

The Restoration/18th Century & Romantic Literature



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The Restoration and 18th Century Overview

A little less than the first half of our course is focused on the literary period most commonly known as the Restoration and the 18th Century (from 1660-1785). However, the period is divided in a number of ways and called by different names (some scholars refer to the period as the “Neoclassical Period” [formerly the name used for this course], others call it the “Age of Reason” or “Age of Pope and Dryden” due to the heavy influence of two particularly important writers of the period). Still other scholars subdivide the period even further, referring to the Restoration era (approximately 1660-1690), the Augustan era (approximately 1690-1744) and the pre-Romantic period (approximately 1744-1785). Part of the struggle, also true with all other literary periods, comes from general questions of periodization (literature has never been produced in tidy little blocks, leading to a blurring around the edges by scholars as to when any specific period begins and ends and how the period should be divided). Nor are scholars in universal agreement concerning what the literature of the time looked, felt, and read like. Nevertheless, there are generally agreed upon principles that define how we see and observe the period today (often simply referred to in this class as the 18th Century, even though we are really addressing 1660-1785). This overview, although not comprehensive, strives to summarize the key principles of the period in a way that is simple and accessible.

Historically Significant Facts

The period between 1660 and 1785 was a time of tremendous external, visible expansion for “Great Britain,” as the nation came to be called after the Union Act in 1707 joined Scotland to England and Wales. Britain became a world power, an empire on which the sun never set (most students have heard the old adage of the “sun never setting on the British Empire”). But the nation also changed internally. A sense of new, expanding possibilities—as well as modern problems—transformed the daily life of the British people, and offered them fresh ways of thinking about their relations to nature and to each other. Between 1666 and 1766, the London population doubled (changing from approximately from 400,000 to 800,000 people—it’s hard to really grasp how important this shift was given today’s metropolitan areas, but it did affect almost every element of life in Britain and how power was negotiated). More so than the population shift, the cultural and commercial life of Britain and its empire increasingly centered on London. Though a vast majority of English people continued to work at farming, it was the city that set the tone for business, pleasure, and an emerging consumer society. “When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life,” according to Samuel Johnson; “for there is in London all that life can afford.” The late eighteenth century witnessed a turn from palaces to pleasure gardens open to anyone with the price of admission. New standards of taste were set by what the people of London wanted—not the monarchy—and art joined with commerce to satisfy those desires. Artist William Hogarth made his living not as earlier painters had done: through portraits of royal and noble patrons, but by selling his prints to a large and appreciative public. London itself—its beauty and horror, its ever-changing moods—became a favorite subject of writers. By the end of the period, the average British citizen was much wealthier than at the beginning of the period, signifying economic growth as a nation. The invention of the steam engine in 1698 and further related inventions drove the industrial revolution via literal and figurative steam power. The acquisition of coal, as a main source of power, highly influenced British life-style as mining and shipping played a large role in the development of industrial towns into cities (these changes also worsened living conditions and reduced life expectancies for the average citizen—especially those in newly industrial cities—as has been well chronicled). As the British economic engine changed, so too did their banking (the Bank of England was founded in 1694), transportation, and leisure systems (the latter playing a major role in terms of what people read with their increasing “free” time).

With the restoration of the monarchy (Charles in 1660), established church policies were also restored, giving Anglican clergy broad powers that they used to try and eliminate religious dissent (often with cruel and unfortunate results that haunted the nation for centuries). Religious differences and power struggles came to a head especially when James II took the throne (he and his son were Catholics, which worried many). Soon after, William was brought over (a strong Protestant), leading to a rift between Jacobites (those loyal to James's family and descendants) and the ruling body of the nation. Still, the country did avoid a bloody revolution through William, who gave up some state powers, reinforced Parliament as the ruling body of the nation, and moved towards increased individual rights. Struggles of religion and power never really went away though, with the Whig and Tory parties working out their religious and ideological differences in struggles throughout the era.

Cultural Shifts

There was a general sense during the 18th century that society, at long last, was improving. As the many advances in science and technology began to surpass the understanding of any one individual (as opposed to the educated scholar of early centuries who dabbled in most areas of knowledge), the 18th century was one of the first times in Britain where specialization of scholarship was seen as necessary. Women, while certainly not treated equally in education or anywhere else, were increasingly educated at aristocratic level and proto-feminist authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft laid the foundation for later centuries to move towards a more equal society in terms of gender. Sadly, by the mid-eighteenth century approximately 49,000 slaves were still being transported across the Atlantic each year, but philosophical thought (and literature) were turning against the previously booming slave trade.

Philosophical thought also was moving throughout the period towards a stronger belief in the inherent good of human nature and connections between people. Directly observing experiences as the primary means of getting to truth established empiricism as the dominant intellectual approach of the period. These ideas, and many other shifting currents of thought, were now much more easily accessible. Many new public places were constructed for reading (such as coffee houses) and the sharing of ideas (driven in part by a desire of many to learn more about religious ideologies and practices) continued to become more common. With new print technology and the development of the newspaper as a dominant force in shaping people's view of the world (newspapers were the dominant form of sharing ideas for centuries before the recent digital shifts in information dissemination), essays also increased in popularity, leading to the development of periodicals as newly dominant literary form (literary criticism, in particular, became much more popular during this era).

Along with print shifts, the ways in which authors produced their work also changed rapidly at this time. With the ability to make money via the pen taking off due to the new print culture, there was also an emergent gap in who wrote and why. Upper class, wealthy people were now able to print their own work, and distinctions in purpose began to emerge ("Grub Street" authors who wrote to make a living were denigrated for producing "low" art writing). More privileged authors who were able to write mostly free from the restraints of making a living (such as Alexander Pope) tried to separate the "true" art of writing from popular writing flowing from the presses. This separation of high art and low art, as will see later in the course, eventually led the Romantics to lean the other way by embracing themes of "common" life that were more accessible to the burgeoning reading public.

English was also becoming the national language due to the need for a shared language (there is good reason that Samuel Johnson is considered one of the greatest titans of the age primarily for writing a dictionary). With ideas now in circulation more than ever before, readers needed shared meanings, spellings, and standardizations to make sense of all the works that were becoming accessible. Grammar books, previously focused on Latin, now moved towards creating English standards that were accessible (you can now blame the Restoration and 18th Century for any an all painful experiences you have had learning how to write or speak "properly" in school or elsewhere). In truth, this shift was difficult, since English was constantly in flux then as it is now, with new words and usages constantly flooding British society.

Literary Style

From 1660-1785, the primary focus of the literature was an effort to refine literature according to specific principles, primarily by looking inward at society and considering what was good and bad about practices and people. In principle, literature was becoming more elegant and simple in its execution (whether this was actually happening is another argument altogether). In summary, the idea for most writers during the time was to provide pleasure and express ideas to readers that "everyone" could understand in language that was accessible to all. The shared human experience, especially through nature, was central to this literary project (the Romantics did not have a monopoly on nature as some believe, rather the truth is that the first century we study (1660-1785) also saw nature as a way to understand ancient writers and themselves). These efforts to use a shared, accessible language lead to a style of writing that later writers saw as artificial and unique to poets of the time.

High verse form (the heroic couplet for example) thrived during the period, but less formal forms of writing also existed and thrived in some avenues, thus creating a steep divide between "high art" and "low art." Put more succinctly, although all writing from 1660-1785 did not follow exactly the same patters, it was generally known for the following qualities: an emphasis on intellect and sociability, the poet as highly educated craftsman, poetry as crafted and restrained, reason and order holding paramount importance, urban life, aristocratic traditions, and the classical past were all very important subjects.

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John Dryden



General Background

Dryden was born on August 9, 1631 into a comfortable (financially) family. The oldest of fourteen children, his formal education began at Westminster School (lead by headmaster Dr. Richard Busby, who famously ran his school in a strict fashion and sometimes employed corporal punishment to keep pupils in line). In 1650, Dryden began attending Trinity College, where he earned his B.A degree in 1654. His father died the same year, providing an inheritance that supported Dryden while he began his literary career. Dryden career started slowly, but he eventually found a patron who supported his work financially and later married the sister of his patron, Lady Elizabeth Howard, in 1663. They had three children together. Over time Dryden became a very successful writer (he was, after all, made Poet Laureate in 1668 and also received a post as historiographer royal--together these two honors paid him approximately 200 pounds a year) and lived comfortable off his writings until eventually turning to translation work due to religious and political complexities later in life. He died of gout in 1700 (stubbornly refusing amputation of an infected toe that allowed the disease to spread to his body).

Style and Works

Dryden was a very gifted writer who wrote in a variety of genres and fields. Although best known today for his poetry, he spent 1664-1681 primarily working (in terms of literature) as a playwright. Reviews of his plays are mixed, with some productions earning mostly positive reviews while other were critiqued rather harshly. Dryden was also a thoughtful literary critic (concerned mostly with form, style, and politics) and, in addition to his essays, he also paid the bills for his family later in life (William and Mary—Protestants—took

power after Dryden had converted to Catholicism and he thus gave up his laureateship and political office on account of his staying loyal to his faith) by doing translation work. Due to his work on translation, he was able to make a number of classical pieces available to those who normally would not have been able to access the pieces (his most important translation work was probably his work translating the works of Virgil from Latin into English).

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Dryden was one of the first authors to transmit his serious interest in literature into essay and poetic form, leading Samuel Johnson to refer to him as the “father of English criticism.” In terms of form, Dryden established the heroic couplet as a standard form of English poetry. In time, heroic couplets were passed down to Alexander Pope (a titan of the age) and his influence on other writers is clear.

Dryden’s work is famously linked to the crown. He wrote political satire that took issues with those who opposed James (a Roman Catholic) from taking the throne. He also wrote a number of poems celebrating English victories and is sometimes criticized for his patriotism and loyalty to the crown. At one point, he was looked down on for what seemed like unflinching allegiance to those in power, but his belief seems authentic given that he gave up money and power late in life due to his faith (he had a nimble enough mind to defend the Anglican Church in 1682 but still change his mind later and convert to Roman Catholicism).

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Annus Mirabilis

BY JOHN DRYDEN

As perhaps I am the first
 who ever presented a
 work of this nature to the
 Metropolis of any Nation, so
 is it likewise consonant to Justice, 5
 that he who was to give
 the first Example of such a
 Dedication should begin it
 with that City, which has set
 a pattern to all others of true 10
 Loyalty, invincible Courage
 and unshaken Constancy.
 Other Cities have been
 prais'd for the same Virtues,
 but I am much deceiv'd if 15
 any have so dearly purchas'd
 their reputation; their fame
 has been won them by cheaper
 trials than an expensive,
 though necessary, War, a consuming 20
 Pestilence, and a more
 consuming Fire. To submit
 your selves with that humility
 to the Judgments of Heaven,
 and at the same time to 25
 raise your selves with that
 vigour above all humane Enemies;
 to be combated at once
 from above and from below,
 to be struck down and to triumph; 30
 I know not whether
 such trials have been ever parallel'd
 in any Nation, the resolution
 and successes of them
 never can be. Never had 35
 Prince or People more mutual
 reason to love each other, if
 suffering for each other can
 in dear affection. You have
 come together a pair of matchless 40
 Lovers, through many
 difficulties; He, through a

long Exile, various traverses of
 Fortune, and the interposition
 of many Rivals, who violently
 ravish'd and with-held 45
 You from Him: And certainly
 you have had your share
 in sufferings. But Providence
 has cast upon you want 50
 of Trade, that you might
 appear bountiful to your
 Country's necessities; and
 the rest of your afflictions are
 not more the effects of God's 55
 displeasure, (frequent examples
 of them having been in
 the Reign of the most excellent
 Princes) then occasions 60
 for the manifesting of your
 Christian and Civil virtues.
 To you therefore this Year of
 Wonders is justly dedicated,
 because you have made it so.
 You who are to stand a wonder 65
 to all Years and Ages, and
 who have built your selves an
 immortal Monument on your
 own ruines. You are now a 70
Phoenix in her ashes, and, as far
 as Humanity can approach, a
 great Emblem of the suffering
 Deity. But Heaven never made
 so much Piety and Vertue to 75
 leave it miserable. I have
 heard indeed of some vertuous
 persons who have ended unfortunately,
 but never of any
 vertuous Nation: Providence
 is engag'd too deeply, when 80
 the cause becomes so general.
 And I cannot imagine it has
 resolv'd the ruine of that people
 at home, which it has blessed 85
 abroad with such successes.
 I am therefore to conclude,
 that your sufferings are at an
 end; and that one part of my
 Poem has not been more an 90
 History of your destruction,
 then the other a Prophecy of
 your restoration. The accomplishment

of which happiness,
 as it is the wish of all true
English-men, so is by none
 more passionately desired then 95

Samuel Pepys



General Background

Samuel Pepys was born on February 23rd, 1633 in London. The son of a prosperous tailor (he was the fifth of eleven children), he grew up in a Puritan home. Pepys experienced pain as he grew up due to a painful kidney stone (which was eventually successfully treated via a life-threatening surgical procedure). As Pepys grew up, he was educated at St Paul's School in London and Magdalen College, Cambridge, earning his B.A. in 1654. In 1655, Pepys married 15-year-old Elizabeth Saint-Michel, a French Protestant. Although Pepys's affairs and her childlessness complicated their relationship, they stayed married until her death in 1669. After her death, and with the help of his cousin, he began a career in the Naval Office. It took hard work and time, but eventually Pepys rose all the way to the office of secretary of the Admiralty.

Pepys experienced accusations from various directions later in life. In 1679, false accusations of treason forced Pepys to resign from the Admiralty. As a result of the charges, he was imprisoned on a charge of selling naval secrets to the French. A couple decades later, he was again arrested under suspicion of Jacobite sympathies, but both times the charges were dropped and he was released from confinement.

Style and Works

Samuel Pepys most important contribution to literature is inarguably his diary (written from 1660-

1669—he stopped writing due to difficulties caused by his failing eyesight, although he never did actually go blind as he expected). This seminal work provides insightful (and stylistically unique) coverage of most of the most important events of the time, including the following: the coronation of King Charles II, the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London. Written in shorthand, it covers not only the most important events of the time (politics and state affairs), but also covers domestic and simple details of life (it's hard not to enjoy a work that starts out covering Pepys's morning shave). His style was honest, frank, and gave the reader a look at the eighteenth century through Pepys's eyes (a very personal perspective that permeates his writings). Additionally, Pepys included foreign words and phrases to his writings (in part to cover issues or private struggles caused by his two primary vices—he spent a lot of time chasing women and trying to make as much money as possible). It appears that Pepys never really intended for his diary to be read by others (it was not fully deciphered and published until over a century after his death). His diary was extensive by the time he stopped writing, coming in at about 1.3 million words

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Pepys lived an exciting life by most measures (false accusations, medical challenges, and his love of many things: science, theater, music, fashion, and women allowed his diary a wide scope of topics). His unique style and pursuit of his many interests lead to a diary filled with interesting observations about many things in the world around him. A very curious and observant man, Pepys greatest contribution probably comes from the keen way in which he observed and noted the cultural changes of England during his life.

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The Diary

BY SAMUEL PEPYS

SEPTEMBER 1666

2nd (Lord's day). Some of our mayds sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast to-day, Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose and slipped on my nightgowne, and went to her window, and thought it to be on the backside of Marke-lane at the farthest; but, being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off; and so went to bed again and to sleep. About seven rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window, and saw the fire not so much as it was and further off. So to my closett to set things to rights after yesterday's cleaning. By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. So down, with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding-lane, and that it hath burned St. Magnus's Church and most part of Fish-street already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the Old Swan, already burned that way, and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the Steeleyard, while I was there. Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters that layoff; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys till they were, some of them burned, their wings, and fell down. Having staid, and in an hour's time seen the fire: rage every way, and nobody, to my sight, endeavouring to quench it, but to remove their goods, and leave all to the fire, and having seen it get as far as the Steele-yard, and the wind mighty high and driving it into the City; and every thing, after so long a drought, proving combustibile, even the very stones of churches, and among other things the poor steeple by which pretty Mrs.-----lives, and whereof my old school-fellow Elborough is parson, taken fire in the very top, and there burned till it fell down:

I to White Hall (with a gentleman with me who desired to go off from the Tower, to see the fire, in my boat); to White Hall, and there up to the Kings closett in the Chappell, where people come about me, and did give them an account dismayed them all, and word was carried in to the King. So I was called for, and did tell the King and Duke of Yorke what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor--[Sir Thomas Bludworth. See June 30th, 1666.]--from him, and command him to spare no houses, but to pull down before the fire every way. The Duke of York bid me tell him that if he would have any more soldiers he shall; and so did my Lord Arlington afterwards, as a great secret.

[Sir William Coventry wrote to Lord Arlington on the evening of this day, "The Duke of York fears the want of workmen and tools to-morrow morning, and wishes the deputy lieutenants and justices of peace to summon the workmen with tools to be there by break of day. In some churches and chapels are great hooks for pulling down houses, which should be brought ready upon the place to-night against the morning" ("Calendar of State Papers," 1666-66, p. 95).]

Here meeting, with Captain Cocke, I in his coach, which he lent me, and Creed with me to Paul's, and there walked along Watlingstreet, as well as I could, every creature coming away laden with goods to save, and here and there sicke people carried away in beds. Extraordinary good goods carried in carts and on backs. At last met my Lord Mayor in Canningstreet, like a man spent, with a handkercher about his neck. To the King's message he cried, like a fainting woman, "Lord! what can I do? I am spent: people will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses; but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it." That he needed no more soldiers; and that, for himself, he must go and refresh himself, having been up all night. So he left me, and I him, and walked home, seeing people all almost distracted, and no manner of means used to quench the fire. The houses, too, so very thick thereabouts, and full of matter for burning, as pitch and tarr, in Thames-street; and warehouses of oyle, and wines, and brandy, and other things. Here I saw Mr. Isaake Houblon, the handsome man, prettily dressed and dirty, at his door at Dowgate, receiving some of his brothers' things, whose houses were on fire; and, as he says, have been removed twice already; and he doubts (as it soon proved) that they must be in a little time removed from his house also, which was a sad consideration. And to see the churches all filling with goods by people who themselves should have been quietly there at this time. By this time it was about twelve o'clock; and so home, and there find my guests, which was Mr. Wood and his wife Barbary Sheldon, and also Mr. Moons: she mighty fine, and her husband; for aught I see, a likely man. But Mr. Moone's design and mine, which was to look over my closett and please him with the sight thereof, which he hath long desired, was wholly disappointed; for we were in great trouble and disturbance at this fire, not knowing what to think of it. However, we had an extraordinary good dinner, and as merry, as

at this time we could be. While at dinner Mrs. Batelier come to enquire after Mr. Woolfe and Stanes (who, it seems, are related to them), whose houses in Fish-street are all burned; and they in a sad condition. She would not stay in the fright. Soon as dined, I and Moone away, and walked, through the City, the streets full of nothing but people and horses and carts loaden with goods, ready to run over one another, and, removing goods from one burned house to another. They now removing out of Canning-streets (which received goods in the morning) into Lumbard-streets, and further;

and among others I now saw my little goldsmith, Stokes, receiving some friend's goods, whose house itself was burned the day after. We parted at Paul's; he home, and I to Paul's Wharf, where I had appointed a boat to attend me, and took in Mr. Carcasse and his brother, whom I met in the streets and carried them below and above bridge to and again to see the fire, which was now got further, both below and above and no likelihood of stopping it. Met with the King and Duke of York in their barge, and with them to Queenhith and there called Sir Richard Browne to them. Their order was only to pull down houses apace, and so below bridge the water-side; but little was or could be done, the fire coming upon them so fast. Good hopes there was of stopping it at the Three Cranes above, and at Buttolph's Wharf below bridge, if care be used; but the wind carries it into the City so as we know not by the water-side what it do there. River full of lighters and boats taking in goods, and good goods swimming in the water, and only I observed that hardly one lighter or boat in three that had the goods of a house in, but there was a pair of Virginals

[The virginal differed from the spinet in being square instead of triangular in form. The word pair was used in the obsolete sense of a set, as we read also of a pair of organs. The instrument is supposed to have obtained its name from young women, playing upon it.]

in it. Having seen as much as I could now, I away to White Hall by appointment, and there walked to St. James's Parks, and there met my wife and Creed and Wood and his wife, and walked to my boat; and there upon the water again, and to the fire up and down, it still encreasing, and the wind great. So near the fire as we could for smoke; and all over the Thames, with one's face in the wind, you were almost burned with a shower of firedrops. This is very true; so as houses were burned by these drops and flakes of fire, three or four, nay, five or six houses, one from another. When we could endure no more upon the water; we to a little ale-house on the Bankside, over against the 'Three Cranes, and there staid till it was dark almost, and saw the fire grow; and, as it grew darker, appeared more and more, and in corners and upon steeples, and between churches and houses, as far as we could see up the hill of the City, in a most horrid malicious bloody flame, not like the fine flame of an ordinary fire. Barbary and her husband away before us. We staid till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch

of fire from this to the other side the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of above a mile long: it made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire and flaming at once; and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruins. So home with a sad heart, and there find every body discoursing and lamenting the fire; and poor Tom Hater come with some few of his goods saved out of his house, which is burned upon Fish-streets Hall. I invited him to lie at my house, and did receive his goods, but was deceived in his lying there, the newes coming every moment of the growth of the fire; so as we were forced to begin to pack up our owne goods; and prepare for their removal; and did by moonshine (it being brave dry, and moon: shine, and warm weather) carry much of my goods into the garden, and Mr. Hater and I did remove my money and iron chests into my cellar, as thinking that the safest place. And got my bags of gold into my office, ready to carry away, and my chief papers of accounts also there, and my tallys into a box by themselves. So great was our fear, as Sir W. Batten hath carts come out of the country to fetch away his goods this night. We did put Mr. Hater, poor man, to bed a little; but he got but very little rest, so much noise being in my house, taking down of goods.

5th. I lay down in the office again upon W. Hewer's, quilt, being mighty weary, and sore in my feet with going till I was hardly able to stand. About two in the morning my wife calls me up and tells me of new cryes of fire, it being come to Barkeing Church, which is the bottom of our lane. I up, and finding it so, resolved presently to take her away, and did, and took my gold, which was about L2350, W. Newer, and Jane, down by Proundy's boat to Woolwich; but, Lord! what sad sight it was by moone-light to see, the whole City almost on fire, that you might see it plain at Woolwich, as if you were by it. There, when I come, I find the gates shut, but no guard kept at all, which troubled me, because of discourse now begun, that there is plot in it, and that the French had done it. I got the gates open, and to Mr. Sheldon's, where I locked up my gold, and charged, my wife and W. Newer never to leave the room without one of them in it, night, or day. So back again, by the way seeing my goods well in the lighters at Deptford, and watched well by people. Home; and whereas I expected to have seen our house on fire, it being now about seven o'clock, it was not. But to the fyre, and there find greater hopes than I expected; for my confidence of finding our Office on fire was such, that I durst not ask any body how it was with us, till I come and saw it not burned. But going to the fire, I find by the blowing up of houses, and the great helpe given by the workmen out of the King's yards, sent up by Sir W. Pen, there is a good stop given to it, as well as at Marke-lane end as ours; it having only burned the dyall of Barking Church, and part of the porch, and was there quenched. I up to the top of Barking steeple, and there saw the saddest sight of desolation that I ever saw; every where great fires, oyle-cellars, and brimstone, and other things burning. I became afeard to stay there long, and therefore down again as fast as I could, the fire being spread as

far as I could see it; and to Sir W. Pen's, and there eat a piece of cold meat, having eaten nothing since Sunday, but the remains of Sunday's dinner. Here I met with Mr. Young and Whistler; and having removed all my things, and received good hopes that the fire at our end; is stopped, they and I walked into the town, and find Fanchurch-streete, Gracious-streete; and Lumbard-streete all in dust. The Exchange a sad sight, nothing standing there, of all the statues or pillars, but Sir Thomas Gresham's picture in the corner. Walked into Moorefields (our feet ready to burn, walking through the towne among the hot coles), and find that full of people, and poor wretches carrying their good there, and every body keeping his goods together by themselves (and a great blessing it is to them that it is fair weathe for them to keep abroad night and day); drank there, and paid two-pence for a plain penny loaf. Thence homeward, having passed through Cheapside and Newgate Market, all burned, and seen Anthony Joyce's House in fire. And took up (which I keep by me) a piece of glasse of Mercers' Chappell in the streete, where much more was, so melted and buckled with the heat of the fire like parchement. I also did see a poor cat taken out of a hole in the chimney, joyning to the wall of the Exchange; with, the hair all burned off the body, and yet alive. So home at night, and find there good hopes of saving our office; but great endeavours of watching all night, and having men ready; and so we lodged them in the office, and had drink and bread and cheese for them. And I lay down and slept a good night about midnight, though when I rose I heard that there had been a great alarme of French and Dutch being risen, which proved, nothing. But it is a strange thing to see how long this time did look since Sunday, having been always full of variety of actions, and little sleep, that it looked like a week or more, and I had forgot, almost the day of the week.

then, a news which did trouble me, and so drank and parted and home, and there took up my wife by coach, and to Mrs. Pierce's, there to take her up, and with them to Dr. Clerke's, by invitation, where we have not been a great while, nor had any mind to go now, but that the Dr., whom I love, would have us choose a day. Here was his wife, painted, and her sister Worshipp, a widow now and mighty pretty in her mourning. Here was also Mr. Pierce and Mr. Floyd, Secretary to the Lords Commissioners of Prizes, and Captain Cooke, to dinner, an ill and little mean one, with foul cloth and dishes, and everything poor. Discoursed most about plays and the Opera, where, among other vanities, Captain Cooke had the arrogance to say that he was fain to direct Sir W. Davenant in the breaking of his verses into such and such lengths, according as would be fit for musick, and how he used to swear at Davenant, and command him that way, when W. Davenant would be angry, and find fault with this or that note--but a vain coxcomb I perceive he is, though he sings and composes so well. But what I wondered at, Dr. Clerke did say that Sir W. Davenant is no good judge of a dramatick poem, finding fault with his choice of Henry the 5th, and others, for the stage, when I do think, and he confesses, "The Siege of Rhodes" as good as ever was writ. After dinner Captain Cooke and two of his boys to sing, but it was indeed both in performance and composition most plainly below what I heard last

night, which I could not have believed. Besides overlooking the words which he sung, I find them not at all humoured as they ought to be, and as I believed he had done all he had sett. Though he himself do indeed sing in a manner as to voice and manner the best I ever heard yet, and a strange mastery he hath in making of extraordinary surprising closes, that are mighty pretty, but his bragging that he do understand tones and sounds as well as any man in the world, and better than Sir W. Davenant or any body else, I do not like by no means, but was sick of it and of him for it. He gone, Dr. Clerke fell to reading a new play, newly writ, of a friend's of his; but, by his discourse and confession afterwards, it was his own. Some things, but very few, moderately good; but infinitely far from the conceit, wit, design, and language of very many plays that I know; so that, but for compliment, I was quite tired with hearing it. It being done, and commending the play, but against my judgment, only the prologue magnifying the happiness of our former poets when such sorry things did please the world as was then acted, was very good. So set Mrs. Pierce at home, and away ourselves home, and there to my office, and then my chamber till my eyes were sore at writing and making ready my letter and accounts for the Commissioners of Tangier to-morrow, which being done, to bed, hearing that there was a very great disorder this day at the Ticket Office, to the beating and bruising of the face of Carcasse very much. A foul evening this was to-night, and I mightily troubled to get a coach home; and, which is now my common practice, going over the ruins in the night, I rid with my sword drawn in the coach.

October 1668

25th (Lord's day). Up, and discoursing with my wife about our house and many new things we are doing of, and so to church I, and there find Jack Fenn come, and his wife, a pretty black woman: I never saw her before, nor took notice of her now. So home and to dinner, and after dinner all the afternoon got my wife and boy to read to me, and at night W. Batelier comes and sups with us; and, after supper, to have my head combed by Deb., which occasioned the greatest sorrow to me that ever I knew in this world, for my wife, coming up suddenly, did find me embracing the girl.... I was at a wonderful loss upon it, and the girl also, and I endeavoured to put it off, but my wife was struck mute and grew angry, and so her voice come to her, grew quite out of order, and I to say little, but to bed, and my wife said little also, but could not sleep all night, but about two in the morning waked me and cried, and fell to tell me as a great secret that she was a Roman Catholique and had received the Holy Sacrament, which troubled me, but I took no notice of it, but she went on from one thing to another till at last it appeared plainly her trouble was at what she saw, but yet I did not know how much she saw, and therefore said nothing to her. But after her much crying and reproaching me with inconstancy and preferring a sorry girl before her, I did give her no provocation, but did promise all fair usage to her and love, and foreswore any hurt that I did with her, till

at last she seemed to be at ease again, and so toward morning a little sleep, and so I with some little repose and rest

November 1668

14th. Up, and had a mighty mind to have seen or given her a little money, to which purpose I wrapt up 40s. in paper, thinking to have given her a little money, but my wife rose presently, and would not let me be out of her sight, and went down before me into the kitchen, and come up and told me that she was in the kitchen, and therefore would have me go round the other way; which she repeating and I vexed at it, answered her a little angrily, upon which she instantly flew out into a rage, calling me dog and rogue, and that I had a rotten heart; all which, knowing that I deserved it, I bore with, and word being brought presently up that she was gone away by coach with her things, my wife was friends, and so all quiet, and I to the Office, with my heart sad, and find that I cannot forget the girl, and vexed I know not where to look for her. And more troubled to see how my wife is by this means likely for ever to have her hand over me, that I shall for ever be a slave to her--that is to say, only in matters of pleasure, but in other things she will make [it] her business, I know, to please me and to keep me right to her, which I will labour to be indeed, for she deserves it of me, though it will be I fear a little time before I shall be able to wear Deb, out of my mind. At the Office all the morning, and merry at noon, at dinner; and after dinner to the Office, where all the afternoon, doing much business, late. My mind being free of all troubles, I thank God, but only for my thoughts of this girl, which hang after her. And so at night home to supper, and then did sleep with great content with my wife. I must here remember that I have lain with my moher as a husband more times since this falling out than in I believe twelve months before. And with more pleasure to her than I think in all the time of our marriage before.

18th. Lay long in bed talking with my wife, she being unwilling to have me go abroad, saying and declaring herself jealous of my going out for fear of my going to Deb., which I do deny, for which God forgive me, for I was no sooner out about noon but I did go by coach directly to Somerset House, and there enquired among the porters there for Dr. Allbun, and the first I spoke with told me he knew him, and that he was newly gone into Lincoln's Inn Fields, but whither he could not tell me, but that one of his fellows not then in the way did carry a chest of drawers thither with him, and that when he comes he would ask him. This put me into some hopes, and I to White Hall, and thence to Mr. Povy's, but he at dinner, and therefore I away and walked up and down the Strand between the two turnstiles, hoping to see her out of a window, and then employed a porter, one Osberton, to find out this Doctor's lodgings thereabouts, who by appointment comes to me to Hercules pillars, where I dined alone, but tells me that he cannot find out any such, but will enquire further. Thence back to White Hall to the Treasury a while, and

thence to the Strand, and towards night did meet with the porter that carried the chest of drawers with this Doctor, but he would not tell me where he lived, being his good master, he told me, but if I would have a message to him he would deliver it. At last I told him my business was not with him, but a little gentlewoman, one Mrs. Willet, that is with him, and sent him to see how she did from her friend in London, and no other token. He goes while I walk in Somerset House, walk there in the Court; at last he comes back and tells me she is well, and that I may see her if I will, but no more. So I could not be commanded by my reason, but I must go this very night, and so by coach, it being now dark, I to her, close by my tailor's, and she come into the coach to me, and je did baiser her... I did nevertheless give her the best council I could, to have a care of her honour, and to fear God, and suffer no man para avoir to do con her as je have done, which she promised. Je did give her 20s. and directions para laisser sealed in paper at any time the name of the place of her being at Herringman's, my bookseller in the 'Change, by which I might go para her, and so bid her good night with much content to my mind, and resolution to look after her no more till I heard from her. And so home, and there told my wife a fair tale, God knows, how I spent the whole day, with which the poor wretch was satisfied, or at least seemed so, and so to supper and to bed, she having been mighty busy all day in getting of her house in order against to-morrow to hang up our new hangings and furnishing our best chamber.

19th. Up, and at the Office all the morning, with my heart full of joy to think in what a safe condition all my matters now stand between my wife and Deb, and me, and at noon running up stairs to see the upholsters, who are at work upon hanging my best room, and setting up my new bed, I find my wife sitting sad in the dining room; which enquiring into the reason of, she begun to call me all the false, rotten-hearted rogues in the world, letting me understand that I was with Deb. yesterday, which, thinking it impossible for her ever to understand, I did a while deny, but at last did, for the ease of my mind and hers, and for ever to discharge my heart of this wicked business, I did confess all, and above stairs in our bed chamber there I did endure the sorrow of her threats and vows and curses all the afternoon, and, what was worse, she swore by all that was good that she would slit the nose of this girle, and be gone herself this very night from me, and did there demand 3 or L400 of me to buy my peace, that she might be gone without making any noise, or else protested that she would make all the world know of it. So with most perfect confusion of face and heart, and sorrow and shame, in the greatest agony in the world I did pass this afternoon, fearing that it will never have an end; but at last I did call for W. Hewer, who I was forced to make privy now to all, and the poor fellow did cry like a child, [and] obtained what I could not, that she would be pacified upon condition that I would give it under my hand never to see or speak with Deb, while I live, as I did before with Pierce and Knepp, and which I did also, God knows, promise for Deb. too, but I have the confidence to deny it to the perjury of myself. So, before it was late, there was, beyond my hopes as well as desert, a durable peace; and so

to supper, and pretty kind words, and to bed, and there he did have content
eile to her content, and so with some rest spent the night in bed, being
most absolutely resolved, if ever I can master this bout, never to give
her occasion while I live of more trouble of this or any other kind,
there being no curse in the world so great as this of the differences
between myself and her, and therefore I do, by the grace of God, promise
never to offend her more, and did this night begin to pray to God upon
my knees alone in my chamber, which God knows I cannot yet do heartily;
but I hope God will give me the grace more and more every day to fear
Him, and to be true to my poor wife. This night the upholsters did
finish the hanging of my best chamber, but my sorrow and trouble is so
great about this business, that it puts me out of all joy in looking
upon it or minding how it was.

John Bunyan



General Background

John Bunyan's place in British literary history was not as predetermined as some of his famous contemporaries due to his lack of education and privileged upbringing. His father was a poor Bedfordshire tinker and Bunyan received very little formal education. Due to historical factors surrounding his life in the seventeenth century (being called was more important to becoming a preacher during this time than was a formal education—something easy to relate to for many given Joseph Smith's own powerful experiences being called to teach and preach), Bunyan was able to become a prolific author as a Baptist preacher without much school.

Joining the army at age 16, it was not until Bunyan returned to civilian life three years later and found his wife that he turned to religion (his wife's name and their marriage date are sadly not known, but he did write about his wife bringing into their marriage two religious tomes that Bunyan read and learned from). His first wife died when Bunyan was 27 and he later remarried a woman named Elizabeth. He became a very active reader of the Bible after his marriage and committed to his faith. Voluntarily jailed for 12 years because he refused to keep silent about his beliefs, John taught his fellow prisoners and wrote religious texts in jail before being released and spending his life as a pastor.

Style and Works

Bunyan's autobiography (*Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*) is a helpful addition to his corpus of writings, but he wrote far more than that, with 42 published titles to his credit addressing a range of religious ideas and principles. Stylistically, Bunyan (although charged with being uneducated and unsophisticated

in terms of vocabulary) uses language modeled after the prose of the Bible (English), concrete details, and observed details to mold his writings into works accessible to readers both sophisticated and simple. *Pilgrim's Promise*, for example, uses a strong, extended metaphor (comparing life to a journey through common places) to make its central arguments while also maintaining easy relatability.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Bunyan's writings demonstrate clearly the power of authorship by someone devoted to making literature accessible and relatable. Unlike his more educated contemporaries, Bunyan's goals were more overtly spiritual and his writings brought together lasting literary phrases and ideas that still speak to readers who find him today. Accordingly, one of his lasting legacies (for those willing to work through the older language) is the ability to form a literary legacy that borrowed from and employed Biblical prose style with relatable places and experiences.

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The Pilgrim's Progress

BY JOHN BUNYAN

Section 1

CHAPTER I.

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and, not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, "What shall I do?"

In this plight, therefore, he went home, and restrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased. Wherefore at length he brake his mind to his wife and children; and thus he began to talk to them: "Oh my dear wife," said he, "and you my sweet children, I, your dear friend, am in myself undone by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me; moreover, I am told to a certainty that this our city will be burned with fire from heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee, my wife, and you, my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except some way of escape can be found whereby we may be delivered." At this all his family were sore amazed; not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy or madness had got into his head; therefore, it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brain, with all haste they got him to bed. But the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when the morning was come, they would know how he did. He told them, Worse and worse: he also set to talking to them again; but they began to be hardened. They also thought to drive away his madness by harsh and surly treatment of him: sometimes they would ridicule, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him. Wherefore he began to retire himself to his chamber, to pray for and pity them, and also to sorrow over his own misery; he would also walk solitary in the fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying; and thus for some days he spent his time.

CHRISTIAN'S DISTRESS OF MIND

Now, I saw, upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out as he had done before, crying, "What shall I do to be saved?"

I saw also that he looked this way and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because (as I perceived) he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, who asked, "Wherefore dost thou cry?"

Evangelist Points to Wicket-Gate. Evangelist Points to Wicket-Gate.

See page 15

He answered, "Sir, I read in the book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment; and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second."

Then said Evangelist, "Why not willing to die, since this life is troubled with so many evils?" The man answered, "Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall

fall into Tophet. And, sir, if I be not fit to go to prison, I am not fit to go to judgment, and from thence to death; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.”

Then said Evangelist, “If this be thy condition, why standest thou still?”

He answered, “Because I know not whither to go.” Then he gave him a parchment roll, and there was written within, “Flee from the wrath to come.”

The man, therefore, read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said, “Whither must I fly?” Then said Evangelist (pointing with his finger over a very wide field), “Do you see yonder wicket-gate?” The man said, “No.” Then said the other, “Do you see yonder shining light?” He said, “I think I do.” Then said Evangelist, “Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto; so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.” So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now, he had not run far from his own door, when his wife and children perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, “Life! life! eternal life!” So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain.

CHRISTIAN FLEES FROM THE CITY

The neighbors also came out to see him run; and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and among those that did so there were two that resolved to fetch him back by force. The name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other Pliable. Now, by this time the man was got a good distance from them; but, however, they were resolved to pursue him, which they did, and in a little time they overtook him. Then said the man, “Neighbors, wherefore are ye come?” They said, “To persuade you to go back with us.” But he said, “That can by no means be: you dwell,” said he, “in the City of Destruction, the place also where I was born: I see it to be so; and, dying there, sooner or later, you will sink lower than the grave, into a place that burns with fire and brimstone. Be content, good neighbors, and go along with me.”

Obst. “What!” said Obstinate, “and leave our friends and comforts behind us?”

Chris. “Yes,” said Christian (for that was his name), “because that all which you forsake is not worthy to be compared with a little of that I am seeking to enjoy; and if you would go along with me, and hold it, you shall fare as I myself; for there, where I go, is enough and to spare. Come away, and prove my words.”

Obst. What are the things you seek, since you leave all the world to find them?

Chris. I seek a place that can never be destroyed, one that is pure, and that fadeth not away, and it is laid up in heaven, and safe there, to be given, at the time appointed, to them that seek it with all their heart. Read it so, if you will, in my book.

Obst. “Tush!” said Obstinate, “away with your book; will you go back with us or no?”

Chris. “No, not I,” said the other, “because I have put my hand to the plough.”

Obst. Come, then, neighbor Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him: there is a company of these crazy-headed fools, that, when they take a fancy by the end, are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.

Pli. Then said Pliable, “Don’t revile; if what the good Christian says is true, the things he looks after are better than ours; my heart inclines to go with my neighbor.”

Obst. What! more fools still? Be ruled by me, and go back; who knows whither such a brain-sick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise.

Chris. Nay, but do thou come with thy neighbor Pliable; there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more glories besides. If you believe not me, read here in this book; and for the truth of what is told therein, behold, all is made by the blood of Him that made it.

Pli. “Well, neighbor Obstinate,” said Pliable, “I begin to come to a point; I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him. But, my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?”

Chris. I am directed by a man, whose name is Evangelist, to speed me to a little gate that is before us, where we shall receive directions about the way.

Pli. Come, then, good neighbor, let us be going. Then they went both together.

Section 2

THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND

Chris. Now, I saw in my dream, that just as they had ended this talk, they drew nigh to a very miry slough or swamp, that was in the midst of the plain; and they, being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond. Here, therefore, they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink into the mire.

Pli. Then said Pliable, “Ah! neighbor Christian where are you now?”

Chris. “Truly,” said Christian, “I do not know.”

Pli. At this Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow, “Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect between this and our journey’s end? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave country alone for me.” And with that, he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the mire on that side of the swamp which was next to his own house: so away he went, and Christian saw him no more.

Wherefore Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone; but still he tried to struggle to that side of the slough which was farthest from his own house, and next to the wicket-gate; the which, he did but could not get out because of the burden that was upon his back; but I beheld in my dream, that a man came to him whose name was Help, and asked him, What he did there?

Chris. “Sir,” said Christian, “I was bid to go this way by a man called Evangelist, who directed me also to yonder gate, that I might escape the wrath to come; and as I was going there I fell in here.”

Help. But why did you not look for the steps?

Chris. Fear followed me so hard, that I fled the next way and fell in.

Help. Then said he, “Give me thine hand.” So he gave him his hand, and he drew him out, and set him upon solid ground, and bade him go on his way.

Then I stepped to him that plucked him out, and said, “Sir, wherefore, since over this place is the way from the City of Destruction to yonder gate, is it that this place is not mended, that poor travelers might go thither with more safety?” And he said unto me, “This miry slough is such a place as cannot be mended; it is the hollow whither the scum and filth that go with the feeling of sin, do continually run, and therefore it is called the Slough of Despond; for still, as the sinner is awakened by his lost condition, there arise in his soul many fears, and doubts, and discouraging alarms, which all of them get together and settle in this place; and this is the reason of the badness of the ground.

Section 3

THE PILGRIMS AT VANITY FAIR

Then I saw in my dream, that, when they were got out of the wilderness, they presently saw a town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity; and at the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair. It is kept all the year long. It beareth the name of Vanity Fair, because the town where it is kept is lighter than vanity, and also because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither, is vanity; as is the saying of the Wise, “All that cometh is vanity.”

This is no newly begun business, but a thing of ancient standing. I will show you the original of it.

Almost five thousand years ago, there were pilgrims walking to the Celestial City, as these two honest persons are; and Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, with their companions, perceiving by the path that the pilgrims made that their way to the city lay through this town of Vanity, they contrived here to set up a fair; a fair wherein should be sold all sorts of vanity, and that it should last all the year long. Therefore at this fair are all such things sold as houses, lands, trades, places, honors, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, as wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not.

And, moreover, at this fair there are at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind.

Here are to be seen, too, and that for nothing, thefts, murders, false swearers, and that of a blood-red color.

And, as in other fairs of less moment there are several rows and streets under their proper names, where such and such wares are vended; so here likewise you have the proper places, rows, streets (namely, countries and kingdoms), where the wares of this fair are soonest to be found. Here are the Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the Spanish Row, the German Row, where several sorts of vanities are to be sold. But, as in other fairs some one commodity is as the chief of all the fair, so the ware of Rome and her goods are greatly promoted in this fair; only our English nation, with some others, have taken dislike thereat.

Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town where this lusty fair is kept; and he that would go to the city, and yet not go through this town, “must needs go out of the world.” The Prince of princes Himself, when here, went through this town to His own country, and that upon a fair day too; yea, and as I think, it was Beelzebub, the chief lord of this fair, that invited Him to buy of his vanities; yea, would have made Him lord of the fair, would He but have done him reverence as He went through the town. Yea, because He was such a person of honor, Beelzebub had Him from street to street, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a little time, that he might, if possible, allure that Blessed One to ask for and buy some of his vanities; but He had no mind to the merchandise, and therefore left the town without laying out so much as one farthing upon these vanities. This fair, therefore, is an ancient thing of long-standing, and a very great fair.

Now, these pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this fair. Well, so they did; but, behold, even as they entered into the fair, all the people in the fair were moved and the town itself, as it were, in a hubbub about them, and that for several reasons; for,

First,—The pilgrims were clothed with such kind of garments as were different from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people, therefore, of the fair, made a great gazing upon them: some said they were fools; some, they were bedlams; and some, they were outlandish men.

Secondly,—And, as they wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech; for few could understand what they said. They naturally spoke the language of Canaan; but they that kept the fair were the men of this world. So that from one end of the fair to the other, they seemed barbarians each to the other.

Thirdly,—But that which did not a little amuse the store-keepers was, that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares. They cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,” and look upwards, signifying that their trade and traffic were in heaven.

One chanced, mockingly, beholding the actions of the men, to say unto them, “What will you buy?” But they, looking gravely upon him, said, “We buy the truth.” At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more: some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling on others to smite them. At last things came to a hubbub and great stir in the fair, insomuch that all order was confounded. Now was word presently brought to the great one of the fair, who quickly came down, and deputed some of his most trusty friends to take these men for trial about whom the fair was almost overturned. So the men were brought to trial, and they that sat upon them asked them whence they came, whither they went, and what they did there in such an unusual garb. The men told them that they were pilgrims and strangers in the world, and that they were going to their own country, which was the heavenly Jerusalem, and that they had given no occasion to the men of the town, nor yet to the merchants, thus to abuse them, and to hinder them in their journey, except it was for that, when one asked them what they would buy, they said they would buy the truth. But they that were appointed to examine them did not believe them to be any other than crazy people and mad, or else such as came to put all things into a confusion in the fair. Therefore they took them and beat them, and besmeared them with dirt, and then put them into the cage, that they might be made a spectacle to all the men of the fair.

Section 4

So I saw, when they awoke they undertook to go up to the City. But, as I said, the reflection of the sun upon the City (for the City was pure gold) was so extremely glorious, that they could not, as yet, with open face behold it, but through a glass made for that purpose. So I saw that, as they went on, there met them two men in raiment that shone like gold, also their faces shone as the light.

These men asked the pilgrims whence they came; and they told them. They also asked them where they had lodged, what difficulties and dangers, what comforts and pleasures, they had met in the way; and they told them. Then said the men that met them, “You have but two difficulties more to meet with, and then you are in the City.”

Christian, then, and his companion, asked the men to go along with them; so they told them that they would. “But,” said they, “you must obtain it by your own faith.” So I saw in my dream that they went on together till they came in sight of the gate.

A RIVER INTERVENES

Now I further saw, that betwixt them and the gate was a river; but there was no bridge to go over, and the river was very deep. At the sight, therefore, of this river, the pilgrims were much stunned; but the men that went with them said, "You must go through, or you cannot come at the gate."

The pilgrims then began to inquire if there was no other way to the gate; to which they answered, "Yes; but there hath not any save two, to wit, Enoch and Elijah, been permitted to tread that path since the foundation of the world, nor shall until the last trumpet shall sound." The pilgrims then, especially Christian, began to be anxious in his mind, and looked this way and that; but no way could be found by them by which they might escape the river. Then they asked the men if the waters were all of a depth. They said, "No," yet they could not help them in that case; "for," said they, "you shall find it deeper or shallower as you believe in the King of the place."

They then addressed themselves to the water; and, entering, Christian began to sink, and crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head; all His waves go over me."

Then said the other, "Be of good cheer, my brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good." Then said Christian, "Ah! my friend, the sorrows of death have compassed me about; I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey." And with that, a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him. Also here he in a great measure lost his senses, so that he could neither remember nor orderly talk of any of those sweet refreshments that he had met with in the way of his pilgrimage. But all the words that he spake still tended to show that he had horror of mind, and heart-fears that he should die in that river, and never obtain entrance in at the gate. Here also, as they that stood by perceived, he was much in the troublesome thoughts of the sins that he had committed, both since and before he began to be a pilgrim. It was also observed that he was troubled with the sight of demons and evil spirits; for ever and anon he would intimate so much by words.

Hopeful, therefore, here had much ado to keep his brother's head above water; yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then, ere a while he would rise up again half dead. Hopeful would also endeavor to comfort him, saying, "Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us;" but Christian would answer, "It is you, it is you they wait for: you have been hopeful ever since I knew you." "And so have you," said he to Christian. "Ah, brother," said he, "surely, if I were right, He would now arise to help me; but for my sins He hath brought me into this snare, and hath left me." Then said Hopeful, "My brother, these troubles and distresses that you go through in these waters are no sign that God hath forsaken you; but are sent to try you, whether you will call to mind that which hitherto you have received of His goodness, and live upon Him in your distresses."

Then I saw in my dream that Christian was in thought awhile. To whom also Hopeful added these words, "Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." And, with that, Christian brake out with a loud voice, "Oh, I see Him again; and He tells me, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'" Then they both took courage; and the enemy was, after that, as still as a stone, until they were gone over. Christian, therefore, presently found ground to stand upon; and so it followed that the rest of the river was but shallow. Thus they got over.

TWO SHINING MEN

Now, upon the bank of the river, on the other side, they saw the two Shining Men again, who there waited for them. Wherefore, being come out of the river, they saluted them, saying, "We are heavenly spirits, sent forth to help those that shall be heirs of salvation." Thus they went along towards the gate. Now, you must note that the City stood upon a mighty hill; but the pilgrims went up that hill with ease, because they had these two men to lead them up by the arms; also they had left their mortal garments behind them in the river; for though they went in with them, they came out without them. They therefore went up here with much activity and speed,

though the foundation upon which the City was framed was higher than the clouds. They therefore went up through the regions of the air, sweetly talking as they went, being comforted because they had safely got over the river, and had such glorious companions to attend them.

MOUNT ZION

The talk they had with the Shining Ones, was about the glory of the place; who told them that the beauty and glory of it were such as could not be put into words. "There," said they, "is the Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of good men made perfect. You are going now," said they, "to the Paradise of God, wherein you shall see the tree of life, and eat of the never-fading fruits thereof; and when you come there, you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of an eternal life. There you shall not see again such things as you saw when you were in the lower region upon the earth; to wit, sorrow, sickness, affliction, and death; 'for the former things are passed away.' You are going now to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and to the prophets, men that God hath taken away from the evil to come, and that are now resting upon their beds, each one walking in his righteousness." The men then asked, "What must we do in the holy place?" To whom it was answered, "You must there receive the comfort of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow; you must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your prayers, and tears, and sufferings for the King by the way. In that place you must wear crowns of gold, and enjoy the perpetual sight and visions of the Holy One; for there you shall see Him as He is. There also you shall serve Him continually with praise, with shouting and thanksgiving, whom you desired to serve in the world, though with much difficulty, because of the weakness of your bodies. There your eyes shall be delighted with seeing and your ears with hearing the pleasant voice of the Mighty One. There you shall enjoy your friends again that are gone thither before you; and there you shall with joy receive even every one that follows into the holy place after you. There also you shall be clothed with glory and majesty, and put into a state fit to ride out with the King of Glory. When He shall come with sound of trumpet in the clouds, as upon the wings of the wind, you shall come with Him; and when He shall sit upon the throne of judgment, you shall sit by Him; yea, and when He shall pass sentence upon all the workers of evil, let them be angels or men, you also shall have a voice in that judgment because they were His and your enemies. Also, when He shall again return to the City, you shall go too, with sound of trumpet, and be ever with Him."

Now, while they were thus drawing towards the gate, behold, a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them; to whom it was said by the other two Shining Ones, "These are the men that have loved our Lord when in the world, and that have left all for His holy name; and He hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy." Then the heavenly host gave a great shout, saying, "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." There came out also at this time to meet them several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment who, with melodious noises and loud, made even the heavens to echo with their sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world; and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet.

THE CELESTIAL CITY

This done, they compassed them round on every side; some went before, some behind, and some on the right hand, some on the left (as it were to guard them through the upper regions), continually sounding as they went, with melodious noise, in notes on high: so that the very sight was to them that could behold it as if heaven itself was come down to meet them. Thus, therefore, they walked on together; and, as they walked, ever and anon these trumpeters, even with joyful sound, would, by mixing their music, with looks and gestures, still signify to Christian and his brother how welcome they were into their company, and with what gladness they came to meet them. And now were these two men as it were in heaven before they came at it, being swallowed up with the sight of angels, and with hearing of their melodious notes. Here also they had the City itself in view, and thought they heard all the bells therein to ring, and welcome them thereto. But, above all, the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there with such company, and that for ever and ever, oh! by

what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed?

And thus they came up to the gate. Now, when they were come up to the gate, there was written over it in letters of gold, “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

Then I saw in my dream, that the Shining Men bid them call at the gate: the which when they did, some from above looked over the gate: such as Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, and others, to whom it was said, “These pilgrims are come from the City of Destruction, for the love that they bear to the King of this place.” And then the pilgrims gave in unto them each man his certificate, which they had received in the beginning; those therefore were carried in to the King, who, when He had read them, said, “Where are the men?” To whom it was answered, “They are standing without the gate.” The King then commanded to open the gate, “that the righteous nation,” said He, “which keepeth the truth, may enter in.”

Now, I saw in my dream, that these two men went in at the gate; and lo! as they entered, their looks were changed so that their faces became bright; and they had garments put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them—the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honor. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the City rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, “Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.” I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, saying, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!”

Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the City shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal.

There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without ceasing, saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!” And, after that, they shut up the gates; which when I had seen, I wished myself among them.

IGNORANCE FAILS TO ENTER

Now while I was gazing upon all these things, I turned my head to look back, and saw Ignorance come up to the river-side; but he soon got over, and that without half the difficulty which the other two men met with. For it happened that there was then in the place one Vain-Hope, a ferryman, that with his boat helped him over; so he, as the others I saw, did ascend the hill, to come up to the gate; only he came alone, neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement. When he was come up to the gate, he looked up to the writing that was above, and then began to knock, supposing that entrance should have been quickly given to him; but he was asked by the men that looked over the top of the gate, “Whence came you? and what would you have?” He answered, “I have eaten and drunk in the presence of the King, and He has taught in our streets.” Then they asked him for his certificate, that they might go in and show it to the King: so he fumbled in his bosom for one, and found none. Then said they, “Have you none?” But the man answered never a word. So they told the King; but He would not come down to see him, but commanded the two Shining Ones that conducted Christian and Hopeful to the City, to go out and take Ignorance, and bind him hand and foot, and have him away. Then they took him up, and carried him through the air to the door that I saw in the side of the hill, and put him in there. Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction!

So I awoke, and behold, it was a dream.

Mary Astell



General Background

Astell was born on November 12, 1666 at Newcastle. She was the eldest of two children born to Peter Astell and Mary Errington, a family with strong royalist leanings. As a woman, she lacked a formal education but seems to have been taught and influenced by her uncle Ralph Astell, a clergyman-poet who was educated at the University of Cambridge. Under his tutelage, Astell gained a strong familiarity with Anglican theology and gained confidence in her own ability to reason. Her father’s unexpected death led to a sudden turn in her life and by the mid-1690s she had developed into a full-time writer, publishing essays both intellectual and political.

Style and Works

Analysis of Astell’s work almost always begins commenting on her witty and eloquent style. Her ideas were bold for their time and came in conflict with other prominent writers (such as John Locke). Astell published all of her works anonymously, reflective of how women’s writings were received, and argued vigorously against unfair distributions of power. For Astell, reason was paramount and she encouraged women to look to God or themselves (rather than to men) for hope and a better life.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Astell’s advocacy for educational opportunities for women has earned her the title “the first English feminist” in some circles (although the title is complicated due to arguments centered on whether she fulfills

central tenants of feminism). Her writings show a strong, self-aware writer determinedly working against patriarchal strictures woven into society, with particular emphasis on women's subservient position within marriage at the time and the usefulness and necessity of women being educated. Without a doubt, she was one of the first English writers to develop a cohesive educational framework for women and those who soon followed (Mary Wollstonecraft, for example) owe a distinct debt to the work she did carving out a path for others to follow.

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Reflections on Marriage

BY MARY ASTELL

But if Marriage be such a blessed State, how comes it, may you say, that there are so few happy Marriages? Now in answer to this, it is not to be wonder'd that so few succeed, we should rather be surpriz'd to find so many do, considering how imprudently Men engage, the Motives [Page 13: Motives] they act by, and the very strange Conduct they observe throughout.

For pray, what do Men propose to themselves in Marriage? What Qualifications do they look after in a Spouse? What will she bring is the first enquiry? How many Acres? Or how much ready Coin? Not that this is altogether an unnecessary Question, for Marriage without a Competency, that is, not only a bare Subsistence, but even a handsome and plentiful Provision, according to the Quality and Circumstances of the Parties, is no very comfortable Condition. They who Marry for Love as they call it, find time enough to repent their rash Folly, and are not long in being convinc'd, that whatever fine Speeches might be made in the heat of Passion, there could be no real Kindness between those who can agree to make each other miserable. But as an Estate is to be consider'd, so it should not be the Main, much less the Only consideration, for Happiness does not depend on Wealth.

But suppose a Man does not Marry for Money, tho' for one that does not, perhaps there are thousands that do; let him Marry for Love, an Heroick Action, which makes a mighty noise in the World, partly [Page 19] because of its rarity, and partly in regard of its extravagancy, and what does his Marrying for Love amount to? There's no great odds between his Marrying for the Love of Money, or for the Love of Beauty, the Man does not act according to Reason in either Case; but is govern'd by irregular Appetites. But he loves her Wit perhaps, and this you'l say is more Spiritual, more Refin'd; not at all if you examine it to the Bottom. For what is that which now adays passes under the name of Wit? A bitter and ill-natur'd Raillery, a pert Repartée, or a confident talking at all, and in such a multitude of Words, it's odds if something or other does not pass that is surprizing, tho' every thing that surprizes does not please; some things are wonder'd at for their Ugliness, as well as others for their Beauty. True Wit, durst one venture to describe it, is quite another thing, it consists in such a Sprightliness of Imagination, such a reach and turn of thought, so properly exprest, as strikes and pleases a judicious Tast.

Thus, whether it be Wit or Beauty that a Man's in Love with, there's no great hopes of a lasting Happiness; Beauty with all the helps of Art is of no very lasting date, the more it is help'd the sooner it decays, and he who only or chiefly chose for Beauty, will in a little time find the same reason for another choice. Nor is that sort of Wit which he prefers of a more sure tenure, or allowing it to last, it [Page 22] will not always please. For that which has not a real excellency and value in it self, entertains no longer than that giddy Humour which recommended it to us holds; and when we can like on no just, or on very little Ground, 'tis certain a dislike will arise, as lightly and as unaccountably. And it is not improbable that such a Husband may in a little time by ill usage provoke such a Wife to exercise her Wit, that is, her Spleen on him, and then it is not hard to guess how very agreeable it will be to him.

But do the Women never choose amiss? Are the Men only in fault? That is not pretended; for he who will be just, must be forc'd to acknowledge, that neither Sex is always in the right. A Woman indeed can't properly be said to Choose, all that is allow'd her, is to Refuse or Accept what is offer'd. And when we have made such

reasonable allowances as are due to the Sex, perhaps they may not appear so much in fault as one would at first imagine, and a generous Spirit will find more occasion to pity, than to reprove. But sure I transgress – it must not be suppos'd that the Ladies can do amiss, he is but an ill-bred [Page 24] Fellow who pretends that they need amendment! They are no doubt on't always in the right, and most of all when they take pity on distressed Lovers; whatever they say carries an Authority that no Reason can resist, and all that they do must needs be Exemplary! This is the Modish Language, nor is there a Man of Honour amongst the whole Tribe that would not venture his Life, nay and his Salvation too in their Defence, if any but himself attempts to injure them. But I must ask pardon if I can't come up to these heights, nor flatter them with the having no faults, which is only a malicious way of continuing and encreasing their Mistakes.

Women, it's true, ought to be treated with Civility; for since a little Ceremony and out-side Respect is all their Guard, all the privilege that's allow'd them, it were barbarous to deprive them of it; and because I would treat them civilly, I would not express my Civility at the usual rate. I would not under pretence of honouring and paying a mighty Deference to the Ladies, call them fools to their faces; for what are all the fine Speeches and Submissions that are made, but an abusing them in a well-bred way? She must be a Fool [Page 25] with a witness, who can believe a Man, Proud and Vain as he is, will lay his boasted Authority, the Dignity and Prerogative of his Sex, one Moment at her Feet, but in prospect of taking it up again to more advantage; he may call himself her Slave a few days, but it is only in order to make her his all the rest of his Life.

Indeed that mistaken Self-Love that reigns in the most of us, both Men and Women, that over-good Opinion we have of our selves, and desire that others should have of us, makes us swallow every thing that looks like Respect, without examining how wide it is from what it appears to be. For nothing is in truth a greater outrage than Flattery and feign'd Submissions, the plain English of which is this,

'I have a very mean Opinion both of your Understanding and Vertue, you are weak enough to be impos'd on, and vain enough to snatch at the Bait I throw; there's no danger of your finding out my meaning, or disappointing me of my Ends. I offer you Incense 'tis true, but you are like to pay for't, and to make me a Recompence for your Folly in Imagining I would give my self this trouble, did I not hope, nay were I not sure, to find my own account in it. If for [Page 26] nothing else, you'll serve at least as an exercise of my Wit, and how much soever you swell with my breath, 'tis I deserve the Praise for talking so well on so poor a Subject. We who make the Idols, are the greater Deities; and as we set you up, so it is in our power to reduce you to your first obscurity, or to somewhat worse, to Contempt; you are therefore only on your good behavior, and are like to be no more than what we please to make you.'

This is the Flatter's Language aside, this is the true sense of his heart, whatever his Grimace may be before the Company.

Not but that 'tis possible, and sometimes matter of Fact, to express our selves beyond the Truth in praise of a Person, and yet not be guilty of Flattery; but then we must Think what we say, and Mean what we Profess. We may be so blinded by some Passion or other, especially Love, which in Civil and Good-natur'd Persons is apt to exceed, as to believe some Persons more deserving than really they are, and to pay them greater Respect and Kindness than is in strictness due to them. But this is not the present Case, for our fine Speech-makers doat too much on themselves to have any great passion for another, their Eyes are too much fixt [Page 27] on their own Excellencies, to view another's good Qualities through a Magnifying-Glass, at least if ever they turn that end of the Perspective towards their Neighbours, 'tis only in respect and reference to themselves. They are their own Centres, they find a disproportion in every line that does not tend thither, and in the next visit they make you shall hear all the fine things they said repeated to the new Object, and nothing remembered of the former but her Vanity, or something else as Ridiculous, which serves for a foil, or a whet to Discourse. For let there be ever so many Wits in the Company, Conversation would languish, and they would be at a loss, did not a little Censoriousness come in at a need to help them.

