him throng'd the feather'd rout.
 Friends must be serv'd, and some must out.
 Each thinks his own the best pretension ;
 This asks a place, and that a pension.

The nightingale was set aside.
 A forward daw his room supply'd.

This bird, (says he), for bus'ness fit,
 Hath both sagacity and wit.
 With all his turns, and shifts, and tricks,
 He's docile, and at nothing sticks.
 Then with his neighbours one so free
 At all times will connive at me.
 The hawk had due distinction shown,
 For parts and talents like his own.

Thousands of hireling cocks attend him,
 As blust'ring bullies to defend him.

At once the ravens were discarded,
 And magpies with their posts rewarded.

Those fowls of omen I detest,
 That pry into another's nest.

State-lies must lose all good intent ;
 For they foresee and croak th' event.

My friends ne'er think, but talk by rote,
 Speak what they're taught, and so to vote.

When rogues like these (a Sparrow cries)
 To honours and employments rise,

I court no favour, ask no place;
 From such preferment is disgrace.
 Within my thatch'd retreat I find
 (What these ne'er feel) true peace of mind.

F A B L E III.

The BABOON and the POULTRY.

To a LEVEE-HUNTER.

WE frequently misplace esteem
 By judging men by what they seem.
 To birth, wealth, power, we should allow
 Precedence and our lowest bow.
 In that is due distinction shown,
 Esteem is virtue's right alone.

With partial eye we're apt to see
 The man of noble pedigree,
 We're prepossess'd my Lord inherits
 In some degree his grandfire's merits;
 For those we find upon record:
 But find him nothing but my Lord.

When we with superficial view
 Gaze on the rich, we're dazzled too.
 We know that wealth, well understood,
 Hath frequent pow'r of doing good,
 Then fancy that the thing is done,
 As if the pow'r and will were one.

Thus oft the cheated croud adore
The thriving knaves that keep 'em poor.

The cringing train of pow'r survey;
What creatures are so low as they!
With what obsequiousness they bend!
To what vile actions condescend!
Their rise is on their meanness built,
And flatt'ry is their smallest guilt.
What homage, rev'rence, adoration,
In ev'ry age, in ev'ry nation,
Have sycophants to pow'r address'd!
No matter who the pow'r possess'd.
Let ministers be what they will,
You find their levees always fill.
Ev'n those who have perplex'd a state,
Whose actions claim'd contempt and hate,
Had wretches to applaud their schemes,
Though more absurd than madmens dreams.
When barb'rous Moloch was invok'd,
The blood of infants only smoak'd!
But here (unless all hist'ry lies)
Whole realms have been a sacrifice.

Look through all courts. 'Tis pow'r we find
The gen'ral idol of mankind;
There worshipp'd under ev'ry shape.
Alike the lion, fox, and ape,
Are follow'd by time-serving slaves,
Rich prostitutes and needy knaves.

Who then shall glory in his post?
How frail his pride, how vain his boast!
The followers of his prosp'rous hour
Are as unstable as his pow'r.

Pow'r, by the breath of flatt'ry nurst,
The more it swells, is nearer burst.
The bubble breaks, the gewgaw ends,
And in a dirty tear descends.

Once on a time, an ancient maid,
By wishes and by time decay'd,
To cure the pangs of restless thought,
In birds and beasts amusement sought:
Dogs, parrots, apes, her hours employ'd;
With these alone she talk'd and toy'd.

A huge Baboon her fancy took,
(Almost a man in size and look).
He finger'd ev'ry thing he found,
And mimick'd all the servants round.
Then too his parts and ready wit
Show'd him for ev'ry bus'ness fit.
With all these talents, 'twas but just
That Pug should hold a place of trust:
So to her fav'rite was assign'd
The charge of all her feather'd kind.
'Twas his to tend 'em eve and morn,
And portion out their daily corn.

Behold him now with haughty stride,
Assume a ministerial pride.
The morning rose. In hope of picking,
Swans, turkeys, peacocks, ducks, and chicken,
Fowls of all ranks surround his hut,
To worship his important strut.
The minister appears. The croud,
Now here, now there, obsequious bow'd.

This prais'd his parts, and that his face,
 T'other his dignity in place.
 From bill to bill the flatt'ry ran.
 He hears and bears it like a man;
 For, when we flatter self-conceit,
 We but his sentiments repeat.

If we're too scrupulously just,
 What profit's in a place of trust?
 The common practice of the great,
 Is, to secure a snug retreat.
 So Pug began to turn his brain
 (Like other folks in place) on gain.

An apple-woman's stall was near,
 Well stock'd with fruits through all the year.
 Here ev'ry day he cramm'd his guts,
 Hence were his hoards of pears and nuts;
 For 'twas agreed (in way of trade)
 His payments should in corn be made.

The stock of grain was quickly spent,
 And no account which way it went.
 Then toø the poultry's starv'd condition
 Caus'd speculations of suspicion.
 The facts were prov'd beyond dispute.
 Pug must refund his hoards of fruit;
 And, though then minister in chief,
 Was branded as a public thief.
 Disgrac'd, despis'd, confin'd to chains,
 He nothing but his pride retains.

A goose pass'd by: He knew the face,
 Seen ev'ry levee while in place.

What, no respect! no reverence shown!
 How saucy are these creatures grown!

Not two days since (says he) you bow'd:
The lowest of my fawning croud.

Proud fool, (replies the goose), 'tis true,
Thy corn a flutt'ring levee drew;
For that I join'd the hungry train,
And sold thee flat'ry for thy grain.
But then, as now, conceited ape,
We saw thee in thy proper shape.

F A B L E IV.

The ANT in office.

To a FRIEND.

YOU tell me that you apprehend
My verse may touchy folks offend:

In prudence too you think my rhimes
Should never squint at courtiers crimes;
For though nor this, nor that is meant,
Can we another's thoughts prevent?

You ask me, If I ever knew
Court-chaplains thus the lawn pursue?

I meddle not with gown or lawn.

Poets, I grant, to rise must fawn.

They know great ears are over-nice,

And never shock their patron's vice.

But I this hackney path despise:

'Tis my ambition not to rise.

If I must prostitute the muse,
The base conditions I refuse.

I neither flatter or defame,
Yet own I would bring guilt to shame.
If I Corruption's hand expose,
I make corrupted men my foes.
What then? I hate the paltry tribe.
Be virtue mine; be theirs the bribe.
I no man's property invade:
Corruption's yet no lawful trade.
Nor would it mighty ills produce,
Could I shame brib'ry out of use.
I know 'twould cramp most politicians,
Were they ty'd down to these conditions.
'Twould stint their power, their riches bound,
And make their parts seem less profound.
Were they deny'd their proper tools,
How could they lead their knaves and fools?
Were this the case, let's take a view,
What dreadful mischiefs would ensue.
Though it might aggrandize the state,
Could private lux'ry dine on plate?
Kings might indeed their friends reward,
But ministers find less regard.
Informers, sycophants, and spies,
Would not augment the year's supplies.
Perhaps too, take away this prop,
An annual job or two might drop.
Besides, if pensions were deny'd,
Could Avarice support its pride?
It might ev'n ministers confound,
And yet the state be safe and sound.

I care not though 'tis understood ;
 I only mean my country's good :
 And (let who will my freedom blame)
 I with all courtiers did the same.
 Nay, though some folks the less might get,
 I wish the nation out of debt.
 I put no private man's ambition
 With public good in competition :
 Rather than have our laws defac'd,
 I'd vote a minister disgrac'd.

I strike at vice, be't where it will ;
 And what if great fools take it ill ?
 I hope, corruption, brib'ry, pension,
 One may with detestation mention :
 Think you the law (let who will take it)
 Can *scandalum magnatum* make it ?

I vent no slander, owe no grudge,
 Nor of another's conscience judge :
 At him or him I take no aim,
 Yet dare against all vice declaim.
 Shall I not censure breach of trust,
 Because knaves know themselves unjust ?
 That steward whose account is clear,
 Demands his honour may appear :
 His actions never shun the light ;
 He is, and would be prov'd upright.

But then you think my fable bears
 Allusion too to state-affairs.

I grant it does : And who's so great,
 That has the privilege to cheat ?
 If then in any future reign
 (For ministers may thirst for gain)

Corrupted hands defraud the nation;
I bar no reader's application.

An Ant there was, whose forward prate
Controll'd all matters in debate;
Whether he knew the thing or no,
His tongue eternally would go:
For he had impudence at will,
And boasted univ'rsal skill.
Ambition was his point in view.
Thus by degrees to pow'r he grew.
Behold him now his drift attain:
He's made chief treasurer of the grain.

But as their ancient laws are just,
And punish breach of public trust,
'Tis order'd, (lest wrong application
Should starve that wise industrious nation),
That all accounts be stated clear,
Their stock, and what defray'd the year;
That auditors shall these inspect,
And public rapine thus be check'd.
For this the solemn day was set.
The auditors in council met.
The gran'ry-keeper must explain,
And balance his account of grain.
He brought (since he could not refuse 'em)
Some scraps of paper to amuse 'em.

