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Poems

Poems on several occasions

Gay, John

Edinburgh, 1773

Trivia: or, the art of walking the streets of London

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TRIVIA:

OR, THE

ART OF WALKING

THE STREETS OF

LONDON.

Quo te Moeri pedes? An, quo via ducit, in urbem?

VIRG.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE world, I believe, will take ſo little notice of me, that I need not take much of it. The critics may ſee by this poem, that I walk on foot, which probably may ſave me from their envy. I ſhould be ſorry to raiſe that paſſion in men whom I am ſo much obliged to, ſince they allow me an honour hitherto only ſhown to better writers: That of denying me to be the author of my own works.

Gentlemen, if there be any thing in this poem good enough to diſpleaſe you, and if it be any advantage to you to aſcribe it to ſome perſon of greater merit, I ſhall acquaint you, for your comfort, that, among many other obligations, I owe ſeveral hints of it to Dr Swift. And, if you will ſo far continue your favour as to write againſt it, I beg you to oblige me in accepting the following motto:

——Non tu, in Triviis, indocte, ſolebas
Stridenti, miſerum, ſtipula, diſperdere carmen?

T R I V I A.

B O O K I.

Of the Implements for walking the Streets, and Signs of the Weather.

THROUGH winter ſtreets to ſteer your courſe aright,
How to walk clean by day, and ſafe by night,
How joſtling crowds with prudence to decline,
When to aſſert the wall, and when reſign,
I ſing: Thou, Trivia, goddeſs, aid my ſong,
Through ſpacious ſtreets conduct thy bard along;
By thee tranſported, I ſecurely ſtray
Where winding alleys lead the doubtful way,
The ſilent court, and op'ning ſquare explore,
And long perplexing lanes untrod before.
To pave thy realm, and ſmooth thy broken ways,
Earth from her womb a flinty tribute pays;
For thee the ſturdy paviour thumps the ground,
Whilſt ev'ry ſtroke his lab'ring lungs reſound;
For thee the ſcavenger bids kennels glide
Within their bounds, and heaps of dirt ſubſide.
My youthful boſom burns with thirſt of fame,
From the great theme to build a glorious name,

To tread in paths to ancient bards unknown,
And bind my temples with a civic crown;
But more, my country's love demands the lays,
My country's be the profit, mine the praiſe.
When the black youth at choſen ſtands rejoice,
And *Clean your ſhoes* reſounds from ev'ry voice;
When late their miry ſides ſtage-coaches ſhow,
And their ſtiff horſes through the town move ſlow;
When all the Mall in leafy ruin lies,
And damſels firſt renew their oyſter cries:
Then let the prudent walker ſhoes provide,
Not of the Spaniſh or Morocco hide;
The wooden heel may raiſe the dancer's bound,
And with the ſcallop'd top his ſtep be crown'd:
Let firm, well-hammer'd ſoles protect thy feet
Through freezing ſnows, and rains, and ſoaking ſleet.
Should the big laſt extend the ſhoes too wide,
Each ſtone will wrench th' unwary ſtep aſide:
The ſudden turn may ſtretch the ſwelling vein,
Thy cracking joint unhinge, or ancle ſprain;
And when too ſhort the modiſh ſhoes are worn,
You'll judge the ſeaſons by your ſhooting corn.
Nor ſhould it prove thy leſs important care,
To chuſe a proper coat for winter's wear.
Now in thy trunk thy D'Oily habit fold,
The ſilken drugget ill can fence the cold;
The freeze's ſpungy nap is ſoak'd with rain,
And ſhow'rs ſoon drench the camlet's cockled grain.
True Witney * broad-cloth, with its ſhag unſhorn,
Unpierc'd is in the laſting tempeſt worn:

* A town in Oxfordſhire.

Be this the horſeman's fence; for who would wear
Amid the town the ſpoils of Ruſſia's bear?
Within the roquelaure's claſp thy hands are pent,
Hands, that ſtretch'd forth invading harms prevent.
Let the loop'd bavaroy the fop embrace,
Or his deep cloak beſpatter'd o'er with lace.
That garment beſt the winter's rage defends,
Whoſe ample form without one plait depends;
By various * names in various counties known,
Yet held in all the true Surtout alone;
Be thine of Kerſey firm, though ſmall the coſt,
Then brave unwet the rain, unchill'd the froſt.
If the ſtrong cane ſupport thy walking hand,
Chairmen no longer ſhall the wall command:
Ev'n ſturdy carmen ſhall thy nod obey,
And rattling coaches ſtop to make thee way:
This ſhall direct thy cautious tread aright,
Though not one glaring lamp enliven night.
Let beaus their canes with amber tipt produce,
Be theirs for empty ſhow, but thine for uſe.
In gilded chariots while they loll at eaſe,
And lazily inſure a life's diſeaſe;
While ſofter chairs the tawdry load convey
To court, to White's †, aſſemblies, or the play;
Roſy-complexion'd health thy ſteps attends,
And exerciſe thy laſting youth defends.
Imprudent men heav'n's choiceſt gifts profane;
Thus ſome beneath their arm ſupport the cane:

* A joſeph, wrap-raſcal, &c.
† White's chocolate-houſe in St James's ſtreet.

The dirty point oft checks the careless pace,
And miry spots thy clean cravat disgrace:
O! may I never such misfortune meet,
May no such vicious walkers croud the street,
May providence o'ershade me with her wings,
While the bold muse experienc'd dangers sings.
Not that I wander from my native home,
And (tempting perils) foreign cities roam.
Let Paris be the theme of Gallia's muse,
Where slav'ry treads the streets in wooden shoes;
Nor do I rove in Belgia's frozen clime,
And teach the clumsy boor to skate in rhime,
Where, if the warmer clouds in rain descend,
No miry ways industrious steps offend,
The rushing flood from sloping pavements pours,
And blackens the canals with dirty show'rs.
Let others Naples smoother streets rehearse,
And with proud Roman structures grace their verse,
Where frequent murders wake the night with groans,
And blood in purple torrents dyes the stones;
Nor shall the muse through narrow Venice stray,
Where Gondolas their painted oars display.
O happy streets, to rumbling wheels unknown,
No carts, no coaches shake the floating town!
Thus was of old Britannia's city bless'd,
Ere pride and luxury her sons possess'd:
Coaches and chariots yet unfashion'd lay,
Nor late invented chairs perplex'd the way:
Then the proud lady trip'd along the town,
And tuck'd up petticoats secur'd her gown,
Her rosy cheek with distant visits glow'd,
And exercise unartful charms bestow'd:

But ſince in braided gold her foot is bound,
And a long trailing mantua ſweeps the ground,
Her ſhoe diſdains the ſtreet; the lazy fair
With narrow ſteps affects a limping air.
Now gaudy pride corrupts the laviſh age,
And the ſtreets flame with glaring equipage;
The tricking gameſter inſolently rides,
With Loves and Graces on his chariot ſides;
In ſaucy ſtate the griping broker ſits,
And laughs at honeſty, and trudging wits:
For you, O honeſt men! theſe uſeful lays
The muſe prepares; I ſeek no other praiſe.

When ſleep is firſt diſturb'd by morning cries;
From ſure prognoſtics learn to know the ſkies,
Leſt you of rheums and coughs at night complain;
Surpris'd in dreary fogs, or driving rain.
When ſuffocating miſts obſcure the morn,
Let thy worſt wig, long us'd to ſtorms, be worn;
This knows the powder'd footman, and with care,
Beneath his flapping hat ſecures his hair.
Be thou, for every ſeaſon, juſtly dreſt,
Nor brave the piercing froſt with open breaſt;
And when the burſting clouds a deluge pour,
Let thy ſurtout defend the drenching ſhow'r.