Let us then treat the Ladies as Civilly as may be, but let us not do it by Flattering them, but by endeavoring to make them such as may truly deserve our hearty Esteem and Kindness. Men ought really for their own sakes to do what in them lies to make Women wise and Good, and then it might be hoped they themselves would effectually Study and Practice that Wisdom and Vertue they recommend to others. But so long as Men have base and unworthy Ends to serve, it is not to be [Page 28] expected that they should consent to such Methods as would certainly disappoint them. They would have their own Relations do well, that's their Interest; but it sometimes happens to be for their turn that another Man's should not, and then their Generosity fails them, and no Man is apter to find fault with another's dishonourable Actions, than he who is ready to do, or perhaps has done the same himself.

And as Men have little reason to expect Happiness when they Marry only for the Love of Money, Wit, or Beauty, as has been already shewn, so much less can a Woman expect a tolerable life, when she goes upon these Considerations. Let the business be carried as Prudently as it can be on the Womans side, a reasonable Man can't deny that she has by much the harder bargain. Because she puts her self entirely into her Husband's Power, and if the Matrimonial Yoke be grievous, neither Law nor Custom affords her that redress which a Man obtains. He who has Sovereign Power does not value the Provocations of a Rebellious Subject, but knows how to subdue him with ease, and will make himself obey'd; but Patience and Submission are the only Comforts that are left to a poor People, who groan under [Page 29] Tyranny, unless they are Strong enough to break the Yoke, to Depose and Abdicate, which I doubt wou'd not be allow'd of here. For whatever may be said against Passive-Obedience in another case, I suppose there's no Man but likes it very well in this; how much soever Arbitrary Power may be dislik'd on a Throne, not Milton himself wou'd cry up Liberty to poor Female Slaves, or plead for the Lawfulness of Resisting a Private Tyranny.

If there be a disagreeableness of Humours, which in my mind is harder to be born than greater faults, as being a continual Plague, and for the most part incurable; other Vices a Man may grow weary of, or may be convinced of the evil of them; He may forsake them, or they him, but his Humour and Temper are seldom, if ever put off, Ill-nature sticks to him from his Youth to his grey Hairs, and a Boy that's Humourous and Proud, makes a Peevish, Positive and Insolent Old Man. Now if this be the case, and the Husband be full of himself, obstinately bent on his own way with or without Reason, if he be one who must be always Admir'd, always Humour'd, and yet scarce knows what will please him, if he has Prosperity enough to keep him from considering, and [Page 30] to furnish him with a train of Flatterers and obsequious Admirers; and Learning and Sense enough to make him a Fop in Perfection; for a Man can never be a complete Coxcomb, unless he has a considerable share of these to value himself upon; what can the poor Woman do? the Husband is too wise to be Advis'd, too good to be Reform'd, she must follow all his Paces, and tread in all his unreasonable steps, or there is no Peace, no Quiet for her, she must obey with the greatest exactness, 'tis in vain to expect any manner of Compliance on his side, and the more she complies the more she may; his fantastical humours grow with her desire to gratifie them, for Age encreases Opiniatry in some, as well as it does Experience in others. Of such sort of folks as these it was that Solomon spake, when he said, Seest thou a Man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a Fool than of him; That is, the profligate Sinner, such a one being always a Fool in Solomon's Language, is in a fairer way of being convinc'd of his folly, and brought to reason, than the Proud Conceited Man. That Man indeed can never be good at heart, who is full of himself and his own Endowments. Not that it is necessary, because it is not possible for one to be totally ignorant [Page 31] of his own good Qualities, I had almost said he ought to have a Modest sense of 'em, otherwise he can't be duly thankful, nor make the use of them that is required, to the Glory of God, and the good of Mankind; but he views them in a wrong light, if he discerns any thing that may exalt him above his Neighbours, make him over-look their Merit, or treat them with Neglect or Contempt. He ought to behold them with fear and trembling, as Talents which he has freely receiv'd, and for which he is highly Accountable, and therefore they shou'd not excite his Pride, but his Care and Industry.

And if Pride and Self-conceit keep a Man who has some good Qualities, and is not so bad as the most of his Neighbours, from growing better, it for certain confirms and hardens the Wicked in his Crimes, it sets him up

for a Wit, that is, according to Modern acceptation, one who rallies at all that is serious, a contemner of the Priests first, and then of the Deity himself. For Penitence and Self-condemnation are what his Haughtiness cannot bear, and since the Crimes he has been guilty of have brought on him the reproaches of his own Mind, since he will not take the regular way to be rid of them, [Page 32] which is by Humbling himself and making his Peace with Heaven, he bids defiance to it, and wou'd if he could believe there is no future State, no after Retribution, because he knows that a heavy lot is in justice due to him.

If therefore it be a Woman's hard Fate to meet with a disagreeable Temper, and of all others the Haughty, Imperious and Self-conceited are the most so, she is as unhappy as any thing in the World can make her. When a Wife's Temper does not please, if she makes her Husband uneasie, he can find entertainments abroad, he has a hundred ways of relieving himself, but neither Prudence nor Duty will allow a Woman to fly out, her Business and Entertainment are at home, and tho' he make it ever so uneasie to her she must be content and make her best on't. She who Elects a Monarch for Life, who gives him an Authority she cannot recall however he misapply it, who puts her Fortune and Person entirely in his Power; nay even the very desires of her Heart according to some learned Casuists, so as that it is not lawful to Will or Desire any thing but what he approves and allows; had need be very sure that she does not make a Fool her Head, nor a Vicious Man her [Page 33] Guide and Pattern, she had best stay till she can meet with one who has the Government of his own Passions, and has duly regulated his own Desires, since he is to have such an absolute Power over hers. But he who doats on a Face, he who makes Money his Idol, he who is Charm'd with vain and empty Wit, gives no such Evidence, either of Wisdom or Goodness, that a Woman of any tolerable Sense shou'd care to venture her self to his Conduct.

Indeed, your fine Gentleman's Actions are now a days such, that did not Custom and the Dignity of his Sex give Weight and Authority to them, a Woman that thinks twice might bless her self, and say, is this the Lord and Master to whom I am to promise Love, Honour and Obedience? What can be the Object of Love but amiable Qualities, the Image of the Deity impress'd upon a generous and god-like Mind, a Mind that is above this World, to be sure above all the Vices, the Tricks and Baseness of it; a Mind that is not full of it self, nor contracted to little private Interests, but in imitation of that glorious Pattern it endeavours to Copy after, expands and diffuses it self to its utmost capacity in doing Good. But [Page 34] this fine Gentleman is quite of another Strain, he is the reverse of this in every Instance. He is I confess very fond of his own Dear Person, he sees very much in it to admire; his Air and Mien, his Words and Actions, every Motion he makes declares it; but they must have a Judgment of his size, every whit as Shallow, and a Partiality as great as his own, who can be of his Mind. How then can I Love? And if not Love, much less Honour. Love may arise from Pity or a generous Desire to make that Lovely which as yet is not so, when we see any hopes of Success in our Endeavours of improving it; but Honour supposes some excellent Qualities already, something worth our Esteem, but alas there is nothing more Contemptible then this trifle of a Man, this meer Out-side, whose Mind is as base and Mean as his external Pomp is Glittering. His Office or Title apart, to which some Ceremonious Observance must be paid for Order's sake, there's nothing in him that can command our Respect. Strip him of Equipage and Fortune, and such things as only dazle our Eyes and Imaginations, but don't in any measure affect our Reason, or cause a Reverence in our Hearts, and the poor Creature [Page 35: Creature] sinks beneath our Notice, because not supported by real Worth. And if a Woman can neither Love nor Honour, she does ill in promising to Obey, since she is like to have a crooked Rule to regulate her Actions.

A meer Obedience, such as is paid only to Authority, and not out of Love and a sense of the Justice and Reasonableness of the Command, will be of an uncertain Tenure. As it can't but be uneasie to the Person who pays it, so he who receives it will be sometimes disappointed when he expects to find it, for that Woman must be endow'd with a Wisdom and Goodness much above what we suppose the Sex capable of, I fear much greater than e're a Man can pretend to, who can so constantly conquer her Passions, and divest her self even of Innocent Self-love, as to give up the Cause when she is in the right, and to submit her enlightned Reason, to the imperious Dictates of a blind Will, and wild Imagination, even when she clearly perceives the ill Consequences of it, the Imprudence, nay Folly and Madness of such a Conduct.

And if a Woman runs such a Risque when she Marrys Prudently, according to the Opinion of the World, that is, [Page 36] when she permits her self to be dispos'd of to a Man equal to her in Birth, Education and Fortune, and as good as the most of his Neighbours, (for if none were to Marry, but Men of strict Vertue and Honour, I doubt the World would be but thinly peopled) if at the very best her Lot is hard, what can she expect who is Sold, or any otherwise betray'd into mercenary Hands, to one who is in all, or most respects unequal to her? A Lover who comes upon what is call'd equal Terms, makes no very advantageous Proposal to the Lady he Courts, and to whom he seems to be an humble Servant, for under many sounding Complements, Words that have nothing in them, this is his true meaning. He wants one to manage his Family, an House-keeper, an upper Servant, one whose Interest it will be not to wrong him, and in whom therefore he can put greater confidence than in any he can hire for Money. One who may breed his Children, taking all the care and trouble of their Education, to preserve his Name and Family. One whose Beauty, Wit, or good Humour and agreeable Conversation, will entertain him at Home when he has been contradicted and disappointed abroad; who will [Page 37] do him that Justice the ill-natur'd World denies him, that is, in any one's Language but his own, sooth his Pride and Flatter his Vanity, by having always so much good Sense as to be on his side, to conclude him in the right, when others are so Ignorant, or so Rude as to deny it. Who will not be Blind to his Merit nor contradict his Will and Pleasure, but make it her Business, her very Ambition to content him: Whose softness and gentle Compliance will calm his Passions, to whom he may safely disclose his troublesome Thoughts, and in her Breast discharge his Cares; whose Duty, Submission and Observance will heal those Wounds other Peoples opposition or neglect have given him. In a Word, one whom he can intirely Govern and consequently may form her to his will and liking, who must be his for Life, and therefore cannot quit his Service let him treat her how he will.

And if this be what every Man expects, the Sum of his violent Love and Courtship, when it is put into Sense and rendred Intelligible, to what a fine pass does she bring her self who purchases a Lord and Master, not only with her Money, but with what is of greater Value, at the price of her Discretion? Who has not so [Page 38] much as that poor Excuse, Precedent and Example; or if she has, they are only such as all the World condemns? She will not find him less a Governor because she was once his Superior, on the contrary the scum of the People are most Tyrannical when they get the Power, and treat their Betters with the greatest Insolence. For as the wise Man long since observ'd, a Servant when he Reigns is one of those things for which the Earth is disquieted, and which no Body is able to bear.

It is the hardest thing in the World for a Woman to know that a Man is not Mercenary, that he does not Act on base and ungenerous Principles, even when he is her Equal, because being absolute Master, she and all the Grants he makes her are in his Power, and there have been but too many instances of Husbands that by wheedling or threatning their Wives, by seeming Kindness or cruel Usage, have perswaded or forc'd them out of what has been settled on them. So that the Woman has in truth no security but the Man's Honour and Good-nature, a security that in this present Age no wise Person would venture much upon. A Man enters into Articles very readily before Marriage, and so he may, for he performs [Page 39] no more of them afterwards than he thinks fit. A Wife must never dispute with her Husband, his Reasons are now no doubt on't better than hers, whatever they were before; he is sure to perswade her out of her Agreement, and bring her, it must be suppos'd, Willingly, to give up what she did vainly hope to obtain, and what she thought had been made sure to her. And if she shew any Refractoriness, there are ways enough to humble her; so that by right or wrong the Husband gains his Will. For Covenants between Husband and Wife, like Laws in an Arbitrary Government, are of little Force, the Will of the Sovereign is all in all. Thus it is in Matter of Fact, I will not answer for the Right of it; for if the Woman's Reasons upon which Agreements are grounded are not Just and Good, why did he consent to them? Was it because there was no other way to obtain his Suit, and with an Intention to Annul them when it shall be in his Power? Where then is his Sincerity? But if her Reasons are good, where is his Justice in obliging her to quit them? He neither way acts like an equitable or honest Man.

But when a Woman Marrys unequally and beneath her self, there is almost Demonstration [Page 40: Demonstration] that the Man is Sordid and Unfair, that instead of Loving her he only Loves himself, traps and ruins her to serve his own Ends. For if he had not a mighty Opinion of himself, (which temper is like to make an admirable Husband,) he cou'd never imagine that his Person and good Qualities cou'd make compensation for all the advantages she quits on his account. If he had a real Esteem for her or valu'd her Reputation, he wou'd not expose it, nor have her Discretion call'd in Question for his sake, and if he truly Lov'd her he wou'd not reduce her to Straits and a narrow Fortune, nor so much as lessen her way of Living to better his own. For since GOD has plac'd different Ranks in the World, put some in a higher and some in a lower Station, for Order and Beauty's sake, and for many good Reasons; tho' it is both our Wisdom and Duty not only to submit with Patience, but to be Thankful and well-satisfied when by his Providence we are brought low, yet there is no manner of Reason for us to Degrade our selves; on the contrary, much why we ought not. The better our Lot is in this World and the more we have of it, the greater is our leisure to prepare for the next; we [Page 41] have the more opportunity to exercise that God-like Quality, to tast that Divine Pleasure, Doing good to the Bodies and Souls of those beneath us. Is it not then ill Manners to Heaven, and an irreligious contempt of its Favours, for a Woman to slight that nobler Employment, to which it has assign'd her, and thrust her self down to a meaner Drudgery, to what is in a very literal Sense a caring for the things of the World, a caring not only to Please, but to Maintain a Husband?

And a Husband so chosen will not at all abate of his Authority and right to Govern, whatever fair Promises he might make before. She has made him her Head, and he thinks himself as well qualify'd as the best to Act accordingly, nor has she given him any such Evidence of her Prudence as may dispose him to make an Act of Grace in her Favour. Besides, great Obligations are what Superiors cannot bear, they are more than can be return'd; to acknowledge, were only to reproach themselves with ingratitude, and therefore the readiest way is not to own but overlook them, or rather, as too many do, to repay them with Affronts and Injuries. [Page 42]

What then is to be done? How must a Man chuse, and what Qualities must encline a Woman to accept, that so our Marry'd couple may be as happy as that State can make them? This is no hard Question; let the Soul be principally consider'd, and regard had in the first Place to a good Understanding, a Vertuous Mind, and in all other respects let there be as much equality as may be. If they are good Christians and of suitable Tempers all will be well; but I should be shrewdly tempted to suspect their Christianity who Marry after any of those ways we have been speaking of. I dare venture to say, that they don't Act according to the Precepts of the Gospel, they neither shew the Wisdom of the Serpent, nor the Innocency of the Dove, they have neither so much Government of themselves, nor so much Charity for their Neighbours, they neither take such care not to Scandalize others, nor to avoid Temptations themselves, are neither so much above this World, nor so affected with the next, as they wou'd certainly be did the Christian Religion operate in their Hearts, did they rightly understand and sincerely Practise it, or Acted indeed according to the Spirit of the Gospel. [Page 43]

But it is not enough to enter wisely into this State; care must be taken of our Conduct afterwards. A Woman will not want being admonish'd of her Duty, the custom of the World, Oeconomy, every thing almost reminds her of it. Governors do not often suffer their Subjects to forget Obedience through their want of demanding it, perhaps Husbands are but too forward on this occasion, and claim their Right oftner and more Imperiously than either Discretion or good Manners will justifie, and might have both a more chearful and constant Obedience paid them if they were not so rigorous in Exacting it. For there is a mutual Stipulation, and Love, Honour, and Worship, by which certain Civility and Respect at least are meant, is as much the Woman's due, as Love, Honour, and Obedience is the Man's, and being the Woman is said to be the weaker Vessel, the Man shou'd be more careful not to grieve or offend her. Since her Reason is suppos'd to be less, and her Passions stronger than his, he shou'd not give occasion to call that supposition in Question by his pettish carriage and needless Provocations. Since he is the Man, by which very Word Custom wou'd have us understand not only greatest [Page 44] strength of Body, but even greatest firmness and force of Mind, he shou'd not play the little Master so much as to expect to be cocker'd, nor run over to that side which the Woman us'd to be rank'd in; for according

to the Wisdom of the Italians, *Volete? si dice a gli ammalati*: Will you? Is spoken to sick Folks.

Indeed, Subjection, according to the common Notion of it, is not over easie, none of us whether Men or Women but have so food an Opinion of our own Conduct as to believe we are fit, if not to direct others, at least to govern our selves. Nothing but a sound Understanding, and Grace the best improver of natural Reason, can correct this Opinion, truly humble us, and heartily reconcile us to Obedience. This bitter Cup therefore ought to be sweetned as much as may be; for Authority may be preserv'd and Government kept inviolable, without that nauseous Ostentation of Power which serves to no end or purpose, but to blow up the Pride and Vanity of those who have it, and to exasperate the Spirits of such as must truckle under it.

Insolence 'tis true is never the effect of Power but in weak and cowardly Spirits, who wanting true Merit and [Page 45] Judgment to support themselves in that advantage ground on which they stand, are ever appealing to their Authority, and making a shew of it to maintain their Vanity and Pride. A truly great Mind and such as is fit to Govern, tho' it may stand on its Right with its Equals, and modestly expect what is due to it even from its Superiors, yet it never contends with its Inferiors, nor makes use of its Superiority but to do them Good. So that considering the just Dignity of Man, his great Wisdom so conspicuous on all occasions, the goodness of his Temper and Reasonableness of all his Commands, which makes it a Woman's Interest as well as Duty to be observant and Obedient in all things, that his Prerogative is settled by an undoubted Right, and the Prescription of many Ages; it cannot be suppos'd that he should make frequently and insolent Claims of an authority so well establish'd and us'd with such moderation, nor give an impartial By-stander (cou'd such an one be found) any occasion from thence to suspect that he is inwardly conscious of the Badness of his Title; Usurpers being always most desirous of Recognition and busie in imposing Oaths, [Page 46] whereas a Lawful Prince contents himself with the usual Methods and Securities.

And since Power does naturally puff up, and he who finds himself exalted, seldom fails to think he ought to be so, it is more suitable to a Man's Wisdom and Generosity to be mindful of his great Obligations than to insist on his Rights and Prerogatives. Sweetness of Temper and an obliging Carriage are so justly due to a Wife, that a Husband who must not be thought to want either Understanding to know what is fit, nor Goodness to perform it, can't be suppos'd not to shew them. For setting aside the hazards of her Person to keep up his Name and Family, with all the Pains and Trouble that attend it, which may well be thought great enough to deserve all the respect and kindness that may be, setting this aside, tho' 'tis very considerable, a Woman has so much the disadvantage in most, I was about to say in all things, that she makes a Man the greatest Complement in the World when she condescends to take him for Better for Worse. She puts her self intirely in his Power, leaves all that is dear to her, her Friends and Family, to espouse his Interests and follow his Fortune, and makes it her Business and Duty [Page 47] to please him! What acknowledgments, what returns can he make? What Gratitude can be sufficient for such Obligations? She shews her good Opinion of him by the great Trust she reposes in him, and what a Brute must he be who betrays that Trust, or acts any way unworthy of it? Ingratitude is one of the basest Vices, and if a Man's Soul is sunk so low as to be guilty of it towards her who has so generously oblig'd him, and who so intirely depends on him, if he can treat her Disrespectfully, who has so fully testify'd her Esteem of him, she must have a stock of Vertue which he shou'd blush to discern, if she can pay him that Obedience of which he is so unworthy.

Superiors indeed are too apt to forget the common Priviledges of Mankind; that their Inferiors share with them the greatest Benefits, and are as capable as themselves of enjoying the supreme Good; that tho' the Order of the World requires an Outward Respect and Obedience from some to others, yet the Mind is free, nothing but Reason can oblige it, 'tis out of the reach of the most absolute Tyrant. Nor will it ever be well either with those who Rule or those in Subjection, even from the Throne to every Private Family, till those in Authority look on themselves as plac'd in that [Page 48] Station for the good and improvement of their Subjects, and not for their own sakes; not as the reward of their Merit, or that they may prosecute their own Desires and fulfil all their Pleasure, but as the Representatives of GOD whom they ought to imitate in the Justice and Equity of their Laws,

in doing good and communicating Blessings to all beneath them: By which, and not by following the imperious Dictates of their own will, they become truly Great and Illustrious and Worthily fill their Place. And the Governed for their Part ceasing to envy the Pomp and Name of Authority, shou'd respect their Governours as plac'd in GOD's stead and contribute what they can to ease them of their real Cares, by a chearful and ready compliance with those their endeavours, and by affording them the Pleasure of success in such noble and generous Designs.

For upon a due estimate things are pretty equally divided; those in Subjection as they have a less Glorious, so they have an easier task and a less account to give, whereas he who Commands has in a great measure the Faults of others to answer for as well as his own. 'Tis true he has the Pleasure of doing more good [Page 49] than a Private Person can, and shall receive the Reward of it when time shall be no more, in compensation for the hazards he runs, the difficulties he at present encounters, and the large Account he is to make hereafter, which Pleasure and Reward are highly desirable and most worthy our pursuit; but they are Motives which such as usurp on their Governors, and make them uneasie in the due discharge of their Duty, never propose. And for those other little things that move their Envy and Ambition, they are of no Esteem with a just Considerer, nor will such as violently pursue, find their Account in them.

But how can a Man respect his Wife when he has a contemptible Opinion of her and her Sex? When from his own Elevation he looks down on them as void of Understanding, and full of Ignorance and Passion, so that Folly and a Woman are equivalent Terms with him? Can he think there is any Gratitude due to her whose utmost services he exacts as strict Duty? Because she was made to be a Slave to his Will, and has no higher end than to Serve and Obey him. Perhaps we arrogate too much to our selves when we say this [Page 50] Material World was made for our sakes, that its Glorious Maker has given us the use of it is certain, but when we suppose that over which we have Dominion to be made purely for our sakes, we draw a false Conclusion, as he who shou'd say the People were made for the Prince who is set over them, wou'd be thought to be out of his Senses as well as his Politicks. Yet even allowing that he who made every thing in Number, Weight and Measure, who never acts but for some great and glorious End, an End agreeable to his Majesty, allowing that he Created such a Number of Rational Spirits merely to serve their fellow Creatures, yet how are these Lords and Masters helpt by the Contempt they shew of their poor humble Vassals? Is it not rather an hindrance to that Service they expect, as being an undeniable and constant Proof how unworthy they are to receive it?

None of GOD's Creatures absolutely consider'd are in their own Nature Contemptible; the meanest Fly, the poorest Insect has its Use and Vertue. Contempt is scarce a Human Passion, one may venture to say it was not in Innocent Man, for till Sin came into the World, there [Page 51] was nothing in it to be Contemn'd. But Pride which makes every thing serve its purposes, wrested this Passion from its only Use, so that instead of being an Antidote against Sin, it is become a grand promoter of it, nothing making us more worthy of that Contempt we shew, than when poor, weak, dependent Creatures as we are! we look down with Scorn and Disdain on others.

There is not a surer Sign of a noble Mind, a Mind very far advanc'd towards Perfection, than the being able to bear Contempt and an unjust Treatment from ones Superiors evenly and patiently. For inward Worth and real Excellency are the true Ground of Superiority, and one Person is not in reality better than another, but as he is more Wise and Good. But this World being a place of Tryal and govern'd by general Laws, just Retributions being reserv'd for hereafter, Respect and Obedience many times become due for Order's sake to those who don't otherwise deserve them. Now tho' Humility keeps us from over-valuing our selves or viewing our Merit thro' a false and magnifying Medium, yet it does not put out our Eyes, it does not, it ought not to [Page 52] deprive us of that pleasing sentiment which attends our Acting as we ought to Act, which is as it were a foretast of Heaven, our present Reward for doing what is Just and Fit. And when a Superior does a Mean and unjust Thing, as all Contempt of one's Neighbour is, and yet this does not provoke his Inferiors to refuse that Observance which their Stations in the World require, they cannot but have an inward Sense of their own real Superiority, the other having no pretence to it, at the same time that they pay him an outward Respect and Deference, which is such a flagrant Testimony of the sincerest Love of Order as proves their Souls to be of the highest and noblest Rank.

A Man therefore for his own sake, and to give evidence that he has a Right to those Prerogatives he assumes, shou'd treat Women with a little more Humanity and Regard than is usually paid them. Your whisling Wits may scoff at them, and what then? It matters not, for they Rally every thing tho' ever so Sacred, and rail at the Women commonly in very good Company. Religion, its Priests, and these its most constant and regular Professors, are the usual Subjects [Page 53] of their manly, mannerly and surprizing Jest. Surprizing indeed! not for the newness of the Thought, the brightness of the Fancy, or nobleness of Expression, but for the good Assurance with which such thread-bare Jest are again and again repeated. But that your grave Dons, your Learned Men, and which is more your Men of Sense as they wou'd be thought, should stoop so low as to make Invectives against the Women, forget themselves so much as to Jest with their Slaves, who have neither Liberty nor Ingenuity to make Reprizals! that they shou'd waste their Time and debase their good Sense which fits them for the most weighty Affairs, such as are suitable to their profound Wisdoms and exalted Understandings! to render those poor Wretches more ridiculous and odious who are already in their Opinion sufficiently contemptible, and find no better exercise of their Wit and Satyr than such as are not worth their Pains, tho' it were possible to Reform them, this, this indeed may justly be wondred at!

I know not whether or no Women are allow'd to have Souls, if they have, perhaps it is not prudent to provoke them too much, least silly as they are, they at [Page 54] last recriminate, and then what polite and well-bred Gentleman, tho' himself is concern'd, can forbear taking that lawful Pleasure which all who understand Raillery must tast, when they find his Jest who insolently began to peck at his Neighbour, return'd with Interest upon his own Head? And indeed Men are too Humane, too Wise to venture at it did they not hope for this effect, and expect the Pleasure of finding their Wit turn to such account; for if it be Lawful to reveal a Secret, this is without doubt the whole design of those fine Discourses which have been made against the Women from our great Fore-fathers to this present Time. Generous Man has too much Bravery, he is too Just and too Good to assault a defenceless Enemy, and if he did inveigh against the Women it was only to do them Service. For since neither his Care of their Education, his hearty endeavours to improve their Minds, his wholesome Precepts, nor great Example cou'd do them good, as his last and kindest Essay he resolv'd to try what Contempt wou'd do, and chose rather to expose himself by a seeming want of Justice, Equity, Ingenuity and Good-nature, than suffer Women to [Page 55] remain such vain and insignificant Creatures as they have hitherto been reckon'd. And truly Women are some degrees beneath what I have thus far thought them, if they do not make the best use of his kindness, improve themselves, and like Christians return it.

Let us see then what is their Part, what must they do to make the Matrimonial Yoke tolerable to themselves as well as Pleasing to their Lords and Masters? That the World is an empty and deceitful Thing, that those Enjoyments which appear so desirable at a distance, which rais'd our Hopes and Expectations to such a mighty Pitch, which we so passionately coveted and so eagerly pursued, vanish at our first approach, leaving nothing behind them but the Folly of Delusion, and the pain of disappointed Hopes, is a common Outcry; and yet as common as it is, tho' we complain of being deceiv'd this Instant, we do not fail of contributing to the Cheat the very next. Tho' in reality it is not the World that abuses us, 'tis we abuse ourselves, it is not the emptiness of that, but our own false Judgments, our unreasonable desires and Expectations that Torment us; for he who exerts his whole strength to lift a Straw, ought [Page 56] not to complain of the Burden, but of his own disproportionate endeavour which gives him the pain he feels. The World affords us all that Pleasure a sound Judgment can expect from it, and answers all those Ends and Purposes for which it was design'd, let us expect no more than is reasonable, and then we shall not fail of our Expectations.

It is even so in the Case before us; a Woman who has been taught to think Marriage her only Preferment, the sum-total of her Endeavours, the completion of all her hopes, that which must settle and make her Happy in this World, and very few, in their Youth especially, carry a Thought steddily to a greater distance; She who has seen a Lover dying at her Feet, and can't therefore imagine that he who professes to receive all his Happiness from her can have any other Design or Desire than to please her; whose Eyes have been dazled with all the

Glitter and Pomp of a Wedding, and who hears of nothing but Joy and Congratulation; who is transported with the Pleasure of being out of Pupillage and Mistress not only of her self but of a Family too: She who is either so simple or so vain, as to take her Lover [Page 57] at his Word either as to the Praises he gave her, or the Promises he made for himself: In sum, she whose Expectation has been rais'd by Court-ship, by all the fine things that her Lover, her Governess and Domestick Flatterers say, will find a terrible disappointment when the hurry is over, and when she comes calmly to consider her Condition, and views it no more under a false Appearance, but as it truly is.

I doubt in such a View it will not appear over-desirable if she regards only the Present State of Things. Hereafter may make amends for what she must be prepar'd to suffer here, then will be her Reward, this is her time of Tryal, the Season of exercising and improving her Vertues. A Woman that is not Mistress of her Passions, that cannot patiently submit even when Reason suffers with her, who does not practise Passive Obedience to the utmost, will never be acceptable to such an absolute Sovereign as a Husband. Wisdom ought to Govern without Contradiction, but Strength however will be obey'd. There are but few of those wise Persons who can be content to be made yet wiser by Contradiction, the most will have their Will, [Page 58] and it is right because it is their's. Such is the vanity of Humane Nature that nothing pleases like an intire Subjection; what Imperfections won't a Man overlook where this is not wanting! Tho' we live like Brutes we wou'd have Incense offer'd us, that is only due to Heaven it self, wou'd have an absolute and blind Obedience paid us by all over whom we pretend Authority. We were not made to Idolize one another, yet the whole strain of Courtship is little less than rank Idolatry: But does a Man intend to give, and not to receive his share in this Religious Worship? No such matter; Pride and Vanity and Self-love have their Designs, and if the Lover is so condescending as to set a Pattern in the time of his Addresses, he is so Just as to expect his Wife shou'd strictly Copy after it all the rest of her Life.

But how can a Woman scruple intire Subjection, how can she forbear to admire the worth and excellency of the Superior Sex, if she at all considers it? Have not all the great Actions that have been perform'd in the World been done by them? Have not they founded Empires and overturn'd them? Do not they make Laws and continually repeal [Page 59] and amend them? Their vast Minds lay Kingdoms wast, no bounds or measures can be prescrib'd to their Desires. War and Peace depend on them, they form Cabals and have the Wisdom and Courage to get over all these Rubs which may lie in the way of their desired Grandeur. What is it they cannot do? They make Worlds and ruine them, form Systems of universal Nature and dispute eternally about them; their Pen gives worth to the most trifling Controversie; nor can a fray be inconsiderable if they have drawn their Swords in't. All that the wise Man pronounces is an Oracle, and every Word the Witty speaks a Jest. It is a Woman's Happiness to hear, admire and praise them, especially if a little Ill-nature keeps them at any time from bestowing due applauses on each other! And if she aspires no further she is thought to be in her proper Sphere of Action, she is as wise and as good as can be expected from her.

She then who Marrys ought to lay it down for an indisputable Maxim, that her Husband must govern absolutely and intirely, and that she has nothing else to do but to Please and Obey. She must not attempt to divide his Authority, or [Page 60] so much as dispute it, to struggle with her Yoke will only make it gall the more, but must believe him Wise and Good and in all respects the best, at least he must be so to her. She who can't do this is in no way fit to be a Wife, she may set up for that peculiar Coronet the ancient Fathers talk'd of, but is not qualify'd to receive that great reward, which attends the eminent exercise of Humility and Self-denial, Patience and Resignation, the Duties that a Wife is call'd to.

But some refractory Woman perhaps will say how can this be? Is it possible for her to believe him Wise and Good who by a thousand Demonstrations convinces her and all the World of the contrary? Did the bare Name of Husband confer Sense on a Man, and the mere being in Authority infallibly qualifie him for Government, much might be done. But since a wise Man and a Husband are not Terms convertible, and how loath soever one is to own it, Matter of Fact won't allow us to deny that the Head many times stands in need of the Inferior's Brains to manage it, she must beg leave to be excus'd from such high thoughts of her [Page 61] Sovereign, and if she
52 submits to his Power, it is not so much Reason as Necessity that compells her.

Now of how little force soever this Objection may be in other respects, methinks it is strong enough to prove the necessity of a good Education, and that Men never mistake their true Interest more than when they endeavour to keep Women in Ignorance. Cou'd they indeed deprive them of their Natural good Sense at the same time they deny them the due improvement of it, they might compass their End; otherwise Natural Sense unassisted may run into a false Track, and serve only to punish him justly, who wou'd not allow it to be useful to himself or others. If Man's Authority be justly establish'd, the more Sense a Woman has the more reason she will find to submit to it; if according to the Tradition of our Fathers, (who having had Possession of the Pen, thought they had also the best Right to it,) Women's Understanding is but small, and Men's partiality adds no Weight to the Observation, ought not the more care to be taken to improve them? How it agrees with the Justice of men we inquire not, but certainly Heaven is abundantly [Page 62: abun- dantly] more Equitable than to enjoyn Women the hardest Task and give them the least Strength to perform it. And if Men Learned, Wise and Discreet as they are, who have as is said all the advantages of Nature, and without controversy have, or may have all the assistance of Art, are so far from acquitting themselves as they ought, from living according to that reason and excellent Understanding they so much boast of, can it be expected that a Woman who is reckon'd silly enough in her self, at least comparatively, and whom Men take care to make yet more so, can it be expected that she shou'd constantly perform so difficult a Duty as intire Subjection, to which corrupt Nature is so averse?

If the Great and Wise Cato, a Man, a Man of no ordinary firmness and strength of Mind, a Man who was esteem'd as an Oracle, and by the Philosophers and great Men of his Nation equal'd even to the Gods themselves; If he with all his Stoical Principles was not able to bear the sight of a triumphant Conqueror, (who perhaps wou'd have Insulted and perhaps wou'd not,) but out of a Cowardly fear of an Insult, ran to Death to [Page 63] secure him from it; can it be thought that an ignorant weak Woman shou'd have patience to bear a continual outrage and Insolence all the days of her Life? Unless you will suppose her a very Ass, but then remember what the Italians say, to Quote them once more, since being very Husbands they may be presum'd to have some Authority in this Case, L' asino pur pigro, Stimolato tira qualche calcio; an Ass tho' slow if provok'd will kick.

We never see or perhaps make sport with the ill Effects of a bad Education, till it comes to touch us home in the ill conduct of a Sister, a Daughter, or Wife. Then the Women must be blam'd, their Folly is exclaim'd against, when all this while it was the wise Man's Fault who did not set a better Guard on those who according to him stand in so much need of one. A young Gentleman, as a celebrated Author tells us, ought above all things to be acquainted with the State of the World, the Ways and Humours, the Follies, the Cheats, the Faults of the Age he is fallen into, he should be degrees be inform'd of the Vice in Fashion, and warn'd of the [Page 64] Application and Design of those who will make it their Business to corrupt him, shou'd be told the Arts they use and the Trains they lay, be prepar'd to be Shock'd by some and caress'd by others; warn'd who are like to oppose, who to mislead, who to undermine, and who to serve him. He shou'd be instructed how to know and distinguish them, where he shou'd let them see, and when dissemble the Knowledge of them and their Aims and Workings. Our Author is much in the right, and not to disparage any other Accomplishments which are useful in their kind, this will turn to more account than any Language or Philosophy, Art or Science, or any other piece of Good-breeding and fine Education that can be taught him, which are no otherwise excellent than as they contribute to this, as this does above all things to the making him a wise, a vertuous and useful Man.

And it is not less necessary that a young Lady shou'd receive the like Instructions, whether or not her Temptations be fewer, her Reputation and Honour however are to be more nicely preserv'd; they may be ruin'd by a little Ignorance or Indiscretion, and then [Page 65] tho' she has kept her Innocence, and so is secur'd as to the next World, yet she is in a great measure lost to this. A Woman cannot be too watchful, too apprehensive of her danger, nor keep at too great a distance from it, since Man whose Wisdom and Ingenuity is so much Superior to hers, condescends for his Interest sometimes, and sometimes by way of Diversion, to lay Snares for her. For tho' all Men are Virtuosi, Philosophers and Politicians in comparison of the Ignorant and Illiterate Women, yet they don't all pretend to be Saints, and 'tis no great Matter to them if Women who were born to be
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their Slaves, be now and then ruin'd for their Entertainment.

But according to the rate that young Women are Educated; according to the way their Time is spent; they are destin'd to Folly and Impertinence, to say no worse, and which is yet more inhuman, they are blam'd for that ill Conduct they are not suffer'd to avoid, and reproach'd for those Faults they are in a manner forc'd into; so that if Heaven has bestowed any Sense on them, no other use is made of it, than to leave them without Excuse. So much and no more of the World is shewn them, as serves to [Page 66] weaken and corrupt their Minds, to give them wrong Notions, and busie them in mean Pursuits; to disturb, not to regulate their Passions, to make them timorous and dependant, and in a word, fit for nothing else but to act a Farce for the Diversion of their Governours.

Even men themselves improve no otherwise than according to the Aim they take, and the End they propose; and he whose Designs are but little and mean, will be the same himself. Tho' Ambition, as 'tis usually understood, is a Foolish, not to say a Base and Pitiful Vice, yet the Aspirings of the Soul after true Glory are so much its Nature, that it seems to have forgot it self and to degenerate, if it can forbear; and perhaps the great Secret of Education lies in affecting the Soul with a lively Sense of what is truly its Perfection, and exciting the most ardent Desires after it.

But, alas! what poor Woman is ever taught that she should have a higher Design than to get her a Husband? Heaven will fall in of course; and if she makes but an Obedient and Dutiful Wife, she cannot miss of it. A Husband indeed is thought by both Sexes so very valuable, that scarce a Man who can keep himself [Page 67] clean and make a bow, but thinks he is good enough to pretend to any Woman, no matter for the Difference of Birth or Fortune, a Husband is such a Wonder-working Name as to make an Equality, or something more, whenever it is pronounc'd.

To wind up this matter, if a Woman were duly Principled and taught to know the World, especially the true Sentiments that Men have of her, and the Traps they lay for her under so many gilded Complements, and such a seemingly great Respect, that disgrace wou'd be prevented which is brought upon too many Families, Women wou'd Marry more discreetly, and demean [Page 86] themselves better in a Married State than some People say they do.

Again, it may be said, if a Wife's case be as it is here represented, it is not good for a Woman to Marry, and so there's an end of Human Race. But this is no fair Consequence, for all that can justly be inferr'd from hence, is that a Woman has no mightily Obligations to the Man who makes Love to her, she has no reason to be fond of being a Wife, or to reckon it a peice of Preferment when she is taken to be a Man's Upper-Servant; it is no advantage to her in this World, if rightly manag'd it may prove one as to the next. For she who Marries purely to do Good, to Educate Souls for Heaven, who can be so truly mortify'd as to lay aside her own Will and Desires, to pay such an intire Submission for Life, to one whom she cannot be sure will always deserve it, does certainly perform a more Heroic Action than all the famous Masculine Heroes can boast of, she suffers a continual Martyrdom to bring Glory to GOD and Benefit to Mankind, which consideration indeed may carry her through all Difficulties, I know not what else can, and engage her to Love him who proves perhaps [Page 94] so much worse than a Brute, as to make this Condition yet more grievous than it needed to be. She has need of a strong Reason, of a truly Christian and well-temper'd Spirit, of all the Assistance the best Education can give her, and ought to have some good assurance of her own Firmness and Vertue, who ventures on such a Trial; and for this Reason 'tis less to be wonder'd at that Women Marry off in hast, for perhaps if they took time to consider and reflect upon it, they seldom wou'd.

Jonathan Swift



General Background

Jonathan Swift's early life was busy—he was born in Dublin, Ireland (1667), but his English father died before he was born. Kidnapped by his nursemaid at the age of one, he was not reunited with his mother until he was three. He was born into a literary family and was educated at Kilkenny School and then Trinity College at the University of Dublin. After school, he was forced by the invasion of Ireland to move to London and find employment working as the secretary to Sir William Temple. From there Swift (often as a result of offending through his writing—Swift found his writing niche early, focusing most of his work on politics and religion) moved back and forth between Ireland and London, holding offices mostly within religious circles (he studied for the Anglican priesthood for five years on Dublin) but also working with the state as well. During the course of his writings, Swift took up many causes and was one of the leaders of Irish resistance to English oppression.

Swift's relationships appear in his poetry—he wrote a series of letters to his companion (it is a matter of much debate if they were secretly married or never married, although we do know they were constantly together, but never alone), Esther Johnson, entitled *Journal to Stella* (1710-13) and also wrote her a birthday poem every year until she died in 1728. Later, he wrote *Cadenus and Vanessa*, explaining his friendship with Esther Vanhomrigh from Swift's point of view. Swift was well connected with the literary luminaries of his time (Addison, Pope, Gay, and many others) and struggled during his time in Ireland away from his friends. We

know now that Swift suffered from undiagnosed Menieres disease, a debilitating inner ear disease that plagued him all his life until his death in 1745, and felt the disease's effects often in his later life.

Style and Works

Swift is known as one of the foremost practitioners of modern satire. His most famous work, *Gulliver's Travels*, is known for its satiric insights on culture of the time and for its vivid imagination (who has not heard of Lilliputians or seen "little people" depicted in film and story) and various peoples and locations. A staunch defender of organized religion, Swift nonetheless attacked hypocrisy and "foolishness" in all their forms and was known for the sharp nature of his critiques ("A Modest Proposal" is one of the most anthologized essays ever written and grabs the reader's attention even today).

Swift enjoyed shocking his readers and was unafraid of tackling topics considered taboo by others. His style focused on concrete diction, concise language, uncomplicated syntax, and clear expression. Rather than the more elevated, high style of an Alexander Pope, Swift's writings are less poetic and eschewed some literary conventions to try to get the ideas across satirically but directly.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Swift's tendency to attack others (he was a harsh judge of human nature) and analyze his surroundings also opened him up to criticism as well (although many of his writings were published under pseudonyms, people often knew the identity of Swift as the author). Accused of misogyny and misanthropy during his life and today (his long-suffering medical condition and time spent in Ireland certainly increased the bitterness of some of his writings) Swift's legacy remains complicated (especially given the way women were treated by Swift and contemporaries). He saw himself as a champion of liberty, and certainly worked zealously to combat what he perceived as social maladies of his age. However we judge him now, his devotion to reason, "truth," and the exploration of the mind and careful attention to social/political surroundings marks Swift as one of the most influential writers of his time.

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A Description of a City Shower

BY JONATHAN SWIFT

Careful observers may foretell the hour
(By sure prognostics) when to dread a shower:
While rain depends, the pensive cat gives o'er
Her frolics, and pursues her tail no more.
Returning home at night, you'll find the sink 5
Strike your offended sense with double stink.
If you be wise, then go not far to dine;
You'll spend in coach hire more than save in wine.
A coming shower your shooting corns presage,
Old achès throb, your hollow tooth will rage. 10
Sauntering in coffeehouse is Dulman seen;
He damns the climate and complains of spleen.
Meanwhile the South, rising with dabbled wings,
A sable cloud athwart the welkin flings,
That swilled more liquor than it could contain, 15
And, like a drunkard, gives it up again.
Brisk Susan whips her linen from the rope,
While the first drizzling shower is born aslope:
Such is that sprinkling which some careless quean
Flirts on you from her mop, but not so clean: 20
You fly, invoke the gods; then turning, stop
To rail; she singing, still whirls on her mop.
Not yet the dust had shunned the unequal strife,
But, aided by the wind, fought still for life,
And wafted with its foe by violent gust, 25
'Twas doubtful which was rain and which was dust.
Ah! where must needy poet seek for aid,
When dust and rain at once his coat invade?
Sole coat, where dust cemented by the rain
Erects the nap, and leaves a mingled stain. 30
Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,
Threatening with deluge this devoted town.
To shops in crowds the daggled females fly,
Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy.
The Templar spruce, while every spout's abroach, 35
Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a coach.
The tucked-up sempstress walks with hasty strides,
While seams run down her oiled umbrella's sides.
Here various kinds, by various fortunes led,
Commence acquaintance underneath a shed. 40
Triumphant Tories and desponding Whigs
Forget their feuds, and join to save their wigs.

Boxed in a chair the beau impatient sits,
 While spouts run clattering o'er the roof by fits,
 And ever and anon with frightful din 45
 The leather sounds; he trembles from within.
 So when Troy chairmen bore the wooden steed,
 Pregnant with Greeks impatient to be freed
 (Those bully Greeks, who, as the moderns do,
 Instead of paying chairmen, run them through), 50
 Laocoön struck the outside with his spear,
 And each imprisoned hero quaked for fear.
 Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,
 And bear their trophies with them as they go:
 Filth of all hues and odors seem to tell 55
 What street they sailed from, by their sight and smell.
 They, as each torrent drives with rapid force,
 From Smithfield or St. Pulchre's shape their course,
 And in huge confluence joined at Snow Hill ridge,
 Fall from the conduit prone to Holborn Bridge. 60
 Sweepings from butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood,
 Drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud,
 Dead cats, and turnip tops, come tumbling down the flood.

A Modest Proposal

BY JONATHAN SWIFT

For preventing the children of poor people in Ireland,
 from being a burden on their parents or country,
 and for making them beneficial to the publick.

It is a melancholy object to those, who walk through this great town, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country, to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties, that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these children sound and useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve so well of the publick, as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars: it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age, who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of our projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a child just dropt from its dam, may be supported by her milk, for a solar year, with little other nourishment: at most not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us, sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expence than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple, whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple, who are able to maintain their own children, (although I apprehend there cannot be so many under the present distresses of the kingdom) but this being granted, there will remain a hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand, for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain a hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; they neither build houses, (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land: they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old; except where they are of towardly parts, although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers; as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two instances under

the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl, before twelve years old, is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age, they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown at most, on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriments and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasee, or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to publick consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine, and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore, one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune, through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, increaseth to 28 pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolific dyet, there are more children born in Roman Catholick countries about nine months after Lent, than at any other season; therefore, reckoning a year after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of Popish infants, is at least three to one in this kingdom, and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of Papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend, or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants, the mother will have eight shillings neat profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our City of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said, that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every county being now ready to starve for want of work and service: and these to be disposed of by their parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our schoolboys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission, be a loss to the publick, because they soon

would become breeders themselves: and besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice, (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanaazor, a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London, above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend, that in his country, when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality, as a prime dainty; and that, in his time, the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the Emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at a playhouse and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken, to ease the nation of so grievous an incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away from want of nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it, and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country, than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to a distress, and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintainance of a hundred thousand children, from two years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, besides the profit of a new dish, introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among our selves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, besides the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns, where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection; and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would encrease the care and tenderness of mothers towards their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the publick, to their annual profit instead of expence. We should soon see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives, during the time of their pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, or sows when they are ready to farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barrel'd beef: the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good

bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well grown, fat yearling child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a Lord Mayor's feast, or any other publick entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city, would be constant customers for infants flesh, besides others who might have it at merry meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection, that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged, that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and was indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual Kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon Earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: Of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound: Of using neither clothes, nor household furniture, except what is of our own growth and manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: Of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: Of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence and temperance: Of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo: Of quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken: Of being a little cautious not to sell our country and consciences for nothing: Of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy towards their tenants. Lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shopkeepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he hath at least some glimpse of hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them into practice.

But, as to myself, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal, which, as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expence and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, and flesh being of too tender a consistence, to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country, which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion, as to reject any offer, proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, As things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And secondly, There being a round million of creatures in humane figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock, would leave them in debt two million of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers and labourers, with their wives and children, who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes, as they have since gone through, by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor clothes to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of intailing the like, or greater miseries, upon their breed for ever.

I profess in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the publick good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children, by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

Alexander Pope



General Background

Alexander Pope, an only child, was born to Roman Catholic parents (he was also Catholic, which hindered his rights as a British citizen) in London, on May 21, 1688. His early life (and later life as well) was marked by physical challenges. Tuberculosis of the bone caused his spine to curve early in life and he only grew to the height of four foot six at full maturity (he lived with a hunched back all his life). From 1696 to 1700, Pope was tutored at home by a priest (his religion kept him from attending many schools of the day) but he was largely self-educated through reading in his father's library (impressively so since he was a child prodigy by today's standards, able to read Latin, Greek, French and Italian by his teenage years). Pope was not an accidental poet; he actively sought to become a great poet and he wrote early and often on the art and role of poetry in society.

Despite his physical challenges, Pope's work eventually led to a number of strong friendships with other elite writers of the day, counting among his friends Jonathan Swift, John Gay, Thomas Parnell, and Lord Bolingbroke (among others). Even before becoming well established in the literary community, Pope was a commercially successful author. In fact, Pope is arguably the first English writer to earn a lucrative and comfortable living by publishing his works (Shakespeare, of course, also earned enough to retire but much of the bard's income came from working as an actor and manager, not just through selling his writings). Pope died in 1744, surrounded by friends in his villa at Twickenham.

Style and Works

Pope is famous for a number of works, including *Essay on Man*, *The Rape of the Lock*, and *The Denunciad* (his first real political success was *An Essay on Criticism*). His works are often marked by biting

satire and his emphasis on form. In particular, *The Rape of the Lock* stands out as an impressive mock epic that melded metrical and linguistic precision with witty satire. Evidence of Pope's other interests (he was an amateur painter for example) surface in the breadth of his writings and showcase his eye for detail.

Pope championed high form and looked down on sensational art that appealed to lower denominators, feeling that such works were actually immoral and harmful to society. Stylistically, Pope was the champion of the heroic couplet, a rigid form that he welded masterfully in establishing writing that was both precise and harmonious for the reader. As he moved through literary circles, he eventually was a key leader in forming a group of friends who satirized false learning by creating a character named Martin the Scribbler. They used this evented character to comment consistently on what the group considered educated nonsense (a precursor to publications like *The Onion* today).

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

In addition to his extensive production of literary works, Pope was also very famous for producing tomes of the works of other greats, publishing a volume of Shakespeare's works (although there are some critics who fairly criticize Pope's work on Shakespeare as being inaccurate) and also translating Homer's *The Illiad* (he did such an excellent job translating Homer that he made enough money to purchase an estate in Twickenham, which allowed him to escape the bustle of London when needed and a peaceful place to write). Pope earned himself a number of enemies over the years, to the point where he published some of his works anonymously later in life.

Pope was also one of the earlier writers to wage his personal intellectual, social, and political wars through his writings. He satirized those who critiqued his works, sometimes savagely, and was instrumental in creating the divide between high and low art that marked his era (leading some to label his time as the neoclassical era due to its "high" forms). For better or for worse, Pope set himself up as a defender of what he saw as traditional values (reason, humanistic learning, virtue, etc.).

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The Rape of the Lock

BY ALEXANDER POPE

An heroi-comical poem

*Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;
Sed juvat, hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.*

Mart, [*Epigr*, XII. 84.]

To Mrs. Arabella Fermor

Madam,

It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to You. Yet you may bear me witness, it was intended only to divert a few young Ladies, who have good sense and good humour enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the air of a Secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offer'd to a Bookseller, you had the good-nature for my sake to consent to the publication of one more correct: This I was forc'd to, before I had executed half my design, for the Machinery was entirely wanting to compleat it.

The Machinery, Madam, is a term invented by the Critics, to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Dæmons are made to act in a Poem: For the ancient Poets are in one respect like many modern Ladies: let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These Machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of Spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a Lady; but't is so much the concern of a Poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your Sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms.

The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book call'd *Le Comte de Gabalis*, which both in its title and size is so like a Novel, that many of the Fair Sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these Gentlemen, the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The Gnomes or Dæmons of Earth delight in mischief; but the Sylphs whose habitation is in the Air, are the best-condition'd creatures imaginable. For they say, any mortals may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle Spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true Adepts, an inviolate preservation of Chastity.

As to the following Canto's, all the passages of them are as fabulous, as the Vision at the beginning, or the Transformation at the end; (except the loss of your Hair, which I always mention with reverence). The Human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones; and the character of Belinda, as it is now manag'd, resembles you in nothing but in Beauty.

If this Poem had as many Graces as there are in your Person, or in your Mind, yet I could never hope it should pass thro' the world half so Uncensur'd as You have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem, Madam,

Your most obedient, Humble Servant,

A. Pope

Canto 1

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing — This verse to **Caryl**, Muse! is due:
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise, 5
If She inspire, and He approve my lays.

Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord? 10
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty Rage?

Sol thro' white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day:
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake, 15
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,
And the press'd watch return'd a silver sound.

Belinda still her downy pillow prest,
Her guardian **Sylph** prolong'd the balmy rest: 20
'Twas He had summon'd to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hover'd o'er her head;
A Youth more glitt'ring than a Birth-night Beau,
(That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to glow)
Seem'd to her ear his winning lips to lay, 25
And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to say.
Fairest of mortals, thou distinguish'd care

Canto 2

Not with more glories, in th' etherial plain,
The Sun first rises o'er the purpled main, 30
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair Nymphs, and well-drest Youths around her shone.
But ev'ry eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling Cross she wore,

Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore. 35
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike, 40
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if Belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all. 45

This Nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspir'd to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck. 50
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare, 55
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

Th' advent'rous Baron the bright locks admir'd;
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspir'd.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray; 60

Canto 3

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name. 65
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign Tyrants and of Nymphs at home;
Here thou, great **Anna!** whom three realms obey.
Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes Tea.

Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a Court; 70
In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen; 75
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,

With singing, laughing, ogling, and *all that*.

Mean while, declining from the noon of day, 80
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry Judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the Toilet cease. 85
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two advent'rous Knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their doom;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join, 90
Each band the number of the sacred nine.

Canto 4

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppress'd,
And secret passions labour'd in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive, 95
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refus'd a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry, 100
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd Hair.

For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite, 105
As ever sully'd the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repair'd to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen.

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome, 110
And in a vapour reach'd the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded East is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto, shelter'd close from air,
And screen'd in shades from day's detested glare, 115
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.

Two handmaids wait the throne: alike in place,
But diff'ring far in figure and in face. 120
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white array'd;
With store of pray'rs, for mornings, nights, and noons,

Canto 5

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears.
But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's ears. 125
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fix'd the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begg'd and Dido rag'd in vain.
Then grave Clarissa graceful wav'd her fan;
Silence ensu'd, and thus the nymph began. 130

“Say why are Beauties prais'd and honour'd most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why deck'd with all that land and sea afford,
Why Angels call'd, and Angel-like ador'd?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-glov'd Beaux, 135
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows;
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains:
That men may say, when we the front-box grace:
‘Behold the first in virtue as in face!’ 140
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charm'd the small-pox, or chas'd old-age away;
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a Saint, 145
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to grey;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man, must die a maid; 150
What then remains but well our pow'r to

Samuel Johnson



General Background

Samuel Johnson was born prematurely in 1709 (he was born and grew up in Lichfield) and was not expected to survive childhood. While young he also contracted scrofula, which left him with deafness in one ear, blindness in one eye, and facial scarring. Johnson's father was a bookseller, which was quite the advantage when it came to his education. Johnson excelled in school as a young man at Lichfield Grammar School and arrived at Oxford well prepared for his advanced studies (he did not finish though, due to financial limitations, but showed his prowess in language by writing in Latin and Greek, as well as English, for his entire life).

Married in 1735 (his wife was 21 years his senior), Johnson and his wife moved to London to make a life for themselves. There he carved out a living initially through hack work (writing whatever was asked of him to get paid) of many stripes. He also helped compile an annotated catalog of Edward Harley (Lord Oxford)'s library (an enormous task that helped Johnson gain exposure to more books than almost anyone else at the time). His big career break came when he was hired by a group of London booksellers to write *The Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). His success on the dictionary (he had only six assistants helping with the grandiose project) led to honorary degrees conferred by Oxford and Trinity College and George III eventually granted him a pension of 300 pounds per year.

Johnson was famous most of his life for his perceived genius and elite speaking skills. Starting out poor and unknown, he suffered a stroke in 1783 and later died in 1784 (buried in Westminster Abbey), well known and admired by many.

Style and Works

Johnson is widely acclaimed as a genius and the scope of his personality threatens to overwhelm his literary contributions. Known first and foremost for his dictionary (a work full of wit, honesty, and humor), Johnson was also an accomplished essayist. Like others of the time, he completed an edition of Shakespeare (well received for the most part) in 1765 to go along with his lexicography labors. He also produced *Lives of the English Poets* and helped formulate the strived for honesty of the modern biography (with emphasis on both the subject's vices as well as virtues).

Broadly stated, Johnson had a wide literary range, writing as a poet, a lexicographer, a translator, a journalist, an essayist, a travel writer, a biographer, an editor, and a critic. In all his writings, Johnson was a keen observer of human nature. Part formalist, part entertainer, Johnson's works were well read by other literary luminaries of his age.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Beyond the obvious example of his dictionary, the voluble writer was also heavily influential as a literary critic. He fought through quite a few physical disabilities (and mental struggles as well) to become one of the foremost "men of letters" of his age. Rising from poverty to high acclaim, Johnson was skilled at generalizing ideas and made literary and philosophical complexities available to a wide range of readers through his life's works. Throughout his life, he prized literature as a place of deep moral value, considering why literature lasts over time and how it helps humanity grow as a result.

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Brief to Free A Slave

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON

It must be agreed that in most ages many countries have had part of their inhabitants in a state of slavery ; yet it may be doubted whether slavery can ever be supposed the natural condition of man. It is impossible not to conceive that men in their original state were equal; and very difficult to imagine how one would be subjected to another but by violent compulsion. An individual may, indeed, forfeit his liberty by a crime ; but he cannot by that crime forfeit the liberty of his children. What is true of a criminal seems true likewise of a captive. A man may accept life from a conquering enemy on condition of perpetual servitude; but it is very doubtful whether he can entail that servitude on his descendants; for no man can stipulate without commission for another. The condition which he himself accepts, his son or grandson perhaps would have rejected. If we should admit, what perhaps may with more reason be denied, that there are certain relations between man and man which may make slavery necessary and just, yet it can never be proved that he who is now suing for his freedom ever stood in any of those relations. He is certainly subject by no law, but that of violence, to his present master; who pretends no claim to his obedience, but that he bought him from a merchant of slaves, whose right to sell him never was examined. It is said that according to the constitutions of Jamaica he was legally enslaved ; these constitutions are merely positive; and apparently injurious to the rights of mankind, because whoever is exposed to sale is condemned to slavery without appeal; by whatever fraud or violence he might have been originally brought into the merchant's power. In our own time Princes have been sold, by wretches to whose care they were entrusted, that they might have an European education; but when once they were brought to a market in the plantations, little would avail either their dignity or their wrongs. The laws of Jamaica afford a Negro no redress. His colour is considered as a sufficient testimony against him. It is to be lamented that moral right should ever give way to political convenience. But if temptations of interest are sometimes too strong for human virtue, let us at least retain a virtue where there is no temptation to quit it. In the present case there is apparent right on one side, and no convenience on the other. Inhabitants of this island can neither gain riches nor power by taking away the liberty of any part of the human species. The sum of the argument is this :—No man is by nature the property of another: The defendant is, therefore, by nature free: The rights of nature must be some way forfeited before they can be justly taken away : That the defendant has by any act forfeited the rights of nature we require to be proved; and if no proof of such forfeiture can be given, we doubt not but the justice of the court will declare him free.

Definitions

Cough: A convulsion of the lungs, vellicated by some sharp serosity.

Distiller: One who makes and sells pernicious and inflammatory spirits.

Dull: Not exhilarating (sic); not delightful; as, to make dictionaries is dull work.

Excise: A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid.

Far-fetch: A deep stratagem. A ludicrous word.

Jobbernowl: Loggerhead; blockhead.

Kickshaw: A dish so changed by the cookery that it can scarcely be known.

Lexicographer: A writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the signification of words.

Network: Any thing reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections. (See how he defined 'reticulated,' below.)

Oats: A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland appears to support the people.

Pastern: The knee of a horse. (This is wrong. When Johnson was once asked how he came to make such a mistake, Boswell tells us he replied, "Ignorance, Madam, pure ignorance.")

Patron: One who countenances, supports or protects. Commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery.

Pension: An allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.

Politician: 1. One versed in the arts of government; one skilled in politicks. 2. A man of artifice; one of deep contrivance.

Reticulated: Made of network; formed with interstitial vacuities.

Tory: One who adheres to the ancient constitution of the state, and the apostolical hierarchy of the church of England, opposed to a Whig.

Whig: The name of a faction.

To worm: To deprive a dog of something, nobody knows what, under his tongue, which is said to prevent him, nobody knows why, from running mad.

Anatiferous, adjective: Producing ducks."

Backfriend, noun: A friend backwards; that is, an enemy in secret.”

Camelopard, noun: An Abyssinian animal, taller than an elephant, but not so thick. He is so named, because he has a neck and head like a camel; he is spotted like a pard, but his spots are white upon a red ground. The Italians call him giaraffa.”

Cynanthropy, noun: A species of madness in which men have the qualities of dogs.”

Dull, adjective: Not exhilarating; not delightful: as, *to make dictionaries is dull work.*”

Fart, noun: Wind from behind.

Love is the fart

Of every heart;

It pains a man when 'tis kept close;

And others doth offend, when 'tis let loose”

Gynecocracy, noun: Petticoat government; female power.”

Hotcockles, noun: A play [game] in which one covers his eyes, and guesses who strikes him.”

Jiggumbob, noun: A trinket; a knick-knack; a slight contrivance in machinery.

He rifled all his pokes and fobs

Of gimcracks, whims, and jiggumbobs. Hudibras, p. iii.”

Lexicographer, noun: A writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge, that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the signification of words.”

Monsieur, noun [French]: A term of reproach for a Frenchman.”

Mouth-friend, noun: One who professes friendship without intending it.”

Oats, noun: A Grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.”