An honest pismire, warm with zeal,
In justice to the public weal,
Thus spoke. The nation's hoard is low,
From whence does this profusion flow?

I know our annual fund's amount.
Why such expence? and where's th' account?

With wonted arrogance and pride,
The Ant in office thus reply'd.

Consider, Sirs, were secrets told,
How could the best-schem'd projects hold?
Should we state-mysteries disclose,
'Twould lay us open to our foes.

My duty and my well-known zeal
Bid me our present schemes conceal:
But, on my honour, all th' expence
(Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.

They pass'd th' account, as fair and just,
And voted him implicit trust.

Next year again the gran'ry drain'd,
He thus his innocence maintain'd.

Think how our present matters stand,
What dangers threat from ev'ry hand;
What hosts of turkeys stroll for food;
No farmer's wife but hath her brood.

Consider, when invasion's near,
Intelligence must cost us dear;
And, in this ticklish situation,
A secret told betrays the nation.
But, on my honour, all th' expence
(Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.

Again, without examination,
They thank'd his sage administration.

The year revolves. The treasure spent,
Again in secret service went.

His honour too again was pledg'd
To satisfy the charge alledg'd.

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When thus, with panic shame possess'd,
An auditor his friends address'd.

What are we? ministerial tools.
We little knaves are greater fools.
At last this secret is explor'd;
'Tis our corruption thins the hoard.
For ev'ry grain we touch'd, at least
A thousand his own heaps increas'd.
Then, for his kin, and fav'rite spies,
A hundred hardly could suffice.
Thus, for a paltry sneaking bribe,
We cheat ourselves, and all the tribe;
For all the magazine contains,
Grows from our annual toil and pains.

They vote th' account shall be inspected;
The cunning plund'rer is detected:
The fraud is sentenc'd; and his hoard,
As due, to public use restor'd.

F A B L E V.

The BEAR in a Boat.

To a COXCOMB.

THAT man must daily wiser grow,
Whose search is bent himself to know:
Impartially he weighs his scope,
And on firm reason founds his hope;

He tries his strength before the race,
 And never seeks his own disgrace :
 He knows the compass, sail, and oar,
 Or never launches from the shore ;
 Before he builds, computes the cost,
 And in no proud pursuit is lost :
 He learns the bounds of human sense,
 And safely walks within the fence.
 Thus conscious of his own defect,
 Are pride and self-importance check'd.

If then, self-knowledge to pursue,
 Direct our life in ev'ry view,
 Of all the fools that pride can boast,
 A Coxcomb claims distinction most.

Coxcombs are of all ranks and kind ;
 They're not to sex or age confin'd,
 Or rich, or poor, or great, or small ;
 And vanity besets 'em all.
 By ignorance is pride increas'd :
 Those most assume who know the least ;
 Their own false balance gives 'em weight,
 But ev'ry other finds 'em light.

Not that all coxcombs follies strike
 And draw our ridicule alike.
 To diff'rent merits each pretends,
 This in love-vanity transcends ;
 That smitten with his face and shape,
 By dress distinguishes the ape :
 T'other with learning crams his shelf,
 Knows books, and all things but himself.

All these are fools of low condition,
 Compar'd with coxcombs of ambition.

For those, puff'd up with flatt'ry, dare
Assume a nation's various care :
They ne'er the grossest praise mistrust,
Their sycophaants seem hardly just ;
For these, in part alone, attest
The flatt'ry their own thoughts suggest.
In this wide sphere a coxcomb's shown
In other realms besides his own :
The self-deem'd Machiavel at large
By turns controuls in ev'ry charge.
Does commerce suffer in her rights ?
'Tis he directs the naval fights.
What sailor dares dispute his skill ?
He'll be an adm'ral when he will.
Now, meddling in the foldier's trade,
Troops must be hir'd, and levies made.
He gives ambassadors their cue,
His cobbled treaties to renew ;
And annual taxes must suffice
The current blunders to disguise.
When his crude schemes in air are lost,
And millions scarce defray the cost,
His arrogance (nought undismay'd)
Trusting in self-sufficient aid,
On other rocks misguides the realm,
And thinks a pilot at the helm.
He ne'er suspects his want of skill,
But blunders on from ill to ill ;
And, when he fails of all intent,
Blames only unforeseen event.
Left you mistake the application,
The fable calls me to relation.

A Bear of shagg and manners rough,
At climbing trees expert enough ;
For dextrously, and safe from harm,
Year after year he robb'd the swarm.
Thus, thriving on industrious toil,
He glory'd in his pilfer'd spoil,

This trick so swell'd him with conceit,
He thought no enterprise too great.
Alike in sciences and arts,
He boasted universal parts ;
Pragmatic, busy, bustling, bold,
His arrogance was uncontroul'd :
And thus he made his party good,
And grew dictator of the wood.

The beasts, with admiration, stare,
And think him a prodigious Bear.
Were any common booty got,
'Twas his each portion to allot:
For why, he found there might be picking,
Ev'n in the carving of a chicken.
Intruding thus, he by degrees
Claim'd too the butcher's larger fees.
And now his over-weening pride
In ev'ry province will preside.
No task too difficult was found.
His blund'ring nose misleads the hound :
In stratagem and subtle arts,
He over-rules the fox's parts.

It chanc'd, as, on a certain day,
Along the bank he took his way,
A boat, with rudder, sail, and oar,
At anchor floated near the shore.

He stopt, and turning to his train,
Thus pertly vents his vaunting strain.

What blund'ring puppies are mankind,
In ev'ry science always blind!

I mock the pedantry of schools.

What are their compasses and rules?

From me that helm shall conduct learn,

And man his ignorance discern.

So saying, with audacious pride,

He gains the boat, and climbs the side.

The beasts astonish'd line the strand.

The anchor weigh'd, he drives from land::

The slack sail shifts from side to side;

The boat untrimm'd admits the tide.

Borne down, adrift, at random tost,

His oar breaks short, the rudder's lost.

The Bear, presuming in his skill,

Is here and there officious still;

Till, striking on the dang'rous sands,

A-ground the shatter'd vessel stands.

To see the bungler thus distress'd,

The very fishes sneer and jest.

Ev'n gudgeons join in ridicule,

To mortify the meddling fool.

The clam'rous watermen appear;

Threats, curses, oaths, insult his ear:

Seiz'd, thresh'd, and chain'd, he's dragg'd to land;

Derision shouts along the strand.

F A B L E VI.

*The SQUIRE and his CUR.**To a COUNTRY-GENTLEMAN.*

THE man of pure and simple heart
 Through life disdains a double part.
 He never needs the screen of lies
 His inward bosom to disguise.
 In vain malicious tongues assail.
 Let Envy snarl, let Slander rail,
 From Virtue's shield (secure from wound)
 Their blunted venom'd shafts rebound.
 So shines his light before mankind,
 His actions prove his honest mind.
 If in his country's cause he rise,
 Debating senates to advise,
 Unbrib'd, unaw'd, he dares impart
 The honest dictates of his heart.
 No ministerial frown he fears,
 But in his virtue perseveres.

But would you play the politician,
 Whose heart's averse to intuition,
 Your lips at all times, nay, your reason
 Must be controul'd by place and season.
 What statesman could his pow'r support,
 Were lying tongues forbid the court?

Di princely ears to truth attend,
 What minister could gain his end?
 How could he raise his tools to place,
 And how his honest foes disgrace?

That politician tops his part,
 Who readily can lie with art.
 The man's proficient in his trade;
 His power is strong, his fortune's made.
 By that the int'rest of the throne
 Is made subservient to his own:
 By that have kings of old deluded,
 All their own friends for his excluded.
 By that, his selfish schemes pursuing,
 He thrives upon the public ruin.

† Antiochus, with hardy pace,
 Provok'd the dangers of the chace;
 And, lost from all the menial train,
 Travers'd the wood and pathless plain.
 A cottage lodg'd the royal guest;
 The Parthian clown brought forth his best.
 The king unknown his feast enjoy'd,
 And various chat the hours employ'd.
 From wine what sudden friendship springs!
 Frankly they talk'd of courts and kings.

We country-folk (the clown replies)
 Could ope our gracious monarch's eyes.
 The king (as all our neighbours say)
 Might he (God blefs him!) have his way,
 Is found at heart, and means our good,
 And he would do it, if he cou'd.

† Plutarch.

If truth in courts were not forbid,
Nor kings nor subjects would be rid.
Were he in pow'r, we need not doubt him :
But that transferr'd to those about him,
On them he throws the regal cares :
And what mind they ? their own affairs.
If such rapacious hands he trust,
The best of men may seem unjust.
From kings to coblers 'tis the same :
Bad servants wound their master's fame.
In this our neighbours all agree :
Would the king knew as much as we.
Here he stopt short. Repose they sought.
The peasant slept, the monarch thought.