The changing weather certain ſigns reveal,
Ere winter ſheds her ſnow, or froſts congeal.
You'll ſee the coals in brighter flame aſpire,
And ſulphur tinge with blue the riſing fire:
Your tender ſhins the ſcorching heat decline,
And at the dearth of coals the poor repine;
Before her kitchen hearth, the nodding dame
In flannel mantle wrapt, enjoys the flame;

Hov'ring, upon her feeble knees ſhe bends,
And all around the grateful warmth aſcends.
Nor do leſs certain ſigns the town adviſe,
Of milder weather, and ſerener ſkies.
The ladies gaily dreſs'd, the Mall adorn
With various dyes, and paint the ſunny morn:
The wanton fawns with friſking pleaſure range,
And chirping ſparrows greet the welcome change:
Not that their minds with greater ſkill are fraught,
Endu'd by inſtinct, or by reaſon taught,
The ſeaſons operate on ev'ry breaſt;
'Tis hence that fawns are briſk, and ladies dreſs'd.
When on his box the nodding coachman ſnores,
And dreams of fancy'd fares; when tavern-doors
The chairmen idly croud; then ne'er refuſe
To truſt thy buſy ſteps in thinner ſhoes.
But when the ſwinging ſigns your ears offend
With creaking noiſe, then rainy floods impend;
Soon ſhall the kennels ſwell with rapid ſtreams,
And ruſh in muddy torrents to the Thames.
The bookſeller, whoſe ſhop's an open ſquare,
Foreſees the tempeſt, and with early care
Of learning ſtrips the rails; the rowing crew,
To tempt a fair, cloath all their tilts in blue:
On hoſiers poles depending ſtockings ty'd,
Flag with the ſlacken'd gale from ſide to ſide;
Church-monuments foretel the changing air;
Then Niobe diſſolves into a tear,
And ſweats with ſecret grief: You'll hear the ſounds
Of whiſtling winds, ere kennels break their bounds;
Ungrateful odours common-ſhores diffuſe,
And dropping vaults diſtil unwholeſome dews,

Ere the tiles rattle with the ſmoaking ſhow'r,
And ſpouts on heedleſs men their torrents pour.
All ſuperſtition from thy breaſt repel.
Let cred'lous boys, and pratt'ling nurſes tell,
How, if the feſtival of Paul be clear,
Plenty from lib'ral horn ſhall ſtrow the year;
When the dark ſkies diſſolve in ſnow or rain,
The lab'ring hind ſhall yoke the ſteer in vain;
But if the threat'ning winds in tempeſts roar,
Then War ſhall bathe her waſteful ſword in gore.
How, if on Swithin's feaſt the welkin lours,
And ev'ry pent-houſe ſtreams with haſty ſhow'rs,
Twice twenty days ſhall clouds their fleeces drain,
And waſh the pavements with inceſſant rain.
Let no ſuch vulgar tales debaſe thy mind;
Nor Paul nor Swithin rule the clouds and wind.
If you the precepts of the muſe deſpiſe,
And ſlight the faithful warning of the ſkies,
Others you'll ſee, when all the town's afloat,
Wrapt in th' embraces of a kerſey coat,
Or double-bottom'd freeze; their guarded feet
Defy the muddy dangers of the ſtreet,
While you, with hat unloop'd, the fury dread
Of ſpouts high-ſtreaming, and with cautious tread
Shun ev'ry daſhing pool; or idly ſtop,
To ſeek the kind protection of a ſhop.
But bus'neſs ſummons; now with haſty ſcud
You juſtle for the wall; the ſpatter'd mud
Hides all thy hoſe behind; in vain you ſcow'r,
Thy wig, alas! uncurl'd, admits the ſhow'r.
So fierce Alecto's ſnaky treſſes fell,
When Orpheus charm'd the rig'rous power of hell,

Or thus hung Glaucus' beard, with briny dew
Clotted and ſtrait, when firſt his am'rous view
Surpris'd the bathing fair; the frighted maid
Now ſtands a rock, transform'd by Circe's aid.
Good houſewives all the winter's rage deſpiſe,
Defended by the riding-hood's diſguiſe:
Or underneath th' umbrella's oily ſhed,
Safe through the wet on clinking pattens tread.
Let Perſian dames th' umbrella's ribs diſplay,
To guard their beauties from the ſunny ray;
Or ſweating ſlaves ſupport the ſhady load,
When eaſtern monarchs ſhow their ſtate abroad;
Britain in winter only knows its aid,
To guard from chilly ſhow'rs the walking maid.
But, O! forget not, Muſe, the patten's praiſe,
That female implement ſhall grace thy lays;
Say from what art divine th' invention came,
And from its origin deduce its name.
Where Lincoln wide extends her fenny ſoil,
A goodly yeoman liv'd, grown white with toil;
One only daughter bleſs'd his nuptial bed,
Who from her infant hand the poultry fed:
Martha (her careful mother's name) ſhe bore,
But now her careful mother was no more.
Whilſt on her father's knee the damſel play'd,
Patty he fondly call'd the ſmiling maid;
As years increas'd her ruddy beauty grew,
And Patty's fame o'er all the village flew.
Soon as the grey-ey'd morning ſtreaks the ſkies,
And in the doubtful day the woodcock flies,
Her cleanly pale the pretty houſewife bears,
And, ſinging, to the diſtant field repairs:

And when the plains with ev'ning dews are ſpread,
The milky burden ſmoaks upon her head,
Deep through a miry lane ſhe pick'd her way;
Above her ankle roſe the chalky clay.

Vulcan by chance the blooming maiden ſpies,
With innocence and beauty in her eyes:
He ſaw, he lov'd; for yet he ne'er had known
Sweet innocence and beauty meet in one.
Ah, Muſciber! recal thy nuptial vows,
Think on the graces of thy Paphian ſpouſe;
Think how her eyes dart unexhauſted charms;
And canſt thou leave her bed for Patty's arms?

The Lemnian pow'r forſakes th' realms above,
His boſom glowing with terreſtrial love:
Far in the lane a lonely hut he found,
No tenant ventur'd on th' unwholeſome ground;
Here ſmoaks his forge, he bares his ſinewy arm,
And early ſtrokes the ſounding anvil warm:
Around his ſhop the ſteelly ſparkles flew,
As for the ſteed he ſhap'd the bending ſhoe.

When blue-ey'd Patty near his window came,
His anvil reſts, his forge forgets to flame.
To hear his ſoothing tales ſhe feigns delays;
What woman can reſiſt the force of praiſe?

At firſt ſhe coyly ev'ry kiſs withſtood,
And all her cheek was fluſh'd with modeſt blood:
With headleſs nails he now ſurrounds her ſhoes,
To ſave her ſteps from rains and piercing dews:
She lik'd his ſoothing tales, his preſents wore,
And granted kiſſes, but would grant no more.
Yet winter chill'd her feet, with cold ſhe pines,
And on her cheek the fading roſe declines;

No more her humid eyes their luſtre boaſt,
And in hoarſe ſounds her melting voice is loſt.
This Vulcan ſaw, and in his heav'nly thought,
A new machine mechanic fancy wrought,
Above the mire her ſhelter'd ſteps to raiſe,
And bear her ſafely through the wint'ry ways.
Strait the new engine on his anvil glows,
And the pale virgin on the patten roſe.
No more her lungs are ſhook with drooping rheums,
And on her cheek reviving beauty blooms.
The god obtain'd his ſuit; though flatt'ry fail,
Preſents with female virtue muſt prevail.
The patten now ſupports each frugal dame,
Which from the blue-ey'd Patty takes the name.

T R I V I A.

B O O K II.

Of walking the Streets by Day.

THUS far the Muſe has trac'd in uſeful lays,
The proper implements for wint'ry ways;
Has taught the walker, with judicious eyes,
To read the various warnings of the ſkies.
Now venture, Muſe, from home to range the town,
And for the public ſafety riſk thy own.
For eaſe and for diſpatch, the morning's beſt;
No tides of paſſengers the ſtreet moleſt.
You'll ſee a draggled damſel here and there,
From Billingſgate her fiſhy traffic bear;
On doors the ſallow milkmaid chalks her gains;
Ah! how unlike the milkmaid of the plains!
Before proud gates attending aſſes bray,
Or arrogate with ſolemn pace the way;
Theſe grave phyſicians, with their milky chear,
The love-ſick maid and dwindling beau repair;
Here rows of drummers ſtand in martial file,
And with their vellum thunder ſhake the pile,
To greet the new-made bride. Are ſounds like theſe
The proper prelude to a ſtate of peace?