Patron, noun: One who countenances, supports or protects. Commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery.”

Pension, noun: An allowance made to anyone without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.”

Politician, noun: 1. One versed in the arts of government; one skilled in politicks. 2. A man of artifice; one of deep contrivance.”

Shapesmith, noun: One who undertakes to improve the form of the body” – aka. a personal trainer.

Slubberdegullion, noun: A paltry, dirty, sorry wretch.

Quoth she, although thou hast deserv'd,

Base slubberdegullion, to be serv'd

As thou did'st vow to deal with me,

If thou had'st got the victory. Hudibras”

Sock, noun: Something put between the foot and shoe.”

Tarantula, noun: An insect whose bite is only cured by musick.”

Trolmydames, noun: Of this word I know not the meaning.”

Twittletwattle, noun: (A ludicrous reduplication of twattle.) Tattle; gabble. A vile word.”

Watermelon, noun: A plant. It hath trailing branches, as the cucumber or melon, and is distinguished from other cucurbitaceous plants, by its leaf deeply cut and jagged, and by its producing uneatable fruit.”

To worm, verb: To deprive a dog of something, nobody knows what, under his tongue, which is said to prevent him, nobody knows why, from running mad.”

James Thomson



General Background

James Thomson was born on September 11, 1700. His father was a Presbyterian minister, a role that played an important role in his education. He learned the Bible from his father, Scottish ballads and songs from his mother, and received formal instruction on the classics at Jedburgh Grammar School. He studied for four years at the University of Edinburgh, but did not finish his degree there (he also entered Divinity Hall with the intent of becoming a minister like his father, but did not finish that coursework either).

After his schooling, Thomson spent time working for different patrons as a private tutor for their children. By age 25, he moved to London and became more seriously focused on writing as his profession. While living outside London, he also fell in love with Elizabeth Young (also from Scotland) and courted her for three years. His efforts were in vain though (she rejected his ultimate proposals).

Sadly, Thomson died rather young (he died of a fever at age 47). He was memorialized by a monument erected in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner, put up by his many friends and admirers.

Style and Works

Thomson is most famous for *The Seasons*, nature poetry that was arguably the most popular British poetry of the eighteenth century (he returned to these poems many times over the years, publishing a number of versions of the poem [the poem was printed fifty times between 1730 and 1800], adding additional political and scientific content each time). This work was published in different volumes (*Winter*, *Summer*; you get the idea!) and celebrated the natural riches and beauty of the land. He is also very well known for penning "Rule Britannia" which became Britain's unofficial anthem for some years. He also wrote a Spenserian allegory, *The Castle of Indolence* (1748), that stands as one of the finest examples of this style of writing.

Central to his style was the importance of seeing well (from a variety of perspectives and with a famous imagination). Thomson also incorporated more and more elements to his works over the years—by the time *Seasons* was "finished," it included ideas on natural history and religious experience and demonstrated the different fields that natural poetry was able to engage with in its expansiveness.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Thomson, drawing heavily on his early life experiences growing up in the picturesque border country of Roxboroughshire in southern Scotland, was one of the first true nature poets of the eighteenth century. Some argue that the slopes, streams, cloudy skies, and constant play of light upon natural objects in such a changeable climate were an inspirational precursor to Wordsworth's later love of the Lake District. In many ways setting the stage for the Romantics' later preoccupation with nature as a positive force and inspiration for many of their works, Thomson's *Seasons* produced a template for future authors to follow. Specifically, he had faith in his readers and assumed an approach that treated them as wise enough to observe life with a close eye.

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Rule Britannia

BY JAMES THOMSON

When Britain first, at heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian angels sung this strain—
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
Britons never will be slaves."
5

The nations, not so blest as thee,
Must in their turns to tyrants fall;
While thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
Britons never will be slaves."
10

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
Britons never will be slaves."
15

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame;
All their attempts to bend thee down,
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
But work their woe and thy renown.
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
Britons never will be slaves."
20

To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine;
All thine shall be the subject main,
And every shore it circles thine.
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
Britons never will be slaves."
25

The Muses, still with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair:
Blest isle! with matchless beauty crowned,
And manly hearts to guard the fair.
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
Britons never will be slaves."
30

The Muses, still with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair:
Blest isle! with matchless beauty crowned,
And manly hearts to guard the fair.
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
Britons never will be slaves."
35

The Seasons

BY JAMES THOMSON

Spring

The Argument

The subject proposed. Inscribed to Lady Hartford. This Season is described as it affects the various parts of Nature, ascending from the lower to the higher; and mixed with Digressions arising from the subject. Its influence on inanimate Matter, on Vegetables, on brute Animals, and last on Man; concluding with a Dissuasive from the wild and irregular passion of Love, opposed to that of a purer and more reasonable kind.

Come, gentle Spring, æthereal Mildness, come;
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend. 40

O Hertford, fitted, or to shine in courts,
With unaffected grace; or walk the plain,
With Innocence and Meditation join'd
In soft assemblage, listen to my song,
That thy own season paints; when Nature all
Is blooming, and benevolent like thee. 45

And see where surly Winter passes off,
Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts;
His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
The shatter'd forest, and the ravag'd vale: 50
While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,
Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost,
The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.

As yet the trembling year is unconfirm'd,
And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze, 55
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless; so that scarce
The Bittern knows his time, with bill engulf'd
To shake the sounding marsh; or from the shore
The Plover theirs, to scatter o'er the heath, 60
And sing their wild notes to the listening waste.

At last from Aries rolls the bounteous sun,
And the bright Bull receives him. Then no more

Th' expansive atmosphere is cramp'd with cold,
 But full of life, and vivifying soul, 65
 Lifts the light clouds sublime, and spreads them thin,
 Fleecy, and white, o'er all-surrounding heaven.

Forth fly the tepid airs; and unconfin'd,
 Unbinding earth, the moving softness strays. 70
 Joyous th' impatient husbandman perceives
 Relenting Nature, and his lusty steers,
 Drives from their stalls, to where the well-us'd plow
 Lies in the furrow loosen'd from the frost.
 There, unrefusing to the harness'd yoke, 75
 They lend their shoulder, and begin their toil,
 Chear'd by the simple song, and soaring lark.
 Meanwhile incumbent o'er the shining share
 The master leans, removes th' obstructing clay,
 Winds the whole work, and sidelong lays the glebe. 80

White thro' the neighbouring fields the sower stalks,
 With measur'd step, and liberal throws the grain
 Into the faithful bosom of the Ground.
 The harrow follows harsh, and shuts the scene.

Be gracious, Heaven! for now laborious man 85
 Has done his due. Ye fostering breezes, blow!
 Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend!
 And temper all, thou world-reviving sun,
 Into the perfect year! Nor, ye who live 90
 In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,
 Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear.
 'Twas such as these the rural Maro sung
 To the full Roman court, in all its height
 Of elegance and taste. The sacred plow 95
 Employ'd the kings and fathers of mankind,
 In antient times. And some, with whom compar'd
 You're but the beings of a summer's day,
 Have held the scale of justice, shook the lance
 Of mighty war, then with descending hand,
 Unus'd to little delicacies, seiz'd 100
 The plow, and greatly independent liv'd.

Ye generous Britons, cultivate the plow!
 And o'er your hills, and long withdrawing vales,
 Let Autumn spread his treasures to the sun,
 Luxuriant, and unbounded. As the sea, 105
 Far thro' his azurem turbulent extent,
 Your empire owns, and from a thousand shores
 Wafts all the pomp of life into your ports;
 So with superior boon may your rich soil,
 Exuberant, nature's better blessings pour 110

O'er every land, the naked nations cloath,
 And be th' exhaustless granary of a world!

Nor thro' the lenient air alone, this change
 Delicious breathes; the penetrative sun, 115
 His force deep-darting to the dark retreat
 Of vegetation, sets the steaming power
 At large, to wander o'er the vernant earth
 In various hues; but chiefly thee, gay Green!
 Thou smiling Nature's universal robe!
 United light and shade! where the sight dwells 120
 With growing strength, and ever-new delight!

From the moist meadow to the brown-bow'd hill,
 Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs,
 And swells, and deepens to the cherish'd eye.
 The hawthorn whitens; and the juicy groves 125
 Put forth their buds, unfolding by degrees,
 Till the whole leafy forest stands display'd,
 In full luxuriance, to the sighing gales;
 While the deer rustle thro' the twining brake,
 And the birds sing conceal'd. At once array'd 130
 In all the colours of the flushing year,
 By Nature's swift and secret-working hand,
 The garden glows, and fills the liberal air
 With lavish fragrance; while the promis'd fruit
 Lies yet a little embryo, unperceiv'd, 135
 Within its crimson folds. Now from the town,
 Buried in smook, and sleep, and noisom damps,
 Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields,
 Where freshness breathes, and dash the lucid drops
 From the bent bush, as thro' the fuming maze
 Of sweet-briar hedges I pursue my walk; 140
 Or taste the smell of dairy; or ascend
 Some eminence, Augusta, in thy plains,
 And see the country far-diffus'd around
 One boundless blush, one white-empurpled shower
 Of mingled blossoms; where the raptur'd eye 145
 Travels from joy to joy, and, hid beneath
 The fair profusion, yellow Autumn spies.

The Seasons

BY JAMES THOMSON

Summer

The Argument

THE subject proposed. Invocation. Address to Mr. Dodington. An introductory reflection on the motion of the heavenly bodies; whence the succession of the Seasons. As the face of nature in this season is almost uniform, the progress of the poem is a description of a Summer's day. The dawn. Sun-rising. Hymn to the sun. Forenoon. Summer insects described. Hay-making. Sheep-shearing. Noonday. A woodland retreat. Group of herds and flocks. A solemn grove: how it affects a contemplative mind. A cataract, and rude scene. View of Summer in the torrid zone. Storm of thunder and lightning. A tale. The storm over. A serene afternoon. Bathing. Hour of walking. Transition to the prospect of a rich, well-cultivated country; which introduces a panegyric on Great Britain. Sunset. Evening. Night. Summer meteors. A comet. The whole concluding with the praise of philosophy.

From brightening fields of ether fair-disclosed,
Child of the sun, refulgent Summer comes
In pride of youth, and felt through nature's depth:
He comes, attended by the sultry hours
And ever-fanning breezes on his way; 5
While from his ardent look the turning Spring
Averts her blushful face, and earth and skies
All-smiling to his hot dominion leaves.
Hence let me haste into the mid-wood shade,
Where scarce a sunbeam wanders through the gloom, 10
And on the dark-green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream that by the roots of oak
Rolls o'er the rocky channel, lie at large
And sing the glories of the circling year. 15

Come, Inspiration! from thy hermit-seat,
By mortal seldom found: may fancy dare,
From thy fixed serious eye and raptured glance
Shot on surrounding Heaven, to steal one look 20
Creative of the poet, every power
Exalting to an ecstasy of soul.
And thou, my youthful Muse's early friend,
In whom the human graces all unite —

Pure light of mind and tenderness of heart, 25
Jenius and wisdom, the gay social sense

By decency chastised, goodness and wit
In seldom-meeting harmony combined,
Unblemished honour, and an active zeal
For Britain's glory, liberty, and man: 30

O Dodington! attend my rural song,
Stoop to my theme, inspire every line,
And teach me to deserve thy just applause.

With what an awful world-revolving power
Were first the unwieldy planets launched along 35
The illimitable void!-thus to remain,
Amid the flux of many thousand years
That oft has swept the toiling race of men,
And all their laboured monuments away,
Firm, unremitting, matchless in their course; 40
To the kind-tempered change of night and day,
And of the seasons ever stealing round,
Minutely faithful: such the all-perfect Hand
That poised, impels, and rules the steady whole!

When now no more the alternate Twins are fired, 45
And Cancer reddens with the solar blaze,
Short is the doubtful empire of the night;
And soon, observant of approaching day,
The meek-eyed morn appears, mother of dews,
At first faint-gleaming in the dappled east; 50
Till far o'er ether spreads the widening glow,
And, from before the lustre of her face,
White break the clouds away. With quickened step,
Brown night retires. Young day pours in apace,
And opens all the lawny prospect wide. 55
The dripping rock, the mountain's misty top
Swell on the sight and brighten with the dawn.
Blue through the dusk the smoking currents shine;
And from the bladed field the fearful hare
Limps awkward; while along the forest glade 60
The wild deer trip, and often turning gaze
At early passenger. Music awakes,
The native voice of undissembled joy;
And thick around the woodland hymns arise.
Roused by the cock, the soon-clad shepherd leaves 65
His mossy cottage, where with peace he dwells,
And from the crowded fold in order drives
His flock to taste the verdure of the morn.

Falsely luxurious, will not man awake,
And, springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy 70
The cool, the fragrant, and the silent hour,
To meditation due and sacred song?

For is there aught in sleep can charm the wise?
 To lie in dead oblivion, losing half
 The fleeting moments of too short a life — 75
 Total extinction of the enlightened soul!
 Or else, to feverish vanity alive,
 Wildered, and tossing through distempered dreams!
 Who would in such a gloomy state remain
 Longer than nature craves; when every muse 80
 And every blooming pleasure wait without
 To bless the wildly-devious morning walk?

But yonder comes the powerful king of day
 Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
 The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow 85
 Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
 Betoken glad. Lo! now, apparent all,
 Aslant the dew-bright earth and coloured air,
 He looks in boundless majesty abroad,
 And sheds the shining day, that burnished plays 90
 On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams
 High-gleaming from afar. Prime cheerer, Light!
 Of all material beings first and best!
 Efflux divine! Nature's resplendent robe,
 Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt 95
 In unessential gloom; and thou, O Sun!
 Soul of surrounding worlds! in whom best seen
 Shines out thy Maker! may I sing of thee?

'Tis by thy secret, strong, attractive force,
 As with a chain indissoluble bound, 100
 Thy system rolls entire—from the far bourne
 Of utmost Saturn, wheeling wide his round
 Of thirty years, to Mercury, whose disk
 Can scarce be caught by philosophic eye,
 Lost in the near effulgence of thy blaze. 105

The Seasons

BY JAMES THOMSON

Autumn

The Argument

THE subject proposed. Addressed to Mr. Onslow. A prospect of the fields ready for harvest. Reflections in praise of industry raised by that view. Reaping. A tale relative to it. A harvest storm. Shooting and hunting; their barbarity. A ludicrous account of foxhunting. A view of an orchard. Wall fruit. A vineyard. A description of fogs, frequent in the latter part of Autumn; whence a digression, inquiring into the rise of fountains and rivers. Birds of season considered, that now shift their habitation. The prodigious number of them that cover the northern and western isles of Scotland. Hence a view of the country. A prospect of the discoloured, fading woods. After a gentle dusky day, moonlight. Autumnal meteors. Morning; to which succeeds a calm, pure, sunshiny day, such as usually shuts up the season. The harvest being gathered in, the country dissolved in joy. The whole concludes with a panegyric on a philosophical country life.

Crowned with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf
 While Autumn nodding o'er the yellow plain
 Comes jovial on, the Doric reed once more
 Well-pleased I tune. Whate'er the Wintry frost
 Nitrous prepared, the various-blossomed Spring 5
 Put in white promise forth, and Summer-suns
 Concocted strong, rush boundless now to view,
 Full, perfect all, and swell my glorious theme.

Onslow! the muse, ambitious of thy name
 To grace, inspire, and dignify her song, 10
 Would from the public voice thy gentle ear
 A while engage. Thy noble cares she knows,
 The patriot-virtues that distend thy thought,
 Spread on thy front, and in thy bosom glow;
 While listening senates hang upon thy tongue, 15
 Devolving through the maze of eloquence
 A roll of periods, sweeter than her song.
 But she too pants for public virtue; she,
 Though weak of power, yet strong in ardent will,
 Whene'er her country rushes on her heart, 20
 Assumes a bolder note, and fondly tries
 To mix the patriot's with the poet's flame.

When the bright Virgin gives the beauteous days,
 And Libra weighs in equal scales the year,
 From heaven's high cope the fierce effulgence shook 25

Of parting Summer, a serener blue,
 With golden light enlivened, wide invests
 The happy world. Attempered suns arise
 Sweet-beamed, and shedding oft through lucid clouds
 A pleasing calm; while broad and brown, below, 30
 Extensive harvests hang the heavy head.
 Rich, silent, deep they stand; for not a gale
 Rolls its light billows o'er the bending plain;
 A calm of plenty! till the ruffled air
 Falls from its poise, and gives the breeze to blow. 35
 Rent is the fleecy mantle of the sky;
 The clouds fly different; and the sudden sun
 By fits effulgent gilds the illumined field,
 And black by fits the shadows sweep along —
 A gaily chequered, heart-expanding view, 40
 Far as the circling eye can shoot around,
 Unbounded tossing in a flood of corn.
 These are thy blessings, Industry, rough power!
 Whom labour still attends, and sweat, and pain;
 Yet the kind source of every gentle art 45
 And all the soft civility of life:
 Raiser of human kind! by nature cast
 Naked and helpless out amid the woods
 And wilds to rude inclement elements;
 With various seeds of art deep in the mind 50
 Implanted, and profusely poured around
 Materials infinite; but idle all,
 Still unexerted, in the unconscious breast
 Slept the lethargic powers; Corruption still
 Voracious swallowed what the liberal hand 55
 Of Bounty scattered o'er the savage year.
 And still the sad barbarian roving mixed
 With beasts of prey; or for his acorn meal
 Fought the fierce tusky boar—a shivering wretch!
 Aghast and comfortless when the bleak north, 60
 With winter charged, let the mixed tempest fly,
 Hail, rain, and snow, and bitter-breathing frost.
 Then to the shelter of the hut he fled,
 And the wild season, sordid, pined away;
 For home he had not: home is the resort 65
 Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
 Supporting and supported, polished friends
 And dear relations mingle into bliss.
 But this the rugged savage never felt,
 Even desolate in crowds; and thus his days 70
 Rolled heavy, dark, and unenjoyed along —
 A waste of time! till Industry approached,
 And roused him from his miserable sloth;
 His faculties unfolded; pointed out
 Where lavish Nature the directing hand 75

Of Art demanded; showed him how to raise
 His feeble force by the mechanic powers,
 To dig the mineral from the vaulted earth,
 On what to turn the piercing rage of fire,
 On what the torrent, and the gathered blast; 80
 Gave the tall ancient forest to his axe;
 Taught him to chip the wood, and hew the stone,
 Till by degrees the finished fabric rose;
 Tore from his limbs the blood-polluted fur,
 And wrapt them in the woolly vestment warm, 85
 Or bright in glossy silk, and flowing lawn;
 With wholesome viands filled his table, poured
 The generous glass around, inspired to wake
 The life-refining soul of decent wit;
 Nor stopped at barren bare necessity; 90
 But, still advancing bolder, led him on
 To pomp, to pleasure, elegance, and grace;
 And, breathing high ambition through his soul,
 Set science, wisdom, glory in his view,
 And bade him be the lord of all below. 95
 Then gathering men their natural powers combined,
 And formed a public; to the general good
 Submitting, aiming, and conducting all.
 For this the patriot-council met, the full,
 The free, and fairly represented whole; 100
 For this they planned the holy guardian laws,
 Distinguished orders, animated arts,
 And, with joint force Oppression chaining, set
 Imperial Justice at the helm, yet still
 To them accountable: nor slavish dreamed 105
 That toiling millions must resign their weal
 And all the honey of their search to such
 As for themselves alone themselves have raised.

 Hence every form of cultivated life
 In order set, protected, and inspired 110
 Into perfection wrought. Uniting all,
 Society grew numerous, high, polite,
 And happy. Nurse of art, the city reared
 In beauteous pride her tower-encircled head;
 And, stretching street on street, by thousands drew, 115
 From twining woody haunts, or the tough yew
 To bows strong-straining, her aspiring sons.

The Seasons

BY JAMES THOMSON

Winter

The Argument

THE subject proposed. Address to the Earl of Wilmington. First approach of Winter. According to the natural course of the season, various storms described. Rain. Wind, Snow. The driving of the snows: a man perishing among them; whence reflections on the wants and miseries of human life. The wolves descending from the Alps and Apennines. A winter evening described: as spent by philosophers; by the country people; in the city. Frost. A view of Winter within the polar circle. A thaw. The whole concluding with moral reflections on a future state.

See, Winter comes to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train —
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my theme;
These, that exalt the soul to solemn thought
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms! 5
Cogenial horrors, hail! With frequent foot,
Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nursed by careless solitude I lived
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
Pleased have I wandered through your rough domain; 10
Trode the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burst;
Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brewed
In the grim evening-sky. Thus passed the time,
Till through the lucid chambers of the south 15
Looked out the joyous Spring-looked out and smiled

To thee, the patron of this first essay,
The Muse, O Wilmington! renews her song.
Since has she rounded the revolving year:
Skimm'd the gay Spring; on eagle-pinions borne, 20
Attempted through the Summer-blaze to rise;
Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy gale.
And now among the Wintry clouds again,
Rolled in the doubling storm, she tries to soar,
To swell her note with all the rushing winds, 25
To suit her sounding cadence to the floods;
As is her theme, her numbers wildly great.
Thrice happy, could she fill thy judging ear
With bold description and with manly thought!
Nor art thou skilled in awful schemes alone, 30

And how to make a mighty people thrive;
But equal goodness, sound integrity,
A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul
Amid a sliding age, and burning strong,
Not vainly blazing, for thy country's weal, 35
A steady spirit, regularly free —

These, each exalting each, the statesman light
Into the patriot; these, the public hope
And eye to thee converting, bid the Muse
Record what envy dares not flattery call. 40

Now, when the cheerless empire of the sky
To Capricorn the Centaur-Archer yields,
And fierce Aquarius stains the inverted year —
Hung o'er the farthest verge of heaven, the sun
Scarce spreads o'er ether the dejected day. 45
Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot

His struggling rays in horizontal lines
Through the thick air; as clothed in cloudy storm,
Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the southern sky;
And, soon descending, to the long dark night, 50
Wide-shading all, the prostrate world resigns.

Nor is the night unwished; while vital heat,
Light, life, and joy the dubious day forsake.
Meantime, in sable cincture, shadows vast,
Deep-tinged and damp, and congregated clouds, 55
And all the vapoury turbulence of heaven

Involve the face of things. Thus Winter falls,
A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
Through Nature shedding influence malign,
And rouses up the seeds of dark disease. 60
The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,

And black with more than melancholy views.
The cattle droop; and o'er the furrowed land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun discoloured flocks,
Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root. 65
Along the woods, along the moorish fens,

Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook
And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan, 70
Resounding long in listening fancy's ear.

Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
Wrapt in black glooms. First, joyless rains obscure
Drive through the mingling skies with vapour foul,
Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods 75
That grumbling wave below. The unsightly plain
Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still

Combine, and, deepening into night, shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of heaven, 80
Each to his home, retire; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled air,
Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.
The cattle from the untasted fields return
And ask, with meaning low, their wonted stalls, 85
Or ruminates in the contiguous shade.
Thither the household feathery people crowd,
The crested cock, with all his female train,
Pensive and dripping; while the cottage-hind
Hangs o'er the enlivening blaze, and taleful there go 90
Recounts his simple frolic: much he talks,
And much he laughs, nor reckes the storm that blows
Without, and rattles on his humble roof.

Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent swelled,
And the mixed ruin of its banks o'erspread, 95
At last the roused-up river pours along:
Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain and the mossy wild,
Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sounding far;
Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads, 100
Calm, sluggish, silent; till again, constrained
Between two meeting hills, it bursts a way
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid stream;
There, gathering triple force, rapid and deep,
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through. 105

Nature! great parent! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the Seasons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majestic are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul,
That sees astonished, and astonished sings! 110
Ye too, ye winds! that now begin to blow
With boisterous sweep, I raise my voice to you.
Where are your stores, ye powerful beings! say,
Where your aerial magazines reserved
To swell the brooding terrors of the storm? 115
In what far-distant region of the sky,
Hushed in deep silence, sleep you when 'tis calm?

The Seasons

BY JAMES THOMPSON

A HYMN ON THE SEASONS

These, as they change, Almighty Father! these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, Thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm; 5
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And ev'ry sense, and ev'ry heart, is joy.
Then comes Thy glory in the summer-months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then Thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year; 10
And oft Thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks,
And oft, at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales.
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfin'd,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives. 15
In Winter awful Thou! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd,
Majestic darkness! On the whirlwind's wing
Riding sublime, Thou bidd'st the world adore,
And humblest nature with thy northern blast. 20

Mysterious round! what skill, what force divine,
Deep felt, in these appear! a simple train,
Yet so delightful mix'd, with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combined,
Shade unperceiv'd so softening into shade, 25
And all so forming an harmonious whole
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.
But, wandering oft with brute unconscious gaze
Man marks not Thee, marks not the mighty hand
That, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres, 30
Works in the secret deep, shoots steaming thence
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the Spring,
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day,
Feeds every creature, hurls the tempest forth,
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves, 35
With transport touches all the springs of life.

Nature, attend! join, every living soul
Beneath the spacious temple of the sky,
In adoration join; and ardent raise

One general song! To Him, ye vocal gales, 40
 Breathe soft, whose Spirit in your freshness breathes:
 Oh! talk of Him in solitary glooms,
 Where, o'er the rock, the scarcely-waving pine
 Fills the brown shade with a religious awe.
 And ye, whose bolder note is heard afar, 45
 Who shake th' astonish'd world, lift high to Heaven
 Th' impetuous song, and say from whom you rage.
 His praise, ye brooks, attune, ye trembling rills;
 And let me catch it as I muse along.
 Ye headlong torrents, rapid and profound; 50
 Ye softer floods, that lead the humid maze
 Along the vale; and thou, majestic main,
 A secret world of wonders in thyself,
 Sound His stupendous praise, whose greater voice
 Or bids you roar or bids your roarings fall. 55
 Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
 In mingled clouds to Him, whose sun exalts,
 Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints.
 Ye forests, bend; ye harvests, wave to Him—
 Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart
 As home he goes beneath the joyous moon. 60
 Ye that keep watch in heaven, as earth asleep
 Unconscious lies, effuse your mildest beams,
 Ye constellations! while your angels strike
 Amid the spangled sky the silver lyre.
 Great source of day! best image here below 65
 Of thy Creator, ever pouring wide
 From world to world the vital ocean round!
 On nature write with every beam His praise.
 The thunder rolls: be hush'd the prostrate world,
 While cloud to cloud returns the solemn hymn. 70
 Bleat out afresh, ye hills; ye mossy rocks,
 Retain the sound; the broad responsive low,
 Ye valleys, raise; for the Great Shepherd reigns,
 And his unsuff'ring kingdom yet will come.
 Ye woodlands all, awake: a boundless song 75
 Burst from the groves; and, when the restless day,
 Expiring, lays the warbling world asleep,
 Sweetest of birds, sweet Philomela! charm
 The listening shades, and teach the night His praise!
 Ye chief, for whom the whole creation smiles, 60
 At once the head, the heart, the tongue of all,
 Crown the great hymn! In swarming cities vast,
 Assembled men, to the deep organ join
 The long-resounding voice, oft-breaking clear
 At solemn pauses through the swelling bass; 65
 And, as each mingling flame increases each,
 In one united ardour rise to heaven.
 Or, if you rather choose the rural shade,

And find a fane in every sacred grove,
 There let the shepherd's flute, the virgin's lay, 70
 The prompting seraph, and the poet's lyre
 Still sing the God of Seasons as they roll.
 For me, when I forget the darling theme,
 Whether the blossom blows, the summer-ray
 Russets the plain, inspiring autumn gleams, 75
 Or winter rises in the blackening east,
 Be my tongue mute, may fancy paint no more,
 And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!

 Should fate command me to the farthest verge
 Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes, 80
 Rivers unknown to song, where first the sun
 Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
 Flames on th' Atlantic isles, 'tis naught to me,
 Since God is ever present, ever felt,
 In the void waste as in the city full; 85
 And where He vital spreads there must be joy.
 When even at last the solemn hour shall come,
 And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
 I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers,
 Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go 90
 Where Universal Love not smiles around,
 Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their sons;
 From seeming evil still educing good,
 And better thence again, and better still,
 In infinite progression. But I lose 95
 Myself in Him, in Light ineffable!
 Come then, expressive Silence, muse His praise.

END OF THE SEASONS.

Aphra Behn



General Background

Aphra Behn's early life is less well known than others from her century (scholars are not completely sure on some facts). However, it is generally accepted that she was born just outside Canterbury in 1640 before moving to Surinam in South America due to her father receiving a post there. Sadly, her father died on the voyage, but the family still lived there until 1663 (again, it is important to note that these details about her early life are, at best, educated guesses).

Behn was presumably married upon returning to London, but little is known about her husband other than the fact that he was a merchant of German/Dutch ancestry. She became a part of Charles II's court, probably due to speaking several languages, and became a spy for the king of Antwerp in 1666 (she went by the names "Agent 160" and "Astrea"). Her exciting service ended on a sad note though, since she was put into debtor's prison shortly after her service to the king ended (the king was notoriously lax about paying on time—Behn's brief imprisonment for debt was not her fault).

Forced to write to make a living (she famously wrote that she was "forced to write for bread and not ashamed of it"), Behn's initial contributions were to the stage. An accomplished dramatist, she wrote approximately 20 plays over her career before eventually writing her most famous work—*Oroonoko: or, The Royal Slave*. Her last years saw a return to poverty and illness, as her writing skills were no longer in high demand. She died in 1689, with the following epigraph written on her tombstone in Westminster Abbey: "Here lies proof that wit can never be / Defence enough against mortality."

Style and Works

Although Behn's witty work as a dramatist (Dryden and other literary giants of the time were admirers and supporters of her active role in public debates) should not be overlooked, *Oroonoko* is by far her most important contribution to literature. Considered by many scholars to be the first British novel (the argument depends on one's definition of "novel"), the novel is important not only for its status as a new literary art form

but also for its vital antislavery message.

Oroonoko is difficult to classify—not quite fiction, nor fully realistic or romantic, the novel is nonetheless complex, consisting of memoir, travel narrative, and the biography of a fictional character melded together into a fascinating mix of older forms made new together. Whatever form it is, the novel was used by antislavery activists to humanize those so brutally mistreated and wounded by the abomination of human slavery. As a woman mistreated in her own right by her society, Behn was well placed to demonstrate the power of the pen over social wrongs.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Unlike other female authors more weighed down by convention, Behn defied censorship and spoke her mind actively, vigorously, and regularly (Virginia Woolf wrote that all female authors owed a debt to Behn for her example to other female authors). Although she actually wanted to be remembered as a poet, Behn's dramatic and novel work paved the way for female authors who followed.

Undeniably a key player in the development of the novel as a literary form, Behn's fearless ability to portray scandalous material in an acceptable form opened her up to criticism throughout her life. Her work and exploration of patriarchal power over women is integral to the literary work of representing those who lack societal voice.

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OROONOKO OR THE ROYAL SLAVE

BY APHRA BEHN

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAITLAND.

The Epistle Dedicatory was printed as an Appendix; see Note.

My Lord,

Since the World is grown so Nice and Critical upon Dedications, and will Needs be Judging the Book by the Wit of the Patron; we ought, with a great deal of Circumspection to chuse a Person against whom there can be no Exception; and whose Wit and Worth truly Merits all that one is capable of saying upon that Occasion.

The most part of Dedications are charg'd with Flattery; and if the World knows a Man has some Vices, they will not allow one to speak of his Virtues. This, My Lord, is for want of thinking Rightly; if Men wou'd consider with Reason, they wou'd have another sort of Opinion, and Esteem of Dedications; and wou'd believe almost every Great Man has enough to make him Worthy of all that can be said of him there. My Lord, a Picture-drawer, when he intends to make a good Picture, essays the Face many Ways, and in many Lights, before he begins; that he may chuse from the several turns of it, which is most Agreeable and gives it the best Grace; and if there be a Scar, an ungrateful Mole, or any little Defect, they leave it out; and yet make the Picture extremely like: But he who has the good Fortune to draw a Face that is exactly Charming in all its Parts and Features, what Colours or Agreements can be added to make it Finer? All that he can give is but its due; and Glories in a Piece whose Original alone gives it its Perfection. An ill Hand may diminish, but a good Hand cannot augment its Beauty. A Poet is a Painter in his way; he draws to the Life, but in another kind; we draw the Nobler part, the Soul and Mind; the Pictures of the Pen shall out-last those of the Pencil, and even Worlds themselves. 'Tis a short Chronicle of those Lives that possibly wou'd be forgotten by other Historians, or lye neglected there, however deserving an immortal Fame; for Men of eminent Parts are as Exemplary as even Monarchs themselves; and Virtue is a noble Lesson to be learn'd, and 'tis by Comparison we can Judge and Chuse. 'Tis by such illustrious Presidents as your Lordship the World can be Better'd and [510]Refin'd; when a great part of the lazy Nobility shall, with Shame, behold the admirable Accomplishments of a Man so Great, and so Young.

Your Lordship has Read innumerable Volumes of Men and Books, not Vainly for the gust of Novelty, but Knowledge, excellent Knowledge: Like the industrious Bee, from every Flower you return Laden with the precious Dew, which you are sure to turn to the Publick Good. You hoard no one Reflection, but lay it all out in the Glorious Service of your Religion and Country; to both which you are a useful and necessary Honour: They both want such Supporters; and 'tis only Men of so elevated Parts, and fine Knowledge; such noble Principles of Loyalty and Religion this Nation Sighs for. Where shall we find a Man so Young, like St. Augustine, in the midst of all his Youth and Gaiety, Teaching the World Divine Precepts, true Notions of Faith, and Excellent Morality, and, at the same time be also a perfect Pattern of all that accomplish a Great Man? You have, My Lord, all that refin'd Wit that Charms, and the Affability that Obliges; a Generosity that gives a Lustre to your Nobility; that Hospitality, and Greatness of Mind that engages the World; and that admirable Conduct, that so well Instructs it. Our Nation ought to regret and bemoan their Misfortunes, for not being able to claim the Honour of the Birth of a Man who is so fit to serve his Majesty, and his Kingdoms in all Great and Publick

Affairs; And to the Glory of your Nation, be it spoken, it produces more considerable Men, for all fine Sence, Wit, Wisdom, Breeding and Generosity (for the generality of the Nobility) than all other Nations can Boast; and the Fruitfulness of your Virtues sufficiently make amends for the Barrenness of your Soil: Which however cannot be incommode to your Lordship; since your Quality and the Veneration that the Commonalty naturally pay their Lords creates a flowing Plenty there . . . that makes you Happy. And to compleat your Happiness, my Lord, Heaven has blest you with a Lady, to whom it has given all the Graces, Beauties, and Virtues of her Sex; all the Youth, Sweetness of Nature, of a most illustrious Family; and who is a most rare Example to all Wives of Quality, for her eminent Piety, Easiness, and Condescention; and as absolutely merits Respect from all the World as she does that Passion and Resignation she receives from your Lordship; and which is, on her part, with so much Tenderness return'd. Methinks your tranquil Lives are an Image of the new Made and Beautiful Pair in Paradise: And 'tis the Prayers and Wishes of all, who have the Honour to know you, that it may Eternally so continue with Additions of all the Blessings this World can give you.

My Lord, the Obligations I have to some of the Great Men of your Nation, particularly to your Lordship, gives me an Ambition of making my Acknowledgements by all the Opportunities I can; and such humble Fruits [511] as my Industry produces I lay at your Lordship's Feet. This is a true Story, of a Man Gallant enough to merit your Protection, and, had he always been so Fortunate, he had not made so Inglorious an end: The Royal Slave I had the Honour to know in my Travels to the other World; and though I had none above me in that Country yet I wanted power to preserve this Great Man. If there be anything that seems Romantick I beseech your Lordship to consider these Countries do, in all things, so far differ from ours that they produce unconceivable Wonders, at least, so they appear to us, because New and Strange. What I have mentioned I have taken care shou'd be Truth, let the Critical Reader judge as he pleases. 'Twill be no Commendation to the Book to assure your Lordship I writ it in a few Hours, though it may serve to Excuse some of its Faults of Connexion, for I never rested my Pen a Moment for Thought: 'Tis purely the Merit of my Slave that must render it worthy of the Honour it begs; and the Author of that of Subscribing herself,

My Lord

Your Lordship's most oblig'd
and obedient Servant

A. Behn.

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THE HISTORY OF
THE ROYAL SLAVE.

I do not pretend, in giving you the History of this ROYAL SLAVE, to entertain my Reader with the Adventures of a feign'd Hero, whose Life and Fortunes Fancy may manage at the Poet's Pleasure; nor in relating the Truth, design to adorn it with any Accidents, but such as arrived in earnest to him: And it shall come simply into the World, recommended by its own proper Merits, and natural Intrigues; there being enough of Reality to support it, and to render it diverting, without the Addition of Invention.

I was myself an Eye-witness to a great Part of what you will find here set down; and what I could not be Witness of, I receiv'd from the Mouth of the chief Actor in this History, the Hero himself, who gave us the whole Transactions of his Youth: And I shall omit, for Brevity's Sake, a thousand little Accidents of his Life, which, however pleasant to us, where History was scarce, and Adventures very rare, yet might prove tedious and heavy to my Reader, in a World where he finds Diversions for every Minute, new and strange. But we who were perfectly charm'd with the Character of this great Man, were curious to gather every Circumstance of his Life.

The Scene of the last Part of his Adventures lies in a Colony in America, called Surinam, in the West-Indies.

But before I give you the Story of this Gallant Slave, 'tis fit I tell you the Manner of bringing them to these new Colonies; those they make Use of there, not being Natives of the Place: for those we live with in perfect Amity, without daring to command 'em; but, on the contrary, caress 'em with all the brotherly and friendly Affection in the World; trading with them for their Fish, Venison, Buffaloes Skins, and little Rarities; as Marmosets, a sort of Monkey, as big as a Rat or Weasel, but of a marvellous and delicate Shape, having Face and Hands like a Human Creature; and Cousheries, a little Beast in the Form and Fashion of a Lion, as big as a Kitten, but so exactly made in all Parts like that Noble Beast, that it is in Miniature: Then for little Parakatoes, great Parrots, Muckaws, and a thousand other Birds and Beasts of wonderful and surprizing Forms, Shapes, and Colours: For Skins of prodigious Snakes, of which there are some three-score Yards in Length; as is the Skin of one that may be seen at his Majesty's Antiquary's; where are also some rare Flies, of amazing Forms and Colours, presented to 'em by myself; some as big as my Fist, some less; and all of various Excellencies, such as Art cannot imitate. Then we trade for Feathers, which they order into all Shapes, make themselves little short Habits of 'em, and glorious Wreaths for their Heads, Necks, Arms and Legs, whose Tinctures are unconceivable. I had a Set of these presented to me, and I gave 'em to the King's Theatre; it was the Dress of the Indian Queen, infinitely admir'd by Persons of Quality; and was inimitable. Besides these, a thousand little Knacks, and Rarities in Nature; and some of Art, as their Baskets, Weapons, Aprons, &c. We dealt with 'em with Beads of all Colours, Knives, Axes, Pins and Needles, which they us'd only as Tools to drill Holes with in their Ears, Noses and Lips, where they hang a great many little Things; as long Beads, Bits of Tin, Brass or Silver beat thin, and any shining Trinket. The Beads they weave into Aprons about a Quarter of an Ell long, and of the same Breadth; working them very prettily in Flowers of several Colours; which Apron they wear just before 'em, as Adam and Eve did the Fig-leaves; the Men wearing a long Stripe of Linen, which they deal with us for. They thread these Beads also on long Cotton-threads, and make Girdles to tie their Aprons to, which come twenty times, or more, about the Waste, and then cross, like a Shoulder-belt, both Ways, and round their Necks, Arms and Legs. This Adornment, with their long black Hair, and the Face painted in little Specks or Flowers here and there, makes 'em a wonderful Figure to behold. Some of the Beauties, which indeed are finely shap'd, as almost all are, and who have pretty Features, are charming and novel; for they have all that is called Beauty, except the Colour, which is a reddish Yellow; or after a new Oiling, which they often use to themselves, they are of the Colour of a new Brick, but smooth, soft and sleek. They are extreme modest and bashful, very shy, and nice of being touch'd. And tho' they are all thus naked, if one lives for ever among 'em, there is not to be seen an indecent Action, or Glance: and being continually us'd to see one another so unadorn'd, so like our first Parents before the Fall, it seems as if they had no Wishes, there being nothing to heighten Curiosity: but all you can see, you see at once, and every Moment see; and where there is no Novelty, there can be no Curiosity. Not but I have seen a handsome young Indian, dying for Love of a very beautiful young Indian Maid; but all his Courtship was, to fold his Arms, pursue her with his Eyes, and Sighs were all his Language: While she, as if no such Lover were present, or rather as if she desired none such, carefully guarded her Eyes from beholding him; and never approach'd him, but she looked down with all the blushing Modesty I have seen in the most Severe and Cautious of our World. And these People represented to me an absolute Idea of the first State of Innocence, before Man knew how to sin: And 'tis most evident and plain, that simple Nature is the most harmless, inoffensive and virtuous Mistress. 'Tis she alone, if she were permitted, that better instructs the World, than all the Inventions of Man: Religion would here but destroy that Tranquillity they possess by Ignorance; and Laws would but teach 'em to know Offences, of which now they have no Notion. They once made Mourning and Fasting for the Death of the English Governor, who had given his Hand to come on such a Day to 'em, and neither came nor sent; believing, when a Man's Word was past, nothing but Death could or should prevent his keeping it: And when they saw he was not dead, they ask'd him what Name they had for a Man who promis'd a Thing he did not do? The Governor told them, Such a Man was a Lyar, which was a Word of Infamy to a Gentleman. Then one of 'em reply'd, Governor, you are a Lyar, and guilty of that Infamy. They have a native Justice, which knows no Fraud; and they understand no Vice, or Cunning, but when they are taught by the White Men. They have Plurality of Wives; which, when they grow old, serve those that succeed 'em, who are young, but with a Servitude easy and respected; and unless they take Slaves in War, they have no other Attendants.

Those on that Continent where I was, had no King; but the oldest War-Captain was obey'd with great Resignation.

A War-Captain is a Man who has led them on to Battle with Conduct and Success; of whom I shall have Occasion to speak more hereafter, and of some other of their Customs and Manners, as they fall in my Way.

With these People, as I said, we live in perfect Tranquillity, and good Understanding, as it behoves us to do; they knowing all the Places where to seek the best Food of the Country, and the Means of getting it; and for very small and unvaluable Trifles, supplying us with what 'tis almost impossible for us to get; for they do not only in the Woods, and over the Sevana's, in Hunting, supply the Parts of Hounds, by swiftly scouring thro' those almost impassable Places, and by the mere Activity of their Feet, run down the nimblest Deer, and other eatable Beasts; but in the Water, one would think they were Gods of the Rivers, or Fellow-Citizens of the Deep; so rare an Art they have in swimming, diving, and almost living in Water; by which they command the less swift Inhabitants of the Floods. And then for shooting, what they cannot take, or reach with their Hands, they do with Arrows; and have so admirable an Aim, that they will split almost an Hair, and at any Distance that an Arrow can reach: they will shoot down Oranges, and other Fruit, and only touch the Stalk with the Dart's Point, that they may not hurt the Fruit. So that they being on all Occasions very useful to us, we find it absolutely necessary to caress 'em as Friends, and not to treat 'em as Slaves; nor dare we do otherwise, their Numbers so far surpassing ours in that Continent.

Those then whom we make use of to work in our Plantations of Sugar, are Negroes, Black-Slaves altogether, who are transported thither in this Manner.

Those who want Slaves, make a Bargain with a Master, or a Captain of a Ship, and contract to pay him so much apiece, a Matter of twenty Pound a Head, for as many as he agrees for, and to pay for 'em when they shall be deliver'd on such a Plantation: So that when there arrives a Ship laden with Slaves, they who have so contracted, go aboard, and receive their Number by Lot; and perhaps in one Lot that may be for ten, there may happen to be three or four Men, the rest Women and Children. Or be there more or less of either Sex, you are obliged to be contented with your Lot.

Coramantien, a Country of Blacks so called, was one of those Places in which they found the most advantageous Trading for these Slaves, and thither most of our great Traders in that Merchandize traffick; for that Nation is very warlike and brave; and having a continual Campaign, being always in Hostility with one neighbouring Prince or other, they had the Fortune to take a great many Captives: for all they took in Battle were sold as Slaves; at least those common Men who could not ransom themselves. Of these Slaves so taken, the General only has all the Profit; and of these Generals our Captains and Masters of Ships buy all their Freights.

The King of Coramantien was of himself a Man of an hundred and odd Years old, and had no Son, tho' he had many beautiful Black Wives: for most certainly there are Beauties that can charm of that Colour. In his younger Years he had had many gallant Men to his Sons, thirteen of whom died in Battle, conquering when they fell; and he had only left him for his Successor, one Grand-child, Son to one of these dead Victors, who, as soon as he could bear a Bow in his Hand, and a Quiver at his Back, was sent into the Field, to be train'd up by one of the oldest Generals to War; where, from his natural Inclination to Arms, and the Occasions given him, with the good Conduct of the old General, he became, at the Age of seventeen, one of the most expert Captains, and bravest Soldiers that ever saw the Field of Mars: so that he was ador'd as the Wonder of all that World, and the Darling of the Soldiers. Besides, he was adorn'd with a native Beauty, so transcending all those of his gloomy Race, that he struck an Awe and Reverence, even into those that knew not his Quality; as he did into me, who beheld him with Surprize and Wonder, when afterwards he arrived in our World.

He had scarce arrived at his seventeenth Year, when, fighting by his Side, the General was kill'd with an Arrow in his Eye, which the Prince Oroonoko (for so was this gallant Moor call'd) very narrowly avoided; nor had he, if the General who saw the Arrow shot, and perceiving it aimed at the Prince, had not bow'd his Head between, on Purpose to receive it in his own Body, rather than it should touch that of the Prince, and so saved him.

'Twas then, afflicted as Oroonoko was, that he was proclaimed General in the old Man's Place: and then it was, at the finishing of that War, which had continu'd for two 135Years, that the Prince came to Court, where he had hardly been a Month together, from the Time of his fifth Year to that of seventeen: and 'twas amazing to imagine where it was he learn'd so much Humanity; or to give his Accomplishments a juster Name, where 'twas he got that real Greatness of Soul, those refined Notions of true Honour, that absolute Generosity, and that Softness, that was capable of the highest Passions of Love and Gallantry, whose Objects were almost continually fighting Men, or those mangled or dead, who heard no Sounds but those of War and Groans. Some Part of it we may attribute to the Care of a Frenchman of Wit and Learning, who finding it turn to a very good Account to be a sort of Royal Tutor to this young Black, and perceiving him very ready, apt, and quick of Apprehension, took a great Pleasure to teach him Morals, Language and Science; and was for it extremely belov'd and valu'd by him. Another Reason was, he lov'd when he came from War, to see all the English Gentlemen that traded thither; and did not only learn their Language, but that of the Spaniard also, with whom he traded afterwards for Slaves.

I have often seen and conversed with this Great Man, and been a Witness to many of his mighty Actions; and do assure my Reader, the most illustrious Courts could not have produced a braver Man, both for Greatness of Courage and Mind, a Judgment more solid, a Wit more quick, and a Conversation more sweet and diverting. He knew almost as much as if he had read much: He had heard of and admired the Romans: He had heard of the late Civil Wars in England, and the deplorable Death of our great Monarch; and would discourse of it with all the Sense and Abhorrence of the Injustice imaginable. He had an extreme good and graceful Mien, and all the Civility of a well-bred Great Man. He had nothing of Barbarity in his Nature, but in all Points address'd himself as if his Education had been in some European Court.

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This great and just Character of Oroonoko gave me an extreme Curiosity to see him, especially when I knew he spoke French and English, and that I could talk with him. But tho' I had heard so much of him, I was as greatly surprized when I saw him, as if I had heard nothing of him; so beyond all Report I found him. He came into the Room, and addressed himself to me, and some other Women, with the best Grace in the World. He was pretty tall, but of a Shape the most exact that can be fancy'd: The most famous Statuary could not form the Figure of a Man more admirably turn'd from Head to Foot. His Face was not of that brown rusty Black which most of that Nation are, but a perfect Ebony, or polished Jet. His Eyes were the most awful that could be seen, and very piercing; the White of 'em being like Snow, as were his Teeth. His Nose was rising and Roman, instead of African and flat: His Mouth the finest shaped that could be seen; far from those great turn'd Lips, which are so natural to the rest of the Negroes. The whole Proportion and Air of his Face was so nobly and exactly form'd, that bating his Colour, there could be nothing in Nature more beautiful, agreeable and handsome. There was no one Grace wanting, that bears the Standard of true Beauty. His Hair came down to his Shoulders, by the Aids of Art, which was by pulling it out with a Quill, and keeping it comb'd; of which he took particular Care. Nor did the Perfections of his Mind come short of those of his Person; for his Discourse was admirable upon almost any Subject: and whoever had heard him speak, would have been convinced of their Errors, that all fine Wit is confined to the white Men, especially to those of Christendom; and would have confess'd that Oroonoko was as capable even of reigning well, and of governing as wisely, had as great a Soul, as politick Maxims, and was as sensible of Power, as any Prince civiliz'd in the most refined Schools of Humanity and Learning, or the most illustrious Courts.

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This Prince, such as I have describ'd him, whose Soul and Body were so admirably adorned, was (while yet he was in the Court of his Grandfather, as I said) as capable of Love, as 'twas possible for a brave and gallant Man to be; and in saying that, I have named the highest Degree of Love: for sure great Souls are most capable of that Passion.

I have already said, the old General was kill'd by the Shot of an Arrow, by the Side of this Prince, in Battle; and that Oroonoko was made General. This old dead Hero had one only Daughter left of his Race, a Beauty, that to describe her truly, one need say only, she was Female to the noble Male; the beautiful Black Venus to our young Mars; as charming in her Person as he, and of delicate Virtues. I have seen a hundred White Men sighing after her, and making a thousand Vows at her Feet, all in vain and unsuccessful. And she was indeed too great for any but a Prince of her own Nation to adore.

Oroonoko coming from the Wars (which were now ended) after he had made his Court to his Grandfather, he thought in Honour he ought to make a Visit to Imoinda, the Daughter of his Foster-father, the dead General; and to make some Excuses to her, because his Preservation was the Occasion of her Father's Death; and to present her with those Slaves that had been taken in this last Battle, as the Trophies of her Father's Victories. When he came, attended by all the young Soldiers of any Merit, he was infinitely surpriz'd at the Beauty of this fair Queen of Night, whose Face and Person were so exceeding all he had ever beheld, that lovely Modesty with which she receiv'd him, that Softness in her Look and Sighs, upon the melancholy Occasion of this Honour that was done by so great a Man as Oroonoko, and a Prince of whom she had heard such admirable Things; the Awfulness wherewith she receiv'd him, and the Sweetness of her Words and Behaviour while he stay'd, gain'd a perfect Conquest over 138his fierce Heart, and made him feel, the Victor could be subdu'd. So that having made his first Compliments, and presented her an hundred and fifty Slaves in Fetters, he told her with his Eyes, that he was not insensible of her Charms; while Imoinda, who wish'd for nothing more than so glorious a Conquest, was pleas'd to believe, she understood that silent Language of new-born Love; and, from that Moment, put on all her Additions to Beauty.

The Prince return'd to Court with quite another Humour than before; and tho' he did not speak much of the fair Imoinda, he had the Pleasure to hear all his Followers speak of nothing but the Charms of that Maid, insomuch, that, even in the Presence of the old King, they were extolling her, and heightning, if possible, the Beauties they had found in her: so that nothing else was talk'd of, no other Sound was heard in every Corner where there were Whisperers, but Imoinda! Imoinda!

'Twill be imagin'd Oroonoko stay'd not long before he made his second Visit; nor, considering his Quality, not much longer before he told her, he ador'd her. I have often heard him say, that he admir'd by what strange Inspiration he came to talk Things so soft, and so passionate, who never knew Love, nor was us'd to the Conversation of Women; but (to use his own Words) he said, 'Most happily, some new, and, till then, unknown Power instructed his Heart and Tongue in the Language of Love; and at the same Time, in Favour of him, inspir'd Imoinda with a Sense of his Passion.' She was touch'd with what he said, and return'd it all in such Answers as went to his very Heart, with a Pleasure unknown before. Nor did he use those Obligations ill, that Love had done him, but turn'd all his happy Moments to the best Advantage; and as he knew no Vice, his Flame aim'd at nothing but Honour, if such a Distinction may be made in Love; and especially in that Country, where Men take to themselves as many as they can maintain; and where 139the only Crime and Sin against a Woman, is, to turn her off, to abandon her to Want, Shame and Misery: such ill Morals are only practis'd in Christian Countries, where they prefer the bare Name of Religion; and, without Virtue or Morality, think that sufficient. But Oroonoko was none of those Professors; but as he had right Notions of Honour, so he made her such Propositions as were not only and barely such; but, contrary to the Custom of his Country, he made her Vows, she should be the only Woman he would possess while he liv'd; that no Age or Wrinkles should incline him to change: for her Soul would be always fine, and always young; and he should have an eternal Idea in his Mind of the Charms she now bore; and should look into his Heart for that Idea, when he could find it no longer in her

Face.

After a thousand Assurances of his lasting Flame, and her eternal Empire over him, she condescended to receive him for her Husband; or rather, receive him, as the greatest Honour the Gods could do her.

There is a certain Ceremony in these Cases to be observ'd, which I forgot to ask how 'twas perform'd; but 'twas concluded on both Sides, that in Obedience to him, the Grandfather was to be first made acquainted with the Design: For they pay a most absolute Resignation to the Monarch, especially when he is a Parent also.

On the other Side, the old King, who had many Wives, and many Concubines, wanted not Court-Flatterers to insinuate into his Heart a thousand tender Thoughts for this young Beauty; and who represented her to his Fancy, as the most charming he had ever possess'd in all the long Race of his numerous Years. At this Character, his old Heart, like an extinguish'd Brand, most apt to take Fire, felt new Sparks of Love, and began to kindle; and now grown to his second Childhood, long'd with Impatience to behold this gay Thing, with whom, alas! he could but innocently play. But how he should be confirm'd she was 140this Wonder, before he us'd his Power to call her to Court, (where Maidens never came, unless for the King's private Use) he was next to consider; and while he was so doing, he had Intelligence brought him, that Imoinda was most certainly Mistress to the Prince Oroonoko. This gave him some Chagrine: however, it gave him also an Opportunity, one Day, when the Prince was a hunting, to wait on a Man of Quality, as his Slave and Attendant, who should go and make a Present to Imoinda, as from the Prince; he should then, unknown, see this fair Maid, and have an Opportunity to hear what Message she would return the Prince for his Present, and from thence gather the State of her Heart, and Degree of her Inclination. This was put in Execution, and the old Monarch saw, and burn'd: He found her all he had heard, and would not delay his Happiness, but found he should have some Obstacle to overcome her Heart; for she express'd her Sense of the Present the Prince had sent her, in Terms so sweet, so soft and pretty, with an Air of Love and Joy that could not be dissembled, insomuch that 'twas past Doubt whether she lov'd Oroonoko entirely. This gave the old King some Affliction; but he salv'd it with this, that the Obedience the People pay their King, was not at all inferior to what they paid their Gods; and what Love would not oblige Imoinda to do, Duty would compel her to.

He was therefore no sooner got into his Apartment, but he sent the Royal Veil to Imoinda; that is the Ceremony of Invitation: He sends the Lady he has a Mind to honour with his Bed, a Veil, with which she is covered, and secur'd for the King's Use; and 'tis Death to disobey; besides, held a most impious Disobedience.

'Tis not to be imagin'd the Surprize and Grief that seiz'd the lovely Maid at this News and Sight. However, as Delays in these Cases are dangerous, and Pleading worse than Treason; trembling, and almost fainting, she was oblig'd to suffer herself to be cover'd, and led away.

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They brought her thus to Court; and the King, who had caus'd a very rich Bath to be prepar'd, was led into it, where he sat under a Canopy, in State, to receive this long'd-for Virgin; whom he having commanded to be brought to him, they (after disrobing her) led her to the Bath, and making fast the Doors, left her to descend. The King, without more Courtship, bad her throw off her Mantle, and come to his Arms. But Imoinda, all in Tears, threw herself on the Marble, on the Brink of the Bath, and besought him to hear her. She told him, as she was a Maid, how proud of the Divine Glory she should have been, of having it in her Power to oblige her King: but as by the Laws he could not, and from his Royal Goodness would not take from any Man his wedded Wife; so she believ'd she should be the occasion of making him commit a great Sin, if she did not reveal her State and Condition; and tell him she was another's, and could not be so happy to be his.

The King, enrag'd at this Delay, hastily demanded the Name of the bold Man, that had married a Woman of her Degree, without his Consent. Imoinda seeing his Eyes fierce, and his Hands tremble, (whether with Age or

Anger, I know not, but she fancy'd the last) almost repented she had said so much, for now she fear'd the Storm would fall on the Prince; she therefore said a thousand Things to appease the raging of his Flame, and to prepare him to hear who it was with Calmness: but before she spoke, he imagin'd who she meant, but would not seem to do so, but commanded her to lay aside her Mantle, and suffer herself to receive his Caresses, or, by his Gods he swore, that happy Man whom she was going to name should die, tho' it was even Oroonoko himself. Therefore (said he) deny this Marriage, and swear thyself a Maid. That (reply'd Imoinda) by all our Powers I do; for I am not yet known to my Husband. 'Tis enough (said the King) 'tis enough both to satisfy my Conscience and my Heart. And rising from his Seat, he 142went and led her into the Bath; it being in vain for her to resist.

In this Time, the Prince, who was return'd from Hunting, went to visit his Imoinda, but found her gone; and not only so, but heard she had receiv'd the Royal Veil. This rais'd him to a Storm; and in his Madness, they had much ado to save him from laying violent Hands on himself. Force first prevail'd, and then Reason: They urg'd all to him, that might oppose his Rage; but nothing weigh'd so greatly with him as the King's old Age, uncapable of injuring him with Imoinda. He would give Way to that Hope, because it pleas'd him most, and flatter'd best his Heart. Yet this serv'd not altogether to make him cease his different Passions, which sometimes rag'd within him, and soften'd into Showers. 'Twas not enough to appease him, to tell him, his Grandfather was old, and could not that Way injure him, while he retain'd that awful Duty which the young Men are us'd there to pay to their grave Relations. He could not be convinc'd he had no Cause to sigh and mourn for the Loss of a Mistress, he could not with all his Strength and Courage retrieve, and he would often cry, 'Oh, my Friends! were she in wall'd Cities, or confin'd from me in Fortifications of the greatest Strength; did Inchantments or Monsters detain her from me; I would venture thro' any Hazard to free her; But here, in the Arms of a feeble old Man, my Youth, my violent Love, my Trade in Arms, and all my vast Desire of Glory, avail me nothing. Imoinda is as irrecoverably lost to me, as if she were snatch'd by the cold Arms of Death: Oh! she is never to be retrieved. If I would wait tedious Years; till Fate should bow the old King to his Grave, even that would not leave me Imoinda free; but still that Custom that makes it so vile a Crime for a Son to marry his Father's Wives or Mistresses, would hinder my Happiness; unless I would either ignobly set an ill Precedent to my Successors, or abandon my Country, and 143fly with her to some unknown World who never heard our Story.'

But it was objected to him, That his Case was not the same: for Imoinda being his lawful Wife by solemn Contract, 'twas he was the injur'd Man, and might, if he so pleas'd, take Imoinda back, the Breach of the Law being on his Grandfather's Side; and that if he could circumvent him, and redeem her from the Otan, which is the Palace of the King's Women, a sort of Seraglio, it was both just and lawful for him so to do.

This Reasoning had some Force upon him, and he should have been entirely comforted, but for the Thought that she was possess'd by his Grandfather. However, he lov'd her so well, that he was resolv'd to believe what most favour'd his Hope, and to endeavour to learn from Imoinda's own Mouth, what only she could satisfy him in, whether she was robb'd of that Blessing which was only due to his Faith and Love. But as it was very hard to get a Sight of the Women, (for no Men ever enter'd into the Otan but when the King went to entertain himself with some one of his Wives or Mistresses; and 'twas Death, at any other Time, for any other to go in) so he knew not how to contrive to get a Sight of her.

While Oroonoko felt all the Agonies of Love, and suffer'd under a Torment the most painful in the World, the old King was not exempted from his Share of Affliction. He was troubled, for having been forc'd, by an irresistible Passion, to rob his Son of a Treasure, he knew, could not but be extremely dear to him; since she was the most beautiful that ever had been seen, and had besides, all the Sweetness and Innocence of Youth and Modesty, with a Charm of Wit surpassing all. He found, that however she was forc'd to expose her lovely Person to his wither'd Arms, she could only sigh and weep there, and think of Oroonoko; and oftentimes could not forbear speaking of him, tho' her Life were, by Custom, forfeited by owning her Passion. 144But she spoke not of a Lover only, but of a Prince dear to him to whom she spoke; and of the Praises of a Man, who, 'till now, fill'd the old Man's Soul with Joy at every Recital of his Bravery, or even his Name. And 'twas this

Dotage on our young Hero, that gave Imoinda a thousand Privileges to speak of him without offending; and this Condescension in the old King, that made her take the Satisfaction of speaking of him so very often.

Besides, he many times enquir'd how the Prince bore himself: And those of whom he ask'd, being entirely Slaves to the Merits and Virtues of the Prince, still answer'd what they thought conduc'd best to his Service; which was, to make the old King fancy that the Prince had no more Interest in Imoinda, and had resign'd her willingly to the Pleasure of the King; that he diverted himself with his Mathematicians, his Fortifications, his Officers, and his Hunting.

This pleas'd the old Lover, who fail'd not to report these Things again to Imoinda, that she might, by the Example of her young Lover, withdraw her Heart, and rest better contented in his Arms. But, however she was forc'd to receive this unwelcome News, in all Appearance, with Unconcern and Content; her Heart was bursting within, and she was only happy when she could get alone, to vent her Grievs and Moans with Sighs and Tears.