The courtiers learn'd, at early dawn,
Where their lost sov'reign was withdrawn.
The guards approach our host alarms,
With gaudy coats the cottage swarms.
The crown and purple robes they bring,
And prostrate fall before the king.
The clown was call'd ; the royal guest
By due reward his thanks express'd.
The king then, turning to the croud,
Who fawningly before him bow'd,
Thus spoke. Since, bent on private gain,
Your counsels first misled my reign,
Taught and inform'd by you alone,
No truth the royal ear hath known
Till here conversing. Hence, ye crew,
For now I know myself, and you.

Whene'er the royal ear's ingross'd,
State-lies but little genius cost.

The fav'rite then securely robs,
 And gleans a nation by his jobs.
 Franker and bolder grown in ill,
 He daily poisons dares instil ;
 And, as his present views suggest,
 Inflames or sooths the royal breast.
 Thus wicked ministers oppress,
 When oft the monarch means redress.

Would kings their private subjects hear,
 A minister must talk with fear,
 If honestly oppos'd his views,
 He dar'd not innocence accuse.
 'T would keep him in such narrow bound,
 He could not right and wrong confound.
 Happy were kings, could they disclose
 Their real friends and real foes !
 Were both themselves and subjects known,
 A monarch's will might be his own.
 Had he the use of ears and eyes,
 Knaves would no more be counted wise.
 But then a minister might lose
 (Hard case !) his own ambitious views.
 When such as these have vex'd a state,
 Pursu'd by universal hate,
 Their false support at once hath fail'd,
 And persevering truth prevail'd.
 Expos'd, their train of fraud is seen :
 Truth will at last remove the screen.

A country Squire, by whim directed,
 The true, stanch dogs of chace neglected.

Beneath his board no hound was fed;
 His hand ne'er stroak'd the spaniel's head.
 A snappish Cur, alone carest,
 By lies had banish'd all the rest.
 Yap had his ear; and defamation
 Gave him full scope of conversation.
 His sycophants must be preferr'd;
 Room must be made for all his herd:
 Wherefore, to bring his schemes about,
 Old faithful servants all must out.

The Cur on ev'ry creature flew,
 (As other great mens puppies do),
 Unless due court to him were shown,
 And both their face and bus'ness known.
 No honest tongue an audience found:
 He worried all the tenants round:
 For why, he liv'd in constant fear,
 Lest truth by chance should interfere.
 If any stranger dar'd intrude,
 The noisy Cur his heels pursu'd.
 Now fierce with rage, now struck with dread,
 At once he snarled, bit, and fled.
 Aloof he bays, with bristling hair,
 And thus in secret growls his fear.
 Who knows but Truth, in this disguise,
 May frustrate my best guarded lies?
 Should she (thus mask'd) admittance find,
 That very hour my ruin's sign'd.

Now in his howl's continu'd sound,
 Their words were lost, the voice was drown'd.
 Ever in awe of honest tongues,
 Thus ev'ry day he strain'd his lungs.

It happen'd, in ill-omen'd hour,
 That Yap, unmindful of his pow'r,
 Forfook his post, to love inclin'd.
 A fav'rite bitch was in the wind.
 By her seduc'd, in am'rous play,
 They frisk'd the joyous hours away.
 Thus, by untimely love pursuing,
 Like Antony, he fought his ruin.

For now the Squire, unvex'd with noise,
 An honest neighbour's chat enjoys.
 Be free (says he) your mind impart;
 I love a friendly open heart.
 Methinks my tenants shun my gate.
 Why such a stranger grown of late?
 Pray tell me what offence they find:
 'Tis plain they're not so well inclin'd.

Turn off your Cur, (the farmer cries),
 Who feeds your ear with daily lies.
 His snarling insolence offends.
 'Tis he that keeps you from your friends.
 Were but that saucy puppy checkt,
 You'd find again the same respect.
 Hear only him, he'll swear it too,
 That all our hatred is to you.
 But learn from us your true estate;
 'Tis that curs'd Cur alone we hate.

The Squire heard truth. Now Yap rush'd in;
 The wide hall echoes with his din:
 Yet truth prevail'd; and with disgrace,
 The dog was cudgell'd out of place.

F A B L E VII.

*The COUNTRYMAN and JUPITER.**To MYSELF.*

HAVE you a friend (look round and spy)
 So fond, so prepossess'd as I?
 Your faults, so obvious to mankind,
 My partial eyes could never find.
 When, by the breath of Fortune blown,
 Your airy castles were o'erthrown;
 Have I been over prone to blame?
 Was I e'er known to damp your spirit,
 Or twit you with the want of merit?
 'Tis not so strange that Fortune's frown,
 Still perseveres to keep you down.
 Look round, and see what others do.
 Would you be rich and honest too?
 Have you (like those she rais'd to place)
 Been opportunely mean and base?
 Have you (as times requir'd) resign'd
 Truth, honour, virtue, peace of mind?
 If these are scruples, give her o'er;
 Write, practise morals, and be poor.
 The gifts of Fortune truly rate;
 Then tell me what would mend your state.
 If happiness on wealth were built,
 Rich rogues might comfort find in guilt.

As grows the miser's hoarded store,
His fears, his wants increase the more.

Think, Gay, (what ne'er may be the case),
Should Fortune take you into grace,
Would that your happiness augment?
What can she give beyond content?

Suppose yourself a wealthy heir,
With a vast annual income clear;
In all the affluence you possess,
You might not feel one care the less.
Might you not then (like others) find,
With change of fortune, change of mind?
Perhaps, profuse beyond all rule,
You might start out a glaring fool;
Your luxury might break all bounds;
Plate, table, horses, stewards, hounds,
Might swell your debts: Then, lust of play
No regal income can defray,
Sunk is all credit, writs assail,
And doom your future life to jail.

Or were you dignified with pow'r,
Would that avert one pensive hour?
You might give avarice its swing,
Defraud a nation, blind a king:
Then, from the hirelings in your cause,
Though daily fed with false applause,
Could it a real joy impart?
Great guilt knew never joy at heart.

Is happiness your point in view?
(I mean th' intrinsic and the true),
She nor in camps or courts resides,
Nor in the humble cottage hides;

Yet found alike in ev'ry sphere :
Who finds content, will find her there.

O'erſpent with toil, beneath the ſhade,
A Peaſant reſted on his ſpade.

Good gods ! he cries, 'tis hard to bear
This load of life from year to year.

Soon as the morning ſtreaks the ſkies,
Induſtrious labour bids me riſe ;
With ſweat I earn my homely fare,
And ev'ry day renews my care.

Jove heard the diſcontented ſtrain,
And thus rebuk'd the murm'ring ſwain.

Speak out your wants then, honeſt friend ;
Unjuſt complaints the gods offend.

If you repine at partial fate,
Inſtruct me what could mend your ſtate.

Mankind in ev'ry ſtation ſee.
What wiſh you ? tell me what you'd be.

So ſaid, upborne upon a cloud,
The clown ſurvey'd the anxious croud.

Yon face of care, ſays Jove, behold,
His bulky bags are fill'd with gold.

See with what joy he counts it o'er !
That ſum to-day hath ſwell'd his ſtore.

Were I that man, (the Peaſant cry'd),
What bleſſing could I aſk beſide ?

Hold, ſays the god ; firſt learn to know
True happineſs from outward ſhow.

This optic glaſs of intuition,——
Here, take it, view his true condition.

He look'd, and saw the miser's breast,
 A troubled ocean, ne'er at rest ;
 Want ever stares him in the face,
 And fear anticipates disgrace :
 With conscious guilt he saw him start ;
 Extortion gnaws his throbbing heart ;
 And never, or in thought or dream,
 His breast admits one happy gleam.

May Jove, he cries, reject my pray'r,
 And guard my life from guilt and care.
 My soul abhors that wretch's fate.

O keep me in my humble state !
 But see, amidst a gaudy croud,
 Yon minister so gay and proud,
 On him what happiness attends,
 Who thus rewards his grateful friends !
 First take the glass, the god replies ;
 Man views the world with partial eyes.

Good gods! exclaims the startled wight,
 Defend me from this hideous sight !
 Corruption, with corrosive smart,
 Lies cank'ring on his guilty heart :
 I see him, with polluted hand,
 Spread the contagion o'er the land.
 Now Av'rice with insatiate jaws,
 Now Rapine with her harpy claws,
 His bosom tears. His conscious breast
 Groans with a load of crimes oppress'd.
 See him, mad and drunk with power,
 Stand tott'ring on Ambition's tower.
 Sometimes, in speeches vain and proud,
 His boasts insult the nether croud ;

Now, seiz'd with giddiness and fear,
He trembles lest his fall is near.

Was ever wretch like this, he cries!
Such misery in such disguise!

The change, O Jove, I disavow,
Still be my lot the spade and plough.

He next, confirm'd by speculation,
Rejects the lawyer's occupation;

For he the statesman seem'd in part,
And bore similitude of heart.

Nor did the soldier's trade inflame
His hopes with thirst of spoil and fame:

The miseries of war he mourn'd;
Whole nations into desarts turn'd.