Now Induſtry awakes her buſy ſons,
Full charg'd with news the breathleſs hawker runs:
Shops open, coaches roll, carts ſhake the ground,
And all the ſtreets with paſſing cries reſound.
If cloath'd in black, you tread the buſy town,
Or if diſtinguiſh'd by the rev'rend gown,
Three trades avoid; oft in the mingling preſs,
The barbers apron ſoils the ſable dreſs;
Shun the perfumer's touch with cautious eye,
Nor let the baker's ſtep advance too nigh:
Ye walkers, too, that youthful colours wear,
Three ſullying trades avoid with equal care;
The little chimney-ſweeper ſkulks along,
And marks with ſooty ſtains the heedleſs throng;
When ſmall-coal murmurs in the hoarſer throat,
From ſmutty dangers guard thy threaten'd coat:
The duſt-man's cart offends thy cloaths and eyes,
When through the ſtreet a cloud of aſhes flies;
But whether black or lighter dyes are worn,
The chandler's baſket, on his ſhoulder borne,
With tallow ſpots thy coat; reſign the way,
To ſhun the ſurly butcher's greaſy tray;
Butchers, whoſe hands are dy'd with blood's foul ſtain,
And always foremoſt in the hangman's train.
Let due civilities be ſtrictly paid,
The wall ſurrender to the hooded maid;
Nor let thy ſturdy elbow's haſty rage
Juſtle the feeble ſteps of trembling age:
And when the porter bends beneath his load,
And pants for breath, clear thou the crouded road.
But, above all, the gropping blind direct,
And from the preſſing throng the lame protect.

You'll ſometimes meet a ſop, of niceſt tread,
Whoſe mantling peruke veils his empty head,
At ev'ry ſtep he dreads the wall to loſe,
And riſks, to ſave a coach, his red-heel'd ſhoes;
Him, like the miller, paſs with caution by,
Leſt from his ſhoulder clouds of powder fly.
But when the bully, with aſſuming pace,
Cocks his broad hat, edg'd round with tarniſh'd lace,
Yield not the way; defy his ſtrutting pride,
And thruſt him to the muddy kennel's ſide;
He never turns again, nor dares oppoſe,
But mutters coward curſes as he goes.

If drawn by bus'neſs to a ſtreet unknown,
Let the ſworn porter point thee through the town;
Be ſure obſerve the ſigns, for ſigns remain,
Like faithful land-marks to the walking train.
Seek not from 'prentices to learn the way,
Thoſe fabling boys will turn thy ſteps aſtray;
Aſk the grave tradeſman to direct thee right,
He ne'er deceives, but when he profits by't.

Where fam'd St Giles's ancient limits ſpread,
An inrail'd column rears its lofty head,
Here to ſev'n ſtreets ſev'n dials count the day,
And from each other catch the circling ray.
Here oft the peaſant, with inquiring face,
Bewilder'd, trudges on from place to place;
He dwells on ev'ry ſign with ſtupid gaze,
Enters the narrow alley's doubtful maze,
Tries ev'ry winding court and ſtreet in vain,
And doubles o'er his weary ſteps again.
Thus hardy Theſeus with intrepid feet,
Travers'd the dang'rous labyrinth of Crete;

But ſtill the wand'ring paſſes forc'd his ſtay,
Till Ariadne's clue unwinds the way.
But do not thou, like that bold chief, confide
Thy vent'rous footſteps to a female guide;
She'll lead thee with deluſive ſmiles along,
Dive in thy fob, and drop thee in the throng.
When waggiſh boys the ſtunted beſom ply
To rid the ſlabby pavement, paſs not by
Ere thou haſt held their hands; ſome heedleſs flirt
Will overſpread thy calves with ſpatt'ring dirt.
Where porters hogſheads roll from carts aſlope,
Or brewers down ſteep cellars ſtretch the rope,
Where counted billets are by carmen toſt,
Stay thy raſh ſtep, and walk without the poſt.
What though the gath'ring mire thy feet beſmear,
The voice of induſtry is always near.
Hark! the boy calls thee to his deſtin'd ſtand,
And the ſhoe ſhines beneath his oily hand.
Here let the Muſe, fatigu'd amid the throng,
Adorn her precepts with digreſſive ſong;
Of ſhirtleſs youths the ſecret riſe to trace,
And ſhew the parent of the ſable race.
Like mortal man, great Jove, (grown fond of change),
Of old was wont this nether world to range
To ſeek amours; the vice the monarch lov'd
Soon through the wide etherial court improv'd,
And ev'n the proudeſt goddeſs, now and then,
Would lodge a night among the ſons of men;
To vulgar deities deſcends the faſhion,
Each, like her betters, had her earthly paſſion.

Then Cloacina * (goddeſs of the tide
Whoſe ſable ſtreams beneath the city glide)
Indulg'd the modiſh flame; the town ſhe rov'd;
A mortal ſcavenger ſhe ſaw, ſhe lov'd;
The muddy ſpots that dry'd upon his face,
Like female patches, heighten'd ev'ry grace:
She gaz'd; ſhe ſigh'd. For love can beauties ſpy
In what ſeems faults to ev'ry common eye.

Now had the watchman walk'd his ſecond round;
When Cloacina hears the rumbling ſound
Of her brown lover's cart, for well ſhe knows
That pleaſing thunder: Swift the goddeſs roſe,
And through the ſtreets purſu'd the diſtant noiſe,
Her boſom panting with expected joys.
With the night-wand'ring harlot's airs ſhe paſt,
Bruſh'd near his ſide, and wanton glances caſt;
In the black form of cinder-wench ſhe came,
When love, the hour, the place, had baniſh'd ſhame;
To the dark alley arm in arm they move:
O may no link-boy interrupt their love!

When the pale moon had nine times fill'd her ſpace,
The pregnant goddeſs (cautious of diſgrace)
Deſcends to earth; but ſought no midwife's aid,
Nor 'midſt her anguiſh to Lucina pray'd;

* Cloacina was a goddeſs whoſe image Tatius (a king of the Sabines) found in the common-ſhore, and not knowing what goddeſs it was, he called it Cloacina, from the place in which it was found, and paid to it divine honours. *Lactant.* 1. 20. *Minut. Fel. Oct.* p. 232.

No chearful goſſip wiſh'd the mother joy;
Alone, beneath a bulk ſhe dropt the boy.
The child through various riſks in years improv'd,
At firſt a beggar's brat, compaſſion mov'd;
His infant tongue ſoon learnt the canting art,
Knew all the pray'rs and whines to touch the heart.
Oh happy unown'd youths, your limbs can bear
The ſcorching dog-ſtar, and the winter's air,
While the rich infant, nurs'd with care and pain,
Thirſts with each heat, and coughs with ev'ry rain
The goddeſs long had mark'd the child's diſtreſs,
And long had ſought his ſuff'rings to redreſs;
She prays the gods to take the foundling's part,
To teach his hands ſome beneficial art
Practis'd in ſtreets: The gods her ſuit allow'd,
And made him uſeful to the walking croud,
To cleanſe the miry feet, and o'er the ſhoe
With nimble ſkill the gloſſy black renew.
Each power contributes to relieve the poor:
With the ſtrong briſtles of the mighty boar
Diana forms his bruſh; the god of day
A tripod gives, amid the crouded way
To raiſe the dirty foot, and eaſe his toil;
Kind Neptune fills his vaſe with foetid oil
Preſs'd from th' enormous whale; the god of fire,
From whoſe dominions ſmoaky clouds aſpire,
Among theſe generous preſents joins his part,
And aids with ſoot the new japanning art.
Pleas'd ſhe receives the gifts; ſhe downward glides,
Lights in Fleet-ditch, and ſhoots beneath the tides.
Now dawns the morn, the ſturdy lad awakes,
Leaps from his ſtall, his tangled hair he ſhakes,

Then leaning o'er the rails, he muſing ſtood,
And view'd below the black canal of mud,
Where common ſhores a lulling murmur keep,
Whoſe torrents ruſh from Holborn's fatal ſteep:
Penſive through idleneſs, tears flow'd apace,
Which eas'd his loaded heart, and waſh'd his face;
At length he ſighing cry'd, That boy was bleſt,
Whoſe infant lips have drain'd a mother's breaſt;
But happier far are thoſe, (if ſuch be known)
Whom both a father and a mother own;
But I, alas! hard fortune's utmoſt ſcorn,
Who ne'er knew parent, was an orphan born!
Some boys are rich by birth beyond all wants,
Belov'd by uncles, and kind good old aunts;
When time comes round, a Chriſtmas-box they bear,
And one day makes them rich for all the year.
Had I the precepts of a father learn'd,
Perhaps I then the coachman's fare had earn'd,
For leſſer boys can drive; I thirſty ſtand,
And ſee the double flaggon charge their hand,
See them puff off the froth, and gulp amain,
While with dry tongue I lick my lips in vain.
While thus he fervent prays, the heaving tide,
In widen'd circles beats on either ſide;
The goddeſs roſe amid the inmoſt round,
With wither'd turnip-tops her temples crown'd;
Low reach'd her dripping treſſes, lank, and black
As the ſmooth jet, or gloſſy raven's back;
Around her waſte a circling eel was twin'd,
Which bound her robe that hung in rags behind.
Now beck'ning to the boy, ſhe thus begun,
Thy prayers are granted; weep no more, my ſon:

Go thrive. At ſome frequented corner ſtand,
This bruſh I give thee, graſp it in thy hand,
Temper the ſoot within this vaſe of oil,
And let the little tripod aid the toil;
On this methinks I ſee the walking crew
At thy requeſt ſupport the miry ſhoe,
The foot grows black that was with dirt imbrown'd,
And in thy pocket gingling halfpence ſound.
The goddeſs plunges ſwift beneath the flood,
And daſhes all around her ſhow'rs of mud:
The youth ſtrait choſe his poſt; the labour ply'd
Where branching ſtreets from Charing-croſs divide;
His treble voice reſounds along the Meuſe,
And White-hall echoes——*Clean your Honour's ſhoes.*
Like the ſweet-ballad, this amuſing lay
Too long detains the walker on his way;
While he attends, new dangers round him throng;
The buſy city aſks inſtructive ſong.
Where elevated o'er the gaping croud,
Claſp'd in the board the perjur'd head is bow'd,
Betimes retreat: Here, thick as hailſtones pour,
Turnips, and half hatch'd eggs, (a mingled ſhow'r)
Among the rabble rain: Some random throw
May with the trickling yolk thy cheek o'erflow.
Though expedition bids, yet never ſtray
Where no rang'd poſts defend the rugged way.
Here laden carts with thundring waggons meet,
Wheels claſh with wheels, and bar the narrow ſtreet;
The laſhing whip reſounds, the horſes ſtrain,
And blood in anguiſh burſts the ſwelling vein.
O barb'rous men, your cruel breaſts aſſuage,
Why vent ye on the gen'rous ſteed your rage?

Does not his ſervice earn your daily bread?
Your wives, your children, by his labours fed!
If, as the Samian taught, the ſoul revives,
And, ſhifting ſeats, in other bodies lives,
Severe ſhall be the brutal coachman's change,
Doom'd in a hackney-horſe the town to range:
Carmen, transform'd, the groaning load ſhall draw,
Whom other tyrants with the laſh ſhall awe.
Who would of Watling-ſtreet the dangers ſhare,
When the broad pavement of Cheapſide is near?
Or who * that rugged ſtreet would traverſe o'er,
That ſtretches, O Fleet-ditch, from thy black ſhore
To the Tower's moated walls? Here ſtreams aſcend
That, in mix'd fumes, the wrinkled noſe offend.
Where chandlers cauldrons boil; where fiſhy prey
Hide the wet ſtall, long abſent from the ſea;
And where the cleaver chops the heifer's ſpoil,
And where huge hogſheads ſweat with trainy oil,
Thy breathing noſtril hold: But how ſhall I
Paſs, where in piles † Cornavian cheeſes lie?
Cheeſe, that the table's cloſing rites denies,
And bids me with th' unwilling chaplain riſe.
O bear me to the paths of fair Pell-mell,
Safe are thy pavements, grateful is thy ſmell!
At diſtance rolls along the gilded coach,
Nor ſturdy carmen on thy walks encroach;
No lets would bar thy ways where chairs deny'd,
The ſoft ſupports of lazineſs and pride;
Shops breathe perfumes, thro' ſaſhes ribbons glow,
The mutual arms of ladies, and the beau.

* Thames-ſtreet, † Cheſhire, antiently ſo called.

Yet ſtill even here, when rains the paſſage hide,
Oft the looſe ſtone ſquirts up a muddy tide
Beneath thy careleſs foot; and from on high,
Where maſons mount the ladder, fragments fly;
Mortar, and crumbled lime in ſhow'rs deſcend,
And o'er thy head deſtructive tiles impend.
But ſometimes let me leave the noiſy roads,
And ſilent wander in the cloſe abodes
Where wheels ne'er ſhake the ground; there penſive ſtray,
In ſtudious thought, the long uncrouded way.
Here I remark each walker's diff'rent face,
And in their look their various bus'neſs trace.
The broker here his ſpacious beaver wears,
Upon his brow ſit jealouſies and cares;
Bent on ſome mortgage (to avoid reproach)
He ſeeks bye-ſtreets, and ſaves th' expenſive coach.
Soft, at low doors, old letchers tap their cane,
For fair recluſe, who travels Drury-lane;
Here roams uncomb'd the laviſh rake, to ſhun
His Fleet-ſtreet draper's everlaſting dun.
Careful obſervers, ſtudious of the town,
Shun the misfortunes that diſgrace the clown;
Untempted, they contemn the jugler's feats,
Paſs by the Meuſe, nor try the thimble's cheats †.
When drays bound high, they never croſs behind,
Where bubbling yeſt is blown by guſts of wind:
And when up Ludgate-hill huge carts move ſlow,
Far from the ſtraining ſteeds ſecurely go,

† A cheat commonly practiſed in the ſtreets with three thimbles and a little ball.

Whoſe daſhing hoofs behind them fling the mire,
And mark with muddy blots the gazing 'ſquire.
The Parthian thus his jav'lin backward throws,
And as he flies infeſts purſuing foes.
The thoughtleſs wits ſhall frequent forfeits pay,
Who 'gainſt the ſentry's box diſcharge their tea.
Do thou ſome court, or ſecret corner ſeek,
Nor fluſh with ſhame the paſſing virgin's cheek.
Yet let me not deſcend to trivial ſong,
Nor vulgar circumſtance my verſe prolong;
Why ſhould I teach the maid when torrents pour,
Her head to ſhelter from the ſudden ſhower?
Nature will beſt her ready hand inform,
With her ſpread petticoat to fence the ſtorm.
Does not each walker know the warning ſign,
When wiſps of ſtraw depend upon the twine
Croſs the cloſe ſtreet; that then the paver's art
Renews the ways, deny'd to coach and cart?
Who knows not that the coachman laſhing by,
Oft with his flouriſh cuts the heedleſs eye;
And when he takes his ſtand, to wait a fare,
His horſes foreheads ſhun the winter air?
Nor will I roam, when ſummer's ſultry rays
Parch the dry ground, and ſpread with duſt the ways;
With whirling guſts the rapid atoms riſe,
Smoke o'er the pavement, and involve the ſkies.
Winter my theme confines; whoſe nitry wind
Shall cruſt the ſlabby mire, and kennels bind;
She bids the ſnow deſcend in flaky ſheets,
And in her hoary mantle cloath the ſtreets.
Let not the virgin tread theſe ſlippery roads,
The gathering fleece the hollow patten loads;

But if thy footſtep ſlides with clotted froſt,
Strike off the breaking balls againſt the poſt.
On ſilent wheel the paſſing coaches roll;
Oft look behind, and ward the threatning pole.
In harden'd orbs the ſchool-boy moulds the ſnow,
To mark the coachman with a dextrous throw.
Why do ye, boys, the kennel's ſurface ſpread,
To tempt with faithleſs paſs the matron's tread?
How can ye laugh to ſee the damſel ſpurn,
Sink in your frauds, and her green ſtocking mourn?
At White's the harneſs'd chairman idly ſtands,
And ſwings around his waiſt his tingling hands:
The ſempſtreſs ſpeeds to Change with red-tipt noſe;
The Belgian ſtove beneath her footſtool glows;
In half whipt muſlin needles uſeleſs ly,
And ſhuttle-cocks acroſs the counter fly.
Theſe ſports warm harmleſs; why then will ye prove,
Deluded maids, the dang'rous flame of love?
Where Covent-Garden's famous temple ſtands,
That boaſts the work of Jones' immortal hands:
Columns with plain magnificence appear,
And graceful porches lead along the ſquare:
Here oft my courſe I bend, when lo! from far,
I ſpy the furies of the football war:
The 'prentice quits his ſhop, to join the crew,
Increaſing crouds the flying game purſue.
Thus, as you roll the ball o'er ſnowy ground,
The gath'ring globe augments with ev'ry round.
But whither ſhall I run? the throng draws nigh,
The ball now ſkims the ſtreet, now ſoars on high;
The dext'rous glazier ſtrong returns the bound,
And gingling ſaſhes on the pentheuſe ſound.