What Reports of the Prince's Conduct were made to the King, he thought good to justify, as far as possibly he could, by his Actions; and when he appear'd in the Presence of the King, he shew'd a Face not at all betraying his Heart: so that in a little Time, the old Man, being entirely convinc'd that he was no longer a Lover of Imoinda he carry'd him with him in his Train to the Otan, often to banquet with his Mistresses. But as soon as he enter'd, one Day, into the Apartment of Imoinda, with the King, at the first Glance from her Eyes, notwithstanding all his determined Resolution, he was ready to sink in the Place where he stood; and had certainly done so, but for the Support of Aboan, a young Man who was next to him; which, with his Change of Countenance, had betray'd him, had the King chanc'd to look that Way. And I have observ'd, 'tis a very great Error in those who laugh when one says, A Negro can change Colour: for I have seen 'em as frequently blush, and look pale, and that as visibly as ever I saw in the most beautiful White. And 'tis certain, that both these Changes were evident, this Day, in both these Lovers. And Imoinda, who saw with some Joy the Change in the Prince's Face, and found it in her own, strove to divert the King from beholding either, by a forc'd Caress, with which she met him; which was a new Wound in the Heart of the poor dying Prince. But as soon as the King was busy'd in looking on some fine Thing of Imoinda's making, she had Time to tell the Prince, with her angry, but Love-darting Eyes, that she resented his Coldness, and bemoan'd her own miserable Captivity. Nor were his Eyes silent, but answer'd her's again, as much as Eyes could do, instructed by the most tender and most passionate Heart that ever lov'd: And they spoke so well, and so effectually, as Imoinda no longer doubted but she was the only Delight and Darling of that Soul she found pleading in 'em its Right of Love, which none was more willing to resign than she. And 'twas this powerful Language alone that in an Instant convey'd all the Thoughts of their Souls to each other; that they both found there wanted but Opportunity to make them both entirely happy. But when he saw another Door open'd by Onahal (a former old Wife of the King's, who now had Charge of Imoinda) and saw the Prospect of a Bed of State made ready, with Sweets and Flowers for the Dalliance of the King, who immediately led the trembling Victim from his Sight, into that prepar'd Repose; what Rage! what wild Frenzies seiz'd his Heart! which forcing to keep within Bounds, and to suffer without Noise, it became the more insupportable, and rent his Soul with ten thousand Pains. He was forc'd to retire to vent his Groans, where he fell down on a Carpet, and lay struggling a long Time, and only breathing now and then—Oh Imoinda! When Onahal had finished her necessary Affair within, shutting the Door, she came forth, to wait till the King called; and hearing some one sighing in the other Room, she pass'd on, and found the Prince in that deplorable Condition, which she thought needed her Aid. She gave him Cordials, but all in vain; till finding the Nature of his Disease, by his Sighs, and naming Imoinda, she told him he had not so much Cause as he imagined to afflict himself: for if he knew the King so well as she did, he would not lose a Moment in Jealousy; and that she was confident that Imoinda bore, at this Minute, Part in his Affliction. Aboan was of the same Opinion, and both together persuaded him to re-assume his Courage; and all sitting down on the Carpet, the Prince said so many obliging Things to Onahal, that he half-persuaded her to be of his Party: and she promised him, she would thus far comply with his just Desires, that she would let Imoinda know how faithful he was, what he suffer'd, and what he said.

This Discourse lasted till the King called, which gave Oroonoko a certain Satisfaction; and with the Hope Onahal had made him conceive, he assumed a Look as gay as 'twas possible a Man in his Circumstances could do: and presently after, he was call'd in with the rest who waited without. The King commanded Musick to be brought, and several of his young Wives and Mistresses came all together by his Command, to dance before him; where Imoinda perform'd her Part with an Air and Grace so surpassing all the rest, as her Beauty was above 'em, and received the Present ordained as a Prize. The Prince was every Moment more charmed with the new Beauties and Graces he beheld in this Fair-One; and while he gazed, and she danc'd, Onahal was retired to a Window with Aboan.

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This Onahal, as I said, was one of the Cast-Mistresses of the old King; and 'twas these (now past their Beauty) that were made Guardians or Governantees to the new and the young ones, and whose Business it was to teach them all those wanton Arts of Love, with which they prevail'd and charm'd heretofore in their Turn; and who now treated the triumphing Happy-ones with all the Severity, as to Liberty and Freedom, that was possible, in Revenge of the Honours they rob them of; envying them those Satisfactions, those Gallantries and Presents, that were once made to themselves, while Youth and Beauty lasted, and which they now saw pass, as it were regardless by, and paid only to the Bloomings. And certainly, nothing is more afflicting to a decay'd Beauty, than to behold in itself declining Charms, that were once ador'd; and to find those Caresses paid to new Beauties, to which once she laid Claim; to hear them whisper, as she passes by, that once was a delicate Woman. Those abandon'd ladies therefore endeavour to revenge all the Despights and Decays of Time, on these flourishing Happy-ones. And 'twas this Severity that gave Oroonoko a thousand Fears he should never prevail with Onahal to see Imoinda. But, as I said, she was now retir'd to a Window with Aboan.

This young Man was not only one of the best Quality, but a Man extremely well made, and beautiful; and coming often to attend the King to the Otan, he had subdu'd the Heart of the antiquated Onahal, which had not forgot how pleasant it was to be in love. And tho' she had some Decays in her Face, she had none in her Sense and Wit; she was there agreeable still, even to Aboan's Youth: so that he took Pleasure in entertaining her with Discourses of Love. He knew also, that to make his Court to these She-favourites, was the Way to be great; these being the Persons that do all Affairs and Business at Court. He had also observed, that she had given him Glances more tender and inviting than she had done to others of his Quality. And now, when he saw that her Favour could so absolutely oblige the Prince, he fail'd not to sigh in her Ear, and look with Eyes all soft upon her, and gave her Hope that she had made some Impressions on his Heart. He found her pleas'd at this, and making a thousand Advances to him: but the Ceremony ending, and the King departing, broke up the Company for that Day, and his Conversation.

Aboan fail'd not that Night to tell the Prince of his Success, and how advantageous the Service of Onahal might be to his Amour with Imoinda. The Prince was overjoy'd with this good News, and besought him, if it were possible, to caress her so, as to engage her entirely, which he could not fail to do, if he comply'd with her Desires: For then (said the Prince) her Life lying at your Mercy, she must grant you the Request you make in my Behalf. Aboan understood him, and assur'd him he would make Love so effectually, that he would defy the most expert Mistress of the Art, to find out whether he dissembled it, or had it really. And 'twas with Impatience they waited the next Opportunity of going to the Otan.

The Wars came on, the Time of taking the Field approached; and 'twas impossible for the Prince to delay his going at the Head of his Army to encounter the Enemy; so that every Day seem'd a tedious Year, till he saw his Imoinda: for he believed he could not live, if he were forced away without being so happy. 'Twas with Impatience therefore that he expected the next Visit the King would make; and, according to his Wish, it was not long.

The Parley of the Eyes of these two Lovers had not pass'd so secretly, but an old jealous Lover could spy it; or rather, he wanted not Flatterers who told him they observ'd it: so that the Prince was hasten'd to the Camp, and this was the last Visit he found he should make to the Otan; he therefore urged Aboan to make the best of this last Effort, and to explain himself so to Onahal, that she 149deferring her Enjoyment of her young Lover no longer, might make Way for the Prince to speak to Imoinda.

The whole Affair being agreed on between the Prince and Aboan, they attended the King, as the Custom was, to the Otan; where, while the whole Company was taken up in beholding the Dancing, and Antick Postures the Women-Royal made to divert the King, Onahal singled out Aboan, whom she found most pliable to her Wish. When she had him where she believed she could not be heard, she sigh'd to him, and softly cry'd, 'Ah, Aboan! when will you be sensible of my Passion? I confess it with my Mouth, because I would not give my Eyes the Lye; and you have but too much already perceived they have confess'd my Flame: nor would I have you believe, that because I am the abandon'd Mistress of a King, I esteem myself altogether divested of Charms: No, Aboan; I have still a Rest of Beauty enough engaging, and have learn'd to please too well, not to be desirable. I can have Lovers still, but will have none but Aboan. Madam, (reply'd the half-feigning Youth) you have already, by my Eyes, found you can still conquer; and I believe 'tis in pity of me you condescend to this kind Confession. But, Madam, Words are used to be so small a Part of our Country-Courtship, that 'tis rare one can get so happy an Opportunity as to tell one's Heart; and those few Minutes we have, are forced to be snatch'd for more certain Proofs of Love than speaking and sighing: and such I languish for.'

He spoke this with such a Tone, that she hoped it true, and could not forbear believing it; and being wholly transported with Joy for having subdued the finest of all the King's Subjects to her Desires, she took from her Ears two large Pearls, and commanded him to wear 'em in his. He would have refused 'em, crying, Madam these are not the Proofs of our Love that I expect; 'tis Opportunity, 'tis a Lone-Hour only, that can make me happy. But forcing the Pearls into his Hand, she whisper'd softly to him; Oh! 150do not fear a Woman's Invention, when Love sets her a thinking. And pressing his Hand, she cry'd, This Night you shall be happy. Come to the Gate of the Orange-Grove, behind the Otan, and I will be ready about midnight to receive you. 'Twas thus agreed, and she left him, that no Notice might be taken of their speaking together.

The Ladies were still dancing, and the King, laid on a Carpet, with a great deal of Pleasure was beholding them, especially Imoinda, who that Day appeared more lovely than ever, being enlivened with the good Tidings Onahal had brought her, of the constant Passion the Prince had for her. The Prince was laid on another Carpet at the other End of the Room, with his Eyes fixed on the Object of his Soul; and as she turned or moved, so did they; and she alone gave his Eyes and Soul their Motions. Nor did Imoinda employ her Eyes to any other use, than in beholding with infinite Pleasure the Joy she produced in those of the Prince. But while she was more regarding him than the Steps she took, she chanced to fall, and so near him, as that leaping with extreme Force from the Carpet, he caught her in his Arms as she fell; and 'twas visible to the whole Presence, the Joy wherewith he received her. He clasped her close to his Bosom, and quite forgot that Reverence that was due to the Mistress of a King, and that Punishment that is the Reward of a Boldness of this Nature. And had not the Presence of Mind of Imoinda (fonder of his Safety than her own) befriended him, in making her spring from his Arms, and fall into her Dance again, he had at that Instant met his Death; for the old King, jealous to the last Degree, rose up in Rage, broke all the Diversion, and led Imoinda to her Apartment, and sent out Word to the Prince, to go immediately to the Camp; and that if he were found another Night in Court, he should suffer the Death ordained for disobedient Offenders.

You may imagine how welcome this News was to 151Oroonoko, whose unseasonable Transport and Caress of Imoinda was blamed by all Men that loved him: and now he perceived his Fault, yet cry'd, That for such another Moment he would be content to die.

All the Otan was in Disorder about this Accident; and Onahal was particularly concern'd, because on the

Prince's Stay depended her Happiness; for she could no longer expect that of Aboan: So that e'er they departed, they contrived it so, that the Prince and he should both come that Night to the Grove of the Otan, which was all of Oranges and Citrons, and that there they would wait her Orders.

They parted thus with Grief enough 'till Night, leaving the King in Possession of the lovely Maid. But nothing could appease the Jealousy of the old Lover; he would not be imposed on, but would have it, that Imoinda made a false Step on Purpose to fall into Oroonoko's Bosom, and that all things looked like a Design on both Sides; and 'twas in vain she protested her Innocence: He was old and obstinate, and left her, more than half assur'd that his Fear was true.

The King going to his Apartment, sent to know where the Prince was, and if he intended to obey his Command. The Messenger return'd, and told him, he found the Prince pensive, and altogether unprepar'd for the Campaign; that he lay negligently on the Ground, and answer'd very little. This confirmed the Jealousy of the King, and he commanded that they should very narrowly and privately watch his Motions; and that he should not stir from his Apartment, but one Spy or other should be employ'd to watch him: So that the Hour approaching, wherein he was to go to the Citron-Grove; and taking only Aboan along with him, he leaves his Apartment, and was watched to the very Gate of the Otan; where he was seen to enter, and where they left him, to carry back the Tidings to the King.

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Oroonoko and Aboan were no sooner enter'd, but Onahal led the Prince to the Apartment of Imoinda; who, not knowing any thing of her Happiness, was laid in Bed. But Onahal only left him in her Chamber, to make the best of his Opportunity, and took her dear Aboan to her own; where he shewed the Height of Complaisance for his Prince, when, to give him an Opportunity, he suffered himself to be caressed in Bed by Onahal.

The Prince softly waken'd Imoinda, who was not a little surpriz'd with Joy to find him there; and yet she trembled with a thousand Fears. I believe he omitted saying nothing to this young Maid, that might persuade her to suffer him to seize his own, and take the Rights of Love. And I believe she was not long resisting those Arms where she so longed to be; and having Opportunity, Night, and Silence, Youth, Love, and Desire, he soon prevail'd, and ravished in a Moment what his old Grandfather had been endeavouring for so many Months.

'Tis not to be imagined the Satisfaction of these two young Lovers; nor the Vows she made him, that she remained a spotless Maid till that Night, and that what she did with his Grandfather had robb'd him of no Part of her Virgin-Honour; the Gods, in Mercy and Justice, having reserved that for her plighted Lord, to whom of Right it belonged. And 'tis impossible to express the Transports he suffer'd, while he listen'd to a Discourse so charming from her loved Lips; and clasped that Body in his Arms, for whom he had so long languished; and nothing now afflicted him, but his sudden Departure from her; for he told her the Necessity, and his Commands, but should depart satisfy'd in this, That since the old King had hitherto not been able to deprive him of those Enjoyments which only belonged to him, he believed for the future he would be less able to injure him; so that, abating the Scandal of the Veil, which was no otherwise so, than that she was Wife to another, he believed her safe, even 153in the Arms of the King, and innocent; yet would he have ventur'd at the Conquest of the World, and have given it all to have had her avoided that Honour of receiving the Royal Veil. 'Twas thus, between a thousand Caresses, that both bemoan'd the hard Fate of Youth and Beauty, so liable to that cruel Promotion: 'Twas a Glory that could well have been spared here, tho' desired and aim'd at by all the young Females of that Kingdom.

But while they were thus fondly employ'd, forgetting how Time ran on, and that the Dawn must conduct him far away from his only Happiness, they heard a great Noise in the Otan, and unusual Voices of Men; at which the Prince, starting from the Arms of the frightened Imoinda, ran to a little Battle-Ax he used to wear by his Side; and having not so much Leisure as to put on his Habit, he opposed himself against some who were already opening

the Door: which they did with so much Violence, that Oroonoko was not able to defend it; but was forced to cry out with a commanding Voice, ‘Whoever ye are that have the Boldness to attempt to approach this Apartment thus rudely; know, that I, the Prince Oroonoko, will revenge it with the certain Death of him that first enters: Therefore stand back, and know, this Place is sacred to Love and Me this Night; To-morrow ’tis the King’s.’

This he spoke with a Voice so resolv’d and assur’d, that they soon retired from the Door; but cry’d, ‘’Tis by the King’s Command we are come; and being satisfy’d by thy Voice, O Prince, as much as if we had enter’d, we can report to the King the Truth of all his Fears, and leave thee to provide for thy own Safety, as thou art advis’d by thy Friends.’

At these Words they departed, and left the Prince to take a short and sad Leave of his Imoinda; who, trusting in the Strength of her Charms, believed she should appease the Fury of a jealous King, by saying, she was surprized, and that it was by Force of Arms he got into her Apartment. 154All her Concern now was for his Life, and therefore she hasten’d him to the Camp, and with much ado prevail’d on him to go. Nor was it she alone that prevail’d; Aboan and Onahal both pleaded, and both assured him of a Lye that should be well enough contrived to secure Imoinda. So that at last, with a Heart sad as Death, dying Eyes, and sighing Soul, Oroonoko departed, and took his way to the Camp.

It was not long after, the King in Person came to the Otan; where beholding Imoinda, with Rage in his Eyes, he upbraided her Wickedness, and Perfidy; and threatening her Royal Lover, she fell on her Face at his Feet, bedewing the Floor with her Tears, and imploring his Pardon for a Fault which she had not with her Will committed; as Onahal, who was also prostrate with her, could testify: That, unknown to her, he had broke into her Apartment, and ravished her. She spoke this much against her Conscience; but to save her own Life, ’twas absolutely necessary she should feign this Falsity. She knew it could not injure the Prince, he being fled to an Army that would stand by him, against any Injuries that should assault him. However, this last Thought of Imoinda’s being ravished, changed the Measures of his Revenge; and whereas before he designed to be himself her Executioner, he now resolved she should not die. But as it is the greatest Crime in Nature amongst them, to touch a Woman after having been possess’d by a Son, a Father, or a Brother, so now he looked on Imoinda as a polluted thing wholly unfit for his Embrace; nor would he resign her to his Grandson, because she had received the Royal Veil: He therefore removes her from the Otan, with Onahal; whom he put into safe Hands, with Order they should be both sold off as Slaves to another Country, either Christian or Heathen, ’twas no Matter where.

This cruel Sentence, worse than Death, they implor’d might be reversed; but their Prayers were vain, and it was 155put in Execution accordingly, and that with so much Secrecy, that none, either without or within the Otan, knew any thing of their Absence, or their Destiny.

The old King nevertheless executed this with a great deal of Reluctancy; but he believed he had made a very great Conquest over himself, when he had once resolved, and had perform’d what he resolved. He believed now, that his Love had been unjust; and that he could not expect the Gods, or Captain of the Clouds (as they call the unknown Power) would suffer a better Consequence from so ill a Cause. He now begins to hold Oroonoko excused; and to say, he had reason for what he did. And now every body could assure the King how passionately Imoinda was beloved by the Prince; even those confess’d it now, who said the contrary before his Flame was not abated. So that the King being old, and not able to defend himself in War, and having no Sons of all his Race remaining alive, but only this, to maintain him on his Throne; and looking on this as a man disobliged, first by the Rape of his Mistress, or rather Wife, and now by depriving him wholly of her, he fear’d, might make him desperate, and do some cruel thing, either to himself or his old Grandfather the Offender, he began to repent him extremely of the Contempt he had, in his Rage, put on Imoinda. Besides, he consider’d he ought in Honour to have killed her for this Offence, if it had been one. He ought to have had so much Value and Consideration for a Maid of her Quality, as to have nobly put her to Death, and not to have sold her like a common Slave; the greatest Revenge, and the most disgraceful of any, and to which they a thousand times

prefer Death, and implore it; as Imoinda did, but could not obtain that Honour. Seeing therefore it was certain that Oroonoko would highly resent this Affront, he thought good to make some Excuse for his Rashness to him; and to that End, he sent a Messenger to the Camp, with Orders to treat with him about the Matter, to gain 156his Pardon, and endeavour to mitigate his Grief: but that by no Means he should tell him she was sold, but secretly put to Death; for he knew he should never obtain his Pardon for the other.

When the Messenger came, he found the Prince upon the Point of engaging with the Enemy; but as soon as he heard of the Arrival of the Messenger, he commanded him to his Tent, where he embraced him, and received him with Joy; which was soon abated by the down-cast Looks of the Messenger, who was instantly demanded the Cause by Oroonoko; who, impatient of Delay, ask’d a thousand Questions in a Breath, and all concerning Imoinda. But there needed little Return; for he could almost answer himself of all he demanded, from his Sight and Eyes. At last the Messenger casting himself at the Prince’s Feet, and kissing them with all the Submission of a Man that had something to implore which he dreaded to utter, besought him to hear with Calmness what he had to deliver to him, and to call up all his noble and heroick Courage, to encounter with his Words, and defend himself against the ungrateful Things he had to relate. Oroonoko reply’d, with a deep Sigh, and a languishing Voice,—I am armed against their worst Efforts—For I know they will tell me, Imoinda is no more—And after that, you may spare the rest. Then, commanding him to rise, he laid himself on a Carpet, under a rich Pavilion, and remained a good while silent, and was hardly heard to sigh. When he was come a little to himself, the Messenger asked him Leave to deliver that Part of his Embassy which the Prince had not yet divin’d: And the Prince cry’d, I permit thee—Then he told him the Affliction the old King was in, for the Rashness he had committed in his Cruelty to Imoinda; and how he deign’d to ask Pardon for his Offence, and to implore the Prince would not suffer that Loss to touch his Heart too sensibly, which now all the Gods could not restore him, but might recompense him in Glory, which he begged he 157would pursue; and that Death, that common Revenger of all Injuries, would soon even the Account between him and a feeble old Man.

Oroonoko bad him return his Duty to his Lord and Master; and to assure him, there was no Account of Revenge to be adjudged between them; If there was, he was the Aggressor, and that Death would be just, and, maugre his Age, would see him righted; and he was contented to leave his Share of Glory to Youths more fortunate and worthy of that Favour from the Gods: That henceforth he would never lift a Weapon, or draw a Bow, but abandon the small Remains of his Life to Sighs and Tears, and the continual Thoughts of what his Lord and Grandfather had thought good to send out of the World, with all that Youth, that Innocence and Beauty.

After having spoken this, whatever his greatest Officers and Men of the best Rank could do, they could not raise him from the Carpet, or persuade him to Action, and Resolutions of Life; but commanding all to retire, he shut himself into his Pavilion all that Day, while the Enemy was ready to engage: and wondering at the Delay, the whole Body of the chief of the Army then address’d themselves to him, and to whom they had much ado to get Admittance. They fell on their Faces at the Foot of his Carpet, where they lay, and besought him with earnest Prayers and Tears to lead them forth to Battle, and not let the Enemy take Advantages of them; and implored him to have Regard to his Glory, and to the World, that depended on his Courage and Conduct. But he made no other Reply to all their Supplications than this, That he had now no more Business for Glory; and for the World, it was a Trifle not worth his Care: Go, (continued he, sighing) and divide it amongst you, and reap with Joy what you so vainly prize, and leave me to my more welcome Destiny.

They then demanded what they should do, and whom he would constitute in his Room, that the Confusion of 158ambitious Youth and Power might not ruin their Order, and make them a Prey to the Enemy. He reply’d, he would not give himself that Trouble—but wished ’em to chuse the bravest Man amongst ’em, let his Quality or Birth be what it would: ‘For, Oh my Friends! (says he) it is not Titles make Men Brave or Good; or Birth that bestows Courage and Generosity, or makes the Owner Happy. Believe this, when you behold Oroonoko the most wretched, and abandoned by Fortune, of all the Creation of the Gods.’ So turning himself about, he would make no more Reply to all they could urge or implore.

The Army beholding their Officers return unsuccessful, with sad Faces and ominous Looks, that presaged no good Luck, suffer'd a thousand Fears to take Possession of their Hearts, and the Enemy to come even upon them before they could provide for their Safety by any Defence: and tho' they were assured by some who had a Mind to animate them, that they should be immediately headed by the Prince; and that in the mean time Aboan had Orders to command as General; yet they were so dismay'd for want of that great Example of Bravery, that they could make but a very feeble Resistance; and, at last, down-right fled before the Enemy, who pursued 'em to the very Tents, killing 'em: Nor could all Aboan's Courage, which that Day gained him immortal Glory, shame 'em into a manly Defence of themselves. The Guards that were left behind about the Prince's Tent, seeing the Soldiers flee before the Enemy, and scatter themselves all over the Plain, in great Disorder, made such Out-cries, as rouz'd the Prince from his amorous Slumber, in which he had remained buried for two Days, without permitting any Sustenance to approach him. But, in Spite of all his Resolutions, he had not the Constancy of Grief to that Degree, as to make him insensible of the Danger of his Army; and in that Instant he leaped from his Couch, and cry'd—'Come, if we must die, let us meet Death the noblest Way; and 'twill be 159more like Oroonoko to encounter him at an Army's Head, opposing the Torrent of a conquering Foe, than lazily on a Couch, to wait his lingering Pleasure, and die every Moment by a thousand racking Thoughts; or be tamely taken by an Enemy, and led a whining, love-sick Slave to adorn the Triumphs of Jamoan, that young Victor, who already is enter'd beyond the Limits I have prescrib'd him.'

While he was speaking, he suffer'd his People to dress him for the Field; and sallying out of his Pavilion, with more Life and Vigour in his Countenance than ever he shew'd, he appear'd like some Divine Power descended to save his Country from Destruction: And his People had purposely put him on all Things that might make him shine with most Splendor, to strike a reverend Awe into the Beholders. He flew into the thickest of those that were pursuing his Men; and being animated with Despair, he fought as if he came on Purpose to die, and did such Things as will not be believed that human Strength could perform; and such, as soon inspir'd all the rest with new Courage, and new Ardor. And now it was that they began to fight indeed; and so, as if they would not be out-done even by their ador'd Hero; who turning the Tide of the Victory, changing absolutely the Fate of the Day, gain'd an entire Conquest: And Oroonoko having the good Fortune to single out Jamoan, he took him Prisoner with his own Hand, having wounded him almost to Death.

This Jamoan afterwards became very dear to him, being a Man very Gallant, and of excellent Graces, and fine Parts; so that he never put him amongst the Rank of Captives as they used to do, without Distinction, for the common Sale, or Market, but kept him in his own Court, where he retain'd nothing of the Prisoner but the Name, and returned no more into his own Country; so great an Affection he took for Oroonoko, and by a thousand Tales and Adventures of Love and Gallantry, flatter'd his Disease of Melancholy and Languishment; which I have often heard 160him say, had certainly kill'd him, but for the Conversation of this Prince and Aboan, and the French Governor he had from his Childhood, of whom I have spoken before, and who was a Man of admirable Wit, great Ingenuity and Learning; all which he had infused into his young Pupil. This Frenchman was banished out of his own Country for some Heretical Notions he held; and tho' he was a Man of very little Religion, yet he had admirable Morals, and a brave Soul.

After the total Defeat of Jamoan's Army, which all fled, or were left dead upon the Place, they spent some Time in the Camp; Oroonoko chusing rather to remain a While there in his Tents, than to enter into a Palace, or live in a Court where he had so lately suffer'd so great a Loss, the Officers therefore, who saw and knew his Cause of Discontent, invented all sorts of Diversions and Sports to entertain their Prince: So that what with those Amusements abroad, and others at home, that is, within their Tents, with the Persuasions, Arguments, and Care of his Friends and Servants that he more peculiarly priz'd, he wore off in Time a great Part of that Chagrin, and Torture of Despair, which the first Efforts of Imoinda's Death had given him; insomuch, as having received a thousand kind Embassies from the King, and Invitation to return to Court, he obey'd, tho' with no little Reluctancy; and when he did so, there was a visible Change in him, and for a long Time he was much

more melancholy than before. But Time lessens all Extremes, and reduces 'em to Mediums, and Unconcern; but no Motives of Beauties, tho' all endeavour'd it, could engage him in any sort of Amour, tho' he had all the Invitations to it, both from his own Youth, and other Ambitions and Designs.

Oroonoko was no sooner return'd from this last Conquest, and receiv'd at Court with all the Joy and Magnificence that could be express'd to a young Victor, who was not only return'd Triumphant, but belov'd like a Deity, than there arriv'd in the Port an English Ship.

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The Master of it had often before been in these Countries, and was very well known to Oroonoko, with whom he had traffick'd for Slaves, and had us'd to do the same with his Predecessors.

This Commander was a Man of a finer sort of Address and Conversation, better bred, and more engaging, than most of that sort of Men are; so that he seem'd rather never to have been bred out of a Court, than almost all his Life at Sea. This Captain therefore was always better receiv'd at Court, than most of the Traders to those Countries were; and especially by Oroonoko, who was more civiliz'd, according to the European Mode, than any other had been, and took more Delight in the White Nations; and, above all, Men of Parts and Wit. To this Captain he sold abundance of his Slaves; and for the Favour and Esteem he had for him, made him many Presents, and oblig'd him to stay at Court as long as possibly he could. Which the Captain seem'd to take as a very great Honour done him, entertaining the Prince every Day with Globes and Maps, and Mathematical Discourses and Instruments; eating, drinking, hunting, and living with him with so much Familiarity, that it was not to be doubted but he had gain'd very greatly upon the Heart of this gallant young Man. And the Captain, in Return of all these mighty Favours, besought the Prince to honour his Vessel with his Presence some Day or other at Dinner, before he should set sail; which he condescended to accept, and appointed his Day. The Captain, on his Part, fail'd not to have all Things in a Readiness, in the most magnificent Order he could possibly: And the Day being come, the Captain, in his Boat, richly adorn'd with Carpets and Velvet Cushions, rowed to the Shore, to receive the Prince; with another Long-boat, where was plac'd all his Musick and Trumpets, with which Oroonoko was extremely delighted; who met him on the Shore, attended by his French Governor, Jamoan, Aboan, and about an Hundred of the noblest of the Youths 162of the Court: And after they had first carried the Prince on Board, the Boats fetch'd the rest off; where they found a very splendid Treat, with all Sorts of fine Wines; and were as well entertain'd, as 'twas possible in such a Place to be.

The Prince having drank hard of Punch, and several Sorts of Wine, as did all the rest, (for great Care was taken they should want nothing of that Part of the Entertainment) was very merry, and in great Admiration of the Ship, for he had never been in one before; so that he was curious of beholding every Place where he decently might descend. The rest, no less curious, who were not quite overcome with drinking, rambled at their Pleasure Fore and Aft, as their Fancies guided 'em: So that the Captain, who had well laid his Design before, gave the Word, and seiz'd on all his Guests; they clapping great Irons suddenly on the Prince, when he was leap'd down into the Hold, to view that Part of the Vessel; and locking him fast down, secur'd him. The same Treachery was used to all the rest; and all in one Instant, in several Places of the Ship, were lash'd fast in Irons, and betray'd to Slavery. That great Design over, they set all Hands at Work to hoist Sail; and with as treacherous as fair a Wind they made from the Shore with this innocent and glorious Prize, who thought of nothing less than such an Entertainment.

Some have commended this Act, as brave in the Captain; but I will spare my Sense of it, and leave it to my Reader to judge as he pleases. It may be easily guess'd, in what Manner the Prince resented this Indignity, who may be best resembled to a Lion taken in a Toil; so he raged, so he struggled for Liberty, but all in vain: And they had so wisely managed his Fetters, that he could not use a Hand in his Defence, to quit himself of a Life that would by no Means endure Slavery; nor could he move from the Place where he was ty'd, to any solid Part of the Ship, against which he might have beat his Head, and have finish'd 163his Disgrace that Way. So that

being deprived of all other Means, he resolv'd to perish for want of Food; and pleas'd at last with that Thought, and toil'd and tir'd by Rage and Indignation, he laid himself down, and sullenly resolv'd upon dying, and refused all Things that were brought him.

This did not a little vex the Captain, and the more so, because he found almost all of 'em of the same Humour; so that the Loss of so many brave Slaves, so tall and goodly to behold, would have been very considerable: He therefore order'd one to go from him (for he would not be seen himself) to Oroonoko, and to assure him, he was afflicted for having rashly done so unhospitable a Deed, and which could not be now remedied, since they were far from Shore; but since he resented it in so high a Nature, he assur'd him he would revoke his Resolution, and set both him and his Friends ashore on the next Land they should touch at; and of this the Messenger gave him his Oath, provided he would resolve to live. And Oroonoko, whose Honour was such, as he never had violated a Word in his Life himself, much less a solemn Asseveration, believ'd in an Instant what this Man said; but reply'd, He expected, for a Confirmation of this, to have his shameful Fetters dismiss'd. This Demand was carried to the Captain; who return'd him Answer, That the Offence had been so great which he had put upon the Prince, that he durst not trust him with Liberty while he remain'd in the Ship, for fear, lest by a Valour natural to him, and a Revenge that would animate that Valour, he might commit some Outrage fatal to himself, and the King his Master, to whom the Vessel did belong. To this Oroonoko reply'd, He would engage his Honour to behave himself in all friendly Order and Manner, and obey the Command of the Captain, as he was Lord of the King's Vessel, and General of those Men under his Command.

This was deliver'd to the still doubting Captain, who could not resolve to trust a Heathen, he said, upon his 164Parole, a Man that had no Sense or Notion of the God that he worshipp'd. Oroonoko then reply'd, He was very sorry to hear that the Captain pretended to the Knowledge and Worship of any Gods, who had taught him no better Principles, than not to credit as he would be credited. But they told him, the Difference of their Faith occasion'd that Distrust: for the Captain had protested to him upon the Word of a Christian, and sworn in the Name of a great God; which if he should violate, he must expect eternal Torments in the World to come. 'Is that all the Obligations he has to be just to his Oath? (reply'd Oroonoko) Let him know, I swear by my Honour; which to violate, would not only render me contemptible and despised by all brave and honest Men, and so give my self perpetual Pain, but it would be eternally offending and displeasing all Mankind; harming, betraying, circumventing, and outraging all Men. But Punishments hereafter are suffer'd by one's self; and the World takes no Cognizance whether this God has reveng'd 'em or not, 'tis done so secretly, and deferr'd so long; while the Man of no Honour suffers every Moment the Scorn and Contempt of the honest World, and dies every Day ignominiously in his Fame, which is more valuable than Life. I speak not this to move Belief, but to shew you how you mistake, when you imagine, that he who will violate his Honour, will keep his Word with his Gods.' So, turning from him with a disdainful Smile, he refused to answer him, when he urged him to know what Answer he should carry back to his Captain; so that he departed without saying any more.

The Captain pondering and consulting what to do, it was concluded, that nothing but Oroonoko's Liberty would encourage any of the rest to eat, except the Frenchman, whom the Captain could not pretend to keep Prisoner, but only told him, he was secur'd, because he might act something in Favour of the Prince; but that he should be freed as soon as they came to Land. So that they 165concluded it wholly necessary to free the Prince from his Irons, that he might shew himself to the rest; that they might have an Eye upon him, and that they could not fear a single Man.

This being resolved, to make the Obligation the greater, the Captain himself went to Oroonoko; where, after many Compliments, and Assurances of what he had already promis'd, he receiving from the Prince his Parole, and his Hand, for his good Behaviour, dismiss'd his Irons, and brought him to his own Cabin; where, after having treated and repos'd him a While, (for he had neither eat nor slept in four Days before) he besought him to visit those obstinate People in Chains, who refused all manner of Sustenance; and intreated him to oblige 'em to eat, and assure 'em of their Liberty the first Opportunity.

Oroonoko, who was too generous not to give Credit to his Words, shew'd himself to his People, who were transported with Excess of Joy at the Sight of their darling Prince; falling at his Feet, and kissing and embracing 'em; believing, as some divine Oracle, all he assur'd 'em. But he besought 'em to bear their Chains with that Bravery that became those whom he had seen act so nobly in Arms; and that they could not give him greater Proofs of their Love and Friendship, since 'twas all the Security the Captain (his Friend) could have against the Revenge, he said, they might possibly justly take for the Injuries sustained by him. And they all, with one Accord, assur'd him, that they could not suffer enough, when it was for his Repose and Safety.

After this, they no longer refus'd to eat, but took what was brought 'em, and were pleas'd with their Captivity, since by it they hoped to redeem the Prince, who, all the rest of the Voyage, was treated with all the Respect due to his Birth, tho' nothing could divert his Melancholy; and he would often sigh for Imoinda, and think this a Punishment due to his Misfortune, in having left that 166noble Maid behind him, that fatal Night, in the Otan, when he fled to the Camp.

Possess'd with a thousand Thoughts of past Joys with this fair young Person, and a thousand Grievs for her eternal Loss, he endur'd a tedious Voyage, and at last arriv'd at the Mouth of the River of Surinam, a Colony belonging to the King of England, and where they were to deliver some Part of their Slaves. There the Merchants and Gentlemen of the Country going on Board, to demand those Lots of Slaves they had already agreed on; and, amongst those, the Overseers of those Plantations where I then chanc'd to be: The Captain, who had given the Word, order'd his Men to bring up those noble Slaves in Fetters, whom I have spoken of; and having put 'em, some in one, and some in other Lots, with Women and Children, (which they call Pickaninies) they sold 'em off, as Slaves to several Merchants and Gentlemen; not putting any two in one Lot, because they would separate 'em far from each other; nor daring to trust 'em together, lest Rage and Courage should put 'em upon contriving some great Action, to the Ruin of the Colony.

Oroonoko was first seiz'd on, and sold to our Overseer, who had the first Lot, with seventeen more of all Sorts and Sizes, but not one of Quality with him. When he saw this, he found what they meant; for, as I said, he understood English pretty well; and being wholly unarm'd and defenceless, so as it was in vain to make any Resistance, he only beheld the Captain with a Look all fierce and disdainful, upbraiding him with Eyes that forc'd Blushes on his guilty Cheeks, he only cry'd in passing over the Side of the Ship; Farewel, Sir, 'tis worth my Sufferings to gain so true a Knowledge, both of you, and of your Gods, by whom you swear. And desiring those that held him to forbear their Pains, and telling 'em he would make no Resistance, he cry'd, Come, my Fellow-Slaves, let us descend, and see if we can meet with more Honour and Honesty in the next 167World we shall touch upon. So he nimbly leapt into the Boat, and shewing no more Concern, suffer'd himself to be row'd up the River, with his seventeen Companions.

The Gentleman that bought him, was a young Cornish Gentleman, whose Name was Trefry; a Man of great Wit, and fine Learning, and was carried into those Parts by the Lord — Governor, to manage all his Affairs. He reflecting on the last Words of Oroonoko to the Captain, and beholding the Richness of his Vest, no sooner came into the Boat, but he fix'd his Eyes on him; and finding something so extraordinary in his Face, his Shape and Mein, a Greatness of Look, and Haughtiness in his Air, and finding he spoke English, had a great Mind to be enquiring into his Quality and Fortune; which, though Oroonoko endeavour'd to hide, by only confessing he was above the Rank of common Slaves, Trefry soon found he was yet something greater than he confess'd; and from that Moment began to conceive so vast an Esteem for him, that he ever after lov'd him as his dearest Brother, and shew'd him all the Civilities due to so great a Man.

Trefry was a very good Mathematician, and a Linguist; could speak French and Spanish; and in the three Days they remain'd in the Boat, (for so long were they going from the Ship to the Plantation) he entertain'd Oroonoko so agreeably with his Art and Discourse, that he was no less pleas'd with Trefry, than he was with the

Prince; and he thought himself, at least, fortunate in this, that since he was a Slave, as long as he would suffer himself to remain so, he had a Man of so excellent Wit and Parts for a Master. So that before they had finish'd their Voyage up the River, he made no Scruple of declaring to Trefry all his Fortunes, and most Part of what I have here related, and put himself wholly into the Hands of his new Friend, who he found resented all the Injuries were done him, and was charm'd with all the Greatnesses of his Actions; which were recited with that Modesty, and delicate Sense, 168as wholly vanquish'd him, and subdu'd him to his Interest. And he promis'd him, on his Word and Honour, he would find the Means to re-conduct him to his own Country again; assuring him, he had a perfect Abhorrence of so dishonourable an Action; and that he would sooner have dy'd, than have been the Author of such a Perfidy. He found the Prince was very much concerned to know what became of his Friends, and how they took their Slavery; and Trefry promised to take Care about the enquiring after their Condition, and that he should have an Account of 'em.

Tho', as Oroonoko afterwards said, he had little Reason to credit the Words of a Backearary; yet he knew not why, but he saw a kind of Sincerity, and awful Truth in the Face of Trefry; he saw Honesty in his Eyes, and he found him wise and witty enough to understand Honour: for it was one of his Maxims, A Man of Wit could not be a Knave or Villain.

In their Passage up the River, they put in at several Houses for Refreshment; and ever when they landed, Numbers of People would flock to behold this Man: not but their Eyes were daily entertain'd with the Sight of Slaves; but the Fame of Oroonoko was gone before him, and all People were in Admiration of his Beauty. Besides, he had a rich Habit on, in which he was taken, so different from the rest, and which the Captain could not strip him of, because he was forc'd to surprize his Person in the Minute he sold him. When he found his Habit made him liable, as he thought, to be gazed at the more, he begged Trefry to give him something more befitting a Slave, which he did, and took off his Robes: Nevertheless, he shone thro' all, and his Osenbrigs (a sort of brown Holland Suit he had on) could not conceal the Graces of his Looks and Mein; and he had no less Admirers than when he had his dazling Habit on: The Royal Youth appear'd in spite of the Slave, and People could not help treating him after a different Manner, without designing it. As soon as they 169approached him, they venerated and esteemed him; his Eyes insensibly commanded Respect, and his Behaviour insinuated it into every Soul. So that there was nothing talked of but this young and gallant Slave, even by those who yet knew not that he was a Prince.

I ought to tell you, that the Christians never buy any Slaves but they give 'em some Name of their own, their native ones being likely very barbarous, and hard to pronounce; so that Mr. Trefry gave Oroonoko that of Cæsar; which name will live in that Country as long as that (scarce more) glorious one of the great Roman: for 'tis most evident he wanted no Part of the personal Courage of that Cæsar, and acted Things as memorable, had they been done in some Part of the World replenished with People and Historians, that might have given him his Due. But his Misfortune was, to fall in an obscure World, that afforded only a Female Pen to celebrate his Fame; tho' I doubt not but it had lived from others Endeavours, if the Dutch, who immediately after his Time took that Country, had not killed, banished and dispersed all those that were capable of giving the World this great Man's Life, much better than I have done. And Mr. Trefry, who design'd it, died before he began it, and bemoan'd himself for not having undertook it in Time.

For the future therefore I must call Oroonoko Cæsar; since by that Name only he was known in our Western World, and by that Name he was received on Shore at Parham-House, where he was destin'd a Slave. But if the King himself (God bless him) had come ashore, there could not have been greater Expectation by all the whole Plantation, and those neighbouring ones, than was on ours at that Time; and he was received more like a Governor than a Slave: Notwithstanding, as the Custom was, they assigned him his Portion of Land, his House and his Business up in the Plantation. But as it was more for Form, than any Design to put him to his Task, he endured no 170more of the Slave but the Name, and remain'd some Days in the House, receiving all Visits that were made him, without stirring towards that Part of the Plantation where the Negroes were.

At last, he would needs go view his Land, his House, and the Business assign'd him. But he no sooner came to the Houses of the Slaves, which are like a little Town by itself, the Negroes all having left Work, but they all came forth to behold him, and found he was that Prince who had, at several Times, sold most of 'em to these Parts; and from a Veneration they pay to great Men, especially if they know 'em, and from the Surprize and Awe they had at the Sight of him, they all cast themselves at his Feet, crying out, in their Language, Live, O King! Long live, O King! and kissing his Feet, paid him even Divine Homage.

Several English Gentlemen were with him, and what Mr. Trefry had told 'em was here confirm'd; of which he himself before had no other Witness than Cæsar himself: But he was infinitely glad to find his Grandeur confirmed by the Adoration of all the Slaves.

Cæsar, troubled with their Over-Joy, and Over-Ceremony, besought 'em to rise, and to receive him as their Fellow-Slave; assuring them he was no better. At which they set up with one Accord a most terrible and hideous Mourning and Condoling, which he and the English had much ado to appease: but at last they prevailed with 'em, and they prepared all their barbarous Musick, and every one kill'd and dress'd something of his own Stock (for every Family has their Land apart, on which, at their Leisure-times, they breed all eatable Things) and clubbing it together, made a most magnificent Supper, inviting their Grandee Captain, their Prince, to honour it with his Presence; which he did, and several English with him, where they all waited on him, some playing, others dancing before him all the Time, according to the Manners of 171their several Nations, and with unwearied Industry endeavouring to please and delight him.

While they sat at Meat, Mr. Trefry told Cæsar, that most of these young Slaves were undone in Love with a fine She-Slave, whom they had had about six Months on their Land; the Prince, who never heard the Name of Love without a Sigh, nor any Mention of it without the Curiosity of examining further into that Tale, which of all Discourses was most agreeable to him, asked, how they came to be so unhappy, as to be all undone for one fair Slave? Trefry, who was naturally amorous, and delighted to talk of Love as well as any Body, proceeded to tell him, they had the most charming Black that ever was beheld on their Plantation, about fifteen or sixteen Years old, as he guess'd; that for his Part he had done nothing but sigh for her ever since she came; and that all the White Beauties he had seen, never charm'd him so absolutely as this fine Creature had done; and that no Man, of any Nation, ever beheld her, that did not fall in love with her; and that she had all the Slaves perpetually at her Feet; and the whole Country resounded with the Fame of Clemene, for so (said he) we have christen'd her: but she denies us all with such a noble Disdain, that 'tis a Miracle to see, that she who can give such eternal Desires, should herself be all Ice and all Unconcern. She is adorn'd with the most graceful Modesty that ever beautify'd Youth; the softest Sigher—that, if she were capable of Love, one would swear she languished for some absent happy Man; and so retired, as if she fear'd a Rape even from the God of Day, or that the Breezes would steal Kisses from her delicate Mouth. Her Task of Work, some sighing Lover every Day makes it his Petition to perform for her; which she accepts blushing, and with Reluctancy, for Fear he will ask her a Look for a Recompence, which he dares not presume to hope; so great an Awe she strikes into the Hearts of her Admirers. 'I do not wonder (reply'd the 172Prince) that Clemene should refuse Slaves, being, as you say, so beautiful; but wonder how she escapes those that can entertain her as you can do: or why, being your Slave, you do not oblige her to yield?' 'I confess (said Trefry) when I have, against her Will, entertained her with Love so long, as to be transported with my Passion even above Decency, I have been ready to make Use of those Advantages of Strength and Force Nature has given me: But Oh! she disarms me with that Modesty and Weeping, so tender and so moving, that I retire, and thank my Stars she overcame me.' The Company laugh'd at his Civility to a Slave, and Cæsar only applauded the Nobleness of his Passion and Nature, since that Slave might be noble, or, what was better, have true Notions of Honour and Virtue in her. Thus passed they this Night, after having received from the Slaves all imaginable Respect and Obedience.

The next Day, Trefry ask'd Cæsar to walk when the Heat was allay'd, and designedly carried him by the

Cottage of the fair Slave; and told him she whom he spoke of last Night lived there retir'd: But (says he) I would not wish you to approach; for I am sure you will be in Love as soon as you behold her. Cæsar assured him, he was Proof against all the Charms of that Sex; and that if he imagined his Heart could be so perfidious to love again after Imoinda, he believed he should tear it from his Bosom. They had no sooner spoke, but a little Shock-Dog, that Clemene had presented her, which she took great Delight in, ran out; and she, not knowing any Body was there, ran to get it in again, and bolted out on those who were just speaking of her: when seeing them, she would have run in again, but Trefry caught her by the Hand, and cry'd, Clemene, however you fly a Lover, you ought to pay some Respect to this Stranger, (pointing to Cæsar.) But she, as if she had resolved never to raise her Eyes to the Face of a Man again, bent 'em the more to the Earth, when he spoke, and gave the Prince the Leisure to look the more at her. 173 There needed no long gazing, or Consideration, to examine who this fair Creature was; he soon saw Imoinda all over her: in a Minute he saw her Face, her Shape, her Air, her Modesty, and all that call'd forth his Soul with Joy at his Eyes, and left his Body destitute of almost Life: it stood without Motion, and for a Minute knew not that it had a Being; and, I believe, he had never come to himself, so oppress'd he was with Over-joy, if he had not met with this Allay, that he perceived Imoinda fall dead in the Hands of Trefry. This awaken'd him, and he ran to her Aid, and caught her in his Arms, where by Degrees she came to her self; and 'tis needless to tell with what Transports, what Extasies of Joy, they both a While beheld each other, without speaking; then snatched each other to their Arms; then gaze again, as if they still doubted whether they possess'd the Blessing they grasped: but when they recover'd their Speech, 'tis not to be imagined what tender Things they express'd to each other; wondring what strange Fate had brought them again together. They soon inform'd each other of their Fortunes, and equally bewail'd their Fate; but at the same Time they mutually protested, that even Fetters and Slavery were soft and easy, and would be supported with Joy and Pleasure, while they could be so happy to possess each other, and to be able to make good their Vows. Cæsar swore he disdain'd the Empire of the World, while he could behold his Imoinda; and she despis'd Grandeur and Pomp, those Vanities of her Sex, when she could gaze on Oroonoko. He ador'd the very Cottage where she resided, and said, That little Inch of the World would give him more Happiness than all the Universe could do; and she vow'd it was a Palace, while adorned with the Presence of Oroonoko.

Trefry was infinitely pleased with this Novel, and found this Clemene was the fair Mistress of whom Cæsar had before spoke; and was not a little satisfy'd, that Heaven 174 was so kind to the Prince as to sweeten his Misfortunes by so lucky an Accident; and leaving the Lovers to themselves, was impatient to come down to Parham-House (which was on the same Plantation) to give me an Account of what had happened. I was as impatient to make these Lovers a Visit, having already made a Friendship with Cæsar, and from his own Mouth learned what I have related; which was confirmed by his Frenchman, who was set on shore to seek his Fortune, and of whom they could not make a Slave, because a Christian; and he came daily to Parham-Hill to see and pay his Respects to his Pupil Prince. So that concerning and interesting myself in all that related to Cæsar, whom I had assured of Liberty as soon as the Governour arrived, I hasted presently to the Place where these Lovers were, and was infinitely glad to find this beautiful young Slave (who had already gain'd all our Esteems, for her Modesty and extraordinary Prettiness) to be the same I had heard Cæsar speak so much of. One may imagine then we paid her a treble Respect; and tho' from her being carved in fine Flowers and Birds all over her Body, we took her to be of Quality before, yet when we knew Clemene was Imoinda, we could not enough admire her.

I had forgot to tell you, that those who are nobly born of that Country, are so delicately cut and raised all over the Fore-part of the Trunk of their Bodies, that it looks as if it were japan'd, the Works being raised like high Point round the Edges of the Flowers. Some are only carved with a little Flower, or Bird, at the Sides of the Temples, as was Cæsar; and those who are so carved over the Body, resemble our antient Picts that are figur'd in the Chronicles, but these Carvings are more delicate.

From that happy Day Cæsar took Clemene for his Wife, to the general Joy of all People; and there was as much Magnificence as the Country could afford at the Celebration of this Wedding: And in a very short Time after

she 175 conceived with Child, which made Cæsar even adore her, knowing he was the last of his great Race. This new Accident made him more impatient of Liberty, and he was every Day treating with Trefrey for his and Clemene's Liberty, and offer'd either Gold, or a vast Quantity of Slaves, which should be paid before they let him go, provided he could have any Security that he should go when his Ransom was paid. They fed him from Day to Day with Promises, and delay'd him till the Lord-Governor should come; so that he began to suspect them of Falshood, and that they would delay him till the Time of his Wife's Delivery, and make a Slave of the Child too; for all the Breed is theirs to whom the Parents belong. This Thought made him very uneasy, and his Sullenness gave them some Jealousies of him; so that I was obliged, by some Persons who fear'd a Mutiny (which is very fatal sometimes in those Colonies that abound so with Slaves, that they exceed the Whites in vast Numbers) to discourse with Cæsar, and to give him all the Satisfaction I possibly could: They knew he and Clemene were scarce an Hour in a Day from my Lodgings; that they eat with me, and that I oblig'd them in all Things I was capable. I entertained them with the Lives of the Romans, and great Men, which charmed him to my Company; and her, with teaching her all the pretty Works that I was Mistress of, and telling her Stories of Nuns, and endeavouring to bring her to the Knowledge of the true God: But of all Discourses, Cæsar liked that the worst, and would never be reconciled to our Notions of the Trinity, of which he ever made a Jest; it was a Riddle he said would turn his Brain to conceive, and one could not make him understand what Faith was. However, these Conversations fail'd not altogether so well to divert him, that he liked the Company of us Women much above the Men, for he could not drink, and he is but an ill Companion in that Country that cannot. So that obliging him to love us very well, we had all the Liberty of Speech with him, 176 especially my self, whom he call'd his Great Mistress; and indeed my Word would go a great Way with him. For these Reasons I had Opportunity to take Notice to him, that he was not well pleased of late, as he used to be; was more retired and thoughtful; and told him, I took it ill he should suspect we would break our Words with him, and not permit both him and Clemene to return to his own Kingdom, which was not so long a Way, but when he was once on his Voyage he would quickly arrive there. He made me some Answers that shew'd a Doubt in him, which made me ask, what Advantage it would be to doubt? It would but give us a Fear of him, and possibly compel us to treat him so as I should be very loth to behold; that is, it might occasion his Confinement. Perhaps this was not so luckily spoke of me, for I perceiv'd he resented that Word, which I strove to soften again in vain: However, he assur'd me, that whatsoever Resolutions he should take, he would act nothing upon the White People; and as for myself, and those upon that Plantation where he was, he would sooner forfeit his eternal Liberty, and Life itself, than lift his Hand against his greatest Enemy on that Place. He besought me to suffer no Fears upon his Account, for he could do nothing that Honour should not dictate; but he accused himself for having suffer'd Slavery so long; yet he charg'd that Weakness on Love alone, who was capable of making him neglect even Glory itself; and, for which, now he reproaches himself every Moment of the Day. Much more to this Effect he spoke, with an Air impatient enough to make me know he would not be long in Bondage; and tho' he suffer'd only the Name of a Slave, and had nothing of the Toil and Labour of one, yet that was sufficient to render him uneasy; and he had been too long idle, who us'd to be always in Action, and in Arms. He had a Spirit all rough and fierce, and that could not be tam'd to lazy Rest: And tho' all Endeavours were us'd to exercise himself in such Actions and Sports as this 177 World afforded, as Running, Wrestling, Pitching the Bar, Hunting and Fishing, Chasing and Killing Tygers of a monstrous Size, which this Continent affords in abundance; and wonderful Snakes, such as Alexander is reported to have encounter'd at the River of Amazons, and which Cæsar took great Delight to overcome; yet these were not Actions great enough for his large Soul, which was still panting after more renown'd Actions.

Before I parted that Day with him, I got, with much ado, a Promise from him to rest yet a little longer with Patience, and wait the Coming of the Lord Governour, who was every Day expected on our Shore: He assur'd me he would, and this Promise he desired me to know was given perfectly in Complaisance to me, in whom he had an entire Confidence.

After this, I neither thought it convenient to trust him much out of our View, nor did the Country, who fear'd him; but with one Accord it was advis'd to treat him fairly, and oblige him to remain within such a Compass,

and that he should be permitted, as seldom as could be, to go up to the Plantations of the Negroes; or, if he did, to be accompany'd by some that should be rather, in Appearance, Attendants than Spies. This Care was for some time taken, and Cæsar look'd upon it as a Mark of extraordinary Respect, and was glad his Discontent had oblig'd 'em to be more observant to him; he received new Assurance from the Overseer, which was confirmed to him by the Opinion of all the Gentlemen of the Country, who made their Court to him. During this Time that we had his Company more frequently than hitherto we had had, it may not be unpleasant to relate to you the Diversions we entertain'd him with, or rather he us.

My Stay was to be short in that Country; because my Father dy'd at Sea, and never arriv'd to possess the Honour design'd him, (which was Lieutenant-General of six and thirty Islands, besides the Continent of Surinam) nor the 178Advantages he hop'd to reap by them: So that though we were oblig'd to continue on our Voyage, we did not intend to stay upon the Place. Though, in a Word, I must say thus much of it; That certainly had his late Majesty, of sacred Memory, but seen and known what a vast and charming World he had been Master of in that Continent, he would never have parted so easily with it to the Dutch. 'Tis a Continent, whose vast Extent was never yet known, and may contain more noble Earth than all the Universe beside; for, they say, it reaches from East to West one Way as far as China, and another to Peru: It affords all Things, both for Beauty and Use; 'tis there eternal Spring, always the very Months of April, May, and June; the Shades are perpetual, the Trees bearing at once all Degrees of Leaves, and Fruit, from blooming Buds to ripe Autumn: Groves of Oranges, Lemons, Citrons, Figs, Nutmegs, and noble Aromaticks, continually bearing their Fragrances: The Trees appearing all like Nosegays, adorn'd with Flowers of different Kinds; some are all White, some Purple, some Scarlet, some Blue, some Yellow; bearing at the same Time ripe Fruit, and blooming young, or producing every Day new. The very Wood of all these Trees has an intrinsic Value, above common Timber; for they are, when cut, of different Colours, glorious to behold, and bear a Price considerable, to inlay withal. Besides this, they yield rich Balm, and Gums; so that we make our Candles of such an aromatic Substance, as does not only give a sufficient Light, but as they burn, they cast their Perfumes all about. Cedar is the common Firing, and all the Houses are built with it. The very Meat we eat, when set on the Table, if it be native, I mean of the Country, perfumes the whole Room; especially a little Beast call'd an Armadillo, a Thing which I can liken to nothing so well as a Rhinoceros; 'tis all in white Armour, so jointed, that it moves as well in it, as if it had nothing on: This Beast is about the Bigness of a Pig of six Weeks 179old. But it were endless to give an Account of all the divers wonderful and strange Things that Country affords, and which we took a great Delight to go in Search of; tho' those Adventures are oftentimes fatal, and at least dangerous: But while we had Cæsar in our Company on these Designs, we fear'd no Harm, nor suffer'd any.

As soon as I came into the Country, the best House in it was presented me, call'd St. John's Hill: It stood on a vast Rock of white Marble, at the Foot of which, the River ran a vast Depth down, and not to be descended on that Side; the little Waves still dashing and washing the Foot of this Rock, made the softest Murmurs and Purlings in the World; and the opposite Bank was adorn'd with such vast Quantities of different Flowers eternally blowing, and every Day and Hour new, fenc'd behind 'em with lofty Trees of a thousand rare Forms and Colours, that the Prospect was the most ravishing that Sands can create. On the Edge of this white Rock, towards the River, was a Walk, or Grove, of Orange and Lemon-Trees, about half the Length of the Mall here, whose flowery and Fruit-bearing Branches met at the Top, and hinder'd the Sun, whose Rays are very fierce there, from entering a Beam into the Grove; and the cool Air that came from the River, made it not only fit to entertain People in, at all the hottest Hours of the Day, but refresh the sweet Blossoms, and made it always sweet and charming; and sure, the whole Globe of the World cannot shew so delightful a Place as this Grove was: Not all the Gardens of boasted Italy can produce a Shade to out-vie this, which Nature had join'd with Art to render so exceeding fine; and 'tis a Marvel to see how such vast Trees, as big as English Oaks, could take Footing on so solid a Rock, and in so little Earth as cover'd that Rock: But all Things by Nature there are rare, delightful, and wonderful. But to our Sports.

Sometimes we would go surprising, and in Search of young Tygers in their Dens, watching when the old ones

180went forth to forage for Prey; and oftentimes we have been in great Danger, and have fled apace for our Lives, when surpriz'd by the Dams. But once, above all other Times, we went on this Design, and Cæsar was with us; who had no sooner stoln a young Tyger from her Nest, but going off, we encounter'd the Dam, bearing a Buttock of a Cow, which she had torn off with her mighty Paw, and going with it towards her Den: We had only four Women, Cæsar, and an English Gentleman, Brother to Harry Martin the great Oliverian; we found there was no escaping this enraged and ravenous Beast. However, we Women fled as fast as we could from it; but our Heels had not saved our Lives, if Cæsar had not laid down her Cub, when he found the Tyger quit her Prey to make the more Speed towards him; and taking Mr. Martin's Sword, desired him to stand aside, or follow the Ladies. He obey'd him; and Cæsar met this monstrous Beast of mighty Size, and vast Limbs, who came with open Jaws upon him; and fixing his awful stern Eyes full upon those of the Beast, and putting himself into a very steady and good aiming Posture of Defence, ran his Sword quite through his Breast, down to his very Heart, home to the Hilt of the Sword: The dying Beast stretch'd forth her Paw, and going to grasp his Thigh, surpriz'd with Death in that very Moment, did him no other Harm than fixing her long Nails in his Flesh very deep, feebly wounded him, but could not grasp the Flesh to tear off any. When he had done this, he hallow'd to us to return; which, after some Assurance of his Victory, we did, and found him lugging out the Sword from the Bosom of the Tyger, who was laid in her Blood on the Ground. He took up the Cub, and with an Unconcern that had nothing of the Joy or Gladness of Victory, he came and laid the Whelp at my Feet. We all extremely wonder'd at his daring, and at the Bigness of the Beast, which was about the Height of an Heifer, but of mighty great and strong Limbs.

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Another time, being in the Woods, he kill'd a Tyger, that had long infested that Part, and borne away abundance of Sheep and Oxen, and other Things, that were for the Support of those to whom they belong'd. Abundance of People assail'd this Beast, some affirming they had shot her with several Bullets quite through the Body at several times; and some swearing they shot her through the very Heart; and they believed she was a Devil, rather than a mortal Thing. Cæsar had often said, he had a Mind to encounter this Monster, and spoke with several Gentlemen who had attempted her; one crying, I shot her with so many poison'd Arrows, another with his Gun in this Part of her, and another in that; so that he remarking all the Places where she was shot, fancy'd still he should overcome her, by giving her another Sort of a Wound than any had yet done; and one Day said (at the Table), 'What Trophies and Garlands, Ladies, will you make me, if I bring you home the Heart of this ravenous Beast, that eats up all your Lambs and Pigs?' We all promis'd he should be rewarded at our Hands. So taking a Bow, which he chose out of a great many, he went up into the Wood, with two Gentlemen, where he imagin'd this Devourer to be. They had not pass'd very far into it, but they heard her Voice, growling and grumbling, as if she were pleas'd with something she was doing. When they came in View, they found her muzzling in the Belly of a new ravish'd Sheep, which she had torn open; and seeing herself approach'd, she took fast hold of her Prey with her fore Paws, and set a very fierce raging Look on Cæsar, without offering to approach him, for Fear at the same Time of loosing what she had in Possession: So that Cæsar remain'd a good while, only taking Aim, and getting an Opportunity to shoot her where he design'd. 'Twas some Time before he could accomplish it; and to wound her, and not kill her, would but have enrag'd her the more, and endanger'd him. He had a Quiver of Arrows at his 182Side, so that if one fail'd, he could be supply'd: At last, retiring a little, he gave her Opportunity to eat, for he found she was ravenous, and fell to as soon as she saw him retire, being more eager of her Prey, than of doing new Mischiefs; when he going softly to one Side of her, and hiding his Person behind certain Herbage, that grew high and thick, he took so good Aim, that, as he intended, he shot her just into the Eye, and the Arrow was sent with so good a Will, and so sure a Hand, that it stuck in her Brain, and made her caper, and become mad for a Moment or two; but being seconded by another Arrow, she fell dead upon the Prey. Cæsar cut her open with a Knife, to see where those Wounds were that had been reported to him, and why she did not die of 'em. But I shall now relate a Thing that, possibly, will find no Credit among Men; because 'tis a Notion commonly receiv'd with us, That nothing can receive a Wound in the Heart, and live: But when the Heart of this courageous Animal was taken out, there were seven Bullets of Lead in it, the Wound seam'd up with great Scars, and she liv'd with the Bullets a great While, for it was long since they were shot:

This Heart the Conqueror brought up to us, and 'twas a very great Curiosity, which all the Country came to see; and which gave Cæsar Occasion of many fine Discourses of Accidents in War, and strange Escapes.