By these have laws and rights been brav'd;

By these was free-born man enslav'd:

When battles and invasion cease,

Why swarm they in the lands of peace?

Such change (says he) may I decline;

The scythe and civil arms be mine!

Thus, weighing life in each condition,

The clown withdrew his rash petition.

When thus the god: How mortals err!

If you true happiness prefer,

'Tis to no rank of life confin'd,

But dwells in ev'ry honest mind.

Be justice then your sole pursuit.

Plant virtue, and content's the fruit.

So Jove, to gratify the clown,

Where first he found him set him down.

F A B L E VIII.

The MAN, the CAT, the DOG, and the FLY.

To my NATIVE COUNTRY.

HAil, happy land, whose fertile grounds
 The liquid fence of Neptune bounds;
 By bounteous nature set apart,
 The seat of industry and art!
 O Britain! chosen port of trade,
 May lux'ry ne'er thy sons invade;
 May never minister (intent
 His private treasures to augment)
 Corrupt thy state. If jealous foes
 Thy rights of commerce dare oppose,
 Shall not thy fleets their rapine awe?
 Who is't prescribes the ocean law?
 Whenever neighb'ring states contend,
 'Tis thine to be the gen'ral friend.
 What is't, who rules in other lands?
 On trade alone thy glory stands.
 That benefit is unconfin'd,
 Diffusing good among mankind:
 That first gave lustre to thy reigns,
 And scatter'd plenty o'er thy plains:
 'Tis that alone thy wealth supplies,
 And draws all Europe's envious eyes.

Be commerce then thy sole design ;
 Keep that, and all the world is thine.
 When naval traffic plows the main,
 Who shares not in the merchant's gain ?
 'Tis that supports the regal state,
 And makes the farmer's heart elate :
 The num'rous flocks, that clothe the land,
 Can scarce supply the loom's demand ;
 Prolific culture glads the fields,
 And the bare heath a harvest yields.
 Nature expects mankind should share
 The duties of the public care.
 Who's born for sloth ? * To some we find
 The plough-share's annual toil assign'd.
 Some at the founding anvil glow ;
 Some the swift-sliding shuttle throw :
 Some, studious of the wind and tide,
 From pole to pole our commerce guide :
 Some (taught by industry) impart
 With hands and feet the works of art :
 While some, of genius more refin'd,
 With head and tongue assist mankind :
 Each, aiming at one common end,
 Proves to the whole a needful friend.
 Thus, born each other's useful aid,
 By turns are obligations paid.
 The monarch, when his table's spread,
 Is to the clown oblig'd for bread ;
 And, when in all his glory drest,
 Owes to the loom his royal vest :

* Barrow.

M 2

Do not the mason's toil and care,
 Protect him from th' inclement air ?
 Does not the cutler's art supply
 The ornament that guards his thigh ?
 All these, in duty to the throne
 Their common obligations own.
 'Tis he (his own and people's cause)
 Protects their properties and laws.
 Thus they their honest toil employ,
 And with content the fruits enjoy,
 In ev'ry rank, or great or small,
 'Tis industry supports us all.

The animals, by want oppress'd,
 To man their services address'd.
 While each pursu'd their selfish good,
 They hunger'd for precarious food.
 Their hours with anxious cares were vex'd;
 One day they fed, and starv'd the next.
 They saw that plenty, sure and rife,
 Was found alone in social life ;
 That mutual industry profess'd,
 The various wants of man redress'd.

The Cat, half-famish'd, lean, and weak,
 Demands the privilege to speak.

Well, Pufs, (says Man), and what can you
 To benefit the public do ?

The Cat replies. These teeth, these claws,
 With vigilance shall serve the cause.
 The mouse, destroy'd by my pursuit,
 No longer shall your feasts pollute ;

Nor rats, from nightly ambuscade,
 With wasteful teeth your stores invade.
 I grant, says Man, to gen'ral use
 Your parts and talents may conduce;
 For rats and mice purloin our grain,
 And threshers whirl the flail in vain:
 Thus shall the Cat, a foe to spoil,
 Protect the farmer's honest toil.

Then turning to the Dog, he cry'd,
 Well, Sir; be next your merits try'd.
 Sir, says the Dog, by self-applause
 We seem to own a friendless cause.
 Ask those who know me, if distrust
 E'er found me treach'rous or unjust.
 Did I e'er faith or friendship break?
 Ask all those creatures; let them speak.
 My vigilance and trusty zeal
 Perhaps may serve the public weal.
 Might not your flocks in safety feed,
 Were I to guard the fleecy breed?
 Did I the nightly watches keep,
 Could thieves invade you while you sleep?

The Man replies. 'Tis just and right
 Rewards such service should requite.
 So rare, in property, we find
 Trust uncorrupt among mankind,
 That, taken in a public view,
 The first distinction is your due.
 Such merits all reward transcend:
 Be then my comrade and my friend.
 Addressing now the Fly: From you
 What public service can accrue?

From me! (the flutt'ring insect said);
 I thought you knew me better bred.
 Sir, I'm a gentleman. Is't fit
 That I to industry submit?
 Let mean mechanics, to be fed,
 By bus'ness earn ignoble bread.
 Lost in excess of daily joys,
 No thought, no care my life annoys.
 At noon (the lady's matin hour)
 I sip the tea's delicious flower.
 On cates luxuriously I dine,
 And drink the fragrance of the vine.
 Studious of elegance and ease,
 Myself alone I seek to please.

The Man has pert conceit derides,
 And thus the uselefs coxcomb chides.
 Hence, from that peach, that downy seat;
 No idol fool deserves to eat.
 Could you have sapp'd the blushing rind,
 And on that pulp ambrosial din'd,
 Had not some hand, with skill and toil,
 To raise the tree, prepar'd the soil?
 Consider, sot, what would ensue,
 Were all such worthless things as you.
 You'd soon be fore'd (by hunger stung),
 To make your dirty meals on dung;
 On which such despicable need,
 Unpitied, is reduc'd to feed.
 Besides, vain selfish insect, learn,
 (If you can right and wrong discern),
 That he who, with industrious zeal,
 Contributes to the public weal,

By adding to the common good,
His own hath rightly understood.

So saying, with a sudden blow,
He laid the noxious vagrant low.
Crush'd in his luxury and pride,
The spunger on the public dy'd.

F A B L E IX.

The JACKALL, LEOPARD, and other Beasts.

To a MODERN POLITICIAN.

I Grant corruption sways mankind ;
That int'rest too perverts the mind ;
That bribes have blinded common sense,
Foil'd reason, truth, and eloquence :
I grant you too, our present crimes
Can equal those of former times.
Against plain facts shall I engage,
To vindicate our righteous age ?
I know, that in a modern fist,
Bribes in full energy subsist.
Since then these arguments prevail,
And itching palms are still so frail,
Hence politicians, you suggest,
Should drive the nail that goes the best ;
That it shows parts and penetration,
To ply men with the right temptatⁱ on.

M 4

To this I humbly must dissent ;
Premising, no reflection's meant.

Does justice, or the client's sense,
Teach lawyers either side's defence ?
The fee gives eloquence its spirit ;
That only is the client's merit.
Does art, wit, wisdom, or address,
Obtain the prostitute's carefs ?
The guinea (as in other trades)
From ev'ry hand alike persuades.
Man, scripture says, is prone to evil ;
But does that vindicate the devil ?
Besides, the more mankind are prone,
The less the devil's parts are shown.
Corruption's not of modern date ;
It hath been try'd in ev'ry state.
Great knaves of old their pow'r have fenc'd
By places, pensions, bribes, dispens'd ;
By these they glory'd in success,
And impudently dar'd oppress ;
By these despotically they sway'd,
And slaves extoll'd the hand that paid ;
Nor parts nor genius were employ'd,
By these alone were realms destroy'd.

Now see these wretches in disgrace,
Strip'd of their treasures, pow'r, and place ;
View 'em abandon'd and forlorn,
Expos'd to just reproach and scorn.
What now is all your pride, your boast ?
Where are your slaves, your flatt'ring host ?
What tongues now feed you with applause ?
Where are the champions of your cause ?

Now ev'n that very fawning train,
Which shar'd the gleanings of your gain,
Prefs foremost who shall first accuse
Your selfish jobbs, your paltry views,
Your narrow schemes, your breach of trust,
And want of talents to be just.

What fools were these amidst their pow'r!
How thoughtless of their adverse hour!
What friends were made? A hireling herd,
For temporary votes preferr'd.
Was it, these sycophants to get,
Your bounty swell'd a nation's debt?
You're bit. For these, like Swifs, attend;
No longer pay, no longer friend.

The Lion is (beyond dispute)
Allow'd the most majestic brute;
His valour and his gen'rous mind
Prove him superior of his kind.
Yet to Jackalls (as 'tis averr'd)
Some lions have their pow'r transferr'd:
As if the parts of pimps and spies
To govern forests could suffice.