O roving Muſe, recal that wond'rous year,
When winter reign'd in bleak Britannia's air;
When hoary Thames, with froſted oziers crown'd,
Was three long moons in icy fetters bound.
The waterman, forlorn along the ſhore,
Penſive reclines upon his uſeleſs oar,
Sees harneſs'd ſteeds deſert the ſtony town;
And wander roads unſtable not their own:
Wheels o'er the harden'd waters ſmoothly glide,
And raiſe with whiten'd tracks the ſlipp'ry tide.
Here the fat cook piles high the blazing fire,
And ſcarce the ſpit can turn the ſteer entire.
Booths ſudden hide the Thames, long ſtreets appear,
And num'rous games proclaim the crouded fair.
So when a general bids the martial train
Spread their encampment o'er the ſpacious plain;
Thick riſing tents a canvas city build,
And the loud dice reſound through all the field.

'Twas here the matron found a doleful fate:
Let elegiac lay the woe relate,
Soft as the breath of diſtant flutes, at hours
When ſilent evening cloſes up the flowers;
Lulling as falling water's hollow noiſe;
Indulging grief, like Philomela's voice.

Doll every day had walk'd theſe treach'rous roads;
Her neck grew warpt beneath autumnal loads
Of various fruit; ſhe now a baſket bore,
That head, alas! ſhall baſket bear no more.
Each booth ſhe frequent paſt, in queſt of gain,
And boys with pleaſure heard her ſhrilling ſtrain.
Ah Doll! all mortals muſt reſign their breath,
And induſtry itſelf ſubmit to death!

The cracking cryſtal yields, ſhe ſinks, ſhe dies,
Her head chopt off, from her loſt ſhoulders flies;
Pippins ſhe cry'd, but death her voice confounds,
And pip-pip-pip along the ice reſounds.
So when the Thracian furies Orpheus tore,
And left his bleeding trunk deform'd with gore,
His ſever'd head floats down the ſilver tide,
His yet warm tongue for his loſt conſort cry'd;
Eurydice with quiv'ring voice he mourn'd,
And Heber's banks Eurydice return'd.
But now the weſtern gale the flood unbinds,
And black'ning clouds move on with warmer winds,
The wooden town its frail foundation leaves,
And Thames' full urn rolls down his plenteous waves;
From ev'ry penthouſe ſtreams the fleeting ſnow,
And with diſſolving froſt the pavements flow.
Experienc'd men, inur'd to city-ways,
Need not the calendar to count their days.
When through the town with ſlow and ſolemn air,
Led by the noſtril, walks the muzzled bear;
Behind him moves majeſtically dull,
The pride of Hockley-hole, the ſurly bull;
Learn hence the periods of the week to name,
Mondays and Thurſdays are the days of game.
When fiſhy ſtalls with double ſtore are laid;
The golden-belly'd carp, the broad-finn'd maid,
Red-ſpeckled trouts, the ſalmon's ſilver jowl,
The jointed lobſter, and unſcaly ſoale,
And luſcious 'ſcallops to allure the taſtes
Of rigid zealots to delicious feaſts;
Wedneſdays and Fridays you'll obſerve from hence,
Days, when our ſires were doom'd to abſtinence.

When dirty waters from balconies drop,
And dext'rous damſels twirl the ſprinkling mop,
And cleanſe the ſpatter'd ſaſh, and ſcrub the ſtairs;
Know Saturday's concluſive morn appears.
Succeſſive cries the ſeaſon's change declare,
And mark the monthly progreſs of the year.
Hark, how the ſtreets with treble voices ring,
To ſell the bounteous product of the ſpring!
Sweet-ſmelling flow'rs, and elder's early bud,
With nettle's tender ſhoots, to cleanſe the blood:
And when June's thunder cools the ſultry ſkies,
Ev'n Sundays are prophan'd by mackrel cries.
Walnuts the fruit'rer's hand in autumn ſtain,
Blue plums and juicy pears augment his gain;
Next oranges the longing boys entice,
To truſt their copper fortunes to the dice.
When roſemary, and bays, the poet's crown,
Are bawl'd, in frequent cries, through all the town,
Then judge the feſtival of Chriſtmas near,
Chriſtmas, the joyous period of the year.
Now with bright holly all your temples ſtrow,
With laurel green, and ſacred miſſetoe.
Now, heav'n-born Charity, thy bleſſings ſhed;
Bid meagre Want uprear her ſickly head:
Bid ſhiv'ring limbs be warm; let plenty's bowl
In humble roofs make glad the needy ſoul.
See, ſee, the heaven-born maid her bleſſings ſhed;
Lo! meagre Want uprears her ſickly head,
Cloath'd are the naked, and the needy glad,
While ſelfiſh Avarice alone is ſad.
Proud coaches paſs, regardleſs of the moan
Of infant orphans, and the widow's groan;

While charity ſtill moves the walker's mind,
His liberal purſe relieves the lame and blind.
Judiciouſly thy half-pence are beſtow'd,
Where the laborious beggar ſweeps the road.
Whate'er you give, give ever at demand,
Nor let old age long ſtretch his palſy'd hand.
Thoſe who give late, are importun'd each day,
And ſtill are teaz'd, becauſe they ſtill delay.
If e'er the miſer durſt his farthings ſpare,
He thinly ſpreads them through the public ſquare,
Where, all beſide the rail, rang'd beggars lie,
And from each other catch the doleful cry;
With heav'n, for twopence, cheaply wipes his ſcore,
Lifts up his eyes, and haſtes to beggar more.

Where the braſs knocker, wrapt in flannel band,
Forbids the thunder of the footman's hand;
Th' upholder, rueful harbinger of death,
Waits with impatience for the dying breath;
As vultures o'er a camp, with hov'ring flight,
Snuff up the future carnage of the fight.
Here canſt thou paſs, unmindful of a pray'r,
That heav'n in mercy may thy brother ſpare?

Come, F * * * ſincere, experienc'd friend,
Thy briefs, thy deeds, and ev'n thy fees ſuſpend;
Come let us leave the Temple's ſilent walls,
Me bus'neſs to my diſtant lodging calls:
Thro' the long Strand together let us ſtray:
With thee converſing I forget the way.
Behold that narrow ſtreet which ſteep deſcends,
Whoſe building to the ſlimy ſhore extends;
Here Arundel's fair ſtructure rear'd its frame,
The ſtreet alone retains an empty name:

Where Titian's glowing paint the canvas warm'd,
And Raphael's fair design, with judgment, charm'd,
Now hangs the bellman's song, and pasted here
The colour'd prints of Overton appear.
Where statues breath'd the works of Phidia's hands,
A wooden pump, or lonely watch-house stands.
There Essex' stately pile adorn'd the shore,
There Cecil's, Bedford's, Villiers' now no more.
Yet Burlington's fair palace still remains;
Beauty within, without proportion reigns.
Beneath his eye declining art revives,
The wall with animated picture lives;
There Handel strikes the strings, the melting strain
Transports the soul, and thrills thro' ev'ry vein;
There oft I enter, (but with cleaner shoes)
For Burlington's belov'd by ev'ry muse.

O ye associate walkers, O my friends,
Upon your state what happiness attends!
What though no coach to frequent visit rolls,
Nor for your shilling chairmen sling their poles;
Yet still your nerves rheumatic pains defy,
Nor lazy jaundice dulls your saffron eye;
No wasting cough discharges sounds of death,
Nor wheezing asthma heaves in vain for breath;
Nor from your restless couch is heard the groan
Of burning gout, or sedentary stone.
Let others in the jolting coach confide,
Or in the leaky boat the Thames divide;
Or, box'd within the chair, contemn the street,
And trust their safety to another's feet;
Still let me walk; for oft the sudden gale
Ruffles the tide, and shifts the dang'rous sail.