At other times he would go a Fishing; and discoursing on that Diversion, he found we had in that Country a very strange Fish, call'd a Numb-Eel, (an Eel of which I have eaten) that while it is alive, it has a Quality so cold, that those who are angling, tho' with a Line of ever so great a Length, with a Rod at the End of it, it shall in the same Minute the Bait is touch'd by this Eel, seize him or her that holds the Rod with a Numbness, that shall deprive 'em of Sense for a While; and some have fallen into the Water, and others drop'd, as dead, on the Banks of the Rivers where they stood, as soon as this Fish touches the Bait. Cæsar us'd to laugh at this, and believ'd it impossible a Man could lose his Force at the Touch of a Fish; and could not understand that Philosophy, that a cold Quality should be of that Nature; however, he had a great Curiosity to try whether it would have the same Effect on him it had on others, and often try'd, but in vain. At last, the sought-for Fish came to the Bait, as he stood angling on the Bank; and instead of throwing away the Rod, or giving it a sudden Twitch out of the Water, whereby he might have caught both the Eel, and have dismiss'd the Rod, before it could have too much Power over him; for Experiment-sake, he grasp'd it but the harder, and fainting, fell into the River; and being still possess'd of the Rod, the Tide carry'd him, senseless as he was, a great Way, till an Indian Boat took him up; and perceiv'd, when they touch'd him, a Numbness seize them, and by that knew the Rod was in his Hand; which with a Paddle, (that is a short Oar) they struck away, and snatch'd it into the Boat, Eel and all. If Cæsar was almost dead, with the Effect of this Fish, he was more so with that of the Water, where he had remain'd the Space of going a League, and they found they had much ado to bring him back to Life; but at last they did, and brought him home, where he was in a few Hours well recover'd and refresh'd, and not a little asham'd to find he should be overcome by an Eel, and that all the People, who heard his Defiance, would laugh at him. But we cheer'd him up; and he being convinc'd, we had the Eel at Supper, which was a quarter of an Ell about, and most delicate Meat; and was of the more Value, since it cost so dear as almost the Life of so gallant a Man.

About this Time we were in many mortal Fears, about some Disputes the English had with the Indians; so that we could scarce trust our selves, without great Numbers, to go to any Indian Towns, or Place where they abode, for fear they should fall upon us, as they did immediately after my coming away; and the Place being in the Possession of the Dutch, they us'd them not so civilly as the English; so that they cut in Pieces all they could take, getting into Houses and hanging up the Mother, and all her Children about her; and cut a Footman, I left behind me, all in Joints, and nail'd him to Trees.

This Feud began while I was there; so that I lost half the Satisfaction I propos'd, in not seeing and visiting the Indian Towns. But one Day, bemoaning of our Misfortunes upon this Account, Cæsar told us, we need not fear, for if we had a Mind to go, he would undertake to be our Guard. Some would, but most would not venture: About eighteen of us resolv'd, and took Barge; and after eight Days, arriv'd near an Indian Town: But approaching it, the Hearts of some of our Company fail'd, and they would not venture on Shore; so we poll'd, who would, and who would not. For my Part, I said, if Cæsar would, I would go. He resolv'd; so did my Brother, and my Woman, a Maid of good Courage. Now none of us speaking the Language of the People, and imagining we should have a half Diversion in gazing only; and not knowing what they said, we took a Fisherman that liv'd at the Mouth of the River, who had been a long Inhabitant there, and oblig'd him to go with us: But because he was known to the Indians, as trading among 'em, and being, by long living there, become a perfect Indian in Colour, we, who had a Mind to surprize 'em, by making them see something they never had seen, (that is, White People) resolv'd only my self, my Brother and Woman should go: So Cæsar, the Fisherman, and the rest, hiding behind some thick Reeds and Flowers that grew in the Banks, let us pass on towards the Town, which was on the Bank of the River all along. A little distant from the Houses, or Huts, we saw some dancing, others busy'd in fetching and carrying of Water from the River. They had no sooner spy'd us, but they set up a loud Cry, that frighted us at first; we thought it had been for those that should kill us, but it seems it was of Wonder and Amazement. They were all naked; and we were dress'd, so as is most commode for the hot

Countries, very glittering and rich; so that we appear'd extremely fine; my own Hair was cut short, and I had a Taffety Cap, with black Feathers on my Head; my Brother was in a Stuff-Suit, with Silver Loops and Buttons, and abundance of green Ribbon. This was all infinitely surprising to them; and because we saw them stand still till we approach'd 'em, we took Heart and advanc'd, came up to 'em, and offer'd 'em our Hands; which they took, and look'd on us round about, calling still for more Company; who came swarming out, all wondering, and crying out Tepeeeme; taking their Hair up in their Hands, and spreading it wide to those they call'd out to; as if they would say (as indeed it signify'd) Numberless Wonders, or not to be recounted, no more than to number the Hair of their Heads. By Degrees they grew more bold, and from gazing upon us round, they touch'd us, laying their Hands upon all the Features of our Faces, feeling our Breasts, and Arms, taking up one Petticoat, then wondering to see another; admiring our Shoes and Stockings, but more our Garters, which we gave 'em, and they ty'd about their Legs, being lac'd with Silver Lace at the Ends; for they much esteem any shining Things. In fine, we suffer'd 'em to survey us as they pleas'd, and we thought they would never have done admiring us. When Cæsar, and the rest, saw we were receiv'd with such Wonder, they came up to us; and finding the Indian Trader whom they knew, (for 'tis by these Fishermen, call'd Indian Traders, we hold a Commerce with 'em; for they love not to go far from home, and we never go to them) when they saw him therefore, they set up a new Joy, and cry'd in their Language, Oh, here's our Tiguamy, and we shall know whether those Things can speak. So advancing to him, some of 'em gave him their Hands, and cry'd, Amora Tiguamy; which is as much as, How do you do? or, Welcome Friend; and all, with one din, began to gabble to him, and ask'd, if we had Sense and Wit? If we could talk of Affairs of Life and War, as they could do? If we could hunt, swim, and do a thousand Things they use? He answer'd 'em, We could. Then they invited us into their Houses, and dress'd Venison and Buffalo for us; and going out, gather'd a Leaf of a Tree, called a Sarumbo Leaf, of six Yards long, and spread it on the Ground for a Table-Cloth; and cutting another in Pieces, instead of Plates, set us on little low Indian Stools, which they cut out of one entire Piece of Wood, and paint in a sort of Japan-Work. They serve every one their Mess on these Pieces of Leaves; and it was very good, but too high-season'd with Pepper. When we had eat, my Brother and I took out our Flutes, and play'd to 'em, which gave 'em new Wonder; and I soon perceiv'd, by an Admiration that is natural to these People, and by the extreme Ignorance and Simplicity of 'em, it were not difficult to establish any unknown or extravagant Religion among them, and to impose any Notions or Fictions upon 'em. For seeing a Kinsman of mine set some Paper on Fire with a Burning-Glass, a Trick they had never before seen, they were like to have ador'd him for a God, and begg'd he would give 'em the Characters or Figures of his Name, that they might oppose it against Winds and Storms: which he did, and they held it up in those Seasons, and fancy'd it had a Charm to conquer them, and kept it like a holy Relique. They are very superstitious, and call'd him the Great Peeie, that is, Prophet. They shewed us their Indian Peeie, a Youth of about sixteen Years old, as handsome as Nature could make a Man. They consecrate a beautiful Youth from his Infancy, and all Arts are used to compleat him in the finest Manner, both in Beauty and Shape: He is bred to all the little Arts and Cunning they are capable of; to all the legerdemain Tricks, and Slight of Hand, whereby he imposes on the Rabble; and is both a Doctor in Physick and Divinity: And by these Tricks makes the Sick believe he sometimes eases their Pains, by drawing from the afflicted Part little Serpents, or odd Flies, or Worms, or any strange Thing; and though they have besides undoubted good Remedies for almost all their Diseases, they cure the Patient more by Fancy than by Medicines, and make themselves feared, loved, and revered. This young Peeie had a very young Wife, who seeing my Brother kiss her, came running and kiss'd me. After this they kiss'd one another, and made it a very great Jest, it being so novel; and new Admiration and Laughing went round the Multitude, that they never will forget that Ceremony, never before us'd or known. Cæsar had a Mind to see and talk with their War-Captains, and we were conducted to one of their Houses, where we beheld several of the great Captains, who had been at Council: But so frightful a Vision it was to see 'em, no Fancy can create; no sad Dreams can represent so dreadful a Spectacle. For my Part, I took 'em for Hobgoblins, or Fiends, rather than Men; But however their Shapes appear'd, their Souls were very humane and noble; but some wanted their Noses, some their Lips, some both Noses and Lips, some their Ears, and others cut through each Cheek, with long Slashes, through which their Teeth appear'd: They had several other formidable Wounds and Scars, or rather Dismembrings. They had Comitias, or little Aprons before them; and Girdles of Cotton, with their Knives naked stuck in it; a Bow at their

Back, and a Quiver of Arrows on their Thighs; and most had Feathers on their Heads of divers Colours. They cry'd Amora Tiguamy to us, at our Entrance, and were pleas'd we said as much to them: They seated us, and gave us Drink of the best Sort, and wonder'd as much as the others had done before to see us. Cæsar was marvelling 188as much at their Faces, wondring how they should be all so wounded in War; he was impatient to know how they all came by those frightful Marks of Rage or Malice, rather than Wounds got in noble Battle: They told us by our Interpreter, That when any War was waging, two Men, chosen out by some old Captain whose fighting was past, and who could only teach the Theory of War, were to stand in Competition for the Generalship, or great War-Captain; and being brought before the old Judges, now past Labour, they are ask'd, What they dare do, to shew they are worthy to lead an Army? When he who is first ask'd, making no Reply, cuts off his Nose, and throws it contemptibly on the Ground; and the other does something to himself that he thinks surpasses him, and perhaps deprives himself of Lips and an Eye: So they slash on 'till one gives out, and many have dy'd in this Debate. And it's by a passive Valour they shew and prove their Activity; a sort of Courage too brutal to be applauded by our Black Hero; nevertheless, he express'd his Esteem of 'em.

In this Voyage Cæsar begat so good an Understanding between the Indians and the English, that there were no more Fears or Heart-burnings during our Stay, but we had a perfect, open, and free Trade with 'em. Many Things remarkable, and worthy reciting, we met with in this short Voyage; because Cæsar made it his Business to search out and provide for our Entertainment, especially to please his dearly ador'd Imoinda, who was a Sharer in all our Adventures; we being resolv'd to make her Chains as easy as we could, and to compliment the Prince in that Manner that most oblig'd him.

As we were coming up again, we met with some Indians of strange Aspects; that is, of a larger Size, and other sort of Features, than those of our Country. Our Indian Slaves, that row'd us, ask'd 'em some Questions; but they could not understand us, but shew'd us a long 189Cotton String, with several Knots on it, and told us, they had been coming from the Mountains so many Moons as there were Knots: they were habited in Skins of a strange Beast, and brought along with 'em Bags of Gold-Dust; which, as well as they could give as to understand, came streaming in little small Channels down the high Mountains, when the Rains fell; and offer'd to be the Convoy to any Body, or Persons, that would go to the Mountains. We carry'd these Men up to Parham, where they were kept till the Lord-Governor came: And because all the Country was mad to be going on this Golden Adventure, the Governor, by his Letters, commanded (for they sent some of the Gold to him) that a Guard should be set at the Mouth of the River of Amazons (a River so call'd, almost as broad as the River of Thames) and prohibited all People from going up that River, it conducting to those Mountains or Gold. But we going off for England before the Project was further prosecuted, and the Governor being drown'd in a Hurricane, either the Design died, or the Dutch have the Advantage of it: And 'tis to be bemoan'd what his Majesty lost, by losing that Part of America.

Though this Digression is a little from my Story, however, since it contains some Proofs of the Curiosity and Daring of this great Man, I was content to omit nothing of his Character.

It was thus for some Time we diverted him; but now Imoinda began to shew she was with Child, and did nothing but sigh and weep for the Captivity of her Lord, herself, and the Infant yet unborn; and believ'd, if it were so hard to gain the Liberty of two, 'twould be more difficult to get that for three. Her Grievs were so many Darts in the great Heart of Cæsar, and taking his Opportunity, one Sunday, when all the Whites were overtaken in Drink, as there were abundance of several Trades, and Slaves for four Years, that inhabited among the Negro Houses; and Sunday being their Day of Debauch, (otherwise they were a sort of 190Spies upon Cæsar) he went, pretending out of Goodness to 'em, to feast among 'em, and sent all his Musick, and order'd a great Treat for the whole Gang, about three hundred Negroes, and about an hundred and fifty were able to bear Arms, such as they had, which were sufficient to do Execution, with Spirits accordingly: For the English had none but rusty Swords, that no Strength could draw from a Scabbard; except the People of particular Quality, who took Care to oil 'em, and keep 'em in good Order: The Guns also, unless here and there one, or those newly carried from

England, would do no Good or Harm; for 'tis the Nature of that Country to rust and eat up Iron, or any Metals but Gold and Silver. And they are very expert at the Bow, which the Negroes and Indians are perfect Masters of.

Cæsar, having singled out these Men from the Women and Children, made an Harangue to 'em, of the Miseries and Ignominies of Slavery; counting up all their Toils and Sufferings, under such Loads, Burdens and Drudgeries, as were fitter for Beasts than Men; senseless Brutes, than human Souls. He told 'em, it was not for Days, Months or Years, but for Eternity; there was no End to be of their Misfortunes: They suffer'd not like Men, who might find a Glory and Fortitude in Oppression; but like Dogs, that lov'd the Whip and Bell, and fawn'd the more they were beaten: That they had lost the divine Quality of Men, and were become insensible Asses, fit only to bear: Nay, worse; an Ass, or Dog, or Horse, having done his Duty, could lie down in Retreat, and rise to work again, and while he did his Duty, endur'd no Stripes; but Men, villanous, senseless Men, such as they, toil'd on all the tedious Week 'till Black Friday; and then, whether they work'd or not, whether they were faulty or meriting, they, promiscuously, the Innocent with the Guilty, suffer'd the infamous Whip, the sordid Stripes, from their Fellow-Slaves, 'till their Blood trickled from all Parts of their Body; 191Blood, whose every Drop ought to be revenged with a Life of some of those Tyrants that impose it. 'And why (said he) my dear Friends and Fellow-sufferers, should we be Slaves to an unknown People? Have they vanquished us nobly in Fight? Have they won us in Honourable Battle? And are we by the Chance of War become their Slaves? This would not anger a noble Heart; this would not animate a Soldier's Soul: No, but we are bought and sold like Apes or Monkeys, to be the Sport of Women, Fools and Cowards; and the Support of Rogues and Runagades, that have abandoned their own Countries for Rapine, Murders, Theft and Villanies. Do you not hear every Day how they upbraid each other with Infamy of Life, below the wildest Salvages? And shall we render Obedience to such a degenerate Race, who have no one human Virtue left, to distinguish them from the vilest Creatures? Will you, I say, suffer the Lash from such Hands?' They all reply'd with one Accord, 'No, No, No; Cæsar has spoke like a great Captain, like a great King.'

After this he would have proceeded, but was interrupted by a tall Negro, of some more Quality than the rest, his Name was Tuscan; who bowing at the Feet of Cæsar, cry'd, 'My Lord, we have listen'd with Joy and Attention to what you have said; and, were we only Men, would follow so great a Leader through the World: But O! consider we are Husbands and Parents too, and have Things more dear to us than Life; our Wives and Children, unfit for Travel in those unpassable Woods, Mountains and Bogs. We have not only difficult Lands to overcome, but Rivers to wade, and Mountains to encounter; ravenous Beasts of Prey,'—To this Cæsar reply'd, 'That Honour was the first Principle in Nature, that was to be obey'd; but as no Man would pretend to that, without all the Acts of Virtue, Compassion, Charity, Love, Justice and Reason, he found it not inconsistent with that, to take equal Care of their Wives and Children 192as they would of themselves; and that he did not design, when he led them to Freedom, and glorious Liberty, that they should leave that better Part of themselves to perish by the Hand of the Tyrant's Whip: But if there were a Woman among them so degenerate from Love and Virtue, to chuse Slavery before the Pursuit of her Husband, and with the Hazard of her Life, to share with him in his Fortunes; that such a one ought to be abandoned, and left as a Prey to the common Enemy.'

To which they all agreed—and bowed. After this, he spoke of the impassable Woods and Rivers; and convinced them, the more Danger the more Glory. He told them, that he had heard of one Hannibal, a great Captain, had cut his Way through Mountains of solid Rocks; and should a few Shrubs oppose them, which they could fire before 'em? No, 'twas a trifling Excuse to Men resolved to die, or overcome. As for Bogs, they are with a little Labour filled and harden'd; and the Rivers could be no Obstacle, since they swam by Nature, at least by Custom, from the first Hour of their Birth: That when the Children were weary, they must carry them by Turns, and the Woods and their own Industry would afford them Food. To this they all assented with Joy.

Tuscan then demanded, what he would do: He said he would travel towards the Sea, plant a new Colony, and defend it by their Valour; and when they could find a Ship, either driven by Stress of Weather, or guided by Providence that Way, they would seize it, and make it a Prize, till it had transported them to their own Countries:

at least they should be made free in his Kingdom, and be esteem'd as his Fellow-Sufferers, and Men that had the Courage and the Bravery to attempt, at least, for Liberty; and if they died in the Attempt, it would be more brave, than to live in perpetual Slavery.

They bow'd and kiss'd his Feet at this Resolution, and with one Accord vow'd to follow him to Death; and that Night was appointed to begin their March. They made it known to their Wives, and directed them to tie their Hamocks about their Shoulders, and under their Arms, like a Scarf and to lead their Children that could go, and carry those that could not. The Wives, who pay an entire Obedience to their Husbands, obey'd, and stay'd for 'em where they were appointed: The Men stay'd but to furnish themselves with what defensive Arms they could get; and all met at the Rendezvouz, where Cæsar made a new encouraging Speech to 'em and led 'em out.

But as they could not march far that Night, on Monday early, when the Overseers went to call 'em all together, to go to work, they were extremely surprized, to find not one upon the Place, but all fled with what Baggage they had. You may imagine this News was not only suddenly spread all over the Plantation, but soon reached the neighbouring ones; and we had by Noon about 600 Men, they call the Militia of the Country, that came to assist us in the Pursuit of the Fugitives: But never did one see so comical an Army march forth to War. The Men of any Fashion would not concern themselves, tho' it were almost the Common Cause; for such Revoltings are very ill Examples, and have very fatal Consequences oftentimes, in many Colonies: But they had a Respect for Cæsar, and all Hands were against the Parhamites (as they called those of Parham-Plantation) because they did not in the first Place love the Lord-Governor; and secondly, they would have it that Cæsar was ill used, and baffled with: and 'tis not impossible but some of the best in the Country was of his Council in this Flight, and depriving us of all the Slaves; so that they of the better sort would not meddle in the Matter. The Deputy-Governor, of whom I have had no great Occasion to speak, and who was the most fawning fair-tongu'd Fellow in the World, and one that pretended the most Friendship to Cæsar, was now the only violent Man against him; and though he had nothing, and so need fear nothing, yet talked and looked bigger than any Man. He was a Fellow, whose Character is not fit to be mentioned with the worst of the Slaves: This Fellow would lead his Army forth to meet Cæsar, or rather to pursue him. Most of their Arms were of those Sort of cruel Whips they call Cat with nine Tails; some had rusty useless Guns for Shew; others old Basket Hilts, whose Blades had never seen the Light in this Age; and others had long Staffs and Clubs. Mr. Trefry went along, rather to be a Mediator than a Conqueror in such a Battle; for he foresaw and knew, if by fighting they put the Negroes into Despair, they were a sort of sullen Fellows, that would drown or kill themselves before they would yield; and he advis'd that fair Means was best: But Byam was one that abounded in his own Wit, and would take his own Measures.

It was not hard to find these Fugitives; for as they fled, they were forced to fire and cut the Woods before 'em: So that Night or Day they pursu'd 'em by the Light they made, and by the Path they had cleared. But as soon as Cæsar found that he was pursu'd, he put himself in a Posture of Defence, placing all the Woman and Children in the Rear; and himself, with Tuscan by his Side, or next to him, all promising to die or conquer. Encouraged thus, they never stood to parley, but fell on pell-mell upon the English, and killed some, and wounded a great many; they having Recourse to their Whips, as the best of their Weapons. And as they observed no Order, they perplexed the Enemy so sorely, with lashing 'em in the Eyes; and the Women and Children seeing their Husbands so treated, being of fearful and cowardly Dispositions, and hearing the English cry out, Yield and Live! Yield, and be Pardon'd! they all ran in amongst their Husbands and Fathers, and hung about them, crying out, Yield! Yield, and leave Cæsar to their Revenge; that by Degrees the Slaves abandon'd Cæsar, and left him only Tuscan and his Heroick Imoinda, who grown as big as she was, did nevertheless press near her Lord, having a Bow and a Quiver full of poisoned Arrows, which she managed with such Dexterity, that she wounded several, and shot the Governor into the Shoulder; of which Wound he had like to have died, but that an Indian Woman, his Mistress, sucked the Wound, and cleans'd it from the Venom: But however, he stir'd not from the Place till he had parly'd with Cæsar, who he found was resolved to die fighting, and would not be taken; no more would Tuscan or Imoinda. But he, more thirsting after Revenge of another Sort, than that of depriving him of Life, now made use of all his Art of Talking and Dissembling, and besought Cæsar to yield

himself upon Terms which he himself should propose, and should be sacredly assented to, and kept by him. He told him, It was not that he any longer fear'd him, or could believe the Force of two Men, and a young Heroine, could overthrow all them, and with all the Slaves now on their Side also; but it was the vast Esteem he had for his Person, the Desire he had to serve so gallant a Man, and to hinder himself from the Reproach hereafter, of having been the Occasion of the Death of a Prince, whose Valour and Magnanimity deserved the Empire of the World. He protested to him, he looked upon his Action as gallant and brave, however tending to the Prejudice of his Lord and Master, who would by it have lost so considerable a Number of Slaves; that this Flight of his should be look'd on as a Heat of Youth, and a Rashness of a too forward Courage, and an unconsider'd Impatience of Liberty, and no more; and that he labour'd in vain to accomplish that which they would effectually perform as soon as any Ship arrived that would touch on his Coast: 'So that if you will be pleased (continued he) to surrender yourself, all imaginable Respect shall be paid you; and your Self, your Wife and Child, if it be born here, shall depart free out of our Land.' But Cæsar would hear of no Composition; though Byam urged, if he pursued and went on in his Design, he would inevitably perish, either by great Snakes, wild Beasts or Hunger; and he ought to have Regard to his Wife, whose Condition requir'd Ease, and not the Fatigues of tedious Travel, where she could not be secured from being devoured. But Cæsar told him, there was no Faith in the White men, or the Gods they ador'd; who instructed them in Principles so false, that honest Men could not live amongst them; though no People profess'd so much, none perform'd so little: That he knew what he had to do when he dealt with Men of Honour; but with them a Man ought to be eternally on his Guard, and never to eat and drink with Christians, without his Weapon of Defence in his Hand; and, for his own Security, never to credit one Word they spoke. As for the Rashness and Inconsiderateness of his Action, he would confess the Governor is in the right; and that he was ashamed of what he had done in endeavouring to make those free, who were by Nature Slaves, poor wretched Rogues, fit to be used as Christian Tools; Dogs, treacherous and cowardly, fit for such Masters; and they wanted only but to be whipped into the Knowledge of the Christian Gods, to be the vilest of all creeping Things; to learn to worship such Deities as had not Power to make them just, brave, or honest: In fine, after a thousand Things of this Nature, not fit here to be recited, he told Byam, He had rather die, than live upon the same Earth with such Dogs. But Trefry and Byam pleaded and protested together so much, that Trefry believing the Governor to mean what he said, and speaking very cordially himself, generously put himself into Cæsar's Hands, and took him aside, and persuaded him, even with Tears, to live, by surrendring himself, and to name his Conditions. Cæsar was overcome by his Wit and Reasons, and in Consideration of Imoinda; and demanding what he desired, and that it should be ratify'd by their Hands in Writing, because he had perceived that was the common Way of Contract between Man and Man amongst the Whites; all this was performed, and Tuscan's Pardon was put in, and they surrender'd to the Governor, who walked peaceably down into the Plantation with them, after giving Order to bury their Dead. Cæsar was very much toil'd with the Bustle of the Day, for he had fought like a Fury; and what Mischief was done, he and Tuscan performed alone; and gave their Enemies a fatal Proof, that they durst do any Thing, and fear'd no mortal Force.

But they were no sooner arrived at the Place where all the Slaves receive their Punishments of Whipping, but they laid Hands on Cæsar and Tuscan, faint with Heat and Toil; and surprizing them, bound them to two several Stakes, and whipped them in a most deplorable and inhuman Manner, rending the very Flesh from their Bones, especially Cæsar, who was not perceived to make any Moan, or to alter his Face, only to roll his Eyes on the faithless Governor, and those he believed Guilty, with Fierceness and Indignation; and to complete his Rage, he saw every one of those Slaves who but a few Days before ador'd him as something more than Mortal, now had a Whip to give him some Lashes, while he strove not to break his Fetters; tho' if he had, it were impossible: but he pronounced a Woe and Revenge from his Eyes, that darted Fire, which was at once both awful and terrible to behold.

When they thought they were sufficiently revenged on him, they unty'd him, almost fainting with Loss of Blood, from a thousand Wounds all over his Body; from which they had rent his Clothes, and led him bleeding and naked as he was, and loaded him all over with Irons; and then rubb'd his Wounds, to complete their Cruelty,

with Indian Pepper, which had like to have made him raving mad; and, in this Condition made him so fast to the Ground, that he could not stir, if his Pains and Wounds would have given him Leave. They spared Imoinda, and did not let her see 198this Barbarity committed towards her Lord, but carried her down to Parham, and shut her up; which was not in Kindness to her, but for Fear she should die with the Sight, or miscarry, and then they should lose a young Slave, and perhaps the Mother.

You must know, that when the News was brought on Monday Morning, that Cæsar had betaken himself to the Woods, and carry'd with him all the Negroes, we were possess'd with extreme Fear, which no Persuasions could dissipate, that he would secure himself till Night, and then would come down and cut all our Throats. This Apprehension made all the Females of us fly down the River, to be secured; and while we were away, they acted this Cruelty; for I suppose I had Authority and Interest enough there, had I suspected any such Thing, to have prevented it: but we had not gone many Leagues, but the News overtook us, that Cæsar was taken and whipped like a common Slave. We met on the River with Colonel Martin, a Man of great Gallantry, Wit, and Goodness, and whom I have celebrated in a Character of my new Comedy, by his own Name, in Memory of so brave a Man: He was wise and eloquent, and, from the Fineness of his Parts, bore a great Sway over the Hearts of all the Colony: He was a Friend to Cæsar, and resented this false Dealing with him very much. We carried him back to Parham, thinking to have made an Accommodation; when he came, the first News we heard, was, That the Governor was dead of a Wound Imoinda had given him; but it was not so well. But it seems, he would have the Pleasure of beholding the Revenge he took on Cæsar; and before the cruel Ceremony was finished, he dropt down; and then they perceived the Wound he had on his Shoulder was by a venom'd Arrow, which, as I said, his Indian Mistress healed by sucking the Wound.

We were no sooner arrived, but we went up to the Plantation to see Cæsar; whom we found in a very miserable 199and unexpressible Condition; and I have a thousand Times admired how he lived in so much tormenting Pain. We said all Things to him, that Trouble, Pity and Good-Nature could suggest, protesting our Innocency of the Fact, and our Abhorrence of such Cruelties; making a thousand Professions and Services to him, and begging as many Pardons for the Offenders, till we said so much, that he believed we had no Hand in his ill Treatment; but told us, He could never pardon Byam; as for Trefry, he confess'd he saw his Grief and Sorrow for his Suffering, which he could not hinder, but was like to have been beaten down by the very Slaves, for speaking in his Defence: But for Byam, who was their Leader, their Head—and should, by his Justice and Honour, have been an Example to 'em—for him, he wished to live to take a dire Revenge of him; and said, It had been well for him, if he had sacrificed me, instead of giving me the comtemptible Whip. He refused to talk much; but begging us to give him our Hands, he took them, and protested never to lift up his to do us any Harm. He had a great Respect for Colonel Martin, and always took his Counsel like that of a Parent; and assured him, he would obey him in any Thing but his Revenge on Byam: 'Therefore (said he) for his own Safety, let him speedily dispatch me; for if I could dispatch myself, I would not, till that Justice were done to my injured Person, and the Contempt of a Soldier: No, I would not kill myself, even after a Whipping, but will be content to live with that Infamy, and be pointed at by every grinning Slave, till I have completed my Revenge; and then you shall see, that Oroonoko scorns to live with the Indignity that was put on Cæsar.' All we could do, could get no more Words from him; and we took Care to have him put immediately into a healing Bath, to rid him of his Pepper, and ordered a Chirurgeon to anoint him with healing Balm, which he suffer'd, and in some Time he began to be able to walk and eat. We failed not 200to visit him every Day, and to that End had him brought to an Apartment at Parham.

The Governor had no sooner recover'd, and had heard of the Menaces of Cæsar, but he called his Council, who (not to disgrace them, or burlesque the Government there) consisted of such notorious Villains as Newgate never transported; and, possibly, originally were such who understood neither the Laws of God or Man, and had no sort of Principles to make them worthy the Name of Men; but at the very Council-Table would contradict and fight with one another, and swear so bloodily, that 'twas terrible to hear and see 'em. (Some of 'em were afterwards hanged, when the Dutch took Possession of the Place, others sent off in Chains.) But calling these

special Rulers of the Nation together, and requiring their Counsel in this weighty Affair, they all concluded, that (damn 'em) it might be their own Cases; and that Cæsar ought to be made an Example to all the Negroes, to fright 'em from daring to threaten their Betters, their Lords and Masters; and at this Rate no Man was safe from his own Slaves; and concluded, nemine contradicente, That Cæsar should be hanged.

Trefry then thought it Time to use his Authority, and told Byam, his Command did not extend to his Lord's Plantation; and that Parham was as much exempt from the Law as White-Hall; and that they ought no more to touch the Servants of the Lord—who there represented the King's Person) than they could those about the King himself; and that Parham was a Sanctuary; and tho' his Lord were absent in Person, his Power was still in being there, which he had entrusted with him, as far as the Dominions of his particular Plantations reached, and all that belonged to it; the rest of the Country, as Byam was Lieutenant to his Lord, he might exercise his Tyranny upon. Trefry had others as powerful, or more, that interested themselves in Cæsar's Life, and absolutely said, he 201should be defended. So turning the Governor, and his wise Council, out of Doors, (for they sat at Parham-House) we set a Guard upon our Lodging-Place, and would admit none but those we called Friends to us and Cæsar.

The Governor having remain'd wounded at Parham, till his Recovery was completed, Cæsar did not know but he was still there, and indeed for the most Part, his Time was spent there: for he was one that loved to live at other Peoples Expence, and if he were a Day absent, he was ten present there; and us'd to play, and walk, and hunt, and fish with Cæsar: So that Cæsar did not at all doubt, if he once recover'd Strength, but he should find an Opportunity of being revenged on him; though, after such a Revenge, he could not hope to live: for if he escaped the Fury of the English Mobile, who perhaps would have been glad of the Occasion to have killed him, he was resolved not to survive his Whipping; yet he had some tender Hours, a repenting Softness, which he called his Fits of Cowardice, wherein he struggled with Love for the Victory of his Heart, which took Part with his charming Imoinda there; but for the most Part, his Time was pass'd in melancholy Thoughts, and black Designs. He consider'd, if he should do this Deed, and die either in the Attempt, or after it, he left his lovely Imoinda a Prey, or at best a Slave to the enraged Multitude; his great Heart could not endure that Thought: Perhaps (said he) she may be first ravish'd by every Brute; expos'd first to their nasty Lusts, and then a shameful Death: No, he could not live a Moment under that Apprehension, too insupportable to be borne. These were his Thoughts, and his silent Arguments with his Heart, as he told us afterwards: So that now resolving not only to kill Byam, but all those he thought had enraged him; pleasing his great Heart with the fancy'd Slaughter he should make over the whole Face of the Plantation; he first resolved on a Deed, (that however horrid it first appear'd to us all) when we had heard his Reasons, we 202thought it brave and just. Being able to walk, and, as he believed, fit for the Execution of his great Design, he begg'd Trefry to trust him into the Air, believing a Walk would do him good; which was granted him; and taking Imoinda with him, as he used to do in his more happy and calmer Days, he led her up into a Wood, where (after with a thousand Sighs, and long gazing silently on her Face, while Tears gush'd, in spite of him, from his Eyes) he told her his Design, first of killing her, and then his Enemies, and next himself, and the Impossibility of escaping, and therefore he told her the Necessity of dying. He found the heroick Wife faster pleading for Death, than he was to propose it, when she found his fix'd Resolution; and, on her Knees, besought him not to leave her a Prey to his Enemies. He (grieved to Death) yet pleased at her noble Resolution, took her up, and embracing of her with all the Passion and Languishment of a dying Lover, drew his Knife to kill this Treasure of his Soul, this Pleasure of his Eyes; while Tears trickled down his Cheeks, hers were smiling with Joy she should die by so noble a Hand, and be sent into her own Country (for that's their Notion of the next World) by him she so tenderly loved, and so truly ador'd in this: For Wives have a Respect for their Husbands equal to what any other People pay a Deity; and when a Man finds any Occasion to quit his Wife, if he love her, she dies by his Hand; if not, he sells her, or suffers some other to kill her. It being thus, you may believe the Deed was soon resolv'd on; and 'tis not to be doubted, but the parting, the eternal Leave-taking of two such Lovers, so greatly born, so sensible, so beautiful, so young, and so fond, must be very moving, as the Relation of it was to me afterwards.

All that Love could say in such Cases, being ended, and all the intermitting Irresolutions being adjusted, the lovely, young and ador'd Victim lays herself down before the Sacrificer; while he, with a Hand resolved, and a 203Heart-breaking within, gave the fatal Stroke, first cutting her Throat, and then severing her yet smiling Face from that delicate Body, pregnant as it was with the Fruits of tenderest Love. As soon as he had done, he laid the Body decently on Leaves and Flowers, of which he made a Bed, and conceal'd it under the same Cover-lid of Nature; only her Face he left yet bare to look on: But when he found she was dead, and past all Retrieve, never more to bless him with her Eyes, and soft Language, his Grief swell'd up to Rage; he tore, he rav'd, he roar'd like some Monster of the Wood, calling on the lov'd Name of Imoinda. A thousand Times he turned the fatal Knife that did the Deed towards his own Heart, with a Resolution to go immediately after her; but dire Revenge, which was now a thousand Times more fierce in his Soul than before, prevents him; and he would cry out, 'No, since I have sacrific'd Imoinda to my Revenge, shall I lose that Glory which I have purchased so dear, as at the Price of the fairest, dearest, softest Creature that ever Nature made? No, no!' Then at her Name Grief would get the Ascendant of Rage, and he would lie down by her Side, and water her Face with Showers of Tears, which never were wont to fall from those Eyes; and however bent he was on his intended Slaughter, he had not Power to stir from the Sight of this dear Object, now more beloved, and more ador'd than ever.

He remained in this deplorable Condition for two Days, and never rose from the Ground where he had made her sad Sacrifice; at last rousing from her Side, and accusing himself with living too long, now Imoinda was dead, and that the Deaths of those barbarous Enemies were deferred too long, he resolved now to finish the great Work: but offering to rise, he found his Strength so decay'd, that he reeled to and fro, like Boughs assailed by contrary Winds; so that he was forced to lie down again, and try to summon all his Courage to his Aid. He found his Brains turned 204round, and his Eyes were dizzy, and Objects appear'd not the same to him they were wont to do; his Breath was short, and all his Limbs surpriz'd with a Faintness he had never felt before. He had not eat in two Days, which was one Occasion of his Feebleness, but Excess of Grief was the greatest; yet still he hoped he should recover Vigour to act his Design, and lay expecting it yet six Days longer; still mourning over the dead Idol of his Heart, and striving every Day to rise, but could not.

In all this time you may believe we were in no little Affliction for Cæsar and his Wife; some were of Opinion he was escaped, never to return; others thought some Accident had happened to him: But however, we fail'd not to send out a hundred People several Ways, to search for him. A Party of about forty went that Way he took, among whom was Tuscan, who was perfectly reconciled to Byam: They had not gone very far into the Wood, but they smelt an unusual Smell, as of a dead Body; for Stinks must be very noisom, that can be distinguish'd among such a Quantity of natural Sweets, as every Inch of that Land produces: so that they concluded they should find him dead, or some body that was so; they pass'd on towards it, as loathsom as it was, and made such rustling among the Leaves that lie thick on the Ground, by continual falling, that Cæsar heard he was approach'd; and though he had, during the Space of these eight Days, endeavour'd to rise, but found he wanted Strength, yet looking up, and seeing his Pursuers, he rose, and reel'd to a neighbouring Tree, against which he fix'd his Back; and being within a dozen Yards of those that advanc'd and saw him, he call'd out to them, and bid them approach no nearer, if they would be safe. So that they stood still, and hardly believing their Eyes, that would persuade them that it was Cæsar that spoke to them, so much he was alter'd; they ask'd him, what he had done with his Wife, for they smelt a Stink that almost struck them dead? He pointing to the 205dead Body, sighing, cry'd, Behold her there. They put off the Flowers that cover'd her, with their Sticks, and found she was kill'd, and cry'd out, Oh, Monster! that hast murder'd thy Wife. Then asking him, why he did so cruel a Deed? He reply'd, He had no Leisure to answer impertinent Questions: 'You may go back (continued he) and tell the faithless Governor, he may thank Fortune that I am breathing my last; and that my Arm is too feeble to obey my Heart, in what it had design'd him': But his Tongue faltering, and trembling, he could scarce end what he was saying. The English taking Advantage by his Weakness, cry'd, Let us take him alive by all Means. He heard 'em; and, as if he had reviv'd from a Fainting, or a Dream, he cried out, 'No, Gentlemen, you are deceived; you will find no more Cæsars to be whipt; no more find a Faith in me; Feeble as you think me, I have Strength yet left to secure me from a second Indignity.' They swore all anew; and he only shook his Head, and

beheld them with Scorn. Then they cry'd out, Who will venture on this single Man? Will nobody? They stood all silent, while Cæsar replied, Fatal will be the Attempt of the first Adventurer, let him assure himself, (and, at that Word, held up his Knife in a menacing Posture:) Look ye, ye faithless Crew, said he, 'tis not Life I seek, nor am I afraid of dying, (and at that Word, cut a Piece of Flesh from his own Throat, and threw it at 'em) yet still I would live if I could, till I had perfected my Revenge: But, oh! it cannot be; I feel Life gliding from my Eyes and Heart; and if I make not haste, I shall fall a Victim to the shameful Whip. At that, he rip'd up his own Belly, and took his Bowels and pull'd 'em out, with what Strength he could; while some, on their Knees imploring, besought him to hold his Hand. But when they saw him tottering, they cry'd out, Will none venture on him? A bold Englishman cry'd, Yes, if he were the Devil, (taking Courage when he saw him almost dead) and swearing a horrid Oath for his farewell to the World, he 206rush'd on him. Cæsar with his arm'd Hand, met him so fairly, as stuck him to the Heart, and he Fell dead at his feet. Tuscan seeing that, cry'd out, I love thee, O Cæsar! and therefore will not let thee die, if possible; and running to him, took him in his Arms; but, at the same time, warding a Blow that Cæsar made at his Bosom, he receiv'd it quite through his Arm; and Cæsar having not Strength to pluck the Knife forth, tho' he attempted it, Tuscan neither pull'd it out himself, nor suffer'd it to be pull'd out, but came down with it sticking in his Arm; and the Reason he gave for it, was, because the Air should not get into the Wound. They put their Hands a-cross, and carry'd Cæsar between six of 'em, fainting as he was, and they thought dead, or just dying; and they brought him to Parham, and laid him on a Couch, and had the Chirurgeon immediately to him, who dressed his Wounds, and sow'd up his Belly, and us'd Means to bring him to Life, which they effected. We ran all to see him; and, if before we thought him so beautiful a Sight, he was now so alter'd, that his Face was like a Death's-Head black'd over, nothing but Teeth and Eye-holes: For some Days we suffer'd no Body to speak to him, but caused Cordials to be poured down his Throat; which sustained his Life, and in six or seven Days he recovered his Senses: For, you must know, that Wounds are almost to a Miracle cur'd in the Indies; unless Wounds in the Legs, which they rarely ever cure.

When he was well enough to speak, we talk'd to him, and ask'd him some Questions about his Wife, and the Reasons why he kill'd her; and he then told us what I have related of that Resolution, and of his Parting, and he besought us we would let him live, and was extremely afflicted to think it was possible he might live: He assur'd us, if we did not dispatch him, he would prove very fatal to a great many. We said all we could to make him live, and gave him new Assurances; but he begg'd we would 207not think so poorly of him, or of his Love to Imoinda, to imagine we could flatter him to Life again: But the Chirurgeon assur'd him he could not live, and therefore he need not fear. We were all (but Cæsar) afflicted at this News, and the Sight was ghastly: His Discourse was sad; and the earthy Smell about him so strong, that I was persuaded to leave the Place for some time, (being my self but sickly, and very apt to fall into Fits of dangerous Illness upon any extraordinary Melancholy.) The Servants, and Trefry, and the Chirurgeons, promis'd all to take what possible Care they could of the Life of Cæsar; and I, taking Boat, went with other Company to Colonel Martin's, about three Days Journey down the River. But I was no sooner gone, than the Governor taking Trefry, about some pretended earnest Business, a Day's Journey up the River, having communicated his Design to one Banister, a wild Irish Man, one of the Council, a Fellow of absolute Barbarity, and fit to execute any Villany, but rich; he came up to Parham, and forcibly took Cæsar, and had him carried to the same Post where he was whipp'd; and causing him to be ty'd to it, and a great Fire made before him, he told him he should die like a Dog, as he was. Cæsar replied, This was the first piece of Bravery that ever Banister did, and he never spoke Sense till he pronounc'd that Word; and if he would keep it, he would declare, in the other World, that he was the only Man, of all the Whites, that ever he heard speak Truth. And turning to the Men that had bound him, he said, My Friends, am I to die, or to be whipt? And they cry'd, Whipt! no, you shall not escape so well. And then he reply'd, smiling, A Blessing on thee; and assur'd them they need not tie him, for he would stand fix'd like a Rock, and endure Death so as should encourage them to die: But if you whip me (said he) be sure you tie me fast.

He had learn'd to take Tobacco; and when he was assur'd he should die, he desir'd they would give him a 208Pipe in his Mouth, ready lighted; which they did: And the Executioner came, and first cut off his Members, and threw them into the Fire; after that, with an ill-favour'd Knife, they cut off his Ears and his Nose, and

burn'd them; he still smook'd on, as if nothing had touch'd him; then they hack'd off one of his Arms, and still he bore up and held his Pipe; but at the cutting off the other Arm, his Head sunk, and his Pipe dropt, and he gave up the Ghost, without a Groan, or a Reproach. My Mother and Sister were by him all the While, but not suffer'd to save him; so rude and wild were the Rabble, and so inhuman were the Justices who stood by to see the Execution, who after paid dear enough for their Insolence. They cut Cæsar into Quarters, and sent them to several of the chief Plantations: One Quarter was sent to Colonel Martin; who refus'd it, and swore, he had rather see the Quarters of Banister, and the Governor himself, than those of Cæsar, on his Plantations; and that he could govern his Negroes, without terrifying and grieving them with frightful Spectacles of a mangled King.

Thus died this great Man, worthy of a better Fate, and a more sublime Wit than mine to write his Praise: Yet, I hope, the Reputation of my Pen is considerable enough to make his glorious Name to survive to all Ages, with that of the brave, the beautiful and the constant Imoinda.

Notes: Critical and Explanatory:

Oroonoko.

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p. 509 Appendix. Oroonoko: Epistle Dedicatory. Richard Maitland, fourth Earl of Lauderdale (1653-95), eldest son of Charles, third Earl of Lauderdale by Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Richard Lauder of Halton, was born 20 June, 1653. Before his father succeeded to the Lauderdale title he was styled of Over-Gogar; after that event he was known as Lord Maitland. 9 October, 1678, he was sworn a Privy Councillor, and appointed Joint General of the Mint with his father. In 1681 he was made Lord Justice General, but deprived of that office three years later on account of suspected communications with his father-in-law, Argyll, who had fled to Holland in 1681. Maitland, however, was in truth a strong Jacobite, and refusing to accept the Revolution settlement became an exile with his King. He is said to have been present at the battle of the Boyne, 1 July, 1690. He resided for some time at St. Germain, but fell into disfavour, perhaps owing to the well-known protestant sympathies of his wife, Lady Agnes Campbell (1658-1734), second daughter of the fanatical Archibald, Earl of Argyll. From St. Germain Maitland retired to Paris, where he died in 1695. He had succeeded to the Earldom of Lauderdale 9 June, 1691, but was outlawed by the Court of Justiciary, 23 July, 1694. He left no issue. Lauderdale was the author of a verse translation of Virgil (8vo, 1718 and 2 Vols., 12mo, 1737). Dryden, to whom he sent a MS. copy from Paris, states that whilst working on his own version he consulted this whenever a crux appeared in the Latin text. Lauderdale also wrote A Memorial on the Estate of Scotland (about 1690), printed in Hooke's Correspondence (Roxburghe Club), and there wrongly ascribed to the third Earl, his father.

The Dedication only occurs in the first edition of Oroonoko (1688), of which I can trace but one copy. This is in the library of Mr. F. F. Norcross of Chicago, whose brother-in-law, Mr. Harold B. Wrenn, most kindly transcribed and transmitted to me the Epistle Dedicatory. It, unfortunately, arrived too late for insertion at p. 129.

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p. 130 I gave 'em to the King's Theatre. Sir Robert Howard and Dryden's heroic tragedy, The Indian Queen, was produced at the Theatre Royal in mid-January, 1663. It is a good play, but the extraordinary success it attained was in no small measure due to the excellence and magnificence of the scenic effects and mounting. 27 January, Pepys noticed that the streets adjacent to the theatre were 'full of coaches at the new play The Indian Queen, which for show, they say, exceeds Henry VIII.' On 1 February he himself found it 'indeed a most pleasant show'. The grandeur of the mise en scène became long proverbial in theatrical history. Zempoalla, the Indian Queen, a fine rôle, was superbly acted by Mrs. Marshall, the leading tragedienne of the day. The feathered ornaments which Mrs. Behn mentions must have formed a quaint but doubtless striking addition to the actress's pseudo-classic attire. Bernbaum pictures 'Nell Gwynn⁵ in the true costume of a Carib belle', a quite unfair deduction from Mrs. Behn's words.

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p. 168 Osenbrigs. More usually 'osnaburg', so named from Osnabrück in North Germany, a kind of coarse linen made in this town. Narborough's Journal, 1669 (An Account of Several Late Voyages, 1694), speaks of 'Cloth, Osenbrigs, Tobacco'. cf. Pennsylvania Col. Records (1732): 'That to each there be given a couple of Shirts, a Jackett, two pairs of trowsers of Oznabrigs.'

p. 174 as soon as the Governour arrived. The Governor was Francis Willoughby, fifth Baron Willoughby of Parham (1613?-1666). He had arrived at Barbadoes, 29 April, 1650, and was received as Governor 7 May, which same day he caused Charles II to be proclaimed. An ardent royalist, he was dispossessed by an Act of Parliament, 4 March, 1652, and summoned back to England. At the Restoration he was reinstated, and arrived the second time with full powers in Barbadoes, 10 August, 1663. About the end of July, 1666, he was lost at sea on board the good ship Hope.

p. 177 my Father . . . never arriv'd to possess the Honour design'd him. Bernbaum, following the mistaken statement that Mrs. Behn's father, John Amis, was a barber, argues that a man in such a position could hardly have obtained so important a post, and if her 'father was not sent to Surinam, the only reason she gives for being there disappears.' However, since we know her father to have been no barber, but of good family, this line of discussion falls to the ground.

p. 180 Brother to Harry Martin the great Oliverian. Henry, or Harry, and George Marten were the two sons of Sir Henry Marten (ob. 1641) and his first wife, Elizabeth, who died 19 June, 1618. For the elder brother, Henry Marten, (1602-80), see note Vol. I, p. 457. Cross-reference: Note from Volume I

p. 193 The Deputy Governor. William Byam was 'Lieutenant General of Guiana and Governor of Willoughby Land', 1661-7. Even previously to this he had gained no little influence and power in these colonies. He headed the forces that defended Surinam in 1667 against the Dutch Admiral Crynsens, who, however, proved victorious.

p. 198 my new Comedy. The Younger Brother; or, The Amorous Jilt, posthumously produced under the auspices of, and with some alterations by, Charles Gildon at Drury Lane in 1696. George Marteen, acted by Powell, is the young and gallant hero of the comedy.

p. 200 his Council. In The Widow Ranter Mrs. Behn draws a vivid picture of these deboshed ruffians.

p. 207 one Banister. Sergeant Major James Banister being, after Byam's departure in 1667, 'the only remaining eminent person' became Lieutenant-Governor. It was he who in 1668 made the final surrender of the colony. Later, having quarrelled with the Dutch he was imprisoned by them.

Olaudah Equiano



General Background

Olaudah Equiano wrote in his autobiography that he was born in southern Nigeria. He also describes how he was kidnapped by African raiders (along with his sister) around the age of 11, sold into slavery, and shipped across the Atlantic to Barbados. Purchased by a naval officer (despite slavery being heavily discouraged by the British Navy and at home in England), Equiano was renamed Gustavus Vassa and spent six years with the officer before being sold again and shipped to the West Indies. While serving on the sea, and studying for short time at a school in London, Equiano was able to acquire a basic education despite his enslavement (it is important to note that this background information comes from his autobiography—scholars have not been able to determine the truth of these claims—there is some evidence that Equiano fabricated some of his early life story and was born in Carolina rather than Africa, which would trouble the accuracy of his account of the Atlantic passage—one of the more visceral parts of the narrative).

A Quaker merchant named Robert King eventually purchased Equiano, leading to Olaudah purchasing his freedom in 1776. He then returned to London and worked as a hairdresser for some time before later voyaging around the world, even joining an expedition looking for a route to India via the North Pole. By the end of his life, Equiano was an active worker in the abolitionist fight to restore humanity to the world. After his writing and adventures, in 1792 Equiano married an Englishwoman, Susanna Cullen, and they had two daughters together. Equiano died several years later on March 31st, 1797.

Style and Works

The Life of Equiano (1789) stands as Equiano's only well known (but powerful) literary contribution to the world. Written as autobiography, Equiano builds on the writings of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* by adding a personal voice to the discussion. His work, part memoir, part adventure, part abolitionist tract, part narrative, and part spiritual autobiography, is a brilliant piece that forces the reader to think about life as a slave, traded and dehumanized by the social and political forces of the time. By putting his readers "in his shoes," Equiano laid the foundation for readers to experience, through his writings, the awfulness of the slave trade and generate the desire to do something about it.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Equiano's writings form the first slave narrative written in English, and he is considered by many scholars to be the originator of the genre. He gave voice to the voiceless in his writings, demonstrating that black people could speak/write for themselves. As a prominent member (starting in 1786) of the Sons of Africa, a group of twelve black men who campaigned for abolition, Equiano was an active worker for equality. His writing humanized the "otherness" of blacks during this period of British history, showing a humanity, intelligence, and Christian outlook that appealed to many readers of the time.

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The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaundan Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, The African.

Written by Himself
Section 1

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled and tossed up to see if I were sound by some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me. Their complexions too differing so much from ours, their long hair, and the language they spoke, (which was very different from any I had ever heard) united to confirm me in this belief. Indeed such were the horrors of my views and fears at the moment, that, if ten thousand worlds had been my own, I would have freely parted with them all to have exchanged my condition with that of the meanest slave in my own country. When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace or copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. When I recovered a little I found some black people about me, who I believed were some of those who brought me on board, and had been receiving their pay; they talked to me in order to cheer me, but all in vain. I asked them if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and loose hair. They told me I was not; and one of the crew brought me a small portion of spirituous liquor in a wine glass; but, being afraid of him, I would not take it out of his hand. One of the blacks therefore took it from him and gave it to me, and I took a little down my palate, which, instead of reviving me, as they thought it would, threw me into the greatest consternation at the strange feeling it produced, having never tasted any such liquor before. Soon after this the blacks who brought me on board went off, and left me abandoned to despair. I now saw myself deprived of all chance of returning to my native country, or even the least glimpse of hope of gaining the shore, which I now considered as friendly; and I even wished for my former slavery in preference to my present situation, which was filled with horrors of every kind, still heightened by my ignorance of what I was to undergo. I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste any thing. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across I think the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced any thing of this kind before; and although, not being used to the water, I naturally feared that element the first time I saw it, yet nevertheless, could I have got

over the nettings, I would have jumped over the side, but I could not; and, besides, the crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water: and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself. In a little time after, amongst the poor chained men, I found some of my own nation, which in a small degree gave ease to my mind. I inquired of these what was to be done with us; they gave me to understand we were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them. I then was a little revived, and thought, if it were no worse than working, my situation was not so desperate: but still I feared I should be put to death, the white people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among any people such instances of brutal cruelty; and this not only shewn towards us blacks, but also to some of the whites themselves. One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast, that he died in consequence of it; and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute. This made me fear these people the more; and I expected nothing less than to be treated in the same manner. I could not help expressing my fears and apprehensions to some of my countrymen: I asked them if these people had no country, but lived in this hollow place (the ship): they told me they did not, but came from a distant one. 'Then,' said I, 'how comes it in all our country we never heard of them?' They told me because they lived so very far off. I then asked where were their women? had they any like themselves? I was told they had: 'and why,' said I, 'do we not see them?' they answered, because they were left behind. I asked how the vessel could go? they told me they could not tell; but that there were cloths put upon the masts by the help of the ropes I saw, and then the vessel went on; and the white men had some spell or magic they put in the water when they liked in order to stop the vessel. I was exceedingly amazed at this account, and really thought they were spirits. I therefore wished much to be from amongst them, for I expected they would sacrifice me: but my wishes were vain; for we were so quartered that it was impossible for any of us to make our escape. While we stayed on the coast I was mostly on deck; and one day, to my great astonishment, I saw one of these vessels coming in with the sails up. As soon as the whites saw it, they gave a great shout, at which we were amazed; and the more so as the vessel appeared larger by approaching nearer. At last she came to an anchor in my sight, and when the anchor was let go I and my countrymen who saw it were lost in astonishment to observe the vessel stop; and were not convinced it was done by magic. Soon after this the other ship got her boats out, and they came on board of us, and the people of both ships seemed very glad to see each other. Several of the strangers also shook hands with us black people, and made motions with their hands, signifying I suppose we were to go to their country; but we did not understand them. At last, when the ship we were in had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck, so that we could not see how they managed the vessel. But this disappointment was the least of my sorrow. The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable. Happily perhaps for myself I was soon reduced so low here that it was thought necessary to keep me almost always on deck; and from my extreme youth I was not put in fetters. In this situation I expected every hour to share the fate of my companions, some of whom were

almost daily brought upon deck at the point of death, which I began to hope would soon put an end to my miseries. Often did I think many of the inhabitants of the deep much more happy than myself. I envied them the freedom they enjoyed, and as often wished I could change my condition for theirs. Every circumstance I met with served only to render my state more painful, and heighten my apprehensions, and my opinion of the cruelty of the whites. One day they had taken a number of fishes; and when they had killed and satisfied themselves with as many as they thought fit, to our astonishment who were on the deck, rather than give any of them to us to eat as we expected, they tossed the remaining fish into the sea again, although we begged and prayed for some as well as we could, but in vain; and some of my countrymen, being pressed by hunger, took an opportunity, when they thought no one saw them, of trying to get a little privately; but they were discovered, and the attempt procured them some very severe floggings. One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings and jumped into the sea: immediately another quite dejected fellow, who, on account of his illness, was suffered to be out of irons, also followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same if they had not been prevented by the ship's crew, who were instantly alarmed. Those of us that were the most active were in a moment put down under the deck, and there was such a noise and confusion amongst the people of the ship as I never heard before, to stop her, and get the boat out to go after the slaves. However two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other, and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery. In this manner we continued to undergo more hardships than I can now relate, hardships which are inseparable from this accursed trade. Many a time we were near suffocation from the want of fresh air, which we were often without for whole days together. This, and the stench of the necessary tubs, carried off many. During our passage I first saw flying fishes, which surprised me very much: they used frequently to fly across the ship, and many of them fell on the deck. I also now first saw the use of the quadrant; I had often with astonishment seen the mariners make observations with it, and I could not think what it meant. They at last took notice of my surprise; and one of them, willing to increase it, as well as to gratify my curiosity, made me one day look through it. The clouds appeared to me to be land, which disappeared as they passed along. This heightened my wonder; and I was now more persuaded than ever that I was in another world, and that every thing about me was magic. At last we came in sight of the island of Barbadoes, at which the whites on board gave a great shout, and made many signs of joy to us. We did not know what to think of this; but as the vessel drew nearer we plainly saw the harbour, and other ships of different kinds and sizes; and we soon anchored amongst them off Bridge Town. Many merchants and planters now came on board, though it was in the evening. They put us in separate parcels, and examined us attentively. They also made us jump, and pointed to the land, signifying we were to go there. We thought by this we should be eaten by these ugly men, as they appeared to us; and, when soon after we were all put down under the deck again, there was much dread and trembling among us, and nothing but bitter cries to be heard all the night from these apprehensions, insomuch that at last the white people got some old slaves from the land to pacify us. They told us we were not to be eaten, but to work, and were soon to go on land, where we should see many of our country people. This report eased us much; and sure enough, soon after we were landed, there came to us Africans of all languages. We were conducted immediately to the merchant's yard, where we were all pent up together like so many sheep in a fold, without regard to sex or age. As every object was new to me every thing I saw filled me with surprise. What struck me first was that the houses were built with stories, and in every other respect different from those in Africa: but I was still more astonished on seeing people on horseback. I did not know what this could mean; and indeed I thought these people were full of nothing but magical arts. While I was in this astonishment one of my fellow prisoners spoke to a countryman of his about the horses, who said they were the same kind they had

in their country. I understood them, though they were from a distant part of Africa, and I thought it odd I had not seen any horses there; but afterwards, when I came to converse with different Africans, I found they had many horses amongst them, and much larger than those I then saw. We were not many days in the merchant's custody before we were sold after their usual manner, which is this:—On a signal given, (as the beat of a drum) the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamour with which this is attended, and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers, serve not a little to increase the apprehensions of the terrified Africans, who may well be supposed to consider them as the ministers of that destruction to which they think themselves devoted. In this manner, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again. I remember in the vessel in which I was brought over, in the men's apartment, there were several brothers, who, in the sale, were sold in different lots; and it was very moving on this occasion to see and hear their cries at parting. O, ye nominal Christians! might not an African ask you, learned you this from your God, who says unto you, Do unto all men as you would men should do unto you? Is it not enough that we are torn from our country and friends to toil for your luxury and lust of gain? Must every tender feeling be likewise sacrificed to your avarice? Are the dearest friends and relations, now rendered more dear by their separation from their kindred, still to be parted from each other, and thus prevented from cheering the gloom of slavery with the small comfort of being together and mingling their sufferings and sorrows? Why are parents to lose their children, brothers their sisters, or husbands their wives? Surely this is a new refinement in cruelty, which, while it has no advantage to atone for it, thus aggravates distress, and adds fresh horrors even to the wretchedness of slavery.