Once, studious of his private good,
A proud Jackall oppress'd the wood;
To cram his own insatiate jaws
Invaded property and laws.
The forest groans with discontent,
Fresh wrongs the gen'ral hate foment.
The spreading murmurs reach'd his ear;
His secret hours were vex'd with fear.

Night after night he weighs the case,
And feels the terrors of disgrace.

By friends (says he) I'll guard my seat,
By those malicious tongues defeat :
I'll strengthen pow'r by new allies,
And all my clam'rous foes despise.

To make the gen'rous beasts his friends,
He cringes, fawns, and condescends ;
But those repuls'd his abject court,
And scorn'd oppression to support.
Friends must be had, He can't subsist,
Bribes shall new profelytes enlist.
But these nought weigh'd in honest paws ;
For bribes confess a wicked cause :
Yet think not ev'ry paw withstands
What had prevail'd in human hands.

A tempting turnip's silver skin
Drew a base hog through thick and thin :
Bought with a stag's delicious haunch,
The mercenary wolf was stanch :
The convert fox grew warm and hearty,
A pullet gain'd him to the party :
The golden pippin in his fist,
A chat'ring monkey join'd the list.

But soon, expos'd to public hate,
The fav'rite's fall redress'd the state.
The Leopard, vindicating right,
Had brought his secret frauds to light.
As rats, before the mansion falls,
Desert late hospitable walls,
In shoals the servile creatures run,
To bow before the rising sun.

The hog with warmth express'd his zeal,
 And was for hanging those that steal;
 But hop'd, though low, the public board
 Might half a turnip still afford.
 Since saving measures were profess'd,
 A lamb's head was the wolf's request.
 The fox submitted, if to touch
 A goslin would be deem'd too much.
 The monkey thought his grin and chatter
 Might ask a nut, or some such matter.

Ye hirelings, hence, (the Leopard cries);
 Your venal conscience I despise.
 He who the public good intends,
 By bribes needs never purchase friends.
 Who acts this just, this open part,
 Is propt by ev'ry honest heart.
 Corruption now, too late, has show'd,
 That bribes are always ill-bestow'd.
 By you your bubbled master's taught,
 Time-serving tools, not friends, are bought.

F A B L E X.

The DEGENERATE BEES.

To the Reverend Dr SWIFT, Dean of St Patrick's.

THough courts the practice disallow,
 A friend at all times I'll avow.
 In politics I know 'tis wrong:
 A friendship may be kept too long:

And that they call the prudent part,
Is to wear int'rest next the heart.
As the times take a diff'rent face,
Old friendships should to new give place.

I know too you have many foes,
That owning you is sharing those;
That ev'ry knave in ev'ry station,
Of high and low denomination,
For what you speak and what you write,
Dread you at once, and bear you spite.
Such freedoms in your works are shown,
They can't enjoy what's not their own.
All dunces too in church and state
In frothy nonsense show their hate;
With all the petty scribbling crew,
(And those pert fots are not a few),
'Gainst you and Pope their envy spurt.
The bookfellers alone are hurt.

Good gods! by what a powerful race
(For blockheads may have pow'r and place)
Are scandals rais'd, and libels writ,
To prove your honesty and wit!
Think with yourself: Those worthy men,
You know, have suffer'd by your pen.
From them you've nothing but your due.
From hence, 'tis plain, your friends are few.
Except myself, I know of none,
Besides the wife and good alone.
To set the case in fairer light,
My fable shall the rest recite;
Which (though unlike our present state)
I for the moral's sake relate,

A bee, of cunning, not of parts,
 Luxurious, negligent of arts,
 Rapacious, arrogant, and vain;
 Greedy of pow'r, but more of gain,
 Corruption sow'd throughout the hive,
 By petty rogues the great ones thrive.

As pow'r and wealth his views supply'd,
 'Twas seen in overbearing pride,
 With him loud impudence had merit;
 The Bee of conscience wanted spirit;
 And those who follow'd honour's rules,
 Were laugh'd to scorn for squeamish fools.

Wealth claim'd distinction, favour, grace;
 And poverty alone was base.
 He treated industry with slight,
 Unless he found his profit by't.
 Rights, laws, and liberties gave way,
 To bring his selfish schemes in play.
 The swarm forgot the common toil,
 To share the gleanings of his spoil.

While vulgar souls, of narrow parts,
 Waste life in low mechanic arts,
 Let us (says he) to genius born,
 The drudg'ry of our fathers scorn.
 The wasp and drone, you must agree,
 Live with more elegance than we,
 Like gentlemen they sport and play;
 No bus'ness interrupts the day:
 Their hours to luxury they give,
 And nobly on their neighbours live.

A stubborn bee among the swarm,
 With honest indignation warm,

Thus from his cell with zeal reply'd.

I slight thy frowns, and hate thy pride.
 The laws our native rights protect;
 Offending thee, I those respect.
 Shall luxury corrupt the hive,
 And none against the torrent strive?
 Exert the honour of your race;
 He builds his rise on your disgrace.
 'Tis industry our state maintains.
 'Twas honest toil and honest gains
 That rais'd our fires to pow'r and fame.
 Be virtuous; save yourselves from shame.
 Know that, in selfish ends pursuing,
 You scramble for the public ruin.

He spoke; and, from his cell dismiss'd,
 Was insolently scoff'd and hiss'd.
 With him a friend or two resign'd,
 Disdaining the degen'rate kind.

These drones (says he) these insects vile,
 (I treat them in their proper style),
 May for a time oppress the state.
 They own our virtue by their hate;
 By that our merits they reveal,
 And recommend our public zeal;
 Disgrac'd by this corrupted crew,
 We're honour'd by the virtuous few.

F A B L E XI.

The PACK-HORSE and the CARRIER.

To a YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

Begin, my Lord, in early youth,
To suffer, nay, encourage truth :
And blame me not for disrespect,
If I the flatt'rer's style reject ;
With that, by menial tongues supply'd,
You're daily cocker'd up in pride.

The tree's distinguish'd by the fruit.
Be virtue then your first pursuit :
Set your great ancestors in view,
Like them deserve the title too ;
Like them ignoble actions scorn :
Let virtue prove you greatly born.

Though with less plate their side-board shone,
Their conscience always was their own ;
They ne'er at levees meanly fawn'd,
Nor was their honour yearly pawn'd ;
Their hands, by no corruption stain'd,
The ministerial bribe disdain'd ;
They serv'd the crown with loyal zeal,
Yet jealous of the public weal ;
They stood the bulwark of our laws,
And wore at heart their country's cause ;

By neither place or pension bought,
They spoke and voted as they thought.
Thus did your fires adorn their seat;
And such alone are truly great.

If you the paths of learning slight,
You're but a dunce in stronger light:
In foremost rank, the coward, plac'd,
Is more conspicuously disgrac'd.
If you, to serve a paltry end,
To knavish jobs can condescend,
We pay you the contempt that's due;
In that you have precedence too.

Whence had you this illustrious name?
From virtue and unblemish'd fame.
By birth the name alone descends;
Your honour on yourself depends.
Think not your coronet can hide
Assuming ignorance and pride.
Learning by study must be won,
'Twas ne'er entail'd from son to son.
Superior worth your rank requires;
For that mankind reveres your fires:
If you degen'rate from your race,
Their merits heighten your disgrace.

A Carrier ev'ry night and morn,
Would see his horses eat their corn.
This sunk the hostler's vails, 'tis true;
But then his horses had their due.
Were we so cautious in all cases,
Small gain would rise from greater places.

The manger now had all its measure ;
 He heard the grinding teeth with pleasure :
 When all at once confusion rung ;
 They snorted, jostled, bit, and stung.
 A Pack-horse turn'd his head aside,
 Foaming, his eye-balls swell'd with pride.

Good gods! (says he), how hard's my lot?

Is then my high descent forgot?
 Reduc'd to drudg'ry and disgrace,
 (A life unworthy of my race),
 Must I too bear the vile attacks
 Of ragged scrubs, and vulgar hacks?
 See scurvy Roan, that brute ill-bred,
 Dares from the manger thrust my head!
 Shall I, who boast a noble line,
 On offals of these creatures dine?
 Kick'd by old Ball! so mean a foe!

My honour suffers by the blow.

Newmarket speaks my grandfire's fame,

All jockeys still revere his name :

There yearly are his triumphs told,

There all his massy plates enroll'd.

Whene'er led forth upon the plain,

You saw him with a liv'ry train ;

Returning too, with laurels crown'd,

You heard the drums and trumpets sound.

Let it then, Sir, be understood,

Respect's my due ; for I have blood.

Vain-glorious fool, (the Carrier cry'd),

Respect was never paid to pride.

Know, 'twas thy giddy wilful heart

Reduc'd thee to this slavish part.