Then ſhall the paſſenger too late deplore,
The whelming billow, and the faithleſs oar;
The drunken chairman in the kennel ſpurns,
The glaſſes ſhatters, and his charge o'erturns.
Who can recount the coach's various harms,
The legs disjointed, and the broken arms?
I've ſeen a beau, in ſome ill-fated hour,
When o'er the ſtones choak'd kennels ſwell the ſhow'r,
In gilded chariot loll; he with diſdain
Views ſpatter'd paſſengers all drench'd in rain;
With mud fill'd high, the rumbling cart draws near,
Now rule thy prancing ſteeds, lac'd charioteer;
The duſtman laſhes on with ſpiteful rage,
His ponderous ſpokes thy painted wheel engage,
Cruſh'd is thy pride, down falls the ſhrieking beau,
The ſlabby pavement cryſtal fragments ſtrow,
Black floods of mire th' embroider'd coat diſgrace,
And mud enwraps the honours of his face.
So when dread Jove the ſon of Phoebus hurl'd,
Scar'd with dark thunder, to the nether world;
The headſtrong courſers tore the ſilver reins,
And the ſun's beamy ruin gilds the plains.
If the pale walker pant with weak'ning ills,
His ſickly hand is ſtor'd with friendly bills:
From hence he learns the ſeventh-born doctor's fame,
From hence he learns the cheapeſt tailor's name.
Shall the large mutton ſmoak upon your boards?
Such, Newgate's copious market beſt affords.
Would'ſt thou with mighty beef augment thy meal?
Seek Leadenhall; St James's ſends thee veal;

Thames-ſtreet gives cheeſes; Covent-garden fruits;
Moorfields old books, and Monmouth-ſtreet old ſuits.
Hence mayſt thou well ſupply the wants of life,
Support thy family, and cloath thy wife.
Volumes on ſhelter'd ſtalls expanded lie,
And various ſcience lures the learned eye;
The bending ſhelves with pond'rous ſcholiaſts groan,
And deep divines to modern ſhops unknown:
Here, like the bee, that on induſtrious wing
Collects the various odours of the ſpring,
Walkers, at leiſure, learning's flow'rs may ſpoil,
Nor watch the waſting of the midnight oil,
May morals ſnatch from Plutarch's tatter'd page,
A mildew'd Bacon, or Stagyra's ſage.
Here ſauntering 'prentices o'er Otway weep,
O'er Congreve ſmile, or over D** ſleep;
Pleas'd ſempſtreſſes the Lock's fam'd Rape unfold,
And Squirts * read Garth, till apozems grow cold.
O Lintot, let my labours obvious lie,
Rang'd on thy ſtall, for ev'ry curious eye;
So ſhall the poor theſe precepts gratis know,
And to my verſe their future ſafeties know.
What walker ſhall his mean ambition fix
On the falſe luſtre of a coach and ſix?
Let the vain virgin, lur'd by glaring ſhow,
Sigh for the liv'ries of th' embroider'd beau.
See yon bright chariot on its braces ſwing,
With Flanders mares, and on an arched ſpring.

* The name of an apothecary's boy in the poem of the Diſpenſary.

That wretch, to gain an equipage and place,
Betray'd his ſiſter to a lewd embrace.
This coach, that with the blazon'd 'ſcutcheon glows
Vain of his unknown race, the coxcomb ſhows.
Here the brib'd lawyer, ſunk in velvet, ſleeps;
The ſtarving orphan, as he paſſes, weeps;
There flames a fool, begirt with tinſel'd ſlaves,
Who waſtes the wealth of a whole race of knaves.
That other, with a cluſt'ring train behind,
Owes his new honours to a ſordid mind,
This next in court-fidelity excells,
The public rifles, and his country ſells.
May the proud chariot never be my fate,
If purchas'd at ſo mean, ſo dear a rate;
Or rather give me ſweet content on foot,
Wrapt in my virtue, and a good ſurtout!

TRIVIA.

BOOK III.

Of Walking the Streets by Night.

O TRIVIA! goddeſs, leave thoſe low abodes,
And traverſe o'er the wide etherial roads,
Celeſtial queen, put on thy robes of light,
Now Cynthia nam'd fair regent of the night.
At ſight of thee the villain ſheathes his ſword,
Nor ſcales the wall, to ſteal the wealthy hoard.
O may thy ſilver lamp, from heav'n's high bow'r,
Direct my footſteps in the midnight hour!

When night firſt bids the twinkling ſtars appear,
Or with her cloudy veſt inwraps the air,
Then ſwarms the buſy ſtreet; with caution tread,
Where the ſhop windows falling threat thy head;
Now lab'rers home return, and join their ſtrength,
To bear the tott'ring plank, or ladder's length;
Still fix thy eyes intent upon the throng,
And as the paſſes open, wind along.

Where the fair columns of St Clement ſtand,
Whoſe ſtraiten'd bounds encroach upon the Strand;
Where the low penthouſe bows the walker's head,
And the rough pavement wounds the yielding tread;

Where not a poſt protects the narrow ſpace,
And, ſtrung in twines, combs dangle in thy face;
Summon at once thy courage, rouſe thy care,
Stand firm, look back, be reſolute, beware.
Forth iſſuing from ſteep lanes, the colliers ſteeds
Drag the black load; another cart ſucceeds;
Team follows team, crouds heap'd on crouds appear,
And wait impatient till the road grow clear.
Now all the pavement ſounds with trampling feet,
And the mixt hurry barricades the ſtreet.
Entangl'd here, the waggon's lengthen'd team
Cracks the tough harneſs; here a pond'rous beam
Lies overturn'd athwart; for ſlaughter fed
Here lowing bullocks raiſe their horned head.
Now oaths grow loud, with coaches coaches jar,
And the ſmart blow provokes the ſturdy war;
From the high box they whirl the thong around,
And with the twining laſh their ſhins reſound:
Their rage ferments, more dang'rous wounds they try,
And the blood guſhes down their painful eye.
And now on foot the frowning warriors light,
And with their pond'rous fiſts renew the fight;
Blow anſwers blow, their cheeks are ſmear'd with blood,
Till down they fall, and grappling roll in mud.
So when two boars, in wild Ytene * bred,
Or on Weſtphalia's fatt'ning cheſſnuts fed,
Gnaſh their ſharp tuſks, and rous'd with equal fire,
Diſpute the reign of ſome luxurious mire;

* New Foreſt in Hampſhire, anciently ſo called.

In the black flood they wallow o'er and o'er,
Till their arm'd jaws distil with foam and gore.
Where the mob gathers, swiftly shoot along,
Nor idly mingle with the noisy throng.
Lur'd by the silver hilt, amid the swarm,
The subtil artist will thy side disarm.
Nor is thy flaxen wig with safety worn;
High on the shoulder in a basket borne
Lurks the sly boy; whose hand to rapine bred,
Plucks off the curling honours of thy head.
Here dives the skulking thief, with practis'd slight,
And unfelt fingers make thy pockets light.
Where's now the watch, with all its trinkets, flown?
And thy late snuff-box is no more thy own.
But lo! his bolder thefts some tradesman spies,
Swift from his prey the scudding lurcher flies;
Dex'trous he 'scapes the coach with nimble bounds,
While ev'ry honest tongue *Stop thief* resounds.
So speeds the wily fox, alarm'd by fear,
Who lately filch'd the turkey's callow care;
Hounds following hounds, grow louder as he flies,
And injur'd tenants join the hunter's cries.
Breathless he stumbling falls: Ill-fated boy!
Why did not honest work thy youth employ?
Seiz'd by rough hands, he's dragg'd amid the rout,
And stretch'd beneath the pump's incessant spout:
Or plung'd in miry ponds, he gasping lies,
Mud choaks his mouth, and plaisters o'er his eyes.
Let not the ballad-singer's shrilling strain
Amid the swarm thy list'ning ear detain:
Guard well thy pocket; for these Syrens stand
To aid the labours of the diving hand;

Confed'rate in the cheat, they draw the throng,
And cambrick handkerchiefs reward the ſong;
But ſoon as coach or cart drives ratt'ling on,
The rabble part, in ſhoals they backward run.
So Jove's loud bolts the mingled war divide,
And Greece and Troy retreat on either ſide.