Section 2

Every day now brought me nearer my freedom, and I was impatient till we proceeded again to sea, that I might have an opportunity of getting a sum large enough to purchase it. I was not long ungratified; for, in the beginning of the year 1766, my master bought another sloop, named the Nancy, the largest I had ever seen. She was partly laden, and was to proceed to Philadelphia; our Captain had his choice of three, and I was well pleased he chose this, which was the largest; for, from his having a large vessel, I had more room, and could carry a larger quantity of goods with me. Accordingly, when we had delivered our old vessel, the Prudence, and completed the lading of the Nancy, having made near three hundred per cent, by four barrels of pork I brought from Charlestown, I laid in as large a cargo as I could, trusting to God's providence to prosper my undertaking. With these views I sailed for Philadelphia. On our passage, when we drew near the land, I was for the first time surprised at the sight of some whales, having never seen any such large sea monsters before; and as we sailed by the land one morning I saw a puppy whale close by the vessel; it was about the length of a wherry boat, and it followed us all the day till we got within the Capes. We arrived safe and in good time at Philadelphia, and I sold my goods there chiefly to the quakers. They always appeared to be a very honest discreet sort of people, and never attempted to impose on me; I therefore liked them, and ever after chose to deal with them in preference to any others. One Sunday morning while I was here, as I was going to church, I chanced to pass a meeting-house. The doors being open, and the house full of people, it excited my curiosity to go in. When I entered the house, to my great surprise, I saw a very tall woman standing in the midst of them, speaking in an audible voice something which I could not understand. Having never seen anything of this kind before, I stood and stared about me for some time, wondering at this odd scene. As soon as it was over I took an opportunity to make inquiry about the place and people,

when I was informed they were called Quakers. I particularly asked what that woman I saw in the midst of them had said, but none of them were pleased to satisfy me; so I quitted them, and soon after, as I was returning, I came to a church crowded with people; the church-yard was full likewise, and a number of people were even mounted on ladders, looking in at the windows. I thought this a strange sight, as I had never seen churches, either in England or the West Indies, crowded in this manner before. I therefore made bold to ask some people the meaning of all this, and they told me the Rev. Mr. George Whitfield was preaching. I had often heard of this gentleman, and had wished to see and hear him; but I had never before had an opportunity. I now therefore resolved to gratify myself with the sight, and I pressed in amidst the multitude. When I got into the church I saw this pious man exhorting the people with the greatest fervour and earnestness, and sweating as much as I ever did while in slavery on Montserrat beach. I was very much struck and impressed with this; I thought it strange I had never seen divines exert themselves in this manner before, and I was no longer at a loss to account for the thin congregations they preached to. When we had discharged our cargo here, and were loaded again, we left this fruitful land once more, and set sail for Montserrat. My traffic had hitherto succeeded so well with me, that I thought, by selling my goods when we arrived at Montserrat, I should have enough to purchase my freedom. But, as soon as our vessel arrived there, my master came on board, and gave orders for us to go to St. Eustatia, and discharge our cargo there, and from thence proceed for Georgia. I was much disappointed at this; but thinking, as usual, it was of no use to encounter with the decrees of fate, I submitted without repining, and we went to St. Eustatia. After we had discharged our cargo there we took in a live cargo, as we call a cargo of slaves. Here I sold my goods tolerably well; but, not being able to lay out all my money in this small island to as much advantage as in many other places, I laid out only part, and the remainder I brought away with me neat. We sailed from hence for Georgia, and I was glad when we got there, though I had not much reason to like the place from my last adventure in Savannah; but I longed to get back to Montserrat and procure my freedom, which I expected to be able to purchase when I returned. As soon as we arrived here I waited on my careful doctor, Mr. Brady, to whom I made the most grateful acknowledgments in my power for his former kindness and attention during my illness. While we were here an odd circumstance happened to the Captain and me, which disappointed us both a good deal. A silversmith, whom we had brought to this place some voyages before, agreed with the Captain to return with us to the West Indies, and promised at the same time to give the Captain a great deal of money, having pretended to take a liking to him, and being, as we thought, very rich. But while we stayed to load our vessel this man was taken ill in a house where he worked, and in a week's time became very bad. The worse he grew the more he used to speak of giving the Captain what he had promised him, so that he expected something considerable from the death of this man, who had no wife or child, and he attended him day and night. I used also to go with the Captain, at his own desire, to attend him; especially when we saw there was no appearance of his recovery: and, in order to recompense me for my trouble, the Captain promised me ten pounds, when he should get the man's property. I thought this would be of great service to me, although I had nearly money enough to purchase my freedom, if I should get safe this voyage to Montserrat. In this expectation I laid out above eight pounds of my money for a suit of superfine clothes to dance with at my freedom, which I hoped was then at hand. We still continued to attend this man, and were with him even on the last day he lived, till very late at night, when we went on board. After we were got to bed, about one or two o'clock in the morning, the Captain was sent for, and informed the man was dead. On this he came to my bed, and, waking me, informed me of it, and desired me to get up and procure a light, and immediately go to him. I told him I was very sleepy, and wished he would take somebody else with him; or else, as the man was dead, and could want no farther attendance, to let all things remain as they were till the next morning. 'No, no,' said he, 'we will have the money to-night, I cannot wait till to-morrow; so let us go.' Accordingly I got up and struck a light, and away we both went and saw the man as dead as we could wish. The Captain said he

would give him a grand burial, in gratitude for the promised treasure; and desired that all the things belonging to the deceased might be brought forth. Among others, there was a nest of trunks of which he had kept the keys whilst the man was ill, and when they were produced we opened them with no small eagerness and expectation; and as there were a great number within one another, with much impatience we took them one out of the other. At last, when we came to the smallest, and had opened it, we saw it was full of papers, which we supposed to be notes; at the sight of which our hearts leapt for joy; and that instant the Captain, clapping his hands, cried out, 'Thank God, here it is.' But when we took up the trunk, and began to examine the supposed treasure and long-looked-for bounty, (alas! alas! how uncertain and deceitful are all human affairs!) what had we found! While we thought we were embracing a substance we grasped an empty nothing. The whole amount that was in the nest of trunks was only one dollar and a half; and all that the man possessed would not pay for his coffin. Our sudden and exquisite joy was now succeeded by a sudden and exquisite pain; and my Captain and I exhibited, for some time, most ridiculous figures—pictures of chagrin and disappointment! We went away greatly mortified, and left the deceased to do as well as he could for himself, as we had taken so good care of him when alive for nothing. We set sail once more for Montserrat, and arrived there safe; but much out of humour with our friend the silversmith. When we had unladen the vessel, and I had sold my venture, finding myself master of about forty-seven pounds, I consulted my true friend, the Captain, how I should proceed in offering my master the money for my freedom. He told me to come on a certain morning, when he and my master would be at breakfast together. Accordingly, on that morning I went, and met the Captain there, as he had appointed. When I went in I made my obeisance to my master, and with my money in my hand, and many fears in my heart, I prayed him to be as good as his offer to me, when he was pleased to promise me my freedom as soon as I could purchase it. This speech seemed to confound him; he began to recoil: and my heart that instant sunk within me. 'What,' said he, 'give you your freedom? Why, where did you get the money? Have you got forty pounds sterling?' 'Yes, sir,' I answered. 'How did you get it?' replied he. I told him, very honestly. The Captain then said he knew I got the money very honestly and with much industry, and that I was particularly careful. On which my master replied, I got money much faster than he did; and said he would not have made me the promise he did if he had thought I should have got money so soon. 'Come, come,' said my worthy Captain, clapping my master on the back, 'Come, Robert, (which was his name) I think you must let him have his freedom; you have laid your money out very well; you have received good interest for it all this time, and here is now the principal at last. I know Gustavus has earned you more than an hundred a-year, and he will still save you money, as he will not leave you:—Come, Robert, take the money.' My master then said, he would not be worse than his promise; and, taking the money, told me to go to the Secretary at the Register Office, and get my manumission drawn up. These words of my master were like a voice from heaven to me: in an instant all my trepidation was turned into unutterable bliss; and I most reverently bowed myself with gratitude, unable to express my feelings, but by the overflowing of my eyes, while my true and worthy friend, the Captain, congratulated us both with a peculiar degree of heartfelt pleasure. As soon as the first transports of my joy were over, and that I had expressed my thanks to these my worthy friends in the best manner I was able, I rose with a heart full of affection and reverence, and left the room, in order to obey my master's joyful mandate of going to the Register Office. As I was leaving the house I called to mind the words of the Psalmist, in the 126th Psalm, and like him, 'I glorified God in my heart, in whom I trusted.' These words had been impressed on my mind from the very day I was forced from Deptford to the present hour, and I now saw them, as I thought, fulfilled and verified. My imagination was all rapture as I flew to the Register Office, and, in this respect, like the apostle Peter,[U] (whose deliverance from prison was so sudden and extraordinary, that he thought he was in a vision) I could scarcely believe I was awake. Heavens! who could do justice to my feelings at this moment! Not conquering heroes themselves, in the midst of a triumph—Not the tender mother who has just regained her long-lost infant, and presses it to her heart—Not the weary hungry mariner, at the sight of the desired friendly port—Not the lover, when he once more

embraces his beloved mistress, after she had been ravished from his arms!—All within my breast was tumult, wildness, and delirium! My feet scarcely touched the ground, for they were winged with joy, and, like Elijah, as he rose to Heaven, they ‘were with lightning sped as I went on.’ Every one I met I told of my happiness, and blazed about the virtue of my amiable master and captain.

When I got to the office and acquainted the Register with my errand he congratulated me on the occasion, and told me he would draw up my manumission for half price, which was a guinea. I thanked him for his kindness; and, having received it and paid him, I hastened to my master to get him to sign it, that I might be fully released. Accordingly he signed the manumission that day, so that, before night, I who had been a slave in the morning, trembling at the will of another, was become my own master, and completely free. I thought this was the happiest day I had ever experienced; and my joy was still heightened by the blessings and prayers of the sable race, particularly the aged, to whom my heart had ever been attached with reverence.

As the form of my manumission has something peculiar in it, and expresses the absolute power and dominion one man claims over his fellow, I shall beg leave to present it before my readers at full length:

Montserrat.—To all men unto whom these presents shall come: I Robert King, of the parish of St. Anthony in the said island, merchant, send greeting: Know ye, that I the aforesaid Robert King, for and in consideration of the sum of seventy pounds current money of the said island, to me in hand paid, and to the intent that a negro man-slave, named Gustavus Vassa, shall and may become free, have manumitted, emancipated, enfranchised, and set free, and by these presents do manumit, emancipate, enfranchise, and set free, the aforesaid negro man-slave, named Gustavus Vassa, for ever, hereby giving, granting, and releasing unto him, the said Gustavus Vassa, all right, title, dominion, sovereignty, and property, which, as lord and master over the aforesaid Gustavus Vassa, I had, or now I have, or by any means whatsoever I may or can hereafter possibly have over him the aforesaid negro, for ever. In witness whereof I the abovesaid Robert King have unto these presents set my hand and seal, this tenth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six.

Robert King.

Signed, sealed, and delivered in the presence of Terrylegay, Montserrat.

Registered the within manumission at full length, this eleventh day of July, 1766, in liber D.

Terrylegay, Register.

In short, the fair as well as black people immediately styled me by a new appellation, to me the most desirable in the world, which was Freeman, and at the dances I gave my Georgia superfine blue clothes made no indifferent appearance.

Thomas Gray



General Background

Thomas Gray was born in London, the only one of twelve children to survive to adulthood. Due to a poor home life (his mentally unstable father abused his mother), Gray left home at age eight (financed by his mother) and went to Eton, where he quickly built several life-long friendships. Eventually he matriculated to Cambridge and left without graduating to take the grand tour of France and Italy as Horace Walpole’s guest (Walpole was the son of the prime minister). After his schooling, Gray retreated from public life for the most part and became a scholarly recluse who lived a quiet life.

In his later years, he did take some walking tours and accepted a professorship of modern history at Cambridge. He was offered the Poet Laureateship in 1757, but turned down the position. Single to the end, he fell suddenly ill shortly before a planned trip to Switzerland with a close friend and died in July of 1771.

Style and Works

Gray wrote several odes and other pieces but is far and away the most famous for writing “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (1751). His work was usually marked by archaic words and Latin influences (Gray believed that common vernacular of any time was never the proper language for poetry), but “Elegy” combines Latin well with living English speech of the time. “Elegy” is a meditation on the inevitability of death, the vanity of ambition, and the universal human desire to be loved. In particular, the poem looks at death as an indiscriminate force which fails to distinguish between the famous and the anonymous (all are equal in the face of the human constant of death).

Several prominent poets who followed Gray were known to praise his work: Samuel Johnson, William Wordsworth, and Samuel Coleridge all praised his style and found his melding of elevated language with common theme (elegiac poetry) to be important in the literary scene of eighteenth-century Britain.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Gray's most lasting contributions came through "Elegy." His work demonstrated both the technical precision of neoclassical restraint and thematic resonances leaning towards sentiments of sensibility. Widely read, one can see Gray's vast knowledge (recorded in his personal notebooks) of botany, Norse literature, music, painting, law, architecture, and entomology reflected in his writing. Although he considered himself as a melancholy man, his writings show a writer with a lively wit and an active intellect.

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Hymn to Adversity

BY THOMAS GREY

Daughter of JOVE, relentless Power,
Thou Tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and tort'ring hour
The Bad affright, afflict the Best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain 5
The Proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple Tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy Sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling Child, design'd, 10
To thee he gave the heav'nly Birth,
And bad to form her infant mind.
Stern rugged Nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore:
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know, 15
And from her own she learn'd to melt at other's woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
And leave us leisure to be good. 20
Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer Friend, the flatt'ring Foe;
By vain Prosperity received,
To her they vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom in sable garb array'd 25
Immers'd in rapt'rous thought profound,
And Melancholy, silent maid
With leaden eye, that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend:
Warm Charity, the gen'ral friend, 30
With Justice to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh, gently on thy Suppliant's head,
Dread Goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand!
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad, 35
Nor circled with the vengeful Band
(As by the Impious thou art seen)
With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning mien,
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,

Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty. 40
 Thy form benign, oh Goddess, wear,
 Thy milder influence impart,
 Thy philosophic Train be there
 To soften, not to wound my heart,
 The gen'rous spark extinct revive, 45
 Teach me to love and to forgive,
 Exact my own defects to scan,
 What others are, to feel, and know myself a Man.

The Bard: A Pindaric Ode

BY THOMAS GREY

I.1.
 "Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
 Confusion on thy banners wait,
 Tho' fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing
 They mock the air with idle state.
 Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail, 5
 Nor even thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail
 To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
 From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!"
 Such were the sounds, that o'er the crested pride
 Of the first Edward scatter'd wild dismay, 10
 As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
 He wound with toilsome march his long array.
 Stout Glo'ster stood aghast in speechless trance;
 To arms! cried Mortimer, and couch'd his quiv'ring lance.

I.2.
 On a rock, whose haughty brow 15
 Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
 Rob'd in the sable garb of woe,
 With haggard eyes the poet stood;
 (Loose his beard, and hoary hair
 Stream'd, like a meteor, to the troubled air) 20
 And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
 Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre;
 "Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
 Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
 O'er thee, O King! their hundred arms they wave, 25
 Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
 Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
 To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I.3.
 "Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
 That hush'd the stormy main; 30
 Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
 Mountains, ye mourn in vain
 Modred, whose magic song
 Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topp'd head.
 On dreary Arvon's shore they lie, 35
 Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale:
 Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
 The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by.

Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
 Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes,
 Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart, 40
 Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
 No more I weep. They do not sleep.
 On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,
 I see them sit, they linger yet,
 Avengers of their native land: 45
 With me in dreadful harmony they join,
 And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line:—

II.1.

“Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
 The winding sheet of Edward's race.
 Give ample room, and verge enough 50
 The characters of hell to trace.
 Mark the year, and mark the night,
 When Severn shall re-echo with affright
 The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roofs that ring,
 Shrieks of an agonising King! 55
 She-Wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
 That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
 From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
 The scourge of Heav'n. What terrors round him wait!
 Amazement in his van, with Flight combin'd, 60
 And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

II.2.

“Mighty victor, mighty lord,
 Low on his funeral couch he lies!
 No pitying heart, no eye, afford
 A tear to grace his obsequies. 65
 Is the Sable Warrior fled?
 Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
 The swarm, that in thy noon-tide beam were born?
 Gone to salute the rising Morn.
 Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr blows, 70
 While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
 In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
 Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
 Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
 That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey. 75

II.3.

“Fill high the sparkling bowl,
 The rich repast prepare;
 Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast.
 Close by the regal chair
 Fell Thirst and Famine scowl 80
 A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.

Heard ye the din of battle bray,
 Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
 Long years of havoc urge their destin'd course
 And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way. 85
 Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
 With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
 Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,
 And spare the meek usurper's holy head.
 Above, below, the rose of snow, 90
 Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:
 The bristled Boar in infant-gore
 Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
 Now, brothers, bending o'er th' accursed loom
 Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom. 95

III.1.

“Edward, lo! to sudden fate
 (Weave we the woof. The thread is spun)
 Half of thy heart we consecrate.
 (The web is wove. The work is done.)'
 Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn 100
 Leave me unblest'd, unpitied, here to mourn!
 In yon bright track, that fires the western skies!
 They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
 But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
 Descending slow their glitt'ring skirts unroll? 105
 Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
 Ye unborn Ages, crowd not on my soul!
 No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.
 All-hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail!

III.2.

“Girt with many a baron bold
 Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
 And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
 In bearded majesty appear.
 In the midst a form divine! 110
 Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line;
 Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
 Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.
 What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
 What strings of vocal transport round her play!
 Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear; 120
 They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
 Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
 Waves in the eye of Heav'n her many-colour'd wings.

III.3.

“The verse adorn again
 Fierce War, and faithful Love, 125

And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
 In buskin'd measures move
 Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
 With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast. 130
 A voice, as of the cherub-choir,
 Gales from blooming Eden bear;
 And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
 That lost in long futurity expire.
 Fond impious man, think'st thou, yon sanguine cloud,
 Rais'd by thy breath, has quench'd the orb of day? 135
 To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
 And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
 Enough for me: with joy I see
 The different doom our Fates assign. 140
 Be thine Despair, and scept' red Care,
 To triumph, and to die, are mine."
 He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
 Deep in the roaring tide he plung'd to endless night.

Ode on a Distant Prospect

BY THOMAS GREY

Ye distant spires, ye antique tow'rs,
 That crown the wat'ry glade,
 Where grateful Science still adores
 Her Henry's holy Shade; 5
 And ye, that from the stately brow
 Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below
 Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
 Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowr's among
 Wanders the hoary Thames along 10
 His silver-winding way.

Ah, happy hills, ah, pleasing shade,
 Ah, fields below'd in vain,
 Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
 A stranger yet to pain! 15
 I feel the gales, that from ye blow,
 A momentary bliss bestow,
 As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
 My weary soul they seem to soothe,
 And, redolent of joy and youth, 20
 To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen
 Full many a sprightly race
 Disporting on thy margent green
 The paths of pleasure trace, 25
 Who foremost now delight to cleave
 With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
 The captive linnet which enthrall?
 What idle progeny succeed
 To chase the rolling circle's speed, 30
 Or urge the flying ball?

While some on earnest business bent
 Their murm'ring labours ply
 'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint
 To sweeten liberty: 35
 Some bold adventurers disdain
 The limits of their little reign,
 And unknown regions dare descry:
 Still as they run they look behind,
 They hear a voice in ev'ry wind, 40
 And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
 Less pleasing when possest;
 The tear forgot as soon as shed,
 The sunshine of the breast:
 Theirs buxom health of rosy hue, 5
 Wild wit, invention ever-new,
 And lively cheer of vigour born;
 The thoughtless day, the easy night,
 The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
 That fly th' approach of morn. 10

Alas, regardless of their doom,
 The little victims play!
 No sense have they of ills to come,
 Nor care beyond to-day:
 Yet see how all around 'em wait 15
 The ministers of human fate,
 And black Misfortune's baleful train!
 Ah, show them where in ambush stand
 To seize their prey the murth'rous band!
 Ah, tell them they are men! 20

These shall the fury Passions tear,
 The vultures of the mind
 Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
 And Shame that skulks behind;
 Or pining Love shall waste their youth, 25
 Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
 That inly gnaws the secret heart,
 And Envy wan, and faded Care,
 Grim-visag'd comfortless Despair,
 And Sorrow's piercing dart. 30

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
 Then whirl the wretch from high,
 To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
 And grinning Infamy.
 The stings of Falsehood those shall try, 35
 And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,
 That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow;
 And keen Remorse with blood defil'd,
 And moody Madness laughing wild
 Amid severest woe. 40

Lo, in the vale of years beneath
 A griesly troop are seen,
 The painful family of Death,
 More hideous than their Queen:
 This racks the joints, this fires the veins, 45

That ev'ry labouring sinew strains,
 Those in the deeper vitals rage:
 Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
 That numbs the soul with icy hand,
 And slow-consuming Age. 50

To each his suff'rings: all are men,
 Condemn'd alike to groan,
 The tender for another's pain;
 Th' unfeeling for his own.
 Yet ah! why should they know their fate? 55
 Since sorrow never comes too late,
 And happiness too swiftly flies.
 Thought would destroy their paradise.
 No more; where ignorance is bliss,
 'Tis folly to be wise. 60

Death of a Favorite Cat

BY THOMAS GREY

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined, 5
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies, 10
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purred applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The genii of the stream; 15
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Through richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw;
A whisker first and then a claw, 20
With many an ardent wish,
She stretched in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent 25
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.

(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled)
The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in.
Eight times emerging from the flood 30
She mewed to every watery god,
Some speedy aid to send.

No dolphin came, no Nereid stirred;
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard; 35
A Favourite has no friend!

From hence, ye beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,

And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize; 40
Nor all that glisters, gold.

Country Churchyard

BY THOMAS GREY

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight, 5
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r 10
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid, 15
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield, 25
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure; 30
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour. 35

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault 40
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll; 50
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen, 55
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. 60

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone 65
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life 75

They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey, 85
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires; 90
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led, 95
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away 100
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by. 105

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill, 110
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne. 115
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

Oliver Goldsmith



General Background

Oliver Goldsmith was born in Ireland. The son of an Anglican clergyman, he suffered from smallpox disfigurement at an early age. He was taught to read at home by Elizabeth Delap (who lived with Goldsmith's large family) and continued learning at the diocesan school of Elphan. Considered very sensitive in his youth, Oliver did not seem to enjoy his early studies very much. Although he was also described by his peers as a mediocre student, he attended Trinity College, Dublin for his formal education and earned his B.A. in 1749. Soon after, he studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh before leaving to travel around Europe for a time. When he returned to England in 1756, he had acquired an M.D. (from where is not known) and tried to practice medicine but was unable to make a living and turned to writing for income.

Goldsmith began his writing career as an editor for a periodical (there were a number of short-lived periodicals at the time, and these works often changed the work submitted to them to fit the desires of the head editors and owners of the periodical). Although historians are not sure of all the work he produced, we do know that Goldsmith rose quickly to fame as an author, even establishing a friendship with Samuel Johnson (he was featured in Boswell's famous biography of Johnson). Goldsmith was also one of the nine original members of The Club, a literary dining society founded in 1746. Although he made quite a bit of money during his career as a writer for hire, he was also a very generous and extravagant man, leading to sizeable debt of 2000 pounds by the time of his death. Goldsmith died after a brief illness in 1774—he was only 43—and is now buried in London's Temple Church.

Style and Works

Goldsmith is best known today for his poetry. Although he wrote for a number of periodicals, his beautiful renditions of pastoral living (reflected in a number of artworks during the 18th and 19th centuries as well) function today as his enduring literary legacy. Specifically, *The Deserted Village* and *The Traveler, or A Prospect of Society* stand out for their idealization of English rural life. Goldsmith was praised for his ability to render his ideas with an air of simplicity while engaging with complex ideas. Stylistically, he is known for his writings' accessibility.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Goldsmith's poetic concerns with the effects of industrialization set the tone for William Wordsworth's lifelong concern with the same. Specifically, Goldsmith emphasized the dangers of the Enclosure Acts (a series of legislations that displaced rural/poor farmers/herders and families that had lived on land for generations in order to give big farms and private parks more land) and demonstrated the need to preserve rural life. Goldsmith set the tone for Romantics to follow by simultaneously lamenting the loss of the past while also critiquing the forces of urbanization and new wealth.

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The Deserted Village

BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheared the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed,
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease, 5
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm, 10
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blest the coming day, 15
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed; 20
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And slights of art and feats of strength went round;
And still as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown 25
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove! 30
These were thy charms, sweet village; sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;
These round thy bowers their chearful influence shed,
These were thy charms—But all these charms are fled.
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn, 35
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain; 40
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choaked with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,

The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
 Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies, 45
 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
 Sunk are thy bowers, in shapeless ruin all,
 And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
 And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
 Far, far away, thy children leave the land. 50
 Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride, 55
 When once destroyed, can never be supplied.
 A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
 When every rood of ground maintained its man;
 For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
 Just gave what life required, but gave no more: 60
 His best companions, innocence and health;
 And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
 But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
 Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
 Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose, 65
 Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose;
 And every want to opulence allied,
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.
 Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
 Those calm desires that asked but little room, 70
 Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
 Lived in each look, and brightened all the green;
 These, far departing seek a kinder shore,
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.
 Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour, 75
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
 Here as I take my solitary rounds,
 Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruined grounds,
 And, many a year elapsed, return to view
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
 In all my wanderings round this world of care,
 In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
 I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown, 85
 Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
 To husband out life's taper at the close,
 And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
 Amidst the swains to shew my book-learned skill, 90
 Around my fire an evening groupe to draw,
 And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
 And, as an hare whom hounds and horns pursue,

Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
 I still had hopes, my long vexations past, 95
 Here to return—and die at home at last.
 O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
 Retreats from care that never must be mine,
 How happy he who crowns, in shades like these
 A youth of labour with an age of ease; 100
 Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
 For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
 Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
 No surly porter stands in guilty state 105
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate,
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
 Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
 While resignation gently slopes the way; 110
 And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
 His Heaven commences ere the world be past!
 Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close,
 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
 There, as I past with careless steps and slow, 115
 The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
 The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
 The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,
 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
 The playful children just let loose from school, 120
 The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
 And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind,
 These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
 And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
 But now the sounds of population fail, 125
 No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
 No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
 For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
 All but yon widowed, solitary thing
 That feebly bends beside the plashy spring; 130
 She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
 To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
 To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
 To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
 She only left of all the harmless train, 135
 The sad historian of the pensive plain.
 Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
 And still where many a garden-flower grows wild;
 There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
 The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140
 A man he was, to all the country dear,
 And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
 Remote from towns he ran his godly race,

Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place;
 Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power, 145
 By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
 Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
 More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
 His house was known to all the vagrant train,
 He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain; 150
 The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
 Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
 The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
 Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay, 155
 Sate by his fire, and talked the night away;
 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
 Shouldered his crutch, and shewed how fields were won.
 Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160
 Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,
 His pity gave ere charity began.
 Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
 And even his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
 But in his duty prompt at every call, 165
 He watched and wept, he prayed and felt, for all.
 And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
 To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies;
 He tried each art, reproved each dull delay, 170
 Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
 Beside the bed where parting life was layed,
 And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns, dismayed
 The reverend champion stood. At his control
 Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
 Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise, 175
 And his last faltering accents whispered praise.
 At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
 His looks adorned the venerable place;
 Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
 And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray. 180
 The service past, around the pious man,
 With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
 Even children followed, with endearing wile,
 And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.
 His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest, 185
 Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest:
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in Heaven.
 As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190
 Tho' round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.
 Beside yon stragling fence that skirts the way,

With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
 There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule, 195
 The village master taught his little school;
 A man severe he was, and stern to view,
 I knew him well, and every truant knew;
 Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
 The day's disasters in his morning face; 200
 Full well they laughed, with counterfeited glee,
 At all his jokes, for many a joke had he:
 Full well the busy whisper circling round,
 Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
 Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught, 205
 The love he bore to learning was in fault;
 The village all declared how much he knew;
 'Twas certain he could write, and cypher too;
 Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
 And ev'n the story ran that he could gauge. 210
 In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,
 For even tho' vanquished, he could argue still;
 While words of learned length and thundering sound,
 Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
 And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew, 220
 That one small head could carry all he knew.
 But past is all his fame. The very spot
 Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.
 Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
 Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 225
 Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
 Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
 Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
 And news much older than their ale went round.
 Imagination fondly stoops to trace 230
 The parlour splendours of that festive place;
 The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
 The varnished clock that clicked behind the door;
 The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
 A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day; 235
 The pictures placed for ornament and use,
 The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
 The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
 With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
 While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for shew, 240
 Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.
 Vain transitory splendours! Could not all
 Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall!
 Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
 An hour's importance to the poor man's heart; 245
 Thither no more the peasant shall repair
 To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
 No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,

No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
 No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear, 250
 Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
 The host himself no longer shall be found
 Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
 Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
 Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 255
 Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
 These simple blessings of the lowly train;
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
 Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play, 260
 The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
 Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
 Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
 But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
 With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed, 265
 In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
 The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
 And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
 The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.
 Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey 270
 The rich man's joys encrease, the poor's decay,
 'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
 Between a splendid and a happy land.
 Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
 And shouting Folly hails them from her shore; 275
 Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,
 And rich men flock from all the world around.
 Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
 That leaves our useful products still the same.
 Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride 280
 Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
 Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
 Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
 The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth,
 Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth; 285
 His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
 Indignant spurns the cottage from the green:
 Around the world each needful product flies,
 For all the luxuries the world supplies.
 While thus the land adorned for pleasure, all 290
 In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.
 As some fair female unadorned and plain,
 Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
 Slights every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
 Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes. 295
 But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
 When time advances, and when lovers fail,
 She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,

In all the glaring impotence of dress.
 Thus fares the land, by luxury betrayed: 300
 In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed;
 But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprize;
 While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
 The mournful peasant leads his humble band; 305
 And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
 The country blooms—a garden, and a grave.
 Where then, ah where, shall poverty reside,
 To scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
 If to some common's fenceless limits strayed, 310
 He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
 And ev'n the bare-worn common is denied.
 If to the city sped—What waits him there?
 To see profusion that he must not share; 315
 To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
 To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
 To see those joys the sons of pleasure know,
 Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
 Here while the courtier glitters in brocade, 320
 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
 Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
 There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
 The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,
 Here, richly deckt, admits the gorgeous train; 325
 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
 Sure these denote one universal joy!
 Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes 330
 Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
 She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
 Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
 Her modest looks the cottage might adorn
 Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn: 335
 Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
 Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
 And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
 With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour
 When idly first, ambitious of the town, 340
 She left her wheel and robes of country brown.
 Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,
 Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
 Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
 At proud men's doors they ask a little bread! 345
 Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,
 Where half the convex world intrudes between,
 Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,

Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
 Far different there from all that charm'd before, 350
 The various terrors of that horrid shore;
 Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
 And fiercely shed intolerable day;
 Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
 But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling; 355
 Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
 Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
 Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
 The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
 Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey, 360
 And savage men, more murderous still than they;
 While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
 Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
 Far different these from every former scene,
 The cooling brook, the grassy vested green, 365
 The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
 That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.
 Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
 That called them from their native walks away;
 When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 370
 Hung round their bowers, and fondly looked their last,
 And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
 For seats like these beyond the western main;
 And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
 Returned and wept, and still returned to weep. 375
 The good old sire the first prepared to go
 To new found worlds, and wept for others woe.
 But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
 He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
 His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears, 380
 The fond companion of his helpless years,
 Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
 And left a lover's for a father's arms.
 With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
 And blessed the cot where every pleasure rose; 385
 And kist her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
 And claspt them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
 In all the silent manliness of grief.
 O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree, 390
 How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
 How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
 Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
 Kingdoms, by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
 Boast of a florid vigour not their own; 395
 At every draught more large and large they grow,
 A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
 Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,

Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.
 Even now the devastation is begun, 400
 And half the business of destruction done;
 Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
 I see the rural virtues leave the land:
 Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
 That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 405
 Downward they move, a melancholy band,
 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
 Contented toil, and hospitable care,
 And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
 And piety with wishes placed above, 410
 And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
 Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,
 To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame; 415
 Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
 Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
 That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
 Thou guide by which the nobler arts excell, 420
 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
 Farewell, and O where'er thy voice be tried,
 On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
 Whether were equinoctial fervours glow,
 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 425
 Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
 Redress the rigours of the inclement clime;
 Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain,
 Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
 Teach him, that states of native strength possess, 430
 Tho' very poor, may still be very blest;
 That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
 As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
 While self-dependent power can time defy,
 As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 435

British Romanticism Overview

It is understandably difficult to fully approximate and summarize an entire literary period, especially one as well known today as the British Romantic Period. Part of the struggle comes from general questions of periodization (literature has never been produced in tidy little blocks, leading to a blurring around the edges by scholars as to when any specific period begins and ends). The British Romantic period is no different; eminent scholars consider the period in different divisions, with 1780-1830, 1785-1832, 1798-1832 all put forth as reasonable time frames for the literature that we now consider the British Romantic Period. Nor are scholars in universal agreement concerning what the literature of the time looked, felt, and read like. Nevertheless, there are generally agreed upon principles that define how we see and observe the period today (for the rest of this overview, for ease of use, the British Romantic period will be referred to as “Romanticism” with the understanding that Romanticism in America, Europe, and elsewhere took slightly different forms than Romanticism in Britain. Since this class is focused on Britain though, our focus will stay on British definitions). This overview, although not comprehensive, strives to summarize the key principles of the period in a way that is simple and accessible.

Historically Significant Facts

Perhaps the most important element of population change in Britain’s Romantic Period was the revolution that never happened. While several nations underwent a number of internal changes (especially France), the middle class (bourgeoisie) in Britain allied itself with the upper class (aristocracy) rather than the poor or working class (proletariat). As a result, although there were social uprisings and a revolutionary spirit throughout the era, warfare and revolution never happened in Britain to the same degree as in other places (the reasons for this are many and varied, but part of the peace was caused by laws being passed over time in Britain giving more rights to the bourgeoisie and proletariat than in many surrounding countries). The sense that everything was changing was also sparked by a revolution in science. In earlier periods, the universe had often seemed a small place, less than 6,000 years old, where a single sun moved about the earth, the center of the cosmos. Now time and space exploded, the microscope and telescope opened new fields of vision, and the “plurality of worlds,” as this topic is called, became a doctrine endlessly repeated. The authority of Aristotle and Ptolemy was broken; their systems could not explain what Galileo and Kepler saw in the heavens or what Hooke saw in the eye of a fly. As discoveries multiplied, it became clear that the moderns knew things of which the ancients had been ignorant. This challenge to received opinion was thrilling as well as disturbing. During the Romantic Period, Britain’s expansion into an empire was fueled by slavery and the slave trade, a source of profit that belied the national self-image as a haven of liberty and turned British people against one another. Rising prosperity at home had been built on inhumanity across the seas. At the end of the 18th Century, as many writers joined the abolitionist campaign, a new humanitarian ideal was forged. The modern world invented by the 18th Century brought suffering along with progress. We still live with its legacies today.

Finally, the century saw the decline of monarchical power in England. At the beginning of the century, power was divided between the monarch and the Parliament, but Parliamentary politics were incredibly corrupt. Members of Parliament secured votes mainly by paying for them, and the temptation to corruption increased as the power of the institution increased. This came to a head in the latter part of the century when George III began to assert his own prerogatives and replaced parliament ministers with his own. This crisis—the “battle over prerogative”—eventually was won by Parliament at the end of the century. This was the last gasp of monarchical power in England; from this point on, the nation was, for the most part, run by Parliament.

Literary Style

The prevailing attitude of Romanticism favored innovation over traditionalism in the materials, forms, and style of literature. Wordsworth and Coleridge, working together in the Preface to their *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, refined the idea of focusing on “common life” in “a selection of language really used by men.” Wordsworth’s serious or tragic treatment of lowly subjects in common language violated the basic neoclassic rule of decorum, thus introducing a less elevated style of writing. Other innovations in the period were the exploitation of the realm of the supernatural and of “the far away and the long ago”; the assumption by William Blake, William Wordsworth, and Percy Bysshe Shelley of the persona of a poet-prophet who writes a visionary mode of poetry; and the use of poetic symbolism deriving from a worldview in which objects are charged with a significance beyond their physical qualities. “I always seek in what I see,” as Shelley said, “the likeness of something beyond the present and tangible object.” Romanticism was also marked by its focus on the creation of poetry and the role of the poet. In his preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth repeatedly declared that good poetry is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.” According to this view, poetry is not primarily a mirror of men in action; on the contrary, its essential component is the poet’s own feelings, while the process of composition, since it is “spontaneous” is the opposite of the artful manipulation of means to foreseen ends stressed by the neoclassic critics. Thus the immediate act of composition, if a poem is to be genuine, must be spontaneous—that is, unforced, and free of what Wordsworth decried as the “artificial” rules and conventions of his neoclassic predecessors. “If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree,” Keats wrote, “it had better not come at all.” The philosophical-minded Coleridge substituted for neoclassic “rules,” which he describes as imposed on the poet from without, the concept of the inherent organic “laws” of the poet’s imagination; that is, he conceives that each poetic work, like a growing plant, evolves according to its own internal principles into its final organic form.

To a remarkable degree external nature—the landscape, together with its flora and fauna—became a persistent subject of poetry, and was described with an accuracy and sensuous nuance unprecedented in earlier writers. It is a mistake, however, to describe the romantic poets as simply “nature poets.” Representative romantic works are in fact poems of meaningful meditation which, though often stimulated by a natural phenomenon, are concerned with central human experiences and problems. Romantic poets broke from the past by no longer producing artistic works that merely mirrored or reflected nature faithfully; instead, they fashioned poems that served as lamps illuminating truths through self-expression, casting the poets’ subjective, even impressionistic, experiences onto the world. From philosophers such as Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant, the Romantics inherited a distinction between two aesthetic categories, the beautiful and the sublime—in which beautiful suggests smallness, clarity, and painless pleasure, and sublime suggests boundlessness, obscurity, and imagination-stretching grandeur. From German philosophy, Coleridge developed his ideal of “organic form,” the unity found in artworks whose parts are interdependent and integral to the whole—grown, like a natural organism, according to innate processes, not externally mandated formulas. Romantic poets could “choose incidents and situations from common life” as their subjects, describing them not in polished or high-flown diction but instead in everyday speech, “a selection of language really used by men.” Romanticism can do justice to the disadvantaged, to those marginalized or forgotten by an increasingly urban and commercial culture—rural workers, children, the poor, the elderly, or the disabled—or it can testify to individuality simply by foregrounding the poet’s own subjectivity at its most idiosyncratic or experimental.

What seemed to a number of political liberals the infinite social promise of the French Revolution in the early 1790s, fostered the sense in writers of the early Romantic Period that theirs was a great age of new beginnings and high possibilities. Many writers viewed a human being as endowed with limitless aspiration toward the infinite good envisioned by the faculty of imagination. According to a number of romantic

writers, the highest art consists in an endeavor beyond finite human possibility; as a result, neoclassical satisfaction in the perfectly accomplished, because limited, enterprise was replaced in writers such as Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley by a preference for the glory of the imperfect, in which the artist's very failure attests the grandeur of his aim.

Politically and Economically

In Britain, Romanticism was not a single unified movement, consolidated around any one person, place, moment, or manifesto, and the various schools, styles, and stances we now label capital-R Romantic would resist being lumped into one clear category. Yet all of Romanticism's products exploded out of the same set of contexts: some were a century in the making; others were overnight upheavals. Ushered in by revolutions in the United States (1776) and France (1789), the Romantic period coincides with the societal transformations of the Industrial Revolution, the rise of liberal movements and the state's counterrevolutionary measures, and the voicing of radical ideas—Parliamentary reform, expanded suffrage, abolitionism, atheism—in pamphlets and public demonstrations. Though Britain avoided an actual revolution, there were still a number of changes brought about by the revolutionary spirit of the age.

In terms of economic change, the most important shift occurred in moving from an agrarian to industrial work model. The following key shifts emerged as the nature of Britain's economy changed:

- New classes emerged, often based on manufacturing.
- Power-driven machinery replaced hand labor.
- Communally-worked farms became privately-owned agricultural holdings.
- The new landless class either migrated to cities or became grossly underpaid rural laborers.
- Women and children were employed under extremely dangerous and unhealthy conditions.

Literary and philosophical characteristics of the Romantic Movement

1. Poets located the source of the poem in the individual poet, and specified that the essential materials of a poem were not external people and events, but the inner feelings of the author or external objects only after these have been transformed and irradiated by the author's feelings.
2. Romantic poets conceived a great work of literature to be a self-organizing process that begins with a seed-like idea in the poet's imagination, grows by assimilating both poet's feelings and the diverse materials of sense experience, and evolves into an organic whole in which the parts are integrally related to each other and the whole.
3. Tends to assert that through "nature" (or the physical universe) one can see divinity or a revelation of spiritual "Truth."
4. Encourages the freeing of the artist and the individual from the constraints and rules of artistic, cultural, political, and religious conventions.

5. The Romantic poet frequently cast himself into the role of a Bard, or Prophet (poet-prophet), or visionary and sometimes put himself forward as a spokesman for Western civilization at a time of profound crisis.
6. Most Romantic poets rejected the idea that poets must assimilate classical precedents and learn the "rule" governing each particular poetic form; instead, the act of composition must be spontaneous—that is, arising from impulse and free from all rules of artful manipulation of means to foreseen ends.
7. Imaginative experience transcends the "real," or "actual," or even rational thinking; through the imagination one can come to know "higher truths."
8. Is marked by unlimited striving for the "Ideal," the "Absolute," the "Infinite."
9. Romantics proposed that "paradise" or "the new heaven and new earth" of the book of Revelation is available here and now, to all of us, if we can only make our visionary imagination triumph over our senses and sense bound understanding.
10. Sees altered or unusual states of perception as vehicles of the imagination and therefore as vehicles to "Truth"; these include: the dream, the trance, heightened self-consciousness, intuition, occult or mystic experiences, instinct, "emotion recollected in tranquility."
11. Asserted the general or innate goodness of the natural world and human beings.
12. Romantics emphasized the free activity of the imagination, related to an insistence on the essential role of instinct, intuition, and the feelings of the "heart" to supplement the judgments of the purely logical faculty, "the head," whether in the province of artistic beauty, religious or philosophical, or moral goodness.

Some formal characteristics of Romantic literature

Many characteristics of Romantic literature evolved out of a reaction against Neoclassical literature. Some of these reactions against neoclassical poetic practice include the following:

1. The abandonment of the heroic couplet.
2. The general abandonment of satire and the heroic epic.
3. The abandonment of conventional and artificial poetic diction in favor of a language closer to common or vernacular speech.
4. An increased interest in characteristically "English" forms and authors: Spenserian stanzas, Shakespearean sonnets, Shakespearean and Miltonian blank verse.
5. An increased interest in the collection and imitation of popular ballads and folklore.
6. The dominance of various lyric forms, including the sonnet, the love lyric, the reflective lyric, and the lyric of morbid melancholy.
7. An increased willingness to experiment with innovative and original poetic forms.

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Anna Barbauld



General Background

Anna Barbauld, named Anna Letitia Aikin at birth, was born in Leicestershire in 1743. The daughter of a Nonconformist minister, preacher, and teacher at the Warrington Academy in Lancashire he (was the headmaster at a dissenting academy before taking a teaching position at Warrington), Anna was educated at home by her father (some sources say she demanded to be taught the classics and—since she and her father were very close—he was unable to refuse the request). His teaching focus employed not only education on modern languages and English literature, but also on natural sciences, which provided Anna with a much broader educational base than those educated in traditional circumstances of the time.

Her first publications (poems written in 1773, some alone and some coauthored with her brother) gave her immediate literary attention. Married to Rochemont Barbauld one year after the publication of her first poems (he was also a Dissenting minister like her father), she and her new husband set up a boys' school together that did not last too long (most likely due to her husband's mental instability). During the early years of their marriage, Anna split her time between publishing additional poems focused on children and teaching the young boys at her school.

A powerful literary figure during her time (Coleridge himself walked many miles just to meet her), Anna Barbauld churned out essays and poetry for years during the height of her fame and influence. Unfortunately, the final piece published during her lifetime—*Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*—was savagely attacked due to its critique of England's war with France and consumer society. Critics showed their dark colors and wounded pride with barbs aimed at her gender. Luckily for readers today, she continued to write and we have today several pieces that were unpublished during her lifetime.

Style and Works

Barbauld was considered an elegant and powerful writer for most of her life, writing on children and other topics that were not well covered by men during her time. Immensely popular and well known, she was eventually minimized from the critical canon for three primary reasons. First, her final published essay offended and angered many in power at the time (leading to campaigns against her work). Second, Wordsworth and Coleridge—two of the most powerful literary tastemakers of the era—dismissed her work in their later, more conservative years. Third, Victorianists reworked reception of her writings by framing her works as middle-class, sentimental pieces (this type of writer was despised by the Modernists, who removed her from the canon altogether). Feminist scholarship did not originally recover Barbauld (her work lacked the anti-patriarchal fervor of the texts often championed by feminism in the 70's and 80's), but in the last several decades she has become required reading in virtually any class focused on the Romantic Period.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Barbauld added a distractive, feminine voice to the Romantic era while also writing in the same tradition as the well known “Big Six” (Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, P. Shelley, and Keats). Her writings mirror Wordsworth's for their concern with the voiceless and capture the imagination of real people. Barbauld was also an active essay writer and fearless in pointing out the flaws of her people and society. Her essays were deeply concerned with reforming society and emphasized the power of human emotions. Although her works were reduced by political forces for some time, her writing is far from being maudlin and sentimental—instead she accesses the feminine voice in ways that expand our understanding of what Romanticism was and is today.

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The Mouse's Petition

BY ANNA BARBAULD

OH ! hear a pensive captive's prayer,
For liberty that sighs ;
And never let thine heart be shut
Against the prisoner's cries. 5

For here forlorn and sad I sit,
Within the wiry grate ;

And tremble at th' approaching morn,
Which brings impending fate.

If e'er thy breast with freedom glow'd,
And spurn'd a tyrant's chain, 10
Let not thy strong oppressive force
A free-born mouse detain.

Oh ! do not stain with guiltless blood
Thy hospitable hearth ;
Nor triumph that thy wiles betray'd 15
A prize so little worth.

The scatter'd gleanings of a feast
My scanty meals supply ;
But if thine unrelenting heart
That slender boon deny, 20

The chearful light, the vital air,
Are blessings widely given ;
Let nature's commoners enjoy
The common gifts of heaven.

The well taught philosophic mind 25
To all compassion gives ;
Casts round the world an equal eye,
And feels for all that lives.

If mind, as ancient sages taught,
A never dying flame, 30
Still shifts thro' matter's varying forms,
In every form the same,

Beware, lest in the worm you crush
A brother's soul you find ;

And tremble lest thy luckless hand 35
Dislodge a kindred mind.

Or, if this transient gleam of day
Be all of life we share,
Let pity plead within thy breast,
That little all to spare. 40

So may thy hospitable board
With health and peace be crown'd ;
And every charm of heartfelt ease
Beneath thy roof be found.

So when unseen destruction lurks, 45
Which men like mice may share,
May some kind angel clear thy path,
And break the hidden snare.

The Rights of Women

BY ANNA BARBAULD

Yes, injured Woman! rise, assert thy right!
Woman! too long degraded, scorned, opprest;
O born to rule in partial Law's despite,
Resume thy native empire o'er the breast!

Go forth arrayed in panoply divine; 5
That angel pureness which admits no stain;
Go, bid proud Man his boasted rule resign,
And kiss the golden sceptre of thy reign.

Go, gird thyself with grace; collect thy store 10
Of bright artillery glancing from afar;
Soft melting tones thy thundering cannon's roar,
Blushes and fears thy magazine of war.

Thy rights are empire: urge no meaner claim,—
Felt, not defined, and if debated, lost;
Like sacred mysteries, which withheld from fame, 15
Shunning discussion, are revered the most.

Try all that wit and art suggest to bend
Of thy imperial foe the stubborn knee;
Make treacherous Man thy subject, not thy friend;
Thou mayst command, but never canst be free. 20

Awe the licentious, and restrain the rude;
Soften the sullen, clear the cloudy brow:
Be, more than princes' gifts, thy favours sued;—
She hazards all, who will the least allow.

But hope not, courted idol of mankind, 25
On this proud eminence secure to stay;
Subduing and subdued, thou soon shalt find
Thy coldness soften, and thy pride give way.

Then, then, abandon each ambitious thought,
Conquest or rule thy heart shall feebly move, 30
In Nature's school, by her soft maxims taught,
That separate rights are lost in mutual love.

To a Little Invisible Being

BY ANNA BARBAULD

Germ of new life, whose powers expanding slow
For many a moon their full perfection wait,—
Haste, precious pledge of happy love, to go
Auspicious borne through life's mysterious gate.

What powers lie folded in thy curious frame,— 5
Senses from objects locked, and mind from thought!
How little canst thou guess thy lofty claim
To grasp at all the worlds the Almighty wrought!

And see, the genial season's warmth to share,
Fresh younglings shoot, and opening roses glow! 10
Swarms of new life exulting fill the air,—
Haste, infant bud of being, haste to blow!

For thee the nurse prepares her lulling songs,
The eager matrons count the lingering day;
But far the most thy anxious parent longs 15
On thy soft cheek a mother's kiss to lay.

She only asks to lay her burden down,
That her glad arms that burden may resume;
And nature's sharpest pangs her wishes crown,
That free thee living from thy living tomb. 20

She longs to fold to her maternal breast
Part of herself, yet to herself unknown;
To see and to salute the stranger guest,
Fed with her life through many a tedious moon.

Come, reap thy rich inheritance of love! 25
Bask in the fondness of a Mother's eye!
Nor wit nor eloquence her heart shall move
Like the first accents of thy feeble cry.

Haste, little captive, burst thy prison doors! 30
Launch on the living world, and spring to light!
Nature for thee displays her various stores,
Opens her thousand inlets of delight.

If charmed verse or muttered prayers had power,
With favouring spells to speed thee on thy way, 35
Anxious I'd bid my beads each passing hour,
Till thy wished smile thy mother's pangs o'erpay.

Mary Darby Robinson



General Background

Mary Darby Robinson lived an exceptionally sensational and exciting life. Born to a sea captain (whaler) and his wife on November 27th, 1758, according to her memoirs, (she was born in 1757 according to recently published research), her father deserted her mother when Mary was very young and her mother was left to support herself and the five children by starting a school for young girls (where Mary taught by her 14th birthday). However, the family's hardships continued when Captain Darby (during a rare visit) had the school closed (which he was entitled to do by English law).

Although Mary had a number of suitors from an early age, she eventually accepted the proposal of Thomas Robinson (Mary was only 16 when they married in 1774), who claimed to have expectations of a large inheritance from elderly relatives. In truth, Thomas Robinson was a gambler who was neither wealthy nor born to the aristocracy. His habits and lack of wealth lead to the couple leaving for Wales (where Mary's only living daughter was born) for a number of years. When Thomas Robinson was imprisoned for debt, Mary and their daughter lived in prison with him. During this time, Mary Robinson's first volume of poems were published.

After being released from prison, Mary decided to return to the theater. She debuted as Juliet in 1776. Although married, she had quite a few public suitors vying for her attention as a quickly celebrated actress. Later, her 1779 performance as Perdita in *Florizel and Perdita* (an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*) brought her both public notoriety and the attentions of the Prince of Wales.

After her relationship with the Prince of Wales ended, Mary Robinson attempted to blackmail the Crown by threatening to make public the letters the Prince wrote to her during their affair (she tried to obtain

the 20,000 pounds the Prince had promised her before he came of age). Able to obtain only a small annuity, Robinson, who now lived separately from her philandering husband, went on to have several love affairs (which are well documented to the point of subsuming her literary legacy). In 1783, at the age of 26, Robinson suffered a mysterious illness that left her partially paralyzed from the waist down (probably as a result of a miscarriage or rheumatic fever). She died in late 1800, having survived several years of ill-health, and was survived by her daughter, who was also a published novelist.

Style and Works

Robinson is probably best considered first as a poet, but she was more than that, writing political correspondences, essays, and posthumous memoirs (perhaps her most important contribution due to the way her autobiography explores women's places in the masculine world of literary publishing). Stylistically, Robinson used blank verse very well in her poetry, creating a musical style applauded and admired by many of her contemporaries (she modeled one of her poems after the style of Wordsworth and he did the same for one of her works—Coleridge also admired her poetry in a very public way and she returned the favor by writing one of her last poems “To the Poet Coleridge”).

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Despite her critical contributions (the realistic style she brought to poetry in the nineteenth century) most of the early literature written about Robinson focused on her celebrity status, emphasizing her affairs and fashions, but her literary contributions were ample. In her writings, she spoke often about woman's place in the literary world and her memoirs are key to understanding the development of society's appreciation of the feminine voice and literary place.

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London's Summer Morning

BY MARY ROBINSON

Who has not waked to list the busy sounds
Of summer's morning, in the sultry smoke
Of noisy London? On the pavement hot
The sooty chimney-boy, with dingy face
And tattered covering, shrilly bawls his trade, 5
Rousing the sleepy housemaid. At the door
The milk-pail rattles, and the tinkling bell
Proclaims the dustman's office; while the street
Is lost in clouds impervious. Now begins
The din of hackney-coaches, waggons, carts; 10
While tinmen's shops, and noisy trunk-makers,
Knife-grinders, coopers, squeaking cork-cutters,
Fruit-barrows, and the hunger-giving cries
Of vegetable-vendors, fill the air.
Now every shop displays its varied trade, 15
And the fresh-sprinkled pavement cools the feet
Of early walkers. At the private door
The ruddy housemaid twirls the busy mop,
Annoying the smart 'prentice, or neat girl,
Tripping with band-box lightly. Now the sun 20
Darts burning splendor on the glittering pane,
Save where the canvas awning throws a shade
On the gay merchandise. Now, spruce and trim,
In shops (where beauty smiles with industry)
Sits the smart damsel; while the passenger 25
Peeps through the window, watching every charm.
Now pastry dainties catch the eye minute
Of humming insects, while the limy snare
Waits to enthrall them. Now the lamp-lighter
Mounts the tall ladder, nimbly venturous, 30
To trim the half-filled lamps, while at his feet
The pot-boy yells discordant! All along
The sultry pavement, the old-clothes-man cries
In tone monotonous, while sidelong views
The area for his traffic: now the bag 35
Is slyly opened, and the half-worn suit
(Sometimes the pilfered treasure of the base
Domestic spoiler), for one half its worth,
Sinks in the green abyss. The porter now
Bears his huge load along the burning way; 40
And the poor poet wakes from busy dreams,
To paint the summer morning.

Joanna Baillie



General Background

Joanna Baillie was born at Lanarkshire on the banks of the Clyde, on September 11, 1762. She grew up in rural Scotland (her father was a Scottish minister) and belonged to an old Scottish family which claimed among its ancestors Sir William Wallace. Baillie was educated in Glasgow (by all accounts she received an excellent education and began very early to write poetry) and showed considerable literary promise during her formative, educational years. Soon after finishing her early education, she moved with her sister Agnes to London, where their brother, Dr Matthew Baillie, lived. The two sisters inherited a small sum from their uncle, Dr William Hunter, and took up their residence at Hampstead, then on the outskirts of London, where they passed the remainder of their lives.

Style and Works

Joanna Baillie published her first works anonymously in 1790 (yet another woman forced by social pressures to hide her gender from her readers at times—one reviewer of her first work declared it to be clearly the work of a man) as a volume called *Fugitive Verses*, but it was not until 1798 that she produced the first volume of her “plays on the passions,” under the title of *A Series of Plays*. Her design was to illustrate each of the deepest and strongest passions of the human mind, such as hate, jealousy, fear, and love, each of which she felt should be exhibited in the actions of an individual under the influence of these passions. Despite being published anonymously, the authorship of her works, though at first attributed to Sir Walter Scott, was soon

discovered. The book had considerable success and was followed by a second volume in 1802, a third in 1812, and three volumes of dramas in 1836 (she was a prolific writer to the end).

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Joanna Baillie’s greatest literary contributions came via the stage (she wrote 27 plays over the course of her lifetime). Although serious drama was on the decline during the Romantic period (known much more for poetry and novels), Baillie’s works were nevertheless highly praised during her lifetime. No less an authority than Sir Walter Scott considered her dramas on par with the writings of Shakespeare and specifically praised her for using the language of the “higher passions” in her dramatic works. However, she was more than just a writer for the stage—her numerous poems share a focus on daily life mirrored in the other Romantic authors of the period.

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A Mother to Her Waking Infant

BY JOANNA BAILLIE

Now in thy dazzling half-oped eye,
Thy curled nose and lip awry,
Uphoisted arms and noddling head,
And little chin with crystal spread,
Poor helpless thing! what do I see, 5
That I should sing of thee?

From thy poor tongue no accents come,
Which can but rub thy toothless gum:
Small understanding boasts thy face,
Thy shapeless limbs nor step nor grace: 10
A few short words thy feats may tell,
And yet I love thee well.

When wakes the sudden bitter shriek,
And redder swells thy little cheek
When rattled keys thy woes beguile, 15
And through thine eyelids gleams the smile,
Still for thy weakly self is spent
Thy little silly plaint.

But when thy friends are in distress.
Thou'lt laugh and chuckle n'ertheless, 20
Nor with kind sympathy be smitten,
Though all are sad but thee and kitten;
Yet puny varlet that thou art,
Thou twitchest at the heart.

Thy smooth round cheek so soft and warm; 25
Thy pinky hand and dimpled arm;
Thy silken locks that scanty peep,
With gold tipped ends, where circle deep,
Around thy neck in harmless grace,
So soft and sleekly hold their place, 30
Might harder hearts with kindness fill,
And gain our right goodwill.

Each passing clown bestows his blessing,
Thy mouth is worn with old wives' kissing;
E'en lighter looks the gloomy eye 35
Of surly sense when thou art by;
And yet, I think, whoe'er they be,
They love thee not like me.

Perhaps when time shall add a few
Short years to thee, thou'lt love me too; 40
And after that, through life's long way,
Become my sure and cheering stay;
Wilt care for me and be my hold,
When I am weak and old.

Thou'lt listen to my lengthened tale, 45
And pity me when I am frail —
But see, the sweepy spinning fly
Upon the window takes thine eye.
Go to thy little senseless play;
Thou dost not heed my lay. 50

Address to a Steam Vessel

BY JOANNA BAILLIE

FREIGHTED with passengers of every sort,
A motley throng, thou leavest the busy port:
Thy long and ample deck, — where scattered lie,
Baskets and cloaks and shawls of crimson dye;
Where dogs and children through the crowd are straying, 5
And on his bench apart the fiddler playing,
While matron dames to tressed seats repair, —
Seems, on the glassy waves, a floating fair.

Its dark form on the sky's pale azure cast,
Towers from this clustering group thy pillared mast; 10
The dense smoke, issuing from its narrow vent,
Is to the air in curly volumes sent,
Which coiling and uncoiling on the wind,
Trails, like a writhing serpent, far behind.
Beneath, as each merged wheel its motion plies, 15
On either side the white-churned waters rise,
And newly parted from the noisy fray,
Track with light ridgy foam thy recent way,
Then far diverged, in many a lustrous line
On the still-moving distant surface shine. 20

Thou holdest thy course in independent pride;
No leave askest thou of either wind or tide.
To whate'er point the breeze inconstant veer,
Still doth thy careless helmsman onward steer;
As if the stroke of some magician's wand 25
Had lent thee power the ocean to command.
What is this power which thus within thee lurks,
And all unseen, like a masked giant works?
Even that which gentle dames at morning tea,
From silver urn ascending, daily see 30
With tressy wreathings borne upon the air
Like loosened ringlets of a lady's hair;
Or rising from th' enamelled cup beneath,
With the soft fragrance of an infant's breath:
That which within the peasant's humble cot 35
Comes from the uncovered mouth of savoury pot,
As his kind mate prepares his noonday fare,
Which cur and cat and rosy urchins share;
That which, all silvered by the moon's pale beam
Precedes the mighty Geyser's up-cast stream, 40

What time, with bellowing din, exploded forth,
It decks the midnight of the frozen north,
While travellers from their skin-spread couches rise
To gaze upon the sight with wondering eyes.

Thou hast to those "in populous city pent" 45
Glimpses of wild and beauteous nature lent,
A bright remembrance ne'er to be destroyed,
That proves to them a treasure long enjoyed,
And for this scope to beings erst confined,
I fain would hail thee with a grateful mind. 50

They who had nought of verdant freshness seen,
But suburb orchards choked with colworts green,
Now, seated at their ease, may glide along,
Loch Lomond's fair and fairy Isles among;
Where bushy promontories fondly peep 55
At their own beauty in the nether deep,
O'er drooping birch and rowen red that lave
Their fragrant branches in the glassy wave:
They who on higher objects scarce have counted
Than church-spire with its gilded vane surmounted, 60
May view within their near, distinctive ken
The rocky summits of the lofty Ben;
Or see his purple shoulders darkly lower
Through the dim drapery of a summer shower.

Where, spread in broad and fair expanse, the Clyde 65
Mingles his waters with the briny tide,
Along the lesser Cumra's rocky shore,
With moss and crusted lichens fleckered o'er,
He who but warfare held with thievish cat,
Or from his cupboard chaced a hungry rat, 70
The city cobbler, — scares the wild sea-mew
In its mid-flight with loud and shrill halloo;
Or valiantly with fearful threatening shakes
His lank and greasy head at Kittywakes. *

The eyes that have no fairer outline seen, 75
Than chimneyed walls with slated roofs between,
Which hard and harshly edge the smoky sky,
May Aron's softly-visioned peaks descry,
Coping with graceful state her steepy sides
O'er which the cloud's broad shadow swiftly glides, 80
And interlacing slopes that gently merge
Into the pearly mist of ocean's verge.

Eyes which admired that work of sordid skill,
The storied structure of a cotton mill,
May wondering now behold the unnumbered host 85

Of marshalled pillars on fair Ireland's coast,
Phalanx on phalanx ranged with sidelong bend
Or broken ranks that to the main descend,
Like Pharaoh's army on the Red Sea shore,
Who deep and deeper sunk, to rise no more. 90

Yet ne'ertheless, whate'er we owe to thee,
Rover at will on river, lake, and sea,
As profit's bait or pleasure's lure engage,
Offspring of Watt, that philosophic sage,
Who in the heraldry of science ranks
With those to whom men owe high meed of thanks 95
For genius usefully employed, whose fame
Shall still be linked with Davy's splendid name!

Dearer to fancy, to the eye more fair
Are the light skiffs, that to the breezy air 100
Unfurl their swelling sails of snowy hue
Upon the moving lap of ocean blue:
As the proud swan on summer lake displays,
With plumage brightening in the morning rays,
Her fair pavilion of erected wings, 105
They change and veer and turn like living things.

With ample store of shrouding, sails and mast
To brave with manly skill the winter blast
Of every clime, — in vessels rigged like these
Did great Columbus cross the western seas, 110
And to the stunted thoughts of man revealed
What yet the course of ages had concealed:
In such as these, on high adventure bent
Round the vast world Magellan's comrades went.

To such as these are hardy seamen found 115
As with the ties of kindred feeling bound,
Boasting, while cans of cheering grog they sip,
The varied fortunes of "our gallant ship:"
The offspring these of bold sagacious man,
Ere yet the reign of lettered lore began. 120

In very truth, compared to these, thou art
A daily labourer, a mechanic swart,
In working weeds arrayed of homely grey,
Opposed to gentle nymph or lady gay,
To whose free robes the graceful right is given 125
To play and dally with the winds of heaven.

Beholding thee, the great of other days
And modern men with all their altered ways,

Across my mind with hasty transit gleam,
Like fleeting shadows of a feverish dream: 130
Fitful I gaze, with adverse humours teased,
Half sad, half proud, half angry, and half pleased.

William Blake



General Background

William Blake was born on November 28, 1757. Born into a family of moderate but limited means (his father was a tradesman), Blake was born and grew up in London. Blake's parents had seven children, but only five survived infancy. By all accounts Blake had a pleasant and peaceful childhood, marked in part by a lack of formal schooling (he was at least partially self-educated and started writing poetry at a very young age). Despite the lack of formal education, his parents did encourage his artistic talents, enrolling Blake (at the age of 10) in a drawing school. The expense of continued formal training in art eventually became too much for their family budget, so the family decided that, at the age of 14, William would be apprenticed to a master engraver (Blake was apprenticed to James Basire—a well-known engraver at the time—for a full seven years).

At the age of 21, Blake left Basire's apprenticeship and enrolled for a time in the newly formed Royal Academy. After leaving the academy, he made his living as a journeyman engraver. Booksellers employed him to engrave illustrations for a wide range of publications. While he was working, Blake met Catherine Boucher, who he married at age 24 after a year's courtship. The parish registry shows that Catherine, like many women of her class, could not sign her own name. Blake soon taught her to read and to write, and under Blake's tutoring she also became an accomplished draftsman, helping him in the execution of his engravings and printings. By most accounts the marriage was a happy and successful one, but no children were born to the Blakes.