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Did not thy headstrong youth disdain
 To learn the conduct of the rein ?
 Thus coxcombs, blind to real merit,
 In vitious frolics fancy spirit.
 What is't to me by whom begot,
 Thou restif, pert, conceited sot ?
 Your sires I rev'rence; 'tis their due :
 But, worthless fool, what's that to you ?
 Ask all the carriers on the road,
 They'll say thy keeping's ill bestow'd.
 Then vaunt no more thy noble race,
 That neither mends thy strength nor pace.
 What profits me thy boast of blood ?
 An afs hath more intrinsic good.
 By outward show let's not be cheated :
 An afs should like an afs be treated.

F A B L E XII.

PAN and FORTUNE.

To a YOUNG HEIR.

Soon as your father's death was known,
 (As if th' estate had been their own),
 The gamesters outwardly exprest
 The decent joy within your breast.
 So lavish in your praise they grew,
 As spoke their certain hopes in you.

One counts your income of the year,
How much in ready money clear.

No house, says he, is more compleat ;
The garden's elegant and great.
How fine the park around it lies !
The timber's of a noble size.
Then count his jewels and his plate.
Besides, 'tis no entail'd estate.
If cash run low, his lands in fee
Are or for sale, or mortgage free.

Thus they, before you threw the main,
Seem'd to anticipate their gain.

Would you, when thieves are known abroad,
Bring forth your treasures in the road ?

Would not the fool abet the stealth,
Who rashly thus expos'd his wealth ?

Yet this you do, whene'er you play
Among the gentlemen of prey.

Could fools to keep their own contrive,
On what, on whom could gamesters thrive ?

Is it in charity you game,

To save your worthy gang from shame ?

Unless you furnish'd daily bread,

Which way could idleness be fed ?

Could these professors of deceit

Within the law no longer cheat,

They must run bolder risques for prey,

And strip the trav'ler on the way.

Thus in your annual rents they share,

And 'scape the noose from year to year.

Consider, ere you make the bett,
That sum might cross your taylor's debt.

When you the pilf'ring rattle shake,
 Is not your honour too at stake?
 Must you not by mean lies evade
 To-morrow's duns from ev'ry trade?
 By promises so often paid,
 Is yet your taylor's bill defray'd?
 Must you not pitifully fawn,
 To have your butcher's writ withdrawn?
 This must be done. In debts of play
 Your honour suffers no delay:
 And not this year's and next year's rent
 The sons of rapine can content.

Look round. The wrecks of play behold,
 Estates dismember'd, mortgag'd, sold!
 Their owners, not to jails confin'd,
 Show equal poverty of mind.
 Some, who the spoil of knaves were made,
 Too late attempt to learn their trade.
 Some, for the folly of one hour,
 Become the dirty tools of pow'r.
 And, with the mercenary list,
 Upon court-charity subsist.

You'll find at last this maxim true,
 Fools are the game which knaves pursue.

The forest (a whole cent'ry's shade)
 Must be one wasteful ruin made.
 No mercy's shown to age or kind;
 The gen'ral massacre is sign'd.
 The park too shares the dreadful fate,
 For duns grow louder at the gate.

Stern clowns, obedient to the 'Squire,
(What will not barb'rous hands for hire?)
With brawny arms repeat the stroke.
Fall'n are the elm and rev'rend oak,
Through the long wood loud axes sound,
And echo groans with ev'ry wound.

To see the desolation spread,
Pan drops a tear, and hangs his head.
His bosom now with fury burns;
Beneath his hoof the dice he spurns.
Cards too, in peevish passion torn,
The sport of whirling winds are born.

To snails invet'rate hate I bear,
Who spoil the verdure of the year:
The caterpillar I detest,
The blooming spring's voracious pest:
The locust too, whose rav'nous band
Spreads sudden famine o'er the land.
But what are these? The dice's throw
At once hath laid a forest low.

The cards are dealt, the bett is made,
And the wide park hath lost its shade.
Thus is my kingdom's pride defac'd,
And all its ancient glories waste.

All this (he cries) is Fortune's doing:
'Tis thus she meditates my ruin.

By Fortune, that false, fickle jade,
More havock in one hour is made,
Than all the hungry insect-race,
Combin'd, can in an age deface.

Fortune, by chance, who near him past,
O'erheard the vile asperſion caſt.

Why, Pan, (says she), what's all this rant?
 'Tis ev'ry country-bubble's cant.
 Am I the patroness of vice?
 Is't I who cog or palm the dice?
 Did I the shuffling art reveal,
 To mark the cards, or range the deal?
 In all th' employments men pursue,
 I mind the least what gamesters do.
 There may (if computation's just)
 One now and then my conduct trust:
 I blame the fool; for what can I,
 When ninety-nine my pow'r defy?
 These trust alone their fingers end,
 And not one stake on me depends.
 Whene'er the gaming-board is set,
 Two classes of mankind are met:
 But if we count the greedy race,
 The knaves fill up the greater space.
 'Tis a gross error, held in schools,
 That Fortune always favours fools.
 In play it never bears dispute;
 That doctrine these fell'd oaks confute.
 Then why to me such rancour show?
 'Tis folly, Pan, that is thy foe.
 By me his late estate he won,
 But he by Folly was undone.

F A B L E XIII.

PLUTUS, CUPID, and TIME.

OF all the burthens man must bear,
 Time seems most galling and severe:
 Beneath this grievous load oppress'd,
 We daily meet some friend distress'd.

What can one-do? I rose at nine.
 'Tis full six hours before we dine:
 Six hours! no earthly thing to do!
 Would I had doz'd in bed till two.

A pamphlet is before him spread,
 And almost half a page is read;
 Tir'd with the study of the day,
 The flut'ring sheets are tost away.
 He opes his snuff-box, hums an air,
 Then yawns and stretches in his chair.

Not twenty, by the minute-hand!
 Good gods! says he, my watch must stand!
 How muddling 'tis on books to pore!
 I thought I'd read an hour or more.
 The morning, of all hours, I hate.
 One can't contrive to rise too late.

To make the minutes faster run,
 Then too his tiresome self to shun,
 To the next coffehouse he speeds,
 Takes up the news, some scraps he reads,

Saunt'ring, from chair to chair he trails ;
 Now drinks his tea, now bites his nails.
 He spies a partner of his woe ;
 By chat afflictions lighter grow ;
 Each other's grievances they share,
 And thus their dreadful hours compare.

Says Tom, since all men must confess
 That time lies heavy more or less ;
 Why should it be so hard to get,
 Till two, a party at Piquet ?
 Play might relieve the lagging morn :
 By cards long wintry nights are borne.
 Does not Quadrille amuse the fair,
 Night after night, throughout the year ?
 Vapours and spleen forgot, at play
 They cheat uncounted hours away.

My case, says Will, then must be hard,
 By want of skill from play debarr'd.
 Courtiers kill time by various ways ;
 Dependence wears out half their days.
 How happy these, whose time ne'er stands !
 Attendance takes it off their hands.
 Were it not for this cursed show'r,
 The park had whil'd away an hour.
 At court, without or place or view,
 I daily lose an hour or two.
 It fully answers my design,
 When I have pick'd up friends to dine.
 The tavern makes our burthen light ;
 Wine puts our time and care to flight.
 At six (hard case!) they call to pay.
 Where can one go ? I hate the play.

From six till ten! Unless I sleep,
One cannot spend the hours so cheap.
The comedy's no sooner done,
But some assembly is begun.
Loit'ring from room to room I stray;
Converse, but nothing hear or say:
Quite tir'd, from fair to fair I roam.
So soon! I dread the thoughts of home.
From thence, to quicken slow-pac'd night,
Again my tavern-friends invite:
Here too our early mornings pass,
Till drousy sleep retards the glass.

Thus they their wretched life bemoan,
And make each other's case their own.

Consider, friends, no hour rolls on,
But something of your grief is gone.
Were you to schemes of bus'ness bred,
Did you the paths of learning tread,
Your hours, your days would fly too fast;
You'd then regret the minute past,
Time's fugitive and light as wind;
'Tis indolence that clogs your mind:
That load from off your spirits shake;
You'll own, and grieve for your mistake.
A while your thoughtless spleen suspend,
Then read; and (if you can) attend.

As Plutus, to divert his care,
Walk'd forth one morn to take the air,
Cupid o'ertook his strutting pace.
Each star'd upon the stranger's face,

Till recollection set them right ;
 For each knew t'other but by sight.
 After some complimentary talk,
 Time met 'em, bow'd, and join'd their walk.
 Their chat on various subjects ran,
 But most, what each had done for man.
 Plutus assumes a haughty air,
 Just like our purse-proud fellows here.

Let kings (says he) let coblers tell,
 Whose gifts among mankind excel.
 Consider courts : What draws their train ?
 Think you 'tis loyalty-or gain ?
 That statesman hath the strongest hold,
 Whose tool of politics is gold.
 By that, in former reigns, 'tis said,
 The knave in pow'r hath senates led.
 By that alone he sway'd debates,
 Enrich'd himself, and beggar'd states.
 Forego your boast. You must conclude,
 That's most esteem'd that's most pursu'd.
 Think too, in what a woful plight
 That wretch must live whose pocket's light.
 Are not his hours by want deprest ?
 Penurious care corrodes his breast.
 Without respect, or love, or friends,
 His solitary day descends.