If the rude throng pour on with furious pace,
And hap to break thee from a friend's embrace,
Stop ſhort; nor ſtruggle through the croud in vain,
But watch with careful eye the paſſing train.
Yet I (perhaps too fond) if chance the tide
Tumultuous bear my partner from my ſide,
Impatient venture back; deſpiſing harm,
I force my paſſage where the thickeſt ſwarm.
Thus his loſt bride the Trojan ſought in vain,
Through night, and arms, and flames, and hills of ſlain.
Thus Niſus wander'd o'er the pathleſs grove,
To find the brave companion of his love.
The pathleſs grove in vain he wanders o'er:
Euryalus, alas! is now no more.

That walker, who regardleſs of his pace,
Turns oft to pore upon the damſel's face,
From ſide to ſide by thruſting elbows toſt,
Shall ſtrike his aking breaſt againſt the poſt;
Or water, daſh'd from fiſhy ſtalls, ſhall ſtain
His hapleſs coat with ſpirts of ſcaly rain.
But if unwarily he chance to ſtray,
Where twirling turnſtiles intercept the way,
The thwarting paſſenger ſhall force them round,
And beat the wretch half breathleſs to the ground.

Let conſtant vigilance thy footſteps guide,
And wary circumſpection guard thy ſide;
Then ſhalt thou walk unharm'd the dang'rous night,
Nor need th' officious link-boy's ſmoky light.
Thou never wilt attempt to croſs the road,
Where alehouſe-benches reſt the porter's load,
Grievous to heedleſs ſhins; no barrow's wheel,
That bruiſes oft the truant ſchool-boy's heel,
Behind thee rolling, with inſidious pace,
Shall mark thy ſtocking with a miry trace.
Let not thy vent'rous ſteps approach too nigh,
Where gaping wide, low ſteepy cellars lie,
Should thy ſhoe wrench aſide, down, down you fall,
And overturn the ſcolding huckſter's ſtall;
The ſcolding huckſter ſhall not o'er thee moan,
But pence exact for nuts and pears o'erthrown.

Though you through cleanlier alleys wind by day,
To ſhun the hurries of the public way,
Yet ne'er to thoſe dark paths by night retire;
Mind only ſafety, and contemn the mire.
Then no impervious courts thy haſte detain,
Nor ſneering alewives bid thee turn again.

Where Lincoln's-inn, wide ſpace, is rail'd around,
Croſs not with vent'rous ſtep; there oft is found
The lurking thief, who while the day-light ſhone,
Made the walls echo with his begging tone:
That crutch which late compaſſion mov'd, ſhall wound
Thy bleeding head, and fell thee to the ground.
Tho' thou are tempted by the linkman's call,
Yet truſt him not along the lonely wall;
In the midway he'll quench the flaming brand,
And ſhare the booty with the pilf'ring band.

Still keep the public ſtreets, where oily rays
Shot from the cryſtal lamp, o'erſpread the ways.
Happy Auguſta! law-defended town!
Here no dark lanthrons ſhade the villain's frown;
No Spaniſh jealouſies thy lanes infeſt,
Nor Roman vengeance ſtabs th' unwary breaſt;
Here tyranny ne'er lifts her purple hand,
But liberty and juſtice guard the land;
No bravoes here profeſs the bloody trade,
Nor is the church the murd'rer's refuge made.
Let not the chairman, with aſſuming ſtride,
Preſs near the wall, and rudely thruſt thy ſide;
The laws have ſet him bounds; his ſervile feet
Should ne'er encroach where poſts defend the ſtreet.
Yet who the footman's arrogance can quell,
Whoſe flambeau gilds the ſaſhes of Pell-mell,
When in long rank a train of torches flame,
To light the midnight viſits of the dame?
Others, perhaps, by happier guidance led,
May, where the chairman reſts, with ſafety tread;
Whene'er I paſs, their poles unſeen below,
Make my knee tremble with the jarring blow.
If wheels bar up the road where ſtreets are croſt,
With gentle words the coachman's ear accoſt:
He ne'er the threat, or harſh command obeys,
But with contempt the ſpatter'd ſhoe ſurveys.
Now man with utmoſt fortitude thy ſoul,
To croſs the way where carts and coaches roll;
Yet do not in thy hardy ſkill confide,
Nor raſhly riſk the kennel's ſpacious ſtride;
Stay till afar the diſtant wheel you hear,
Like dying thunder in the breaking air;

Thy foot will ſlide upon the miry ſtone,
And paſſing coaches cruſh thy tortur'd bone,
Or wheels incloſe the road ; on either hand
Pent round with perils, in the midſt you ſtand,
And call for aid in vain ; the coachman ſwears,
And carmen drive, unmindful of thy pray'rs.
Where wilt thou turn ? ah ! whither wilt thou fly !
On ev'ry ſide the preſſing ſpokes are nigh.
So ſailors, while Charybdis' gulph they ſhun,
Amaz'd, on Scylla's craggy dangers run.

Be ſure obſerve where brown Oſtrea ſtands,
Who boaſts her ſhelly ware from Wallfleet ſands,
There may'ſt thou paſs, with ſafe unmiry feet,
Where the rais'd pavement leads athwart the ſtreet.
If where Fleetditch with muddy current flows,
You chance to roam ; where oyſter-tubs in rows
Are rang'd beſide the poſts ; there ſtay thy haſte,
And with the ſav'ry fiſh indulge thy taſte :
The damſel's knife the gaping ſhell commands,
While the ſalt liquor ſtreams between her hands.

The man had ſure a palate cover'd o'er
With braſs or ſteel, that on the rocky ſhore
Firſt broke the oozy oyſter's pearly coat,
And riſk'd the living morſel down his throat.
What will not lux'ry taſte ? Earth, ſea, and air
Are daily ranſack'd for the bill of fare.
Blood ſtuff'd in ſkins is Britiſh Chriſtians' food,
And France robs marſhes of the croaking brood ;
Spungy morels in ſtrong ragouts are found,
And in the ſoup the ſlimy ſnail is drown'd.

When from high ſpouts the daſhing torrents fall,
Ever be watchful to maintain the wall ;

For ſhould'ſt thou quit thy ground, the ruſhing throng
Will with impetuous fury drive along;
All preſs to gain thoſe honours thou haſt loſt,
And rudely ſhove thee far without the poſt.
Then to retrieve the ſhade you ſtrive in vain,
Draggled all o'er, and ſoak'd in floods of rain,
Yet rather bear the ſhow'r, and toils of mud,
Than in the doubtful quarrel riſk thy blood.
O think on Oedipus' deteſted ſtate,
And by his woes be warn'd to ſhun thy fate.

Where three roads join'd he met his ſire unknown;
(Unhappy ſire, and more unhappy ſon!)
Each claim'd the way, their ſwords the ſtrife decide;
The hoary monarch fell, he groan'd, and dy'd!
Hence ſprung the fatal plague that thin'd thy reign,
Thy curſed inceſt, and thy children ſlain!
Hence wert thou doom'd in endleſs night to ſtray,
Through Theban ſtreets, and cheerleſs grope thy way.

Contemplate, mortal, on thy fleeting years;
See, with black train the funeral pomp appears!
Whether ſome heir attends in ſable ſtate,
And mourns with outward grief a parent's fate;
Or the fair virgin, nipt in beauty's bloom,
A croud of lover's follow to her tomb.
Why is the hearſe with 'ſcutcheons blazon'd round,
And with the nodding plume of oſtrich crown'd?
No: The dead know it not, nor profit gain;
It only ſerves to prove the living vain;
How ſhort is life! how frail is human truſt!
Is all this pomp for laying duſt to duſt?

Where the nail'd hoop defends the painted ſtall,
Bruſh not thy ſweeping ſkirt too near the wall;

Thy heedless sleeve will drink the colour'd oil,
And spot indelible thy pocket soil.
Has not wise nature strung the legs and feet
With firmest nerves, design'd to walk the street?
Has she not given us hands to grop aright,
Amidst the frequent dangers of the night?
And think'st thou not the double nostril meant
To warn from oily woes by previous scent?
† Who can the various city-frauds recite,
With all the petty rapines of the night?
Who now the guinea-dropper's bait regards,
Trick'd by the sharper's dice, or juggler's cards?
Why should I warn thee ne'er to join the fray,
Where the sham-quarrel interrupts the way?
Lives there in these our days so soft a clown,
Brav'd by the bully's oaths, or threat'ning frown?
I need not strict enjoin the pocket's care,
When from the crouded play thou lead'st the fair;
Who has not here, or watch, or snuff-box lost,
Or handkerchief that India's shuttle boast?
O! may thy virtue guard thee through the roads
Of Drury's mazy courts, and dark abodes.
The harlots' guileful paths, who nightly stand,
Where Katherine-street descends into the Strand.
Say, vagrant Muse, their wiles and subtile arts,
To lure the strangers unsuspecting hearts:
So shall our youth on healthful sinews tread,
And city-cheeks grow warm with rural red.
'Tis she who nightly strolls with saunt'ring pace,
No stubborn stays her yielding shape embrace;

† Various cheats formerly in practice.