Blake was a prolific writer/artist during his career, producing engravings, poetry, and paintings in equal measure. By all accounts, eccentricities aside, he was a brilliant man (Blake famously memorized large

chunks of the Bible, using his prodigious memory well) whose various works shown an extremely nimble mind at work. However, due to the difficulty in producing and selling his complex works (only 30 copies of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* were sold during his lifetime), his works were not as well known during his day as they are now. Upon reaching the end, Blake's body was buried in a plot—on the eve of his 45th wedding anniversary – at the Dissenter's burial ground in Bunhill Fields (his parents' bodies were buried in the same graveyard). Catherine continued selling his illuminated works and paintings after his death, but always consulted "Mr. Blake" before final business decisions (she believed she was regularly visited by Blake's spirit).

Style and Works

William Blake's stylistic contributions to literature are vast and difficult to summarize briefly, but four areas in particular stand out. First, Blake was an incredible mythmaker (his development of myths relating to humanity and scriptural past are heavily imbued with complex symbolism that scholars continue to work actively to understand today). He attempted to build in his works a complete mythology that encompassed all of humanity's present, past, and future (an extremely ambitious undertaking). Second, Blake was a visionary in his melding of previously disparate forms. In particular, Blake's beautifully rendered works often brought engraving and poetry together into one form (which also made it hard for him to make very many copies of his works—limited copies of his work explains why he did not become very famous during his lifetime). Third, Blake was a poet/prophet (meaning that his writings were often visionary and contained voices of warning to the people) who valued spirituality (he claimed on multiple occasions to have seen angels) and imagination to extreme degrees. Finally, Blake was a radical in almost every sense of the word—his works, personality, and actions all blended together to destabilize establishment principles in almost every place he found them.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Blake's legacy started to really take off once the Pre-Raphaelites (a particularly important group of Victorian artists) chose him as one of their most admired literary heroes and examples (they considered him to be a genius). His experimental work in illuminated printing paved the way for generations of experimental artists who consider new mediums for their writing and art. In addition to his artistic influence, Blake also championed

world building, religiosity, and social causes as part of his work (famously antagonistic towards the state and organized religions, Blake nonetheless was a deeply spiritual man who argued that the Bible was central to all art), One of the most original artists of all time (and certainly his age), Blake's expansive vision of humanity influence not only the other Romantics, but writers from subsequent ages who have taken his rebellious, imaginative path as a guideline for their own subversive works.

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The Little Black Boy

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O! my soul is white;
White as an angel is the English child:
But I am black as if bereav'd of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree 5
And sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissed me,
And pointing to the east began to say.

Look on the rising sun: there God does live 10
And gives his light, and gives his heat away.
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning joy in the noonday.

And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love,
And these black bodies and this sun-burnt face 15
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear
The cloud will vanish we shall hear his voice.
Saying: come out from the grove my love & care, 20
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.

Thus did my mother say and kissed me,
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy:

Ill shade him from the heat till he can bear, 25
To lean in joy upon our fathers knee.
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him and he will then love me.

Songs of Innocence

Chimney Sweeper #1

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry “‘weep! ‘weep! ‘weep! ‘weep!”
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep. 5

There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curled like a lamb’s back, was shaved, so I said,
“Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head’s bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.” 10

And so he was quiet, & that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black;

And by came an Angel who had a bright key, 15
And he opened the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind, 20
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.
And the Angel told Tom, if he’d be a good boy,
He’d have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

Songs of Experience

The Chimney Sweeper #2

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying “weep! ‘weep!” in notes of woe! 5
“Where are thy father and mother? say?”
“They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil’d among the winter’s snow, 10
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King,
Who make up a heaven of our misery.”

The Clod and the Pebble

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

“Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hell’s despair.”

So sung a little Clod of Clay 5
Trodden with the cattle’s feet,
But a Pebble of the brook
Warbled out these metres meet:

“Love seeketh only self to please,
To bind another to its delight, 10
Joys in another’s loss of ease,
And builds a Hell in Heaven’s despite.”

London

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

I wander thro’ each charter’d street,
Near where the charter’d Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man, 5
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg’d manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry 10
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro’ midnight streets I hear 15
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

The Human Abstract

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

Pity would be no more,
If we did not make somebody Poor:
And Mercy no more could be,
If all were as happy as we;

And mutual fear brings peace; 5
Till the selfish loves increase.
Then Cruelty knits a snare,
And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with holy fears,
And waters the ground with tears: 10
Then Humility takes its root
Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade
Of Mystery over his head;
And the Catterpillar and Fly. 15
Feed on the Mystery.

And it bears the fruit of Deceit.
Ruddy and sweet to eat;
And the Raven his nest has made
In its thickest shade. 20

The Gods of the earth and sea,
Sought thro' Nature to find this Tree
But their search was all in vain;
There grows one in the Human Brain

Infant Sorrow

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

My mother groand! my father wept.
Into the dangerous world I leapt:
Helpless, naked, piping loud;
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my fathers hands: 5
Striving against my swaddling bands:
Bound and weary I thought best
To sulk upon my mothers breast.

A Poison Tree

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I waterd it in fears, 5
Night & morning with my tears:
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night.
Till it bore an apple bright. 10
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veild the pole;
In the morning glad I see; 15
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

Proverbs of Hell

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy. Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead. The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom. Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity. He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence. The cut worm forgives the plow. Dip him in the river who loves water. A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees. He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star. Eternity is in love with the productions of time. The busy bee has no time for sorrow. The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock, but of wisdom: no clock can measure. All wholsom food is caught without a net or a trap. Bring out number weight & measure in a year of dearth. No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings. A dead body, revenges not injuries. The most sublime act is to set another before you. If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise. Folly is the cloke of knavery. Shame is Prides cloke. ~ Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion. The pride of the peacock is the glory of God. The lust of the goat is the bounty of God. The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God. The nakedness of woman is the work of God. Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps. The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword, are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man. The fox condemns the trap, not himself. Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth. Let man wear the fell of the lion, woman the fleece of the sheep. The bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship. The selfish smiling fool, & the sullen frowning fool, shall be both thought wise, that they may be a rod. What is now proved was once, only imagin'd. The rat, the mouse, the fox, the rabbit: watch the roots; the lion, the tyger, the horse, the elephant, watch the fruits. The cistern contains; the fountain overflows. One thought, fills immensity. Always be ready to speak your mind, and a base man will avoid you. Every thing possible to be believ'd is an image of truth. The eagle never lost so much time, as when he submitted to learn of the crow. ~ The fox provides for himself, but God provides for the lion. Think in the morning. Act in the noon. Eat in the evening. Sleep in the night. He who has suffer'd you to impose on him knows you. As the plow follows words, so God rewards prayers. The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction. Expect poison from the standing water. You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough. Listen to the fools reproach! it is a kingly title! The eyes of fire, the nostrils of air, the mouth of water, the beard of earth. The weak in courage is strong in cunning. The apple tree never asks the beech how he shall grow, nor the lion, the horse, how he shall take his prey. The thankful reciever bears a plentiful harvest. If others had not been foolish, we should be so. The soul of sweet delight, can never be defil'd. When thou seest an Eagle, thou seest a portion of Genius, lift up thy head! As the catterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys. To create a little flower is the labour of ages. Damn, braces: Bless relaxes. The best wine is the oldest, the best water the newest. Prayers plow not! Praises reap not! Joys laugh not! Sorrows weep not! ~ The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands & feet Proportion. As the air to a bird of the sea to a fish, so is contempt to the contemptible. The crow wish'd every thing was black, the owl, that every thing was white. Exuberance is Beauty. If the lion was advised by the fox, he would be cunning. Improvement makes strait roads, but the crooked roads without Improvement, are roads of Genius. Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires. Where man is not nature is barren. Truth can never be told so as to be understood, and not be believ'd. Enough! or Too much!

Holy Thursday: 'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean

BY WILLIAM BAKE

Twas on a Holy Thursday their innocent faces clean
The children walking two & two in red & blue & green
Grey-headed beadles walkd before with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Pauls they like Thames waters flow

O what a multitude they seemd these flowers of London town 5
Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own
The hum of multitudes was there but multitudes of lambs
Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of Heaven among 10
Beneath them sit the aged men wise guardians of the poor
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door

Robert Burns



General Background

Robert Burns was born on January 25th, 1759, in a cottage built by his father in southwestern Scotland. Although his parents were poor, Burns received some education in grammar, mathematics, French, and a smattering of Latin (when he was sporadically able to attend school), but was mostly self-taught through his own reading. He fell in love with poetry early in life, and wrote his first love poem at age 15. At work on his father's farm from an early age until he was twenty-three, he tried at one early juncture to establish himself in business as a flax-dresser in Irvine, but returned in a short time later to his father's house without anything to show for his work. After the death of his father, he and his brother Gilbert took over the farm, which did not go well for them.

Burns was not a very faithful man in his relationships, fathering a number of illegitimate children with different women over his adult years. Never particularly successful financially, he did eventually settle down and married Jean Armour in 1788. Despite their financial struggles (and illness in the case of Burns), most scholars indicate that the marriage was a happy one. In addition to his vital contributions as a poet, Burn also worked as an editor and collector of Scottish ballads. Ultimately, the heart trouble Burn suffered from for much of his life was his undoing, leading to an early death at the age of only 37.

Style and Works

Robert Burns's writings celebrated aspects of rural life, regional experience, traditional culture, class culture, and religious practice. He is considered by many to be the national poet of Scotland, in part because the

Scottish vernacular he used to write many of his most celebrated works was—even as he used it—becoming less and less intelligible to the majority of readers, who were already well-versed with English culture and language. As a result of this loss of Scottish identity and voice, some argue that few truly Scottish poets have lived since Burns (being subsumed instead by a broader English identity).

Burns is often called a pre-Romantic poet for his sensitivity to nature, his high valuation of feeling and emotion, his spontaneity, his fierce stance for freedom and against authority, his individualism, and his antiquarian interest in old songs and legends. Concerned with creating a better world through cultural renovation, Burns’s vernacular has lasted over the years in many forms, from the New Year’s anthem “Auld Lang Syne” to his “Ode to a Haggis” (a cultural touchstone—watching a Haggis being piped in via bagpipes is quite the experience—for admirers of Burns and Scottish people living around the world today).

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Burns occupies a particularly important place in the Scottish literary tradition (and British more broadly). Alive during the transition from agrarian to an industrial nation, Burns was exceptionally gifted at showing agrarian values and complexities in light of a rapidly changing world. His work also contains the lasting legacy of capturing the cultural language and values of a society now mostly faded (see his work on a Haggis as an example of a particularly Scottish food related to culture). Perhaps most importantly though, Burns’s inimitable style (many have tried to copy his language with limited success) gave voice to the less-privileged classes and also was very successful in imagining a better world for all.

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To a Mouse

BY ROBERT BURNS

Wee, sleeket, cowran, tim’rous beastie,
O, what a panic’s in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi’ bickerin brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an’ chase thee
Wi’ murd’ring pattle! 5

I’m truly sorry Man’s dominion
Has broken Nature’s social union,
An’ justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle,
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An’ fellow-mortal! 10

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave
’S a sma’ request:
I’ll get a blessin wi’ the lave,
An’ never miss ’t! 15

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
It’s silly wa’s the win’s are strewin!
An’ naething, now, to big a new ane,
O’ foggage green!
An’ bleak December’s winds ensuin,
Baith snell an’ keen! 20

Thou saw the fields laid bare an’ waste,
An’ weary Winter comin fast,
An’ cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro’ thy cell. 25

That wee-bit heap o’ leaves an’ stibble
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou’s turn’d out, for a’ thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the Winter’s sleety dribble,
An’ cranreuch cauld! 30

But Mousie, thou art no thy-lane,

In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy! 40

Still, thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But Och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear! 45
An' forward tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

To A Louse

BY ROBERT BURNS

Ha! whaur ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?
Your impudence protects you sairly;
I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho', faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place. 5

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your fit upon her-
Sae fine a lady?
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner 10
On some poor body.

Swith! in some beggar's haffet squattle;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations; 15
Whaur horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug and tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right, 20
Till ye've got on it-
The verra tapmost, tow'rin height
O' Miss' bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump an' grey as ony groset: 25
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum.

I wad na been surpris'd to spy 30
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit dubbie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss' fine Lunardi! fye!
How daur ye do't? 35

O Jeany, dinna toss your head,

An' set your beauties a' abroad!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin:
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread, 40
Are notice takin.

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion: 45
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

Auld Lang Syne

BY ROBERT BURNS

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

Chorus:
For auld lang syne, my dear, 5
For auld lang syne.
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint stowp!
And surely I'll be mine! 10
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

Chorus
We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fit, 15
Sin' auld lang syne.

Chorus
We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

Chorus
And there's a hand, my trusty fere! 20
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right gude-willie waught,
For auld lang syne.

Chorus

Robert Bruce's March

BY ROBERT BURNS

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to Victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour; 5
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power-
Chains and Slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave? 10
Wha sae base as be a Slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha, for Scotland's King and Law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa', 15
Let him on wi' me!

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your Sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free! 20

Lay the proud Usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!-
Let us Do or Die!

A Red, Red Rose

BY ROBERT BURNS

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass, 5
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun; 10
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve, 15
Though it were ten thousand mile.

William Wordsworth



General Background

William Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770 in a small town (Cockermouth) located on the northern fringe of the Lake District of England (the Lake District is a beautiful area that has been closely associated with Wordsworth ever since his death). He seems to have lived in an almost rural paradise until his mother died (he was only 8 at the time—his father also died suddenly when Wordsworth was just 13). After her death, William attended the grammar school near Cockermouth Church, where he read voraciously and began writing poetry at a very young age.

Wordsworth entered St. John's College, Cambridge University, as a sizar (sizar received financial help from the college and often had to perform certain menial duties as part of the assistance). During his last summer as an undergraduate (1790), he and his college friend Robert Jones decided to make a tour of the Alps. This walking tour of Europe, which deepened his love for nature and his sympathy for the common man, really began his writing career (most historians see his early political opinions—especially his hatred of tyranny—as developing during this time). Wordsworth was intoxicated by the combination of revolutionary fervor he found in France—he and Jones arrived on the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille—and by the impressive natural beauty of the countryside and mountains. Returning to England in October, Wordsworth was awarded a degree from Cambridge in 1791.

In December, while in France again, he met and fell in love with Annette Vallon. They had a child together (Caroline) and intended to get married, but financial difficulties and the war ruined their plans. In 1795,

however, he received some money after the death of a friend and soon met Samuel Coleridge. The two formed a short-lived but intense friendship that was perhaps the most profitable one every known to poetry (they met almost daily, talked for hours about poetry, and wrote prolifically the first few years of their friendship—even coauthoring some pieces and the preface). In 1802, Wordsworth finally received his father's inheritance, settled in the Lake District with his sister Dorothy (a vital contributor and influence on his work and life), formed a settlement with Annette, and married Mary Hutchinson (who he had known since childhood). By 1810, he and Coleridge were divided by a bitter quarrel and never fully reconciled. In 1843 Wordsworth, as a result of an active life writing poetry, was named poet laureate of England. When he died in 1850, his final masterpiece (the autobiographical *The Prelude*) was published (he finished a draft of the piece in 1805, and revised it constantly until his death at age 80).

Style and Works

Wordsworth's most famous contributions (among many) are probably *The Prelude* (epic in scope, this long poem addresses the “growth of a poet's mind) and the preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (although the poems themselves in Wordsworth and Coleridge's work were quite important as well). The preface to the second edition demonstrates the two poets' views on the craft and purpose of poetry, emphasizing the need for “common speech” within poems and arguing against the hierarchy of the period which valued epic poetry above the lyric. Free verse, a revolutionary spirit, the personal “I” of the poet, imagination, and nature are all explored and considered as hallmarks of the Romantic Period though Wordsworth and Coleridge's combined overview of what poetry should be and do.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

A poet of Wordsworth's stature is critiqued by many and often (even during his own lifetime, Lord Byron and P. Shelley were vehement in their attacks on the aging Wordsworth, essentially arguing that he “sold out” his principles to the establishment later in life), but even today most scholars place him very high on the list of important British authors (tastes vary, of course, but many consider him second only to Shakespeare in importance and literary value). Along with Coleridge, he set many of the standards that distinguished Romantic writings from earlier centuries (breaking especially from 18th century norms). His emphasis on certain principles (giving rural people a voice, striving for authentic expression, focusing on nature and revolutionary change, imagination, etc.) are now deeply ingrained in our understanding of literature in Britain during the Romantic Period. Without a doubt, his legacy as one of the “fathers” of Romantic-era thought and verse still stands firm today.

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Preface to Lyrical Ballads

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The first volume of these Poems was published, as an experiment to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart. Several of my Friends advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory upon which the Poems were written. [...] to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself.

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.

If good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be

originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connexion with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. [...] Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely—all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. All that it is necessary to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected by affirming, what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? to whom does he address himself? and what language is to be expected from him?—He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, ‘that he looks before and after.’ He is the

rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet’s thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I had in view: he will determine how far it has been attained; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining: and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the Public. [END.]

We Are Seven

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

———A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl: 5
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad: 10
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

“Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?”
“How many? Seven in all,” she said, 15
And wondering looked at me.

“And where are they? I pray you tell.”
She answered, “Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea. 20

“Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

“You say that two at Conway dwell, 25
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.”

Then did the little Maid reply,
“Seven boys and girls are we; 30
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.”

“You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid, 35

Then ye are only five.”

“Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
The little Maid replied,
“Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,
And they are side by side. 40

“My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

“And often after sun-set, Sir, 45
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

“The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay, 50
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

“So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played, 55
My brother John and I.

“And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side.”

“How many are you, then,” said I, 60
“If they two are in heaven?”
Quick was the little Maid’s reply,
“O Master! we are seven.”

“But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!” 65
’Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, “Nay, we are seven!”

Expostulation and Reply

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

'WHY, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

'Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind! 5
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

'You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you; 10
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!'

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake, 15
And thus I made reply:

'The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against, or with our will. 20

'Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

'Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum 25
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

'—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may, 30
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away.'

The Tables Turned

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun above the mountain's head, 5
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife: 10
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher: 15
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness. 20

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings; 25
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves; 30
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

Lines

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
 Of five long winters! and again I hear
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
 With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5
 That on a wild secluded scene impress
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
 Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
 ‘Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines 15
 Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
 Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, 20
 Or of some Hermit’s cave, where by his fire
 The Hermit sits alone.

 These beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to me
 As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye: 25
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and ‘mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
 And passing even into my purer mind 30
 With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
 Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
 As have no slight or trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man’s life,
 His little, nameless, unremembered, acts 35
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
 In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight 40
 Of all this unintelligible world,
 Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood 45
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul:
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things. 50

 If this
 Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
 In darkness and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world, 55
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
 O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro’ the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought, 60
 With many recognitions dim and faint,
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
 The picture of the mind revives again:
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts 65
 That in this moment there is life and food
 For future years. And so I dare to hope,
 Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
 I came among these hills; when like a roe
 I bounded o’er the mountains, by the sides 70
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
 Wherever nature led: more like a man
 Flying from something that he dreads, than one
 Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days 75
 And their glad animal movements all gone by)
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood, 80
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite; a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, nor any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past, 85
 And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
 Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
 Abundant recompense. For I have learned 90

To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
 The still sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue.—And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy 95
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man: 100
 A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods
 And mountains; and of all that we behold 105
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world
 Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
 In nature and the language of the sense
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, 110
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay: 115
 For thou art with me here upon the banks
 Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
 My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights 120
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once,
 My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege, 125
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues, 130
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold 135
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
 And let the misty mountain-winds be free

To blow against thee: and, in after years,
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind 140
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts 145
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
 And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
 If I should be where I no more can hear
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
 Of past existence—wilt thou then forget 150
 That on the banks of this delightful stream
 We stood together; and that I, so long
 A worshipper of Nature, hither came
 Unwearied in that service: rather say
 With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal 155
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake! 160

Michael

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

IF from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face. 5
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone 10
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by, 15
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a struggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved;—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills 25
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same 35
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale 40
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.

His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs, 45
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the South 50
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
'The winds are now devising work for me!' 55
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights. 60
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed 65
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory 70
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him 75
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years. 80
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house; two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest
It was because the other was at work. 85
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son, 90
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,

The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their household. I may truly say,
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was gone, 95
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home, even then,
 Their labour did not cease; unless when all
 Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk, 100
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
 Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)
 And his old Father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ 105
 Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.
 Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge, 110
 That in our ancient uncouth country style
 With huge and black projection overbrowed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
 An aged utensil, which had performed 115
 Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn—and late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
 Which, going by from year to year, had found,
 And left, the couple neither gay perhaps 120
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
 Living a life of eager industry.
 And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
 There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
 Father and Son, while far into the night 125
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage through the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
 This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
 And was a public symbol of the life 130
 That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
 Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
 Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
 High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
 And westward to the village near the lake; 135
 And from this constant light, so regular
 And so far seen, the House itself, by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.
 Thus living on through such a length of years, 140
 The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs

Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
 This son of his old age was yet more dear—
 Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
 Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all— 145
 Than that a child, more than all other gifts
 That earth can offer to declining man,
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150
 Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
 His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone 155
 For pastime and delight, as is the use
 Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
 To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
 His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
 And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love, 160
 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
 To have the young-one in his sight, when he
 Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
 Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
 Under the large old oak, that near his door 165
 Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
 Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
 Thence in our rustic dialect was called
 The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.
 There, while they two were sitting in the shade, 170
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
 Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
 Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
 By catching at their legs, or with his shouts 175
 Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.
 And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
 A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
 Two steady roses that were five years old;
 Then Michael from a winter coppice cut 180
 With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
 With iron, making it throughout in all
 Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
 And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
 He as a watchman oftentimes was placed 185
 At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
 And, to his office prematurely called,
 There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
 Something between a hindrance and a help;
 And for this cause not always, I believe, 190
 Receiving from his Father hire of praise;

Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.
But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights, 195
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came 200
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?
Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year, 205
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 210
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture, 215
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost. 220
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his troubles in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again, 225
And his heart failed him. 'Isabel,' said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
'I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours 230
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last 235
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but 240

'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land 245
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go, 250
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained? 255

At this the old Man paused, And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish boy—at the church-door 260
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there, 265
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birthplace, built a chapel floored 270
With marble which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—'Well, Isabel! this scheme 275
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best 280
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he could go, the Boy should go to-night.'

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days 285
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay 290
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights

Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
 And when they rose at morning she could see
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
 She said to Luke, while they two by themselves 295
 Were sitting at the door, 'Thou must not go:
 We have no other Child but thee to lose,
 None to remember—do not go away,
 For if thou leave thy Father he will die.'
 The Youth made answer with a jocund voice; 300
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
 Did she bring forth, and all together sat
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
 With daylight Isabel resumed her work; 305
 And all the ensuing week the house appeared
 As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
 The expected letter from their kinsman came,
 With kind assurances that he would do
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy; 310
 To which, requests were added, that forthwith
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
 The letter was read over; Isabel
 Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
 Nor was there at that time on English land 315
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
 Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
 'He shall depart to-morrow.' To this word
 The Housewife answered, talking much of things
 Which, if at such short notice he should go, 320
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.
 Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
 In that deep valley, Michael had designed
 To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard 325
 The tidings of his melancholy loss,
 For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walked; 330
 And soon as they had reached the place he stopped.
 And thus the old Man spake to him:—'My Son,
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth, 335
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should touch
 On things thou canst not know of.—After thou 340
 First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls

To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
 Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
 And still I loved thee with increasing love. 345
 Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
 Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
 First uttering, without words, a natural tune:
 While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
 Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month, 350
 And in the open fields my life was passed
 And on the mountains; else I think that thou
 Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
 But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
 As well thou knowest, in us the old and young 355
 Have played together, nor with me didst thou
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.'
 Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
 He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
 And said, 'Nay, do not take it so—I see 360
 That these are things of which I need not speak.
 —Even to the utmost I have been to thee
 A kind and a good Father: and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at others' hand; for, though now old 365
 Beyond the common life of man, I still
 Remember them who loved me in my youth.
 Both of them sleep together; here they lived,
 As all their Forefathers had done; and when
 At length their time was come, they were not loth 370
 To give their bodies to the family mould.
 I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived:
 But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son
 And see so little gained from threescore years.
 These fields were burthened when they came to me; 375
 Till I was forty years of age, not more
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
 And till these three weeks past the land was free.
 —It looks as if it never could endure 380
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou shouldst go.'
 At this the old Man paused; Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
 'This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
 It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live 390
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;

I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms, 395
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
 With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes— 400
 I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
 To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
 Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
 What will be left to us!—But, I forget
 My purposes: Lay now the corner-stone, 405
 As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
 And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
 And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear 410
 And all temptations, Luke, I pray that thou
 May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see 415
 A work which is not here: a covenant
 'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave.'
 The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down, 420
 And, as his Father had requested, laid
 The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
 The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
 He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept;
 And to the house together they returned. 425
 —Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
 Ere the Night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy
 Began his journey, and when he had reached
 The public way, he put on a bold face;
 And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors, 430
 Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
 That followed him till he was out of sight.
 A good report did from their kinsman come,
 Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy 435
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
 Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
 'The prettiest letters that were ever seen.'
 Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
 So, many months passed on: and once again
 The Shepherd went about his daily work 440
 With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
 Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour

He to that valley took his way, and there
 Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began 445
 To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses: ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.
 There is a comfort in the strength of love; 450
 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
 Would upset the brain, or break the heart:
 I have conversed with more than one who well
 Remember the old Man, and what he was 455
 Years after he had heard this heavy news.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
 He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
 And listened to the wind; and, as before, 460
 Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
 And for the land, his small inheritance.
 And to that hollow dell from time to time
 Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet 465
 The pity which was then in every heart
 For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
 That many and many a day he thither went,
 And never lifted up a single stone.
 There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen 470
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
 The length of full seven years, from time to time,
 He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died. 475
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
 The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR
 Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground 480
 On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
 In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak is left
 That grew beside their door; and the remains
 Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

I Wandered Lonely

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

IF from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face. 5
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone 10
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by, 15
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a struggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
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Whom I already loved;—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills 25
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 Their labour did not cease; unless when all
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 And for this cause not always, I believe, 190
 Receiving from his Father hire of praise;

Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
 Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.
 But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
 Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights, 195
 Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
 He with his Father daily went, and they
 Were as companions, why should I relate
 That objects which the Shepherd loved before
 Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came 200
 Feelings and emanations—things which were
 Light to the sun and music to the wind;
 And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?
 Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
 And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year, 205
 He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
 From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
 Distressful tidings. Long before the time
 Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 210
 In surety for his brother's son, a man
 Of an industrious life, and ample means;
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
 Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
 Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture, 215
 A grievous penalty, but little less
 Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
 At the first hearing, for a moment took
 More hope out of his life than he supposed
 That any old man ever could have lost. 220
 As soon as he had armed himself with strength
 To look his troubles in the face, it seemed
 The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
 A portion of his patrimonial fields.
 Such was his first resolve; he thought again, 225
 And his heart failed him. 'Isabel,' said he,
 Two evenings after he had heard the news,
 'I have been toiling more than seventy years,
 And in the open sunshine of God's love
 Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours 230
 Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
 And I have lived to be a fool at last 235
 To my own family. An evil man
 That was, and made an evil choice, if he
 Were false to us; and if he were not false,
 There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
 Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but 240

'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
 When I began, my purpose was to speak
 Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
 Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land 245
 Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
 He shall possess it, free as is the wind
 That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
 Another kinsman—he will be our friend
 In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
 Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go, 250
 And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
 He quickly will repair this loss, and then
 He may return to us. If here he stay,
 What can be done? Where every one is poor,
 What can be gained? 255

At this the old Man paused, And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
 Was busy, looking back into past times.
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself, 260
 He was a parish boy—at the church-door
 They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
 And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
 A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
 And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
 Went up to London, found a master there, 265
 Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
 To go and overlook his merchandise
 Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
 And left estates and monies to the poor,
 And, at his birthplace, built a chapel floored 270
 With marble which he sent from foreign lands.
 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
 And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
 And thus resumed:—'Well, Isabel! this scheme 275
 These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
 —We have enough—I wish indeed that I
 Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
 —Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best 280
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
 —If he could go, the Boy should go to-night.'

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
 With a light heart. The Housewife for five days 285
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
 Things needful for the journey of her son.
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
 To stop her in her work: for, when she lay 290
 By Michael's side, she through the last two nights

Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
 And when they rose at morning she could see
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
 She said to Luke, while they two by themselves 295
 Were sitting at the door, 'Thou must not go:
 We have no other Child but thee to lose,
 None to remember—do not go away,
 For if thou leave thy Father he will die.'
 The Youth made answer with a jocund voice; 300
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
 Did she bring forth, and all together sat
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
 With daylight Isabel resumed her work; 305
 And all the ensuing week the house appeared
 As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
 The expected letter from their kinsman came,
 With kind assurances that he would do
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy; 310
 To which, requests were added, that forthwith
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
 The letter was read over; Isabel
 Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
 Nor was there at that time on English land 315
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
 Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
 'He shall depart to-morrow.' To this word
 The Housewife answered, talking much of things
 Which, if at such short notice he should go, 320
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.
 Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
 In that deep valley, Michael had designed
 To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard 325
 The tidings of his melancholy loss,
 For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walked; 330
 And soon as they had reached the place he stopped.
 And thus the old Man spake to him:—'My Son,
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth, 335
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should touch
 On things thou canst not know of.—After thou 340
 First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls

To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
 Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
 And still I loved thee with increasing love. 345
 Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
 Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
 First uttering, without words, a natural tune:
 While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
 Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month, 350
 And in the open fields my life was passed
 And on the mountains; else I think that thou
 Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
 But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
 As well thou knowest, in us the old and young 355
 Have played together, nor with me didst thou
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.'
 Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
 He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
 And said, 'Nay, do not take it so—I see 360
 That these are things of which I need not speak.
 —Even to the utmost I have been to thee
 A kind and a good Father: and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at others' hand; for, though now old 365
 Beyond the common life of man, I still
 Remember them who loved me in my youth.
 Both of them sleep together; here they lived,
 As all their Forefathers had done; and when
 At length their time was come, they were not loth 370
 To give their bodies to the family mould.
 I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived:
 But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son
 And see so little gained from threescore years.
 These fields were burthened when they came to me; 375
 Till I was forty years of age, not more
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
 And till these three weeks past the land was free.
 —It looks as if it never could endure 380
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou shouldst go.'
 At this the old Man paused; Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
 'This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
 It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live 390
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;

I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms, 395
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
 With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes— 400
 I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
 To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
 Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
 What will be left to us!—But, I forget
 My purposes: Lay now the corner-stone, 405
 As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
 And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
 And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear 410
 And all temptations, Luke, I pray that thou
 May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see 415
 A work which is not here: a covenant
 'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave.'
 The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down, 420
 And, as his Father had requested, laid
 The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
 The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
 He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept;
 And to the house together they returned. 425
 —Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
 Ere the Night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy
 Began his journey, and when he had reached
 The public way, he put on a bold face;
 And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors, 430
 Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
 That followed him till he was out of sight.
 A good report did from their kinsman come,
 Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy 435
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
 Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
 'The prettiest letters that were ever seen.'
 Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
 So, many months passed on: and once again
 The Shepherd went about his daily work 440
 With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
 Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour

He to that valley took his way, and there
 Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began 445
 To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses: ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.
 There is a comfort in the strength of love; 450
 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
 Would upset the brain, or break the heart:
 I have conversed with more than one who well
 Remember the old Man, and what he was 455
 Years after he had heard this heavy news.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
 He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
 And listened to the wind; and, as before, 460
 Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
 And for the land, his small inheritance.
 And to that hollow dell from time to time
 Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet 465
 The pity which was then in every heart
 For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
 That many and many a day he thither went,
 And never lifted up a single stone.
 There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen 470
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
 The length of full seven years, from time to time,
 He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died. 475
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
 The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR
 Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground 480
 On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
 In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak is left
 That grew beside their door; and the remains
 Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

I Wandered Lonely

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay: 10
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay, 15
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

My Heart Leaps Up

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die! 5
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

Ode: Intimations of Immortality

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream. 5
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day.
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The Rainbow comes and goes, 10
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair; 15
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound 20
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep; 25
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea 30
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-boy. 35

Ye blessèd creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal, 40

The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling 45
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a Tree, of many, one, 50
A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone;
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam? 55
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting, 60
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home: 65
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy; 70
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away, 75
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim, 80
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses, 85
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,

Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's eyes!
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart, 90
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart, 95
 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside, 100
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage; 105
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep 110
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest, 115
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by; 120
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife? 125
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

 O joy! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live, 130
 That Nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive!
 The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benediction: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest; 135

Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise
 But for those obstinate questionings 140
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised,
 High instincts before which our mortal Nature 145
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may
 Are yet the fountain-light of all our day, 150
 Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
 To perish never;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour, 155
 Nor Man nor Boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
 Can utterly abolish or destroy!
 Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be, 160
 Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
 And see the Children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore. 165

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
 And let the young Lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound!
 We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play, 170
 Ye that through your hearts to-day
 Feel the gladness of the May!
 What though the radiance which was once so bright
 Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour 175
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind;
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be; 180
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering;

In the faith that looks through death,
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.
 And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves, 185
 Forebode not any severing of our loves!
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
 I only have relinquished one delight
 To live beneath your more habitual sway.
 I love the Brooks which down their channels fret, 190
 Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
 The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
 Is lovely yet;
 The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
 Do take a sober colouring from an eye 195
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
 Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give 200
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

London, 1802

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
 England hath need of thee: she is a fen
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men; 5
 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free, 10
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

The World Is Too Much With Us

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—
 Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon; 5
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
 It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn; 10
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

Steamboats, Viaducts, and Railways

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

MOTIONS and means, on land and sea at war
 With old poetic feeling, not for this,
 Shall ye, by poets even, be judged amiss!
 Nor shall your presence, howsoe'er it mar
 The loveliness of Nature, prove a bar 5
 To the mind's gaining that prophetic sense
Of future change, that point of vision whence
 May be discovered what in soul ye are.
 In spite of all that beauty may disown
 In your harsh features, Nature doth embrace 10
 Her lawful offspring in man's art; and Time,
Pleased with your triumphs o'er his brother Space,
 Accepts from your bold hands the proffered crown
 Of hope, and smiles on you with cheer sublime.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge



General Background

Samuel Coleridge was born on October, 1772, in Devonshire, England. The youngest child in the family of fourteen children (his father married twice), Coleridge was a student at his father's school and an avid reader as a young boy. After his father died in 1781, Coleridge attended Christ's Hospital School in London. An accomplished scholar from a young age, Coleridge entered Jesus College, University of Cambridge in 1791 with a focus on a future in the Church of England (his changing view soon made this dream impossible though). While at college, he struggled to stay focused (he found the material to be unstimulating) and accrued large debts that his brothers eventually paid off for him (financial problems were an issue throughout his life, and he constantly depended on the support of others for his living).

In 1794, Coleridge met a student named Robert Southey. They quickly became friends and shared a vision of forming a pantisocracy (equal government by all), which involved emigrating to the New World with ten other families to set up a commune on the banks of the Susquehanna River (a river of particular importance for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) in Pennsylvania. Coleridge and Southey envisioned the men sharing the workload, a great library, philosophical discussions, and freedom of religious and political beliefs (they did not however, figure out the practical difficulties facing their utopian ideal). As marriage was an integral part of the plan for communal living in the New World, Coleridge decided to marry Sarah Fricker (Robert was engaged her sister). Coleridge married Sarah in 1795 (sadly, he was in love for much of his life with Sara Hutchinson, whose sister was married to Wordsworth). Coleridge's marriage was unhappy

and he spent little time actually with Sarah. While the pantisocracy was still in the planning stages, Southey abandoned the project to pursue his legacy in law, leaving Coleridge floundering with only his writing as a focus. Coleridge never returned to Cambridge to finish his degree.

In 1795 Coleridge befriended William Wordsworth, who greatly influenced Coleridge's verse. From 1797 to 1798 he lived near Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy, in Somersetshire. In 1798 the two men collaborated on a joint volume of poetry entitled *Lyrical Ballads* (considered one of if not the most important poetic work in the Romantic Period). That autumn the two poets traveled to the Continent together (they later had a falling out before partially reconciling later in life—throughout his adult life Coleridge had crippling bouts of anxiety and depression; it has been speculated that he had bipolar disorder, which had not been defined during his lifetime, and the effects of his mental illnesses and struggles with drug addictions [doctors proscribed laudanum for some of his physical ailments, so the addictions were not all his fault] put pressure on his friendship with Wordsworth). Coleridge spent most of the trip in Germany studying the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, Jakob Boehme, and G. E. Lessing. While there he mastered the German language and began translating. When he returned to England in 1800, he spent the next two decades lecturing on literature and philosophy, writing about religious and political theory, dwelling in Malta in an effort to overcome his poor health and his opium addiction, and living off of financial donations and grants. Still addicted to opium, he moved in with the physician James Gillman in 1816. In 1817, he published *Biographia Literaria*, which contained his finest literary criticism. He died in London on July 25, 1834.

Style and Works

Coleridge, whose early work was celebratory and conventional, began writing in a more natural style after meeting Wordsworth. In his "conversation poems," such as "The Eolian Harp" and "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," Coleridge used his intimate friends and their experiences as subjects. Coleridge also wrote a number of supernatural works, with "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," and "Kubla Khan" functioning as some of the finest examples of such writing in the entire century. Gifted and notably bright, even his close friends concluded that his remarkable talent was partially wasted due to a constantly shifting mind that struggled to focus on matters at hand. Charged with plagiarism or at least uncited borrowing from German philosophy at times, all of his best work was produced in short bursts of creative, intense effort. Still, *Biographia Literaria* is one of the best pieces of literary criticism of the entire age and several Victorian thinkers considered Coleridge to be the brightest writer of the entire Romantic Period.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Although Coleridge's level of contribution to the poems and Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* is hotly debated (by Wordsworth himself and many scholars since), it is still true that Coleridge was at least the most important influence on this seminal document and at most, a coauthor. Proving his ability to influence literary understandings through *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge elevated the level of discourse surrounding literary analysis and criticism (he was one of the best at bringing literature and philosophy into conversation with each other). A much sought-after lecturer later in life (he spoke brilliantly on Shakespeare and helped restore and rescue *Hamlet* from unjust criticism), Coleridge is also much admired for being the "father" of supernatural poetry. His influence is seen in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (she listened to him read from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as a small child) and the gothic genre more broadly.

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The Eolian Harp

BY TAYLOR COLERIDGE

My pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined
Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
To sit beside our Cot, our Cot o'ergrown
With white-flowered Jasmin, and the broad-leaved Myrtle,
(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!)
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light, 5
Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such would Wisdom be)
Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents
Snatched from yon bean-field! and the world so hushed!
The stilly murmur of the distant Sea 10
Tells us of silence.

And that simplest Lute,
Placed length-ways in the clasping casement, hark!
How by the desultory breeze caressed,
Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover, 15
It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound 20
As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,
Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing! 25
O! the one Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere—
Methinks, it should have been impossible 30
Not to love all things in a world so filled;
Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
Is Music slumbering on her instrument.

And thus, my Love! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon, 35
Whilst through my half-closed eyelids I behold
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquility:
Full many a thought uncalled and undetained,
And many idle flitting phantasies, 40

Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
As wild and various as the random gales
That swell and flutter on this subject Lute!

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic Harps diversely framed, 45
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all?

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O beloved Woman! nor such thoughts 50
Dim and unhallowed dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
Meek Daughter in the family of Christ!

Well hast thou said and holily dispraised 55
These shapings of the unregenerate mind;
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.

For never guiltless may I speak of him,
The Incomprehensible! save when with awe 60
I praise him, and with Faith that inly feels;
Who with his saving mercies healèd me,
A sinful and most miserable man,
Wildered and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this Cot, and thee, heart-honored Maid!

This Lime-tree Bower my Prison

BY TAYLOR COLERIDGE

[Addressed to Charles Lamb, of the India House, London]

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
Had dimm'd mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,
Friends, whom I never more may meet again, 5
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told;
The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun; 10
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge;—that branchless ash,
Unsun'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fann'd by the water-fall! and there my friends 15
Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,
That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my friends emerge 20
Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again
The many-steepled tract magnificent
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles 25
Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
And hunger'd after Nature, many a year,
In the great City pent, winning thy way 30
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds! 35
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round

On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem 40
 Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
 As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
 Spirits perceive his presence.

A delight

Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad 45
 As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
 This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd
 Much that has sooth'd me. Pale beneath the blaze
 Hung the transparent foliage; and I watch'd
 Some broad and sunny leaf, and lov'd to see 50
 The shadow of the leaf and stem above
 Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree
 Was richly ting'd, and a deep radiance lay
 Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
 Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass 55
 Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
 Through the late twilight: and though now the bat
 Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
 Yet still the solitary humble-bee
 Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know 60
 That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;
 No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
 No waste so vacant, but may well employ
 Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
 Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes 65
 'Tis well to be bereft of promis'd good,
 That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
 With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
 My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rook
 Beat its straight path along the dusky air 70
 Homewards, I blest it! deeming its black wing
 (Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
 Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory,
 While thou stood'st gazing; or, when all was still,
 Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm 75
 For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
 No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

Frost at Midnight

BY TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
 Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
 Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.
 The inmates of my cottage, all at rest, 5
 Have left me to that solitude, which suits
 Abstruser musings: save that at my side
 My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
 'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
 And vexes meditation with its strange
 And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood, 10
 This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
 With all the numberless goings-on of life,
 Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
 Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
 Only that film, which fluttered on the grate, 15

Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
 Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
 Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
 Making it a companionable form,
 Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit 20
 By its own moods interprets, every where
 Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
 And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
 How oft, at school, with most believing mind, 25
 Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
 To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft
 With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
 Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
 Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang 30
 From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
 So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
 With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
 Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
 So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt, 35
 Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
 And so I brooded all the following morn,
 Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
 Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
 Save if the door half opened, and I snatched 40
 A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,

For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side, 45
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the intersperséd vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee, 50
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze 55
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible 60
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask. 65

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the night-thatch 70
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon. 75

Epitaph

BY TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Stop, Christian passer-by!—Stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod
A poet lies, or that which once seemed he.
O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.;
That he who many a year with toil of breath
Found death in life, may here find life in death! 5
Mercy for praise—to be forgiven for fame
He asked, and hoped, through Christ. Do thou the same!

Rime of the Ancient Mariner

BY TAYLOR COLERIDGE

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide, 5
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he. 10
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still, 15
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner. 20

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Sun came up upon the left, 25
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—' 30
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;

Nodding their heads before her goes 35
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner. 40

And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, 45
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts 55
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around: 60
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name. 65

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through! 70

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine.'

'God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!— 80
Why look'st thou so?'—With my cross-bow
I shot the ALBATROSS.

PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left 85
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariner's hollo! 90

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay, 95
That made the breeze to blow!

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist. 100
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst 105
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea! 110

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
 We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
 As idle as a painted ship
 Upon a painted ocean. 115

Water, water, every where,
 And all the boards did shrink;
 Water, water, every where,
 Nor any drop to drink. 120

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
 That ever this should be!
 Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
 Upon the slimy sea. 125

About, about, in reel and rout
 The death-fires danced at night;
 The water, like a witch's oils,
 Burnt green, and blue and white. 130

And some in dreams assurèd were
 Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
 Nine fathom deep he had followed us
 From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
 Was withered at the root;
 We could not speak, no more than if
 We had been choked with soot. 135

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
 Had I from old and young!
 Instead of the cross, the Albatross
 About my neck was hung. 140

PART III

There passed a weary time. Each throat
 Was parched, and glazed each eye.
 A weary time! a weary time!
 How glazed each weary eye, 145

When looking westward, I beheld
 A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
 And then it seemed a mist;
 It moved and moved, and took at last
 A certain shape, I wist. 150

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!

And still it neared and neared:
 As if it dodged a water-sprite,
 It plunged and tacked and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked, 155
 We could nor laugh nor wail;
 Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
 I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
 And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked, 160
 Agape they heard me call:
 Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
 And all at once their breath drew in.
 As they were drinking all.

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more! 165
 Hither to work us weal;
 Without a breeze, without a tide,
 She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame.
 The day was well nigh done! 170
 Almost upon the western wave
 Rested the broad bright Sun;
 When that strange shape drove suddenly
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace!) 175
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
 With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she nears and nears! 180
 Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
 Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
 Did peer, as through a grate?
 And is that Woman all her crew? 185
 Is that a DEATH? and are there two?
 Is DEATH that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
 Her locks were yellow as gold:
 Her skin was as white as leprosy, 190
 The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
 Who thicks man's blood with cold.

<p>The naked hulk alongside came, And the twain were casting dice; ‘The game is done! I’ve won! I’ve won!’ Quoth she, and whistles thrice.</p>	<p>195</p>	<p>The many men, so beautiful! And they all dead did lie: And a thousand thousand slimy things Lived on; and so did I.</p>	<p>235</p>
<p>The Sun’s rim dips; the stars rush out; At one stride comes the dark; With far-heard whisper, o’er the sea, Off shot the spectre-bark.</p>	<p>200</p>	<p>I looked upon the rotting sea, And drew my eyes away; I looked upon the rotting deck, And there the dead men lay.</p>	<p>240</p>
<p>We listened and looked sideways up! Fear at my heart, as at a cup, My life-blood seemed to sip! The stars were dim, and thick the night, The steersman’s face by his lamp gleamed white;</p>	<p>205</p>	<p>I looked to heaven, and tried to pray; But or ever a prayer had gusht, A wicked whisper came, and made My heart as dry as dust.</p>	<p>245</p>
<p>From the sails the dew did drip— Till clomb above the eastern bar The hornèd Moon, with one bright star Within the nether tip.</p>		<p>I closed my lids, and kept them close, And the balls like pulses beat; For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky Lay dead like a load on my weary eye, And the dead were at my feet.</p>	<p>250</p>
<p>One after one, by the star-dogged Moon, Too quick for groan or sigh, Each turned his face with a ghastly pang, And cursed me with his eye.</p>	<p>210</p>	<p>The cold sweat melted from their limbs, Nor rot nor reek did they: The look with which they looked on me Had never passed away.</p>	
<p>Four times fifty living men, (And I heard nor sigh nor groan) With heavy thump, a lifeless lump, They dropped down one by one.</p>	<p>215</p>	<p>An orphan’s curse would drag to hell A spirit from on high; But oh! more horrible than that Is the curse in a dead man’s eye! Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse, And yet I could not die.</p>	<p>255</p>
<p>The souls did from their bodies fly,— They fled to bliss or woe! And every soul, it passed me by, Like the whizz of my cross-bow!</p>	<p>220</p>	<p>The moving Moon went up the sky, And no where did abide: Softly she was going up, And a star or two beside—</p>	<p>260</p>
<p>PART IV</p>			
<p>‘I fear thee, ancient Mariner! I fear thy skinny hand! And thou art long, and lank, and brown, As is the ribbed sea-sand.</p>	<p>225</p>	<p>Her beams bemoaned the sultry main, Like April hoar-frost spread; But where the ship’s huge shadow lay, The charmèd water burnt away A still and awful red.</p>	<p>265</p>
<p>I fear thee and thy glittering eye, And thy skinny hand, so brown.’— Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest! This body dropt not down.</p>		<p>Beyond the shadow of the ship, I watched the water-snakes: They moved in tracks of shining white, And when they reared, the elfish light Fell off in hoary flakes.</p>	<p>270</p>
<p>Alone, alone, all, all alone, Alone on a wide wide sea! And never a saint took pity on My soul in agony.</p>	<p>230</p>		

Within the shadow of the ship 275
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue 280
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware. 285

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V
Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing, 290
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck, 295
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank; 300
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost 305
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere. 310

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,

The wan stars danced between. 315
And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge,
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still 320
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship, 325
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes; 330
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all ‘gan work the ropes, 335
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother’s son
Stood by me, knee to knee: 340
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.

‘I fear thee, ancient Mariner!’
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
‘Twas not those souls that fled in pain, 345
Which to their corpses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths, 350
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one. 355

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
 I heard the sky-lark sing;
 Sometimes all little birds that are,
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air
 With their sweet jargoning! 360

And now 'twas like all instruments,
 Now like a lonely flute;
 And now it is an angel's song,
 That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on 365
 A pleasant noise till noon,
 A noise like of a hidden brook
 In the leafy month of June,
 That to the sleeping woods all night
 Singeth a quiet tune. 370

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
 Yet never a breeze did breathe:
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
 Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep, 375
 From the land of mist and snow,
 The spirit slid: and it was he
 That made the ship to go.
 The sails at noon left off their tune,
 And the ship stood still also. 380

The Sun, right up above the mast,
 Had fixed her to the ocean:
 But in a minute she 'gan stir,
 With a short uneasy motion—
 Backwards and forwards half her length 385
 With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
 She made a sudden bound:
 It flung the blood into my head,
 And I fell down in a swoond. 390

How long in that same fit I lay,
 I have not to declare;
 But ere my living life returned,
 I heard and in my soul discerned
 Two voices in the air. 395

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?

By him who died on cross,
 With his cruel bow he laid full low
 The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself 400
 In the land of mist and snow,
 He loved the bird that loved the man
 Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
 As soft as honey-dew: 405
 Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
 And penance more will do.'

PART VI

First Voice
 'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
 Thy soft response renewing—
 What makes that ship drive on so fast? 410
 What is the ocean doing?'

Second Voice
 Still as a slave before his lord,
 The ocean hath no blast;
 His great bright eye most silently 415
 Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;
 For she guides him smooth or grim.
 See, brother, see! how graciously
 She looketh down on him.' 420

First Voice
 'But why drives on that ship so fast,
 Without or wave or wind?'

Second Voice
 'The air is cut away before, 425
 And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
 Or we shall be belated:
 For slow and slow that ship will go,
 When the Mariner's trance is abated.' 430

I woke, and we were sailing on
 As in a gentle weather:
 'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
 The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck, 435
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
 All fixed on me their stony eyes,
 That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died, 440
 Had never passed away:
 I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
 Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more 445
 I viewed the ocean green,
 And looked far forth, yet little saw
 Of what had else been seen—

Like one, that on a lonesome road 450
 Doth walk in fear and dread,
 And having once turned round walks on,
 And turns no more his head;
 Because he knows, a frightful fiend
 Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me, 455
 Nor sound nor motion made:
 Its path was not upon the sea,
 In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek 460
 Like a meadow-gale of spring—
 It mingled strangely with my fears,
 Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
 Yet she sailed softly too:
 Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
 On me alone it blew.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed 465
 The light-house top I see?
 Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
 Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar, 470
 And I with sobs did pray—
 O let me be awake, my God!
 Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
 So smoothly it was strewn!

And on the bay the moonlight lay, 475
 And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
 That stands above the rock:
 The moonlight steeped in silentness
 The steady weathercock. 480

And the bay was white with silent light,
 Till rising from the same,
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,
 In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow 585
 Those crimson shadows were:
 I turned my eyes upon the deck—
 Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
 And, by the holy rood! 490
 A man all light, a seraph-man,
 On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
 It was a heavenly sight!
 They stood as signals to the land,
 Each one a lovely light; 495

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
 No voice did they impart—
 No voice; but oh! the silence sank
 Like music on my heart. 500

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
 I heard the Pilot's cheer;
 My head was turned perforce away
 And I saw a boat appear. 505

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
 I heard them coming fast:
 Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
 The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice: 510
 It is the Hermit good!
 He singeth loud his godly hymns
 That he makes in the wood.

He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
 The Albatross's blood. 515

PART VII

This Hermit good lives in that wood
 Which slopes down to the sea.
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
 He loves to talk with marineres
 That come from a far countree. 520

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
 He hath a cushion plump:
 It is the moss that wholly hides
 The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
 ‘Why, this is strange, I trow!
 Where are those lights so many and fair,
 That signal made but now?’

‘Strange, by my faith!’ the Hermit said—
 ‘And they answered not our cheer!’ 530
 The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
 How thin they are and sere!
 I never saw aught like to them,
 Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag 535
 My forest-brook along;
 When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
 That eats the she-wolf’s young.’

‘Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
 (The Pilot made reply)
 I am a-feared’—’Push on, push on!’
 Said the Hermit cheerily. 540

The boat came closer to the ship,
 But I nor spake nor stirred; 545
 The boat came close beneath the ship,
 And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
 Still louder and more dread:
 It reached the ship, it split the bay; 550
 The ship went down like lead.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
 Which sky and ocean smote,
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned
 My body lay afloat; 555
 But swift as dreams, myself I found

Within the Pilot’s boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
 The boat spun round and round;
 And all was still, save that the hill 560
 Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
 And fell down in a fit;
 The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
 And prayed where he did sit. 565

I took the oars: the Pilot’s boy,
 Who now doth crazy go,
 Laughed loud and long, and all the while
 His eyes went to and fro.
 ‘Ha! ha!’ quoth he, ‘full plain I see, 570
 The Devil knows how to row.’

And now, all in my own countree,
 I stood on the firm land!
 The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
 And scarcely he could stand. 575

‘O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!’
 The Hermit crossed his brow.
 ‘Say quick,’ quoth he, ‘I bid thee say—
 What manner of man art thou?’

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched 580
 With a woful agony,
 Which forced me to begin my tale;
 And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
 That agony returns: 585
 And till my ghastly tale is told,
 This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
 I have strange power of speech;
 That moment that his face I see, 590
 I know the man that must hear me:
 To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
 The wedding-guests are there: 595
 But in the garden-bower the bride
 And bride-maids singing are:

And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been 600
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast, 605
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends, 610
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well 615
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us, 620
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned, 625
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

Thomas De Quincey



General Background

Thomas De Quincey, the son of a wealthy merchant involved in the cotton trade, was born in Manchester in 1785. He suffered quite a bit of sorrow early in his life, with his closest sister, Elizabeth, and his father dying before he turned ten. He started school early, leaving home at seven to study Latin and Greek in a classical educational system at Manchester Grammar School, but struggled with anxiety and family pressures and ended up running away from school to travel through Wales and visit London in his late teens. After final reconciling with his family, he studied at Worcester College, Oxford before withdrawing right in the middle of his final examinations, unable to cope with the stress of the oral portion of the exam (he never did complete his degree).

An admirer of Wordsworth and Coleridge, he became close friends with Wordsworth before a falling out (De Quincey married Margaret Simpson, with whom he eventually had eight children before her death in 1837, after they had a son out of wedlock—Wordsworth did not approve of his actions nor his opium addiction). Desperate for money in the face of his addictions, De Quincey began writing for pay at age 36, writing many articles to support his eight children and keep debt collectors at bay. He eventually received a small income upon his mother's death in his 60's and spend his final years revising and expanding his essays for a collective edition that came out one year after his death in 1859.

Style and Works

De Quincey's style stands in direct contrast to his politics. His writing is sensational (sometimes nightmarishly so) and showcases a quirky wit and jarringly insightful tone while his life seems conservative and conventional to an outside observer. Exceptionally well read (he had a heavy trunk of books he brought with him to college), his many essays covered a wide variety of interests, ranging from philosophy and German literature to economics, theology, literary criticism, and author biographies. In short, his collected essays cover many notable topics that are still relevant today.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

As someone whose mental, physical (intestinal issues and vision impediments were just some of his concerns), and life challenges were ample, De Quincey's writings were vital in expanding literature to encompass the darker, complicated side of human consciousness, with all its strangeness, angst, guilt, alienation, and slippery memories. His most famous work, *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, was controversial in its time for its overall positive depiction of the pleasure of opium, but actually was an effort to personalize addiction and show how difficult it can be to cope with diseases of the mind and body. Luminaries such as Edgar Allan Poe and even modern writers such as Jorge Luis Borges were influenced by De Quincey's writings.

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Literature of Knowledge

BY THOMAS DE QUINCEY

What is it that we mean by literature? Popularly, and amongst the thoughtless, it is held to include everything that is printed in a book. Little logic is required to disturb that definition. The most thoughtless person is easily made aware that in the idea of literature one essential element is, some relation to a general and common interest of man, so that what applies only to a local or professional or merely personal interest even though presenting itself in the shape of a book, will not belong to literature. So far the definition is easily narrowed; and it is as easily expanded. For not only is much that takes a station in books not literature, but, inversely, much that really is literature never reaches a station in books. The weekly sermons of Christendom, that vast pulpit literature which acts so extensively upon the popular mind--to warn, to uphold, to renew, to comfort, to alarm--does not attain the sanctuary of libraries in the ten-thousandth part of its extent. The drama, again, as for instance the finest of Shakspeare's plays in England and all leading Athenian plays in the noontide of the Attic stage, operated as a literature on the public mind, and were (according to the strictest letter of that term) published through the audiences that witnessed their representation, some time before they were published as things to be read; and they were published in this scenical mode of publication with much more effect than they could have had as books during ages of costly copying or of costly printing.

Books, therefore, do not suggest an idea co-extensive and interchangeable with the idea of literature, since much literature, scenic, forensic, or didactic (as from lectures and public orators), may never come into books, and much that does come into books may connect itself with no literary interest. But a far more important correction, applicable to the common vague idea of literature, is to be sought, not so much in a better definition of literature, as in a sharper distinction of the two functions which it fulfils. In that great social organ which, collectively, we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices, that may blend and often do so, but capable, severally, of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of knowledge, and, secondly, the literature of power. The function of the first is to teach; the function of the second is to move: the first is a rudder; the second an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the mere discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding, or reason, but always through affections of pleasure and sympathy. Remotely it may travel towards an object seated in what Lord Bacon calls dry light; but proximately it does and must operate--else it ceases to be literature of power--on and through that humid light which clothes itself in the mists and glittering iris of human passions, desires, and genial emotions. Men have so little reflected on the higher functions of literature as to find it a paradox if one should describe it as a mean or subordinate purpose of books to give information. But this is a paradox only in the sense which makes it honorable to be paradoxical. Whenever we talk in ordinary language of seeking knowledge, we understand the words as connected with something of absolute novelty. But it is the grandeur of all truth which can occupy a very high place in human interests that it is never absolutely novel to the meanest of minds: it exists eternally, by way of germ or latent principle, in the lowest as in the highest, needing to be developed but never to be planted. To be capable of transplantation is the immediate criterion of a truth ranges on a lower scale. Besides which, there is a rarer thing than truth, namely, power, or deep sympathy with truth. What is the effect, for instance, upon society, of children? By the pity, by the tenderness, and by the peculiar modes of admiration, which connect themselves with the helplessness, with the innocence, and with the simplicity of children, not only are the primal affections strengthened and continually renewed, but the qualities which are dearest in the sight of heaven the frailty, for instance, which appeals to forbearance, the innocence which symbolizes the heavenly, and the simplicity which is most alien from the worldly--are kept up in perpetual remembrance, and their ideals are continually refreshed. A purpose of the same nature is answered by the higher literature, viz., the literature of power. What do you learn from Paradise Lost? Nothing

at all. What do you learn from a cookery book? Something new, something that you did not know before, in every paragraph. But would you therefore put the wretched cookery-book on a higher level of estimation than the divine poem? What you owe to Milton is not any knowledge, of which a million separate items are still but a million of advancing steps on the same earthly level; what you owe is power, that is, exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite, where every pulse and each separate influx is a step upwards, a step ascending as upon a Jacob's ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth. All the steps of knowledge, from first to last, carry you further on the same plane, but could never raise you one foot above your ancient level of earth; whereas the very first step in power is a flight, is an ascending movement into another element where earth is forgotten.

Were it not that human sensibilities are ventilated and continually called out into exercise by the great phenomena of infancy, or of real life as it moves through chance and change, or of literature as it recombines these elements in the mimicries of poetry, romance, etc., it is certain that, like any animal power or muscular energy falling into disuse, all such sensibilities would gradually droop and dwindle. It is in relation to these great moral capacities of man that the literature of power, as contra-distinguished from that of knowledge, lives and has its field of action. It is concerned with what is highest in man; for the Scriptures themselves never condescended to deal by suggestion or co-operation with the mere discursive understanding: when speaking of man in his intellectual capacity, the Scriptures speak, not of the understanding, but of "the understanding heart," making the heart, that is, the great intuitive (or non-discursive) organ, to be the interchangeable formula for man in his highest state of capacity for the infinite. Tragedy, romance, fairy tale, or epopee, all alike restore to man's mind the ideals of justice, of hope, of truth, of mercy, of retribution, which else (left to the support of daily life in its realities) would languish for want of sufficient illustration. What is meant, for instance, by poetic justice? It does not mean a justice that differs by its object from the ordinary justice of human jurisprudence, for then it must be confessedly a very bad kind of justice; but it means a justice that differs from common forensic justice by the degree in which it attains its object, a justice that is more omnipotent over its own ends, as dealing, not with the refractory elements of earthly life, but with the elements of its own creation and with materials flexible to its own purest preconceptions. It is certain that, were it not for the literature of power, these ideals would often remain amongst us as mere arid notional forms; whereas, by the creative forces of man put forth in literature, they gain a vernal life of restoration and germinate into vital activities. The commonest novel, by moving in alliance with human fears and hopes, with human instincts of wrong and right, sustains and quickens those affections. Calling them into action, it rescues them from torpor. And hence the pre-eminency, over all authors that merely teach, of the meanest that proves, or that teaches, if at all, indirectly by moving. The very highest work that has ever existed in the literature of knowledge is but a provisional work, a book upon trial and sufferance, and *quamdiu bene se gesserit* [while it behaved well]. Let its teaching be even partially revised, let it be but expanded, nay, even let its teaching be but placed in a better order, and instantly it is superseded. Whereas the feeblest works in the literature of power, surviving at all, survive as finished and unalterable among men. For instance, the *Principia* of Sir Isaac Newton was a book militant on earth from the first. In all stages of its progress it would have to fight for its existence: first, as regards absolute truth; secondly, when that combat was over, as regards its form, or mode of presenting the truth. And as soon as a La Place, or anybody else, builds higher upon the foundations laid by this book, effectually he throws it out of the sunshine into decay and darkness; by weapons won from this book he superannuates and destroys this book, so that soon the name of Newton remains as a mere *nominis umbra*, but his book, as a living power, has transmigrated into other forms. Now, on the contrary, the *Iliad*, the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, the *Othello* or *King Lear*, the *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, and the *Paradise Lost* are not militant but triumphant forever, as long as the languages exist in which they speak or can be taught to speak. They never can transmigrate into new incarnations. To reproduce these in new forms or variations, even if in some things they should be improved, would be to plagiarize. A good steam-engine is properly superseded by a better. But one lovely pastoral valley is not superseded by another, nor a statue of Praxiteles by a statue of Michael Angelo. These things are separated, not by imparity, but by disparity. They are not thought of as unequal under the same standard, but as different in kind, and, if otherwise equal, as equal under a different standard. Human works of immortal beauty and works of nature in one respect stand

on the same footing: they never absolutely repeat each other, never approach so near as not to differ; and they differ not as better and worse, or simply by more and less; they differ by undecipherable and incommunicable differences, that cannot be caught by mimicries, that cannot be reflected in the mirror of copies, that cannot become ponderable in the scales of vulgar comparison.