You might, says Cupid, doubt my parts,
 My knowledge too in human hearts,
 Should I the pow'r of gold dispute,
 Which great examples might confute.
 I know, when nothing else prevails,
 Persuasive money seldom fails ;

That beauty too, (like other wares),
 Its price, as well as conscience, bears.
 Then marriage (as of late profess)
 Is but a moncy-job at best.
 Consent, compliance may be sold:
 But love's beyond the price of gold.
 Smugglers there are, who, by retail,
 Expose what they call love to sale.
 Such bargains are an arrant cheat:
 You purchase flatt'ry and deceit.
 Those who true love have ever try'd,
 (The common cares of life supply'd),
 No wants endure, no wishes make,
 But ev'ry real joy partake.
 All comfort on themselves depends;
 They want nor pow'r, nor wealth, nor friends.
 Love then hath ev'ry blefs in store:
 'Tis friendship, and 'tis something more.
 Each other ev'ry wish they give.
 Not to know love, is not to live.

Or love, or money, (Time reply'd),
 Were men the question to decide,
 Would bear the prize: On both intent,
 My boon's neglected, or mis-spent.
 'Tis I who measure vital space,
 And deal out years to human race.
 Though little priz'd, and seldom sought,
 Without me, love and gold are nought.
 How does the miser time employ?
 Did I e'er see him life enjoy?
 By me forfook, the hoards he won,
 Are scatter'd by his lavish son.

By me all useful arts are gain'd;
 Wealth, learning, wisdom is attain'd.
 Who then would think, (since such my pow'r),
 That e'er I knew an idle hour?
 So subtle and so swift I fly,
 Love's not more fugitive than I.
 Who hath not heard coquettes complain
 Of days, months, years, mis-spent in vain?
 For time misused they pine and waste,
 And love's sweet pleasures never taste.
 Those who direct their time aright,
 If love or wealth their hopes excite,
 In each pursuit fit hours employ'd,
 And both by time have been enjoy'd.
 How heedless then are mortals grown!
 How little is their int'rest known?
 In ev'ry view they ought to mind me;
 For, when once lost, they never find me.

He spoke. The gods no more contest,
 And his superior gift confest;
 That time (when truly understood)
 Is the most precious earthly good,

F A B L E XIV.

*The OWL, the SWAN, the COCK, the SPIDER, the
 ASS, and the FARMER.*

To a MOTHER.

Conversing with your sprightly boys,
 Your eyes have spoke the mother's joys:

With what delight I've heard you quote
Their sayings in imperfect note!

I grant, in body and in mind,
Nature appears profusely kind.
Trust not to that. Act you your part;
Imprint just morals on their heart;
Impartially their talents scan:
Just education forms the man.

Perhaps (their genius yet unknown)
Each lot of life's already thrown;
That this shall plead, the next shall fight,
The last assert the church's right.
I censure not the fond intent;
But how precarious is th' event!
By talents misapplied and crost,
Consider, all your sons are lost.

One day (the tale's by Martial penn'd)
A father thus address'd his friend.
To train my boy, and call forth sense,
You know I've stuck at no expence;
I've try'd him in the sev'ral arts,
(The lad no doubt hath latent parts):
Yet, trying all, he nothing knows;
But, crab-like, rather backward goes.
Teach me what yet remains undone;
'Tis your advice shall fix my son,
Sir, says the friend, I've weigh'd the matter;
Excuse me, for I scorn to flatter:
Make him (nor think his genius checkt)
A herald or an architect.

Perhaps (as commonly 'tis known)
He heard th' advice, and took his own.

The boy wants wit ; he's sent to school,
 Where learning but improves the fool :
 The college next must give him parts,
 And cram him with the lib'ral arts.
 Whether he blunders at the bar,
 Or owes his infamy, to war ;
 Or if by licence or degree
 The sexton shares the doctor's fee ;
 Or from the pulpit by the hour
 He weekly floods of nonsense pour ;
 We find (th' intent of nature foil'd)
 A taylor or a butcher, spoil'd.

Thus ministers have royal-boons
 Confer'd on blockheads and buffoons :
 In spite of nature, merit, wit,
 Their friends for ev'ry post were fit.

But now let ev'ry muse confess,
 That merit finds its due success.
 Th' examples of our days regard ;
 Where's virtue seen without reward ?
 Distinguish'd and in place you find
 Desert and worth of ev'ry kind.
 Survey the rev'rend bench, and see
 religion, learning, piety :
 The patron, ere he recommends,
 Sees his own image in his friend's.
 Is honesty disgrac'd and poor ?
 What is't to us what was before ?

We all of times corrupt have heard,
 When paltry minions were preferr'd ;
 When all great offices, by dozens,
 Were fill'd by brothers, sons, and cousins.

What matter ignorance and pride?
 The man was happily ally'd.
 Provided that his clerk was good,
 What though he nothing understood?
 In church and state, the sorry race
 Grew more conspicuous fools in place.
 Such heads, as then a treaty made,
 Had bungled in the cobbler's trade.

Consider, patrons, that such elves
 Expose your folly with themselves.
 'Tis your's, as 'tis the parent's care,
 To fix each genius in its sphere.
 Your partial hand can wealth dispense,
 But never give a blookhead sense.

An owl, of magisterial air,
 Of solemn voice, of brow austere,
 Assum'd the pride of human race,
 And bore his wisdom in his face.
 Not to deprectate learned eyes,
 I've seen a pedant look as wise.

Within a barn, from noise retir'd,
 He scorn'd the world, himself admir'd;
 And, like an ancient sage, conceal'd
 The follies public life reveal'd.

Philosophers of old, he read,
 Their country's youth to science bred,
 Their manners form'd for ev'ry station,
 And destin'd each his occupation.
 When Xenophon, by numbers brav'd,
 Retreated, and a people sav'd,

That laurel was not all his own ;
 The plant by Socrates was sown.
 To Aristotle's greater name
 The Macedonian ow'd his fame.

Th' Athenian bird, with pride replete,
 Their talents equall'd in conceit ;
 And, copying the Socratic rule,
 Set up for master of a school.
 Dogmatic jargon learnt by heart,
 Trite sentences, hard terms of art,
 To vulgar ears seem'd so profound,
 They fancy'd learning in the sound.

The school had fame ; the croud'd place
 With pupils swarm'd of ev'ry race.
 With these the Swan's maternal care
 Had sent her scarce-fledg'd cygnet heir :
 The Hen (though fond and loth to part)
 Here lodg'd the darling of her heart :
 The Spider, of mechanic kind,
 Aspir'd to science more refin'd :
 The Ass learnt metaphors and tropes,
 But most on music fix'd his hopes.

The pupils now, advanc'd in age,
 Were call'd to tread life's busy stage ;
 And to the master 'twas submitted,
 That each might to his part be fitted.

The Swan (says he) in arms shall shine :
 The foldier's glorious toil be thine.

The Cock shall mighty wealth attain :
 Go, seek it on the stormy main.

The court shall be the Spider's sphere :
 Pow'r, fortune shall reward him there.

In music's art the *Afs*'s fame
 Shall emulate *Corelli*'s name.
 Each took the part that he advis'd,
 And all were equally despis'd.
 A Farmer, at his folly mov'd,
 The dull preceptor thus reprov'd.
 Blockhead (says he) by what you've done,
 One would have thought 'em each your son:
 For parents, to their offspring blind,
 Consult nor parts nor turn of mind;
 But ev'n in infancy decree
 What this, what t'other son shall be.
 Had you with judgment weigh'd the case,
 Their genius thus had fix'd their place.
 The Swan had learnt the sailor's art;
 The Cock had play'd the soldier's part;
 The Spider in the weaver's trade
 With credit had a fortune made:
 But for the foal, in ev'ry class
 The blockhead had appear'd an *Afs*.

F A B L E XV.

The COOK-MAID, the TURNSPIT, and the OX.

To a POOR MAN.

Consider man in ev'ry sphere,
 Then tell me, is your lot severe?

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'Tis murmur, discontent, distrust,
That makes you wretched. God is just.

I grant, that hunger must be fed,
That toil too earns thy daily bread.
What then? Thy wants are seen and known.
But ev'ry mortal feels his own.
We're born a restless needy crew:
Show me the happier man than you.

Adam, though blest'd above his kind,
For want of social woman pin'd.
Eve's wants the subtle serpent saw.
Her fickle taste transgress'd the law:
Thus fell our fire; and their disgrace
The curse entail'd on human race.

When Philip's son, by glory led,
Had o'er the globe his empire spread;
When altars to his name were dress'd,
That he was man, his tears confess'd.

The hopes of avarice are checkt:
The proud man always wants respect.
What various wants on pow'r attend?
Ambition never gains its end.
Who hath not heard the rich complain
Of surfeits and corporeal pain?
He, barr'd from ev'ry use of wealth,
Envies the plowman's strength and health.
Another in a beauteous wife
Finds all the miseries of life:
Domestic jars and jealous fear
Imbitter all his days with care.
This wants an heir; the line is lost:
Why was that vain entail ingross't?