Beneath the lamp her tawdry ribbons glare,
The new-ſcour'd mantua, and the flattern air;
High-draggled petticoats her travels ſhow,
And hollow cheeks with artful bluſhes glow;
With flatt'ring ſounds ſhe ſoothes the cred'lous ear,
My Noble Captain! Charmer! Love! My dear!
In riding-hood near tavern-doors ſhe plies,
Or muffled pinners hide her livid eyes.
With empty band-box ſhe delights to range,
And feigns a diſtant errand from the 'Change;
Nay, ſhe will oft the Quaker's hood profane,
And trudge demure the rounds of Drury-lane.
She darts from ſarſnet ambuſh wily leers,
Twitches thy ſleeve, or with familiar airs
Her fan will pat thy cheek; theſe ſnares diſdain,
Nor gaze behind thee, when ſhe turns again.

I knew a yeoman, who for thirſt of gain,
To the great city drove from Devon's plain
His num'rous lowing herd; his herds he ſold,
And his deep leathern pocket bagg'd with gold:
Drawn by a fraudful nymph, he gaz'd, he ſigh'd;
Unmindful of his home, and diſtant bride;
She leads the willing victim to his doom,
Through winding alleys to her cobweb-room,
Thence through the ſtreet he reels from poſt to poſt,
Valiant with wine, nor knows his treaſure loſt.
The vagrant wretch th' aſſembled watchmen ſpies,
He waves his hanger, and their poles defies;
Deep in the Roundhouſe pent, all night he ſnores,
And the next morn in vain his fate deplores.

Ah hapleſs ſwain, unus'd to pains and ills!
Canſt thou forego roaſt-beef for nauſcous pills?

How wilt thou lift to heav'n thy eyes and hands,
When the long ſcroll the ſurgeon's fees demands!
Or elſe (ye gods avert that worſt diſgrace!)
Thy ruin'd noſe falls level with thy face;
Then ſhall thy wife thy loathſome kiſs diſdain,
And wholeſome neighbours from thy mug refrain.

Yet there are watchmen, who with friendly light
Will teach thy reeling ſteps to tread aright;
For ſixpence will ſupport thy helpleſs arm,
And home conduct thee, ſafe from nightly harm:
But if they ſhake their lanthorns, from afar
To call their brethren to confed'rate war
When rakes reſiſt their pow'r; if hapleſs you
Should chance to wander with the ſcow'ring crew;
Though fortune yield thee captive, ne'er deſpair,
But ſeek the conſtable's confid'rate ear;
He will reverſe the watchman's harſh decree,
Mov'd by the rhet'ric of a ſilver fee.
Thus would you gain ſome fav'rite courtier's word,
Fee not the petty clerks, but bribe my Lord.

Now is the time that rakes their revels keep;
Kindlers of riot, enemies of ſleep.
His ſcatter'd pence the flying Nicker * ſlings,
And with the copper ſhow'r the caſement rings.
Who has not heard the Scowrer's midnight fame?
Who has not trembled at the Mohawks name?
Was there a watchman took his hourly rounds,
Safe from their blows, or new-invented wounds!

* Gentlemen who delighted to break windows with half-pence.

I paſs their deſp'rate deeds, and miſchiefs done,
Where from Snowhill black ſteepy torrents run;
How matrons, hoop'd within the hogſhead's womb,
Were tumbled furious thence, the rolling tomb
O'er the ſtones thunders, bounds from ſide to ſide:
So Regulus to ſave his country dy'd.

Where a dim gleam the paly lanthorn throws
O'er the mid pavement, heapy rubbiſh grows;
Or arched vaults their gaping jaws extend,
Or the dark cave to common ſhores deſcend.
Oft by the winds extinct the ſignal lies,
Or ſmothered in the glimmering ſocket dies,
E'er night has half roll'd round her ebon throne;
In the wide gulph the ſhatter'd coach o'erthrown
Sinks with the ſnorting ſteeds; the reins are broke,
And from the crackling axle flies the ſpoke.
So when ſam'd Eddyſtone's far-ſhooting ray,
That led the ſailor through the ſtormy way,
Was from its rocky roots by billows torn,
And the high turret in the whirlwind borne,
Fleets bulg'd their ſides againſt the craggy land,
And pitchy ruins blacken'd all the ſtrand.

Who then through night would hire the harneſs'd ſteeed,
And who would chuſe the ratt'ling wheel for ſpeed?
But hark! diſtreſs with ſcreaming voice draws nigh'r,
And wakes the ſlumb'ring ſtreet with cries of fire.
At firſt a glowing red enwraps the ſkies,
And borne by winds the ſcatt'ring ſparks ariſe;
From beam to beam the fierce contagion ſpreads;
The ſpiry flames now lift aloft their heads,

Through the burſt ſaſh a blazing deluge pours,
And ſplitting tiles deſcend in rattling ſhow'rs.
Now with thick crouds th' enlighten'd pavement
ſwarms,
The fireman ſweats beneath his crooked arms,
A leathern caſque his vent'rous head defends,
Boldly he climbs where thickeſt ſmoke aſcends;
Mov'd by the mother's ſtreaming eyes and pray'rs,
The helpleſs infant through the flame he bears,
With no leſs virtue, than through hoſtile fire
The Dardan hero bore his aged ſire.
See forceful engines ſpout their levell'd ſtreams,
To quench the blaze that runs along the beams;
The grapling hook plucks rafters from the walls,
And heaps on heaps the ſmoky ruin falls.
Blown by ſtrong winds the fiery tempeſt roars,
Bears down new walls, and pours along the floors;
The heav'ns are all a blaze, the face of night
Is cover'd with a ſanguine dreadful light;
'Twas ſuch a light involv'd thy tow'rs, O Rome,
The dire preſage of mighty Caeſar's doom,
When the ſun veil'd in ruſt his mourning head,
And frightful prodigies the ſkies o'erſpread.
Hark! the drum thunders! far, ye crouds, retire:
Behold! the ready match is tipt with fire,
The nitrous ſtore is laid, the ſmutty train
With running blaze awakes the barrel'd grain;
Flames ſudden wrap the walls; with ſullen ſound
The ſhatter'd pile ſinks on the ſmoaky ground.
So when the years ſhall have revolv'd the date,
Th' inevitable hour of Naples' fate,

Her ſapp'd foundations ſhall with thunders ſhake,
And heave and toſs upon the ſulph'rous lake;
Earth's womb at once the fiery flood ſhall rend,
And in th' abyſs her plunging tow'rs deſcend.
Conſider, reader, what fatigues I've known,
The toils, the perils of the wint'ry town;
What riots ſeen, what buſtling crouds I bor'd,
How oft I croſs'd where carts and coaches roar'd;
Yet ſhall I bleſs my labours, if mankind
Their future ſafety from my dangers find.
Thus the bold traveller, (inur'd to toil,
Whoſe ſteps have printed Aſia's deſert ſoil,
The barb'rous Arabs haunt; or ſhiv'ring croſt
Dark Greenland's mountains of eternal froſt:
Whom providence in length of years reſtores
To the wiſh'd harbour of his native ſhores;)
Sets forth his journals to the public view,
To caution, by his woes, the wand'ring crew.
And now compleat my gen'rous labours lie,
Finiſh'd, and ripe for immortality.
Death ſhall entomb in duſt this mould'ring frame,
But never reach th' eternal part, my fame.
When W* and G**, mighty names, are dead;
Or but at Chelſea under cuſtards read;
When critics crazy bandboxes repair,
And tragedies, turn'd rockets, bounce in air;
High rais'd on Fleetſtreet poſts, conſign'd to fame,
This work ſhall ſhine, and walkers bleſs my name.

EPISTLES

ON

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