Canst thou discern another's mind?
 Why is't you envy? Envy's blind.
 Tell Envy, when she would annoy,
 That thousands want what you enjoy.

The dinner must be dish'd at one.

Where's this vexatious Turnspit gone?
 Unless the skulking Cur is caught,
 The sir-loin's spoil'd, and I'm in fault.
 Thus said; (for sure you'll think it fit
 That I the Cook-maid's oaths omit),
 With all the fury of a cook,
 Her cooler kitchen Nan forsook.

The broomstick o'er her head she waves;
 She sweats, she stamps, she puffs, she raves.
 The sneaking Cur before her flies:
 She whistles, calls; fair speech she tries.
 These nought avail. Her cholera burns;
 The fist and cudgel threat by turns.
 With hasty stride she presses near;
 He flinks aloof, and howls with fear.

Was ever Cur so curs'd? (he cry'd).
 What star did at my birth preside!
 Am I for life by compact bound
 To tread the wheel's eternal round?
 Inglorious task! Of all our race
 No slave is half so mean and base.
 Had Fate a kinder lot assign'd,
 And form'd me of the lap-dog kind,
 I then, in higher life employ'd,
 Had indolence and ease enjoy'd;

And, like a gentleman carost,
 Had been the lady's fav'rite guest.
 Or were I sprung from spaniel line,
 Was his sagacious nostril mine,
 By me, their never-erring guide,
 From wood and plain their feasts supply'd,
 Knights, 'Squires attendant on my pace,
 Had shar'd the pleasures of the chace.
 Endu'd with native strength and fire,
 Why call'd I not the lion fire?
 A lion! such mean views I scorn.
 Why was I not of woman born?
 Who dares with Reason's pow'r contend?
 On man we brutal slaves depend;
 To him all creatures tribute pay,
 And luxury employs his day.

An Ox by chance o'erheard his moan,
 And thus rebuk'd the lazy dronc.

Dare you at partial Fate repine?
 How kind's your lot compar'd with mine!
 Decreed to toil, the barb'rous knife
 Hath sever'd me from social life;
 Urg'd by the stimulating goad,
 I drag the cumbrous waggon's load:
 'Tis mine to tame the stubborn plain,
 Break the stiff soil and house the grain;
 Yet I without a murmur bear
 The various labours of the year.
 But then consider, that one day,
 (Perhaps the hour's not far away),
 You, by the duties of your post,
 Shall turn the spit when I'm the roast;

And for reward shall share the feast,
 I mean shall pick my bones at least.
 Till now, th' astonish'd Cur replies,
 I look'd on all with envious eyes.
 How false we judge by what appears!
 All creatures feel their sev'ral cares.
 If thus you mighty beast complains,
 Perhaps man knows superior pains.
 Let envy then no more torment.
 Think on the Ox, and learn content.
 Thus said; close following at her heel,
 With chearful heart he mounts the wheel.

F A B L E XVI.

*The RAVENS, the SEXTON, and the EARTH-
 WORM.*

To LAURA.

LAURA, methinks your over-nice.
 True. Flatt'ry is a shocking vice;
 Yet sure, whene'er the praise is just,
 One may commend without disgust.
 Am I a privilege deny'd,
 Indulg'd by ev'ry tongue beside?
 How singular are all your ways!
 A woman, and averse to praise!
 If 'tis offence such truths to tell,
 Why do your merits thus excel?

Since then I dare not speak my mind,
 A truth conspicuous to mankind ;
 Though in full lustre ev'ry grace
 Distinguish your celestial face ;
 Though beauties of inferior ray
 (Like stars before the orb of day)
 Turn pale and fade : I check my lays,
 Admiring what I dare not praise.

If you the tribute due disdain,
 The muse's mortifying strain
 Shall, like a woman, in mere spite
 Set beauty in a moral light.

Though such revenge might shock the ear
 Of many a celebrated fair ;
 I mean that superficial race
 Whose thoughts ne'er reach beyond their face ;
 What's that to you ? I but displease
 Such ever-girlish ears as these.
 Virtue can brook the thoughts of age,
 That lasts the same through ev'ry stage.
 Though you by time must suffer more
 Than ever woman lost before ;
 To age is such indiff'rence shown,
 As if your face were not your own.

Were you by Antoninus taught ?
 Or is it native strength of thought,
 That thus, without concern or fright,
 You view yourself by reason's light ?

Those eyes of so divine a ray,
 What are they ? mould'ring, mortal clay.
 Those features, cast in heav'nly mold,
 Shall, like my coarser earth, grow old ;

Like common grass, the fairest flow'r
Must feel the hoary season's pow'r.

How weak, how vain is human pride!

Dares man upon himself confide?

The wretch who glories in his gain,

Amasses heaps on heaps in vain.

Why lose we life in anxious cares

To lay in hoards for future years?

Can those (when tortur'd by disease)

Clear our sick heart, or purchase ease?

Can those prolong one gasp of breath,

Or calm the troubled hour of death?

What's beauty? Call ye that your own,

A flow'r that fades as soon as blown?

What's man in all his boast of sway?

Perhaps the tyrant of a day.

Alike the laws of life take place

Through ev'ry branch of human race.

The monarch of long regal line

Was rais'd from dust as frail as mine.

Can he pour health into his veins,

Or cool the fever's restless pains?

Can he (worn down in nature's course)

New-brace his feeble nerves with force?

Can he (how vain is mortal pow'r!)

Stretch life beyond the destin'd hour?

Consider, man; weigh well thy frame;

The king, the beggar is the same.

Dust form'd us all. Each breathes his day,

Then sinks into his native clay.

Beneath a venerable yew,

That in the lonely church-yard grew,

Two Ravens fat. In solemn croak
 Thus one his hungry friend bespoke,
 Methinks I scent some rich repast;
 The favour strengthens with the blast;
 Snuff then, the promis'd feast inhale;
 I taste the carcase in the gale.
 Near yonder trees, the farmer's steed,
 From toil and daily drudg'ry freed,
 Hath groan'd his last. A dainty treat!
 To birds of taste delicious meat.

A Sexton, busy at his trade,
 To hear their chat, suspends his spade.
 Death struck him with no farther thought,
 Than merely as the fees he brought.
 Was ever two such blund'ring fowls,
 In brains and manners less than owls!
 Blockheads, says he, learn more respect:
 Know ye on whom ye thus reflect?
 In this same grave (who does me right,
 Must own the work is strong and tight)
 The 'Squire that yon fair hall possessit,
 To-night shall lay his bones at rest.
 Whence could the gross mistake proceed?
 The 'Squire was somewhat fat indeed.
 What then? The meanest bird of prey
 Such want of sense could ne'er betray:
 For sure some diff'rence must be found
 (Suppose the smelling organ found)
 In carcases (say what we can);
 Or where's the dignity of man?
 With due respect to human race,
 The Ravens undertook the case.

In such similitude of scent,
 Man ne'er could think reflexion meant,
 As epicures extol a treat,
 And seem their sav'ry words to eat,
 They prais'd dead horse, luxurious food,
 The ven'fon of the prescient brood.

The Sexton's indignation mov'd,
 The mean comparifon reprov'd ;
 Their undiscerning palate blam'd,
 Which two-legg'd carion thus defam'd.

Reproachful speech from either side
 The want of argument supply'd,
 They rail, revile : As often ends
 The contest of disputing friends.

Hold, says the fowl ; since human pride
 With confutation ne'er comply'd,
 Let's state the case, and then refer
 The knotty point : For taste may err.

As thus he spoke, from out the mold
 An Earth-worm, huge of size, unroll'd
 His monstrous length. They strait agree
 To chuse him as their referee ;
 So to th' experience of the jaws
 Each states the merits of his cause.

He paus'd, and with a solemn tone
 Thus made his sage opinion known.

On carcafes of ev'ry kind
 This maw hath elegantly din'd ;
 Provok'd by luxury or need,
 On beast, or fowl, or man, I feed ;
 Such small distinction's in the favour,
 By turns I chuse the fancy'd flavour.

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Yet I must own (that human beast)
 A glutton is the rankest feast.
 Man, cease this boast ; for human pride
 Hath various tracts to range beside.
 The prince who kept the world in awe,
 The judge whose dictate fix'd the law,
 The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
 Are levell'd. Death confounds 'em all.
 Then think not that we reptiles share
 Such cates, such elegance of fare :
 The only true and real good
 Of man was never vermin's food.
 'Tis seated in th' immortal mind ;
 Virtue distinguishes mankind,
 And that (as yet ne'er harbour'd here)
 Mounts with the soul we know not where.
 So, goodman Sexton, since the case
 Appears with such a dubious face,
 To neither I the cause determine ;
 For diff'rent tastes please diff'rent vermin.

THE END OF VOLUME SECOND.