George Byron (Lord Byron)



General Background

George Byron (Lord Byron) was born in London on January, 1788. He was the son of Catherine Gordon of Gight, an impoverished Scots heiress, and Captain John (son of admiral “Foulweather Jack”) Byron. Due to the death of his father at age three, Byron was raised primarily by his volatile mother, with whom he fought often (she was as likely to mock his lameness—he was born with a clubbed foot that was made worse by a poorly done surgery—as to consult doctors about its correction). From his Presbyterian nurse, Byron developed a lifelong love for the Bible that his mother did not share. Early schooling instilled a devotion to reading and especially a passion for history that informed much of his later writing. From 1801 to 1805, he attended the Harrow School, where he excelled in oratory, wrote verse, and played many sports. Byron then attended Trinity College, Cambridge, where he received a MA degree in 1808. After his early writing success, Byron was anxious to realize a long-held dream of traveling abroad. Though in debt, he gathered together sufficient resources to allow him to begin a tour of the eastern Mediterranean, which was heavily influential in his writings.

Part of Parliament due to his ancestry, he spoke only three times in the House of Lords, taking unpopular sides each time. In his first speech, he defended stocking weavers in his home area who had broken the improved weaving machinery that deprived them of work and reduced them to near starvation. On another occasion, he made a plea for Catholic emancipation, the most controversial issue of the day.

Near the end of his life, Lord Byron decided to put his political activism into action by organizing an expedition

to Greece to support the country in its war for independence from the Ottoman Empire. He financed and trained troops in Greece before becoming ill with fevers. Poor medicine of the day (bloodletting) led to his early death at age 36 (he is still revered in Greece today as a national hero for his actions).

Style and Works

Lord Byron’s writings reflect his own life to various degrees—his works are infused with passion, a distaste for society and social institutions, a lack of respect for rank and privilege, and characters being thwarted in love by social constraint or death. Of the major Romantic poets, Byron most sympathized with neoclassicism, with its order, discipline, and clarity. His Byronic heroes are marked by rebellion, exile, an unsavory secret past, arrogance, overconfidence or lack of foresight, and, ultimately, a self-destructive manner. Skilled in poetic meter, comedic verse, and tragedies, Lord Byron’s writing are many and varied, creating unforgettable stories in both *Child Harold* (shortly after *Childe Harold* was published, Byron quipped, “I awoke one morning and found myself famous.” In less than six months sales of his work reached 4,500 copies—a remarkable amount for the time) and *Don Juan*.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Admired more in Europe than in Britain and the U.S., Lord Byron’s writings and influence are inextricably bound up in his popularity and politics (he was active in a number of social causes and his readers cared quite a bit about his personal life). Some of the elements that made him incredibly popular have not aged well today. For example, his creation of the Byronic hero is undoubtedly one of the strongest tropes of his legacy and still reaches far into contemporary film, media, and literature today. However, many feminist scholars have completely rejected the concept and influence today. Lord Byron’s characters are often well rendered, but readers struggle to distinguish between whether they are reading about a character or Lord Byron himself. Byron’s intense celebrity makes it hard for scholarship to focus on his writings rather than his personality (some scholarship spends more time trying to identify his many romantic partners—most scholars believe Lord Byron was bisexual and information about his relationships was often censored during his lifetime—to the exclusion of his writings). There is no denying the forceful nature of his personality and writings though. His works leave a legacy of liberty, wit, and social awareness throughout.

She Walks in Beauty

BY LORD BYRON

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light 5
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face; 10
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow, 15
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

They Say that Hope is Happiness

BY LORD BYRON

THEY say that Hope is happiness;
But genuine Love must prize the past,
And Memory wakes the thoughts that bless:
They rose the first—they set the last;

And all that Memory loves the most 5
Was once our only Hope to be,
And all that Hope adored and lost
Hath melted into Memory.

Alas! it is delusion all;
The future cheats us from afar, 10
Nor can we be what we recall,

Nor dare we think on what we are.

When We Two Parted

BY LORD BYRON

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold, 5
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow— 10
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken, 15
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear? 20
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well—
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met— 25
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years, 30
How should I greet thee?—
With silence and tears.

Stanzas for Music

BY LORD BYRON

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me: 5
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming:

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep; 10
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion, 15
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

So We'll Go No More a Roving

BY LORD BYRON

So, we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath, 5
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon, 10
Yet we'll go no more a roving
By the light of the moon.

January 22nd, Missolonghi

BY LORD BYRON

On this Day I Complete my Thirty-Sixth Year

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf; 5
The flowers and fruits of Love are gone;
The worm—the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some Volcanic Isle; 20
No torch is kindled at its blaze
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of Love I cannot share, 25
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*
Such thoughts should shake my Soul, nor *now*,
Where Glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow. 30

The Sword, the Banner, and the Field,
Glory and Greece around us see!
The Spartan borne upon his shield
Was not more free.

Awake (not Greece—she is awake!) 35
Awake, my Spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down
Unworthy Manhood—unto thee 40
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy Youth, *why live?*

The land of honourable Death
Is here:—up to the Field, and give
Away thy breath! 45

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A Soldier's Grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy Ground,
And take thy rest. 50

Manfred

BY LORD BYRON

THE LAMP must be replenish'd, but even then
It will not burn so long as I must watch.
My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not: in my heart 5
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within; and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing men.
But grief should be the instructor of the wise;
Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most 10
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science, and the springs
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
I have essay'd, and in my mind there is
A power to make these subject to itself— 15
But they avail not: I have done men good,
And I have met with good even among men—
But this avail'd not: I have had my foes,
And none have baffled, many fallen before me—
But this avail'd not:—Good, or evil, life, 20
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all—nameless hour. I have no dread,
And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
Or lurking love of something on the earth. 25
Now to my task.—
Mysterious Agency!
Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe,
Whom I have sought in darkness and in light!
Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell 30
In subtler essence! ye, to whom the tops
Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
And earth's and ocean's caves familiar things—
I call upon ye by the written charm
Which gives me power upon you—Rise! appear! [A pause.
They come not yet.—Now by the voice of him 35
Who is the first among you; by this sign,
Which makes you tremble; by the claims of him
Who is undying,—Rise! appear!—Appear! [A pause.
If it be so.—Spirits of earth and air, 40
Ye shall not thus elude me: by a power,

Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant—spell,
 Which had its birthplace in a star condemn'd,
 The burning wreck of a demolish'd world,
 A wandering hell in the eternal space;
 By the strong curse which is upon my soul, 45
 The thought which is within me and around me,
 I do compel ye to my will. Appear! [A star is seen at the darker end of the gallery: it is stationary; and a voice
 is heard singing.

FIRST SPIRIT

Mortal! to thy bidding bow'd
 From my mansion in the cloud,
 Which the breath of twilight builds, 50
 And the summer's sunset gilds
 With the azure and vermilion
 Which is mix'd for my pavilion;
 Though thy quest may be forbidden,
 On a star—beam I have ridden, 55
 To thine adjuration bow'd;
 Mortal—be thy wish avow'd!

Voice of the SECOND SPIRIT

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains; 60
 They crown'd him long ago
 On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
 With a diadem of snow.
 Around his waist are forests braced,
 The Avalanche in his hand; 65
 But ere it fall, that thundering ball
 Must pause for my command.
 The Glacier's cold and restless mass
 Moves onward day by day;
 But I am he who bids it pass, 70
 Or with its ice delay.
 I am the spirit of the place,
 Could make the mountain bow
 And quiver to his cavern'd base—
 And what with me wouldst Thou? 75

Voice of the THIRD SPIRIT

In the blue depth of the waters, 80
 Where the wave hath no strife,
 Where the wind is a stranger,
 And the sea-snake hath life,
 Where the Mermaid is decking
 Her green hair with shells; 85
 Like the storm on the surface

Came the sound of thy spells;
 O'er my calm Hall of Coral
 The deep echo roll'd—
 To the Spirit of Ocean
 Thy wishes unfold! 90

FOURTH SPIRIT

Where the slumbering earthquake
 Lies pillow'd on fire,
 And the lakes of bitumen
 Rise boilingly higher; 95
 Where the roots of the Andes
 Strike deep in the earth,
 As their summits to heaven
 Shoot soaringly forth;
 I have quitted my birthplace, 100
 Thy bidding to bide—
 Thy spell hath subdued me,
 Thy will be my guide!

FIFTH SPIRIT

I am the Rider of the wind, 105
 The Stirrer of the storm;
 The hurricane I left behind
 Is yet with lightning warm;
 To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
 I swept upon the blast: 110
 The fleet I met sail'd well, and yet
 'Twill sink ere night be past.

SIXTH SPIRIT

My dwelling is the shadow of the night,
 Why doth thy magic torture me with light?

SEVENTH SPIRIT

The star which rules thy destiny
 Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
 It was a world as fresh and fair
 As e'er revolved round sun in air;
 Its course was free and regular, 120
 Space bosom'd not a lovelier star.
 The hour arrived—and it became
 A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
 A pathless comet, and a curse,
 The menace of the universe; 125
 Still rolling on with innate force,

Without a sphere, without a course,
 A bright deformity on high,
 The monster of the upper sky!
 And thou! beneath its influence born— 130
 Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn—
 Forced by a power (which is not thine,
 And lent thee but to make thee mine)
 For this brief moment to descend,
 Where these weak spirits round thee bend 135
 And parley with a thing like thee—
 What wouldst thou, Child of Clay, with me?

The SEVEN SPIRITS

Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds, thy star,
 Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay!
 Before thee at thy quest their spirits are— 140
 What wouldst thou with us, son of mortals—say?
 Man. Forgetfulness—
 First Spirit. Of what—of whom—and why?
 Man. Of that which is within me; read it there—
 Ye know it, and I cannot utter it. 145
 Spirit. We can but give thee that which we possess:
 Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power
 O'er earth, the whole, or portion, or a sign
 Which shall control the elements, whereof
 We are the dominators,—each and all, 150
 These shall be thine.
 Man. Oblivion, self—oblivion—
 Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
 Ye offer so profusely what I ask?
 Spirit. It is not in our essence, in our skill; 155
 But—thou mayst die.
 Man. Will death bestow it on me?
 Spirit. We are immortal, and do not forget;
 We are eternal; and to us the past
 Is as the future, present. Art thou answer'd? 160
 Man. Ye mock me—but the power which brought ye here
 Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will!
 The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,
 The lightning of my being, is as bright,
 Pervading, and far darting as your own,
 And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay! 165
 Answer, or I will teach you what I am.
 Spirit. We answer as we answer'd; our reply
 Is even in thine own words.
 Man. Why say ye so?
 Spirit. If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours, 170
 We have replied in telling thee, the thing
 Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.

Man. I then have call'd ye from your realms in vain;
 Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.
 Spirit. Say;
 What we possess we offer; it is thine: 175
 Bethink ere thou dismiss us, ask again—
 Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days—
 Man. Accursèd! What have I to do with days?
 They are too long already.—Hence—begone!
 Spirit. Yet pause: being here, our will would do thee service; 180
 Bethink thee, is there then no other gift
 Which ye can make not worthless in thine eyes?
 Man. No, none: yet stay—one moment, ere we part—
 I would behold ye face to face. I hear
 Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds, 185
 As music on the waters; and I see
 The steady aspect of a clear large star;
 But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,
 Or one, or all, in your accustom'd forms.
 Spirit. We have no forms, beyond the elements 190
 Of which we are the mind and principle:
 But choose a form—in that we will appear.
 Man. I have no choice; there is no form on earth
 Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him,
 Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect 195
 As unto him may seem most fitting—Come!
 Seventh Spirit (appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure). Behold!
 Man. Oh God! if it be thus, and thou
 Art not a madness and a mockery, 200
 I yet might be most happy. I will clasp thee,
 And we again will be— [The figure vanishes.
 My heart is crush'd! [MANFRED falls senseless.

(A Voice is heard in the Incantation which follows.)

When the moon is on the wave, 205
 And the glow—worm in the grass,
 And the meteor on the grave,
 And the wisp on the morass;
 When the falling stars are shooting,
 And the answer'd owls are hooting, 210
 And the silent leaves are still
 In the shadow of the hill,
 Shall my soul be upon thine,
 With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep, 215
 Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
 There are shades which will not vanish,
 There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
 By a power to thee unknown,
 Thou canst never be alone; 220

Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gather'd in a cloud;

And for ever shalt thou dwell

In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

225

230

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

235

240

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;
From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake,
For there it coil'd as in a brake;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

245

250

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which pass'd for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

255

260

And on thy head I pour the vial

265

Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together

270

Hath the word been pass'd—now wither!

Thomas Moore



General Background

Thomas Moore was born Dublin, Ireland in 1779, to a Catholic home. His father was financially successful and his mother encouraged her son's artistic sensibilities. Moore began his formal education at a private, classical English school before attending an English grammar school. After finishing his early education (and even publishing some literary work as a teenager) Moore became one of the first Catholics admitted to Trinity College, Dublin, but his religion made him ineligible for a scholarship (he easily scored high enough on his entrance exams to earn merit funding). His family could afford the cost of college though, and Moore excelled once he arrived there.

In 1799, after earning his B.A. at Trinity (he excelled in language studies while there, becoming fluent in French and Italian), Moore left Ireland to study law at the Middle Temple in London (even in law school, he was already working on translation work and poetry). Moore never managed his money well, even with his educational advantages, and after school he was forced by financial struggles to accept a position in Bermuda for some time (he even met President Thomas Jefferson while there when he visited America for a Grand Tour of America and Canada). He eventually returned to England to record his observations of America (critics in America were not happy with his work).

From the beginning of Moore's writing career, he set out to do for Ireland what Robert Burns had done for Scotland (Moore was stereotypically Irish, once challenging a man to a duel due to a common quarrel). He approached his work seriously, paying careful attention to his texts and the harmonies (as a gifted singer/

performer himself, Moore was well aware of how poetry sounded aloud) of his words. In March 1811, he married an Irish actress, Elizabeth Dyke, who he met in Ireland. He and his wife had three daughters and two sons. Unfortunately, the girls died young and both sons died when they had only just arrived at adulthood. To support his growing family (and other financial challenges), Moore entered the field of political squib writing and worked in France for some time. As his financial losses accrued over the course of his lifetime, his mind slowly began to fail, reducing him ultimately to senility by December 1849. Moore died a few years later on February 25, 1852, leaving behind his wife (supported by his pension and the proceeds from publication of his journals and correspondences).

Style and Works

A jack of all trades, Moore wrote poetry, essays, did translations, and produced political grunt work at times. Although perhaps better known for his personality more than his writings (shades of Lord Byron, with whom he was close friends), Moore did carve out an important space for himself with writings keyed to language and the ear of the listener/reader. Unafraid to speak his mind and do what he felt best, he controversially burned the manuscript of Byron's autobiography (which Byron had left him). He did so because of the pleas of Byron's half sister and Lady Byron, who felt it would damage Byron's reputation—demonstrating Moore's tendency to blaze his own path.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Thomas Moore's writings occupy an important political sphere in terms of religion. He was a strong advocate for Catholic Emancipation and wrote energetically in support of religious fairness for all. Often considered Ireland's bard, Moore's writings (especially the poetry) are distinctly musical and demonstrate the power and influence of a notable voice. As someone who turned down the position of "Irish Poet Laureate" during his lifetime because he felt it would mute his political voice, Moore was a strong example of staying true to his political principles despite outside pressures.

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Believe Me

BY THOMAS MOORE

Believe me, if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day,
Were to change by to-morrow, and fleet in my arms,
Live fairy-gifts fading away, 5
Thou wouldst still be adored, as this moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still.

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own, 10
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,
That the fervor and faith of a soul may be known,
To which time will but make thee more dear!
No, the heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close, 15
As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets
The same look which she turned when he rose!

The Harp

BY THOMAS MOORE

SHALL the Harp then be silent, when he who first gave
To our country a name, is withdrawn from all eyes?
Shall a Minstrel of Erin stand mute by the grave
Where the first — where the last of her Patriots lies?

No — faint though the death-song may fall from his lips, 5
Though his Harp, like his soul, may with shadows be crost,
Yet, yet shall it sound, 'mid a nation's eclipse,
And proclaim to the world what a star hath been lost; —

What a union of all the affections and powers
By which life is exalted, embellish'd, refined, 10
Was embraced in that spirit — whose centre was ours,
While its mighty circumference circled mankind.

Oh, who that loves Erin, or who that can see,
Through the waste of her annals, that epoch sublime —
Like a pyramid raised in the desert — where he
And his glory stand out to the eyes of all time; 15

That one lucid interval, snatch'd from the gloom
And the madness of ages, when fill'd with his soul,
A Nation o'erleap'd the dark bounds of her doom,
And for one sacred instant, touch'd Liberty's goal?

Who, that ever hath heard him — hath drunk at the source 20
Of that wonderful eloquence, all Erin's own,
In whose high-thoughted daring, the fire, and the force,
And the yet untamed spring of her spirit are shown?

An eloquence rich, wheresoever its wave
Wander'd free and triumphant, with thoughts that shone through 25
As clear as the brook's "stone of lustre," and gave,
With the flash of the gem, its solidity too.

Who, what ever approach'd him, when free from the crowd,
In a home full of love, he delighted to read
'Mong the trees which a nation had given, and which bow'd, 30
As if each brought a new civic crown for his head —

Is there one, who hath thus, through his orbit of life
But at distance observed him — through glory, through blame,

In the calm of retreat, in the grandeur of strife,
Whether shining or clouded, still high and the same? —

Oh no, not a heart that e'er knew him but mourns
Deep, deep, o'er the grave where such glory is shrined —
O'er a monument Fame will preserve 'mong the urns
Of the wisest, the bravest, the best of mankind!

35

The Time I've Lost in Wooing

BY THOMAS MOORE

The time I've lost in wooing,
In watching and pursuing
The light, that lies
In woman's eyes,
Has been my heart's undoing. 5
Though Wisdom oft has sought me,
I scorn'd the lore she brought me,
My only books
Were woman's looks,
And folly's all they've taught me. 10

Her smile when Beauty granted,
I hung with gaze enchanted,
Like him the Sprite,
Whom maids by night
Oft meet in glen that's haunted. 15
Like him, too, Beauty won me,
But while her eyes were on me,
If once their ray
Was turn'd away,
Oh! winds could not outrun me. 20

And are those follies going?
And is my proud heart growing
Too cold or wise
For brilliant eyes
Again to set it glowing? 25
No, vain, alas! th' endeavour
From bonds so sweet to sever;
Poor Wisdom's chance
Against a glance
Is now as weak as ever. 30

Come, Ye Disconsolate

BY THOMAS MOORE

Verse 1
Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel.
Here bring your wounded hearts; here tell your anguish.
Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot heal.

Verse 2
Joy of the desolate, Light of the straying, 5
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
"Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot cure."

Verse 3
Here see the Bread of Life; see waters flowing
Forth from the throne of God, pure from above. 10
Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing
Earth has no sorrow but heav'n can remove.

Percy Shelley



General Background

Percy Shelley was born in 1792 into a wealthy, conservative family of privilege (his father was a member of Parliament). Educated at some of the best schools (Eton and Oxford), he nonetheless saw his schoolmates and schoolmasters as harsh tyrants who repressed those who were unique. Along with his closest friend at Oxford, Thomas Hogg, he coauthored a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Aestheism* and sent it to the schools' bishops and head of colleges. Staunchly devoted to what he wrote, Shelley was expelled from Oxford after only six months as a result.

Soon after, Shelley moved to London, where he met and married Harriet Westbrook (he was 18, she was 16, despite his claim that marriage was a tyrannical and degrading social institution). His writing career started in earnest after he sought out and met author and philosopher William Godwin (employing ideas similar to Godwin's) before falling in love with Godwin and the late Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter, Mary. Mary and Percy married in 1816 (Harriet, who had one of Percy's children while he was with Mary, drowned herself in despair and depression two years after Percy abandoned her—Percy was clearly not a good husband; he wrote a number of lyrics and verse letters to yet another woman, Jane, later in his life). By 1818, Percy and Mary had moved to Italy, where he wrote the majority of his greatest works. In 1822, while sailing his boat, the *Don Juan* (he was good friends with Lord Byron while in Italy), a violent storm swamped the boat and Shelley died at sea.

Style and Works

Percy Shelley addressed many of the ideas key to the Romantic movement, penning work focused on the poetic self (*Prometheus Unbound*), revolution and change (*The Mask of Anarchy*), nature and the sublime ("Mont Blanc"), even a taste-making turn focused on Keats as a great poet (*Adonais*), and many other works engaged with the foundations established by Coleridge and Wordsworth. Incredibly well read, Shelley tended to move quickly from topic and topic and was fearless in addressing what he saw as the social ills of his time while also deeply contemplative and philosophical in his admittedly arrogant view of poets (in "A Defense of Poetry", he famously claimed that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world").

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Percy Shelley, perhaps more than any other Romantic author, incites quite a bit of disagreement over his legacy. Some of his peers (Mary Shelley and Lord Byron in particular) considered him among the best of men (Wordsworth, attacked directly by Shelley, also called Shelley one of the best artists of the time), while others were disgusted by his supposed arrogance and politics. For decades after his early death at sea, Shelley was mainly appreciated by only a few groups (several key Victorian poets, the pre-Raphaelites, the socialists, and the labour movement). There are several reasons for this limited initial legacy, probably foremost among them the social concerns caused by Shelley's political radicalism and aestheism (for some time only his least potentially offensive pieces were published often and easily accessible). Today his essays on poetry and the role of the poet, his sophisticated and symbolic style, his political verve and activism, and his philosophical and moral complexity are admired by many literary luminaries and taught regularly in virtually every Romantic course across the globe.

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Mutability

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

I.

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
How restlessly they speed and gleam and quiver,
 Streaking the darkness radiantly! yet soon
Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:—

II.

Or like forgotten lyres whose dissonant strings 5
 Give various response to each varying blast,
To whose frail frame no second motion brings
 One mood or modulation like the last.

III.

We rest—a dream has power to poison sleep; 10
We rise—one wandering thought pollutes the day;
 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep,
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:—

IV.

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow, 15
 The path of its departure still is free;
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
 Nought may endure but Mutability.

To Wordsworth

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
 That things depart which never may return:
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn. 5
 These common woes I feel. One loss is mine
 Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
 Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood 10
 Above the blind and battling multitude:
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

Hymn to Intellectual Beauty

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen among us; visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower;
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
It visits with inconstant glance 5
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
Like memory of music fled,
Like aught that for its grace may be 10
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form, where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state, 15
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain-river,
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown,
Why fear and dream and death and birth 20
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom, why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given: 25
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavour:
Frail spells whose utter'd charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance and mutability. 30
Thy light alone like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night-wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream. 35

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,

Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart. 40
Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes;
Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came, 45
Depart not—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing 50
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
I call'd on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;
I was not heard; I saw them not;
When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing 55
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shriek'd, and clasp'd my hands in ecstasy!

I vow'd that I would dedicate my powers 60
To thee and thine: have I not kept the vow?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in vision'd bowers 65
Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatch'd with me the envious night:
They know that never joy illum'd my brow
Unlink'd with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery,
That thou, O awful LOVELINESS, 70
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past; there is a harmony
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
Which through the summer is not heard or seen, 75
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm, to one who worships thee, 80
And every form containing thee,
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

Ozymandias

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, 5
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings; 10
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Stanzas Written in Dejection

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might,
The breath of the moist earth is light, 5
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor 10
With green and purple seaweeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone,—
The lightning of the noontide ocean 15
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around, 20
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround— 25
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child, 30
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea 35
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,

Insults with this untimely moan; 40
 They might lament—for I am one
 Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
 Unlike this day, which, when the sun
 Shall on its stainless glory set,
 Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet. 45

A Song: "Men of England"

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Men of England, wherefore plough
 For the lords who lay ye low?
 Wherefore weave with toil and care
 The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed and clothe and save 5
 From the cradle to the grave
 Those ungrateful drones who would
 Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge 10
 Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
 That these stingless drones may spoil
 The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
 Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
 Or what is it ye buy so dear 15
 With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
 The wealth ye find, another keeps;
 The robes ye weave, another wears;
 The arms ye forge, another bears. 20

Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap:
 Find wealth—let no imposter heap:
 Weave robes—let not the idle wear:
 Forge arms—in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells— 25
 In hall ye deck another dwells.
 Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
 The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade and hoe and loom 30
 Trace your grave and build your tomb
 And weave your winding-sheet—till fair
 England be your Sepulchre.

England in 1819

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King;
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring;
Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know,
But leechlike to their fainting country cling 10
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow.
A people starved and stabbed in th' untilled field;
An army, whom liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield;
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay; 15
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;
A senate, Time's worst statute, unrepealed—
Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

To Sidmouth And Castlereagh

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

As from their ancestral oak
...Two empty ravens wind their clarion,
Yell by yell, and croak by croak,
When they scent the noonday smoke
...Of fresh human carrion: —

As two gibbering night-birds flit 5
...From their bowers of deadly yew
Through the night to frighten it —
When the moon is in a fit,
...And the stars are none, or few: —

As a shark and dogfish wait 10
...Under an Atlantic isle
For the Negro-ship, whose freight
Is the theme of their debate,
...Wrinkling their red gills the while —

Are ye — two vultures sick for battle, 15
...Two scorpions under one wet stone,
Two bloodless wolves whose dry throats rattle,
Two crows perched on the murrained cattle,
...Two vipers tangled into one.

To William Shelley

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1.
The billows on the beach are leaping around it,
The bark is weak and frail,
The sea looks black, and the clouds that bound it
Darkly strew the gale.
Come with me, thou delightful child, 5
Come with me, though the wave is wild,
And the winds are loose, we must not stay,
Or the slaves of the law may rend thee away.

2.
They have taken thy brother and sister dear,
They have made them unfit for thee; 10
They have withered the smile and dried the tear
Which should have been sacred to me.
To a blighting faith and a cause of crime
They have bound them slaves in youthly prime,
And they will curse my name and thee 15
Because we fearless are and free.

3.
Come thou, beloved as thou art;
Another sleepeth still
Near thy sweet mother's anxious heart,
Which thou with joy shalt fill, 20
With fairest smiles of wonder thrown
On that which is indeed our own,
And which in distant lands will be
The dearest playmate unto thee.

4.
Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever, 25
Or the priests of the evil faith;
They stand on the brink of that raging river,
Whose waves they have tainted with death.
It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams and rages and swells; 30
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks on the surge of eternity.

5.
Rest, rest, and shriek not, thou gentle child!
The rocking of the boat thou fearest,
And the cold spray and the clamour wild?— 35
There, sit between us two, thou dearest—
Me and thy mother—well we know
The storm at which thou tremblest so,
With all its dark and hungry graves,

Less cruel than the savage slaves 40
Who hunt us o'er these sheltering waves.
6.
This hour will in thy memory
Be a dream of days forgotten long.
We soon shall dwell by the azure sea 45
Of serene and golden Italy,
Or Greece, the Mother of the free;
And I will teach thine infant tongue
To call upon those heroes old
In their own language, and will mould 50
Thy growing spirit in the flame
Of Grecian lore, that by such name
A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim!

Ode to the West Wind

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, 5
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill 10
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion, 15
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre, 25
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30

Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers 35
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed 50
Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd 55
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, 60
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth! 65
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind, 70
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

When the Lamp is Shattered

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

I

When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed. 5
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendor 10
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute:—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell, 15
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled 20
To endure what it once possessed.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

IV

Its passions will rock thee 25
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter 30
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

A Defence of Poetry

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

According to one mode of regarding those two classes of mental action, which are called reason and imagination, the former may be considered as mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced, and the latter, as mind acting upon those thoughts so as to color them with its own light, and composing from them, as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity. The one is the *το ποιειν*, or the principle of synthesis, and has for its objects those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself; the other is the *το λογισειν*, or principle of analysis, and its action regards the relations of things simply as relations; considering thoughts, not in their integral unity, but as the algebraical representations which conduct to certain general results. Reason is the enumeration of qualities already known; imagination is the perception of the value of those qualities, both separately and as a whole. Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things. Reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance.

Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be “the expression of the imagination”: and poetry is connate with the origin of man. Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an Æolian lyre, which move it by their motion to ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in the lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them. It is as if the lyre could accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them, in a determined proportion of sound; even as the musician can accommodate his voice to the sound of the lyre. A child at play by itself will express its delight by its voice and motions; and every inflexion of tone and every gesture will bear exact relation to a corresponding antitype in the pleasurable impressions which awakened it; it will be the reflected image of that impression; and as the lyre trembles and sounds after the wind has died away; so the child seeks, by prolonging in its voice and motions the duration of the effect, to prolong also a consciousness of the cause. In relation to the objects which delight a child these expressions are what poetry is to higher objects. The savage (for the savage is to ages what the child is to years) expresses the emotions produced in him by surrounding objects in a similar manner; and language and gesture, together with plastic or pictorial imitation, become the image of the combined effect of those objects, and of his apprehension of them. Man in society, with all his passions and his pleasures, next becomes the object of the passions and pleasures of man; an additional class of emotions produces an augmented treasure of expressions; and language, gesture, and the imitative arts, become at once the representation and the medium, the pencil and the picture, the chisel and the statute, the chord and the harmony. The social sympathies, or those laws from which, as from its elements, society results, begin to develop themselves from the moment that two human beings coexist; the future is contained within the present, as the plant within the seed; and equality, diversity, unity, contrast, mutual dependence, become the principles alone capable of affording the motives according to which the will of a social being is determined to action, inasmuch as he is social; and constitute pleasure in sensation, virtue in sentiment, beauty in art, truth in reasoning, and love in the intercourse of kind. Hence men, even in the infancy of society, observe a certain order in their words and actions, distinct from that of the objects and the impressions represented by them, all expression being subject to the laws of that from which it proceeds. But let us dismiss those more general considerations which might involve an inquiry into the principles of society itself, and restrict our view to the manner in which the imagination is expressed upon its forms.

In the youth of the world, men dance and sing and imitate natural objects observing in these actions, as in all others, a certain rhythm or order. And, although all men observe a similar, they observe not the same order, in the motions of the dance, in the melody of the song, in the combinations of language, in the series of their imitations of natural objects. For there is a certain order or rhythm belonging to each of these classes of mimetic representation, from which the hearer and the spectator receive an intenser and purer pleasure than from any other: the sense of an approximation to this order has been called taste by modern writers. Every man in the infancy of art observes an order which approximates more or less closely to that from which this highest delight results: but the diversity is not sufficiently marked, as that its gradations should be sensible, except in those instances where the predominance of this faculty of approximation to the beautiful (for so we may be permitted to name the relation between this highest pleasure and its cause) is very great. Those in whom it exists in excess are poets, in the most universal sense of the word; and the pleasure resulting from the manner in which they express the influence of society or nature upon their own minds, communicates itself to others, and gathers a sort of reduplication from that community. Their language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension, until the words which represent them, become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thoughts instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganized, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse. These similitudes or relations are finely said by Lord Bacon to be “the same footsteps of nature impressed upon the various subjects of the world” [“De Augment. Scient.,” cap. i, lib. iii—Shelley]—and he considers the faculty which perceives them as the storehouse of axioms common to all knowledge. In the infancy of society every author is necessarily a poet, because language itself is poetry; and to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation, subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression. Every original language near to its source is in itself the chaos of a cyclic poem: the copiousness of lexicography and the distinctions of grammar are the works of a later age, and are merely the catalogue and the form of the creations of poetry.

But poets, or those who imagine and express this indestructible order, are not only the authors of language and of music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting: they are the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion. Hence all original religions are allegorical, or susceptible of allegory, and, like Janus, have a double face of false and true. Poets, according to the circumstances of the age and nation in which they appeared, were called, in the earlier epochs of the world, legislators, or prophets: a poet essentially comprises and unites both these characters. For he not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but he beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germs of the flower and the fruit of latest time. Not that I assert poets to be prophets in the gross sense of the word, or that they can foretell the form as surely as they foreknow the spirit of events: such is the pretence of superstition, which would make poetry an attribute of prophecy, rather than prophecy an attribute of poetry. A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not. The grammatical forms which express the moods of time, and the difference of persons, and the distinction of place, are convertible with respect to the highest poetry without injuring it as poetry; and the choruses of Aeschylus, and the book of Job, and Dante’s “Paradise” would afford, more than any other writings, examples of this fact, if the limits of this essay did not forbid citation. The creations of sculpture, painting, and music are illustrations still more decisive.

Language, color, form, and religious and civil habits of action, are all the instruments and materials of poetry; they may be called poetry by that figure of speech which considers the effect as a synonym of the cause. But poetry in a more restricted sense expresses those arrangements of language, and especially metrical language, which are created by that imperial faculty, whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man. And this springs from the nature itself of language, which is a more direct representation of the actions

and passions of our internal being, and is susceptible of more various and delicate combinations, than color, form, or motion, and is more plastic and obedient to the control of that faculty of which it is the creation. For language is arbitrarily produced by the imagination, and has relation to thoughts alone; but all other materials, instruments, and conditions of art have relations among each other, which limit and interpose between conception and expression. The former is as a mirror which reflects, the latter as a cloud which enfeebles, the light of which both are mediums of communication. Hence the fame of sculptors, painters, and musicians, although the intrinsic powers of the great masters of these arts may yield in no degree to that of those who have employed language as the hieroglyphic of their thoughts, has never equalled that of poets in the restricted sense of the term; as two performers of equal skill will produce unequal effects from a guitar and a harp. The fame of legislators and founders of religions, so long as their institutions last, alone seems to exceed that of poets in the restricted sense; but it can scarcely be a question, whether, if we deduct the celebrity which their flattery of the gross opinions of the vulgar usually conciliates, together with that which belonged to them in their higher character of poets, any excess will remain.

We have thus circumscribed the word poetry within the limits of that art which is the most familiar and the most perfect expression of the faculty itself. It is necessary, however, to make the circle still narrower, and to determine the distinction between measured and unmeasured language; for the popular division into prose and verse is inadmissible in accurate philosophy.

Sounds as well as thoughts have relation both between each other and towards that which they represent, and a perception of the order of those relations has always been found connected with a perception of the order of the relations of thoughts. Hence the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence, than the words themselves, without reference to that peculiar order. Hence the vanity of translation; it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its color and odor, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower—and this is the burden of the curse of Babel.

An observation of the regular mode of the recurrence of harmony in the language of poetical minds, together with its relation to music, produced metre, or a certain system of traditional forms of harmony and language. Yet it is by no means essential that a poet should accommodate his language to this traditional form, so that the harmony, which is its spirit, be observed. The practice is indeed convenient and popular, and to be preferred, especially in such composition as includes much action: but every great poet must inevitably innovate upon the example of his predecessors in the exact structure of his peculiar versification. The distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error. The distinction between philosophers and poets has been anticipated. Plato was essentially a poet—the truth and splendor of his imagery, and the melody of his language, are the most intense that it is possible to conceive. He rejected the measure of the epic, dramatic, and lyrical forms, because he sought to kindle a harmony in thoughts divested of shape and action, and he forebore to invent any regular plan of rhythm which would include, under determinate forms, the varied pauses of his style. Cicero sought to imitate the cadence of his periods, but with little success. Lord Bacon was a poet. [See the “*Filum Labyrinthi*,” and the “*Essay on Death*” particularly.—Shelley] His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm, which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect; it is a strain which distends, and then bursts the circumference of the reader’s mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy. All the authors of revolutions in opinion are not only necessarily poets as they are inventors, nor even as their words unveil the permanent analogy of things by images which participate in the life of truth; but as their periods are harmonious and rhythmical, and contain in themselves the elements of verse; being the echo of the eternal music. Nor are those supreme poets, who have employed traditional forms of rhythm on account of the form and action of their subjects, less capable of perceiving and teaching the truth of things, than those who have omitted that form. Shakespeare, Dante, and Milton (to confine ourselves to modern writers) are philosophers of the very loftiest power.

A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. There is this difference between a story and a poem, that a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other connection than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator, which is itself the image of all other minds. The one is partial, and applies only to a definite period of time, and a certain combination of events which can never again recur; the other is universal, and contains within itself the germ of a relation to whatever motives or actions have place in the possible varieties of human nature. Time, which destroys the beauty and the use of the story of particular facts, stripped of the poetry which should invest them, augments that of poetry, and forever develops new and wonderful applications of the eternal truth which it contains. Hence epitomes have been called the moths of just history; they eat out the poetry of it. A story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful; poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.

John Keats



General Background

John Keats, the son of a liveryman, was born in 1795. His mother, Frances (Jennings), remarried two months after his father's accidental death in 1804 (his dad died from a fall off a horse) but left her new husband soon after and died in 1810. After their grandmother's death four years later, Keats and his brothers were left to a guardianship. At the Clarke school (where Keats studied before his father's death), he was known as a loud, high-spirited boy who got into a lot of fistfights (Keats was very small, in adulthood he barely stood over five feet tall, but was still excellent in sports and won his fair share of those fights). Keats was apprenticed by his guardian in 1811 (at age 15) to an apothecary-surgeon, and passed his medical examination in 1816. He even began medical studies at Guy's Hospital in London before abandoning his studies to become a poet (his decision was influenced by Leigh Hunt, his good friend and a radical poet, who introduced Keats to many of the leading literary figures of his day [Keats knew most of the Romantic writers of his generation, missing out only on acquaintances with the earliest writers, such as William Blake]).

Keats's literary star rose quickly; he began writing poetry at age 18 and was soon well known in literary circles. In the summer of 1818 (a very busy year for Keats), he went on a walking tour of the Lake district and Scotland with a close friend; he met Fanny Brawne, the great love of his life (they eventually became engaged, but Keats's poor health and poverty made marriage an impossibility), in the fall, while at the same time nursing his brother, Tom, who died in December from tuberculosis. Despite reacting poorly to critical reviews of his poetry and shifting for a time to journalism, he produced quite a bit of writing (poetry especially) before his early death

(he began coughing up blood in 1820 and, due to his training as a physician, knew he would almost certainly die from the illness causing his condition). His fatal illness lasted more than a year before he died in 1821 (his entire writing career lasted barely three and a half years—a very short time for such genius to manifest so quickly).

Style and Works

Keats, due in part to his awareness of his own mortality and human frailty, produced an enormous amount of quality poetry and essays in a very short amount of time. Fearful that his name would be easily and quickly forgotten (his tombstone bears the epitaph—which he wrote—of “Here lies One / Whose Name was writ in Water,” bearing out his fear of being washed away), Keats was deliberate in trying to forge for himself a poetic legacy of merit. A writer who faced the complexity and contradictions of life head on, Keats's goal was to create poetry in a world he felt was devoid of mythic grandeur, poetry that sought its wonder in the desires and sufferings of the human heart (“La Belle Dame Sans Merci” is an excellent example of desires and suffering going hand in hand). Beyond his precise sense of the difficulties presented him in his own literary-historical moment, he developed a rich, powerful, and exactly controlled poetic style that made him one of the greatest lyric poets writing in English.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Keats developed the idea of negative capability in his short career, arguing that all experience was an intermingled web of inseparable but irreconcilable opposites (he brought together supposed binaries in his work: mingling pleasure and pain, love and death, indolence and the highest activity together in conversation with each other). Perhaps most importantly, Keats—like literary titans such as Shakespeare—made his work resonate with the human experience. Specifically, Keats (forged in a furnace of consistent familial loss and personal physical pain) tried to work through eternal questions of the self (making sense of life despite all the misery, suffering, heartache, and pain of the world).

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A Thing of Beauty

BY JOHN KEATS

A Poetic Romance
(excerpt)

BOOK I

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing. 5
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days, 10
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon 15
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms: 20
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees 30
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'er-cast; 35
They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I
Will trace the story of Endymion.
The very music of the name has gone

Into my being, and each pleasant scene 40
Is growing fresh before me as the green
Of our own valleys: so I will begin
Now while I cannot hear the city's din;
Now while the early budders are just new,
And run in mazes of the youngest hue 45
About old forests; while the willow trails
Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer
My little boat, for many quiet hours, 50
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,
Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas, 55
I must be near the middle of my story.
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
See it half finish'd: but let Autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end. 60
And now, at once adventuresome, I send
My herald thought into a wilderness:
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress
My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed. 65

When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be

BY JOHN KEATS

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high-pilèd books, in charactery,
Hold like rich garnerers the full ripened grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starred face, 5
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more, 10
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

To Fanny Brawnie

BY JOHN KEATS

Postmark: Newport, July 3, 1819

Shanklin, Isle of Wight, Thursday

My dearest Lady — I am glad I had not an opportunity of sending off a Letter which I wrote for you on Tuesday night—'twas too much like one out of Rousseau's Heloise. I am more reasonable this morning. The morning is the only proper time for me to write to a beautiful Girl whom I love so much: for at night, when the lonely day has closed, and the lonely, silent, unmusical Chamber is waiting to receive me as into a Sepulchre, then believe me my passion gets entirely the sway, then I would not have you see those Rhapsodies which I once thought it impossible I should ever give way to, and which I have often laughed at in another, for fear you should [think me] either too unhappy or perhaps a little mad.

I am now at a very pleasant Cottage window, looking onto a beautiful hilly country, with a glimpse of the sea; the morning is very fine. I do not know how elastic my spirit might be, what pleasure I might have in living here and breathing and wandering as free as a stag about this beautiful Coast if the remembrance of you did not weigh so upon me I have never known any unalloy'd Happiness for many days together: the death or sickness of some one has always spoilt my hours—and now when none such troubles oppress me, it is you must confess very hard that another sort of pain should haunt me.

Ask yourself my love whether you are not very cruel to have so entrammelled me, so destroyed my freedom. Will you confess this in the Letter you must write immediately, and do all you can to console me in it—make it rich as a draught of poppies to intoxicate me—write the softest words and kiss them that I may at least touch my lips where yours have been. For myself I know not how to express my devotion to so fair a form: I want a brighter word than bright, a fairer word than fair. I almost wish we were butterflies and liv'd but three summer days—three such days with you I could fill with more delight than fifty common years could ever contain.

But however selfish I may feel, I am sure I could never act selfishly: as I told you a day or two before I left Hampstead, I will never return to London if my Fate does not turn up Pam or at least a Court-card. Though I could centre my Happiness in you, I cannot expect to engross your heart so entirely—indeed if I thought you felt as much for me as I do for you at this moment I do not think I could restrain myself from seeing you again tomorrow for the delight of one embrace.

But no—I must live upon hope and Chance. In case of the worst that can happen, I shall still love you—but what hatred shall I have for another!

Some lines I read the other day are continually ringing a peal in my ears:

To see those eyes I prize above mine own
Dart favors on another—
And those sweet lips (yielding immortal nectar)
Be gently press'd by any but myself—
Think, think Francesca, what a cursed thing

It were beyond expression!

J.

Do write immediately. There is no Post from this Place, so you must address Post Office, Newport, Isle of Wight. I know before night I shall curse myself for having sent you so cold a Letter; yet it is better to do it as much in my senses as possible. Be as kind as the distance will permit to your

Present my Compliments to your mother, my love to Margaret and best remembrances to your Brother—if you please so.

July 8, 1819

My sweet Girl—Your Letter gave me more delight than any thing in the world but yourself could do; indeed I am almost astonished that any absent one should have that luxurious power over my senses which I feel. Even when I am not thinking of you I receive your influence and a tenderer nature stealing upon me. All my thoughts, my unhappiest days and nights have I find not at all cured me of my love of Beauty, but made it so intense that I am miserable that you are not with me: or rather breathe in that dull sort of patience that cannot be called Life.

I never knew before, what such a love as you have made me feel, was; I did not believe in it; my Fancy was afraid of it, lest it should burn me up. But if you will fully love me, though there may be some fire, 'twill not be more than we can bear when moistened and bedewed with Pleasures.

You mention 'horrid people' and ask me whether it depend upon them whether I see you again. Do understand me, my love, in this. I have so much of you in my heart that I must turn Mentor when I see a chance of harm befalling you. I would never see any thing but Pleasure in your eyes, love on your lips, and Happiness in your steps. I would wish to see you among those amusements suitable to your inclinations and spirits; so that our loves might be a delight in the midst of Pleasures agreeable enough, rather than a resource from vexations and cares. But I doubt much, in case of the worst, whether I shall be philosopher enough to follow my own Lessons: if I saw my resolution give you a pain I could not.

Why may I not speak of your Beauty, since without that I could never have lov'd you? I cannot conceive any beginning of such love as I have for you but Beauty. There may be a sort of love for which, without the least sneer at it, I have the highest respect and can admire it in others: but it has not the richness, the bloom, the full form, the enchantment of love after my own heart. So let me speak of your Beauty, though to my own endangering; if you could be so cruel to me as to try elsewhere its Power.

You say you are afraid I shall think you do not love me—in saying this you make me ache the more to be near you. I am at the diligent use of my faculties here, I do not pass a day without sprawling some blank verse or tagging some rhymes; and here I must confess, that, (since I am on that subject,) I love you the more in that I believe you have liked me for my own sake and for nothing else. I have met with women whom I really think would like to be married to a Poem and to be given away by a Novel. I have seen your Comet, and only wish it was a sign that poor Rice would get well whose illness makes him rather a melancholy companion: and the more so as so to conquer his feelings and hide them from me, with a forc'd Pun.

I kiss'd your Writing over in the hope you had indulg'd me by leaving a trace of honey. What was your dream?
Tell it me and I will tell you the interpretation thereof.

Ever yours, my love!

Do not accuse me of delay—we have not here any opportunity of sending letters every day. Write speedily.

July 15, 1819

Shanklin, Thursday Evening

My love—I have been in so irritable a state of health these two or three last days, that I did not think I should be able to write this week. Not that I was so ill, but so much so as only to be capable of an unhealthy teasing letter.

To night I am greatly recovered only to feel the languor I have felt after you touched with ardency.

You say you perhaps might have made me better: you would then have made me worse: now you could quite effect a cure: What fee my sweet Physician would I not give you to do so.

Do not call it folly, when I tell you I took your letter last night to bed with me. In the morning I found your name on the sealing wax obliterated. I was startled at the bad omen till I recollected that it must have happened in my dreams, and they you know fall out by contraries. You must have found out by this time I am a little given to bode ill like the raven; it is my misfortune not my fault; it has proceeded from the general tenor of the circumstances of my life, and rendered every event suspicious. However I will no more trouble either you or myself with sad prophecies; though so far I am pleased at it as it has given me opportunity to love your disinterestedness towards me. I can be a raven no more; you and pleasure take possession of me at the same moment. I am afraid you have been unwell. If through me illness have touched you (but it must be with a very gentle hand) I must be selfish enough to feel a little glad at it. Will you forgive me this?

I have been reading lately an oriental tale of a very beautiful color. It is of a city of melancholy men, all made so by this circumstance. Through a series of adventures each one of them by turns reach some gardens of Paradise where they meet with a most enchanting Lady; and just as they are going to embrace her, she bids them shut their eyes they shut them and on opening their eyes again find themselves descending to the earth in a magic basket. The remembrance of this Lady and their delights lost beyond all recovery render them melancholy ever after. How I applied this to you, my dear; how I palpitated at it; how the certainty that you were in the same world with myself, and though as beautiful, not so talismanic as that Lady; how I could not bear you should be so you must believe because I swear it by yourself.

I cannot say when I shall get a volume ready. I have three or four stories half done, but as I cannot write for the mere sake of the press, I am obliged to let them progress or lie still as my fancy chooses. By Christmas perhaps they may appear, but I am not yet sure they ever will. 'Twill be no matter, for Poems are as common as newspapers and I do not see why it is a greater crime in me than in another to let the verses of an half-fledged brain tumble into the reading-rooms and drawing-room windows. Rice has been better lately than usual: he is not suffering from any neglect of his parents who have for some years been able to appreciate him better than they did in his first youth, and are now devoted to his comfort.

Tomorrow I shall, if my health continues to improve during the night, take a look farther About the country,

and spy at the parties about here who come hunting after the picturesque like beagles. It is astonishing how they raven down scenery like children do sweetmeats. The wondrous Chine here as a very great Lion: I wish I had as many guineas as there have been spy-glasses in it.

I have been, I cannot tell why, in capital spirits this last hour. What reason? When I have to take my candle and retire to a lonely room, without the thought as I fall asleep, of seeing you tomorrow morning? or the next day, or the next—it takes on the appearance of impossibility and eternity—I will say a month—I will say I will see you in a month at most, though no one but yourself should see me; if it be but for an hour. I should not like to be so near you as London without being continually with you: after having once more kissed you Sweet I would rather be here alone at my task than in the bustle and hateful literary chitchat. Meantime you must write to me as I will every week for your letters keep me alive. My sweet Girl I cannot speak my love for you.

Good night! and

Ever yours

Postmark: July 27, 1819

Sunday Night

My sweet Girl—I hope you did not blame me much for not obeying your request of a Letter on Saturday: we have had four in our small room playing at cards night and morning leaving me no undisturb'd opportunity to write. Now Rice and Martin are gone I am at liberty. Brown to my sorrow confirms the account you give of your ill health. You cannot conceive how I ache to be with you: how I would die for one hour—for what is in the world? I say you cannot conceive; it is impossible you should look with such eyes upon me as I have upon you: it cannot be.

Forgive me if I wander a little this evening, for I have been all day employ'd in a very abstract Poem and I am in deep love with you two things which must excuse me. I have, believe me, not been an age in letting you take possession of me; the very first week I knew you I wrote myself your vassal; but burnt the Letter as the very next time I saw you I thought you manifested some dislike to me. If you should ever feel for Man at the first sight what I did for you, I am lost. Yet I should not quarrel with you, but hate myself if such a thing were to happen—only I should burst if the thing were not as fine as a Man as you are as a Woman.

Perhaps I am too vehement, then fancy me on my knees, especially when I mention a part of your Letter which hurt me; you say speaking of Mr. Severn 'but you must be satisfied in knowing that I admired you much more than your friend.' My dear love, I cannot believe there ever was or ever could be any thing to admire in me especially as far as sight goes—I cannot be admired, I am not a thing to be admired. You are, I love you; all I can bring you is a swooning admiration of your Beauty. I hold that place among Men which snub-nos'd brunettes with meeting eyebrows do among women—they are trash to me—unless I should find one among them with a fire in her heart like the one that burns in mine.

You absorb me in spite of myself—you alone: for I look not forward with any pleasure to what is called being settled in the world; I tremble at domestic cares—yet for you I would meet them, though if it would leave you

the happier I would rather die than do so.

I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and the hour of my death. O that I could have possession of them both in the same minute. I hate the world: it batters too much the wings of my self-will, and would I could take a sweet poison from your lips to send me out of it. From no others would I take it. I am indeed astonish'd to find myself so careless of all charms but yours—remembering as I do the time when even a bit of ribband was a matter of interest with me.

What softer words can I find for you after this—what it is I will not read. Nor will I say more here, but in a Postscript answer any thing else you may have mentioned in your Letter in so many words—for I am distracted with a thousand thoughts. I will imagine you Venus tonight and pray, pray, pray to your star like a Heathen.

Your's ever, fair Star,

My seal is mark'd like a family table cloth with my Mother's initial F for Fanny: put between my Father's initials. You will soon hear from me again. My respectful Compliments to your Mother. Tell Margaret I'll send her a reef of best rocks and tell Sam I will give him my light bay hunter if he will tie the Bishop hand and foot and pack him in a hamper and send him down for me to bathe him for his health with a Necklace of good snubby stones about his Neck.

La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Ballad

BY JOHN KEATS

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, 5
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow, 10
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads, 15
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone; 20
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing 25
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true'. 30

She took me to her Elfin grot,

And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep, 35
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too, 40
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—‘La Belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall!’

I saw their starved lips in the gloam, 45
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill’s side.

And this is why I sojourn here, 50
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Ode to Psyche

BY JOHN KEATS

O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
Even into thine own soft-conched ear: 5
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The winged Psyche with awaken’d eyes?
I wander’d in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp’ring roof 10
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied:

Mid hush’d, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass; 15
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
Their lips touch’d not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjointed by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love: 20
The winged boy I knew;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

O latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus’ faded hierarchy! 25
Fairer than Phoebe’s sapphire-region’d star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap’d with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan 30
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth’d prophet dreaming. 35

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
Yet even in these days so far retir’d 40

From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd.
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours; 45
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
 From swung censer teeming;
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane 50
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
 Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep; 55
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain, 60
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win, 65
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in!

Ode to a Nightingale

BY JOHN KEATS

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness,— 5
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been 10
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene, 15
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stained mouth;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

 Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget 20
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies; 25
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

 Away! away! for I will fly to thee, 30
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
 Already with thee! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne, 35
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet, 40
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild; 45
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
 Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time 50
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 55
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird! 60
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 65
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell 70
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades 75
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

Ode on a Grecian Urn

BY JOHN KEATS

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
 What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape 5
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy? 10

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave 15
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! 20

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
 More happy love! more happy, happy love! 25
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue. 30

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
 What little town by river or sea shore, 35
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return. 40

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral! 45
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." 50

Ode on Melancholy

BY JOHN KEATS

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries, 5
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul. 10

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose, 15
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes. 20

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
 Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight 25
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
 His soul shalt taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung. 30

Ode on Indolence

BY JOHN KEATS

‘They toil not, neither do they spin.’
One morn before me were three figures seen,
With bowèd necks, and joinèd hands, side-faced;
And one behind the other stepp’d serene,
In placid sandals, and in white robes graced; 5
They pass’d, like figures on a marble urn,
When shifted round to see the other side;
They came again; as when the urn once more
Is shifted round, the first seen shades return;
And they were strange to me, as may betide 10
With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

How is it, Shadows! that I knew ye not?
How came ye muffled in so hush a mask?
Was it a silent deep-disguisèd plot
To steal away, and leave without a task 15
My idle days? Ripe was the drowsy hour;
The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
Benumb’d my eyes; my pulse grew less and less;
Pain had no sting, and pleasure’s wreath no flower:
O, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense 20
Unhaunted quite of all but—nothingness?

A third time pass’d they by, and, passing, turn’d
Each one the face a moment whiles to me;
Then faded, and to follow them I burn’d
And ached for wings, because I knew the three; 25
The first was a fair Maid, and Love her name;
The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,
And ever watchful with fatiguèd eye;
The last, whom I love more, the more of blame
Is heap’d upon her, maiden most unmeek,— 30
I knew to be my demon Poesy.

They faded, and, forsooth! I wanted wings:
O folly! What is Love? and where is it?
And for that poor Ambition! it springs
From a man’s little heart’s short fever-fit;
For Poesy!—no,—she has not a joy,— 35
At least for me,—so sweet as drowsy noons,
And evenings steep’d in honey’d indolence;
O, for an age so shelter’d from annoy,
That I may never know how change the moons,

Or hear the voice of busy common-sense! 40

And once more came they by:—alas! wherefore?
My sleep had been embroider’d with dim dreams;
My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o’er
With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams:
The morn was clouded, but no shower fell, 45
Tho’ in her lids hung the sweet tears of May;
The open casement press’d a new-leaved vine,
Let in the budding warmth and throstle’s lay;
O Shadows! ’twas a time to bid farewell!
Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine. 50

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu! Ye cannot raise
My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass;
For I would not be dieted with praise,
A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!
Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more 55
In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn;
Farewell! I yet have visions for the night,
And for the day faint visions there is store;
Vanish, ye Phantoms! from my idle spright,
Into the clouds, and never more return! 60

To Autumn

BY JOHN KEATS

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees, 5
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease, 10
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind; 15
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spare the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook; 20
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, 25
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn; 30
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Negative Capability

BY JOHN KEATS

Sunday [21 Dec. 1817]
Hampstead

My dear brothers,

I must crave your pardon for not having written ere this.

I saw Kean return to the public in 'Richard III', and finely he did it, and, at the request of Reynolds, I went to criticize his Luke in Riches. The critique is in to-day's 'Champion', which I send you, with the Examiner, in which you will find very proper lamentation on the obsolescence of Christmas Gambols and pastimes: but it was mixed up with so much egotism of that drivelling nature that pleasure is entirely lost. Hone, the publisher's trial, you must find very amusing; and, as Englishmen, very encouraging — his Not Guilty is a thing, which not to have been, would have dulled still more Liberty's Emblazoning — Lord Ellenborough has been paid in his own coin — Wooler and Hone have done us an essential service — I have had two very pleasant evenings with Dilke, yesterday and to-day, and am at this moment just come from him, and feel in the humour to go on I spent Friday evening with Wells, and went next morning to see Death on the Pale Horse. It is a wonderful picture, when West's age is considered; But there is nothing to be intense upon; no woman one feels mad to kiss, no face swelling into reality — The excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth. Examine 'King Lear', and you will find this exemplified throughout; but in this picture we have unpleasantness without any momentous depth of speculation excited, in which to bury its repulsiveness — The picture is larger than 'Christ rejected'.

I dined with Haydon the Sunday after you left, and had a very pleasant day, I dined too (for I have been out too much lately) with Horace Smith, and met his two Brothers, with Hill and Kingston, and one Du Bois. They only served to convince me, how superior humour is to wit in respect to enjoyment — These men say things which make one start, without making one feel; they are all alike; their manners are alike; they all know fashionables; they have a mannerism in their eating and drinking, in their mere handling a Decanter — They talked of Kean and his low company — Would I were with that Company instead of yours, said I to myself! I know such like acquaintance will never do for me and yet I am going to Reynolds on Wednesday. Brown and Dilke walked with me and back from the Christmas pantomime. I had not a dispute but a disquisition, with Dilke on various subjects; several things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously — I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason — Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge. This pursued through volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.

Shelley's poem is out, and there are words about its being objected to as much as "Queen Mab" was. Poor Shelley, I think he has his Quota of good qualities, in sooth la!! Write soon to your most sincere friend and affectionate Brother

John

To Charles Brown

BY JOHN KEATS

He is to weet a melancholy carle:
Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair,
As hath the seeded thistle, when in parle
It holds the Zephyr, ere it sendeth fair
Its light balloons into the summer air; 5
Therto his beard had not begun to bloom,
No brush had touch'd his chin, or razor sheer;
No care had touch'd his cheek with mortal doom,
But new he was, and bright, as scarf from Persian loom.

Ne cared he for wine, or half-and-half; 10
Ne cared he for fish, or flesh, or fowl,
And sauces held he worthless as the chaff;
He 'sdeigned the swine-head at the wassail-bowl;
Ne with lewd ribbalds sat he cheek by jowl;
Ne with sly lemans in the scorner's chair; 15
But after water-brooks this pilgrim's soul

Panted, and all his food was woodland air;
Though he would oft-times feast on gilliflowers rare.

The slang of cities in no wise he knew,
"Tipping the wink" to him was heathen Greek; 20
He sipp'd no "olden Tom," or "ruin blue,"
Or Nantz, or cherry-brandy, drank full meek
By many a damsel brave, and rouge of cheek;
Nor did he know each aged watchman's beat,
Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek 25
For curled Jewesses, with ankles neat,
Who, as they walk abroad, make tinkling with their feet.

Bright Star

BY JOHN KEATS

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task 5
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast, 10
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

Felicia Dorothea Hemans



General Background

Felicia Dorothea Hemans was born on 1793 in Liverpool, England. The daughter of a merchant, she was born into a large family, the fifth of seven children. When her father's business unfortunately failed in 1800, the family moved to an isolated Welsh seaside house in Wales. A voracious reader from an early age, Hemans made use of an extensive home library and was taught several languages by her mother growing up. According to her sister, Felicia had an incredible memory and could recite pages of poetry after reading them just one time. Exposed early to the arts by her parents, she spent two winters in London as a child, and was captivated by the classical art she saw there (art played a large role in her writings as a result of her early experiences). Hemans soon published her first collection, *Poems* (1808), at the precocious age of 14.

Hemans married Captain Alfred Hemans in 1812, and together they had five children. Their marriage was complicated (he left for Rome in 1818 and they never really saw each other after that, consulting by letters on the children but separated for all intensive purposes). Hemans moved around quite a bit during her lifetime, living in Wales, Liverpool, Scotland, and Dublin (she moved in Dublin in 1831 in order to be near one of her brothers). Her moves were at least partially tied to her love of solitude. Weighed down by a constitution that was always delicate, she sought peace in calm places and possessed a love of nature (Wales was always first in her heart) that placed her in high standing with the principles of Romanticism. She died in Ireland in May, 1835, at the somewhat early age of 41. Her death was attributed to a weak heart, which some feel was caused by rheumatic fever.

Style and Works

Hemans dabbled a bit in drama but is known first and foremost for her poetry. A sentimental poet, Hemans was incredibly popular during her lifetime, with “Casabianca” (with its intense support of unwavering patriotism and a postcolonial look at the cost of Empire) required reading and recitation in many schools during her lifetime and Victorian times as well. Somewhat insulated from society, Hemans was nevertheless an astute observer of her society and the influence of nature on her culture. A more emotional stylist than other Romantics, she used her prodigious reading skills to paint a rosy picture of the human condition and played to the emotions of the reader more so than many others of the age.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Hemans responded to the concerns of women of her time much differently than other notable female authors of her age (such as Barbauld, Baillie, and M. Shelley—all of whom spent more time developing and supporting strong-willed female voices). Hemans, solitary by nature and more withdrawn from society than a socialite such as Barbauld, idealized and romanticized woman’s role and relationships. No stranger to suffering on account of men’s actions and inequality (she was left by her husband to essentially raise her children as a single mother, made even worse by separation rather than divorce), Hemans understood the challenges faced by women of her time but took a different literary approach to these concerns. Her portrayal of cultural ideals offered comfort and support to those who found them meaningful, exploring ideas of honor, duty, and the beauty of English and Welsh countryside more so than other writers. Although her influence has not been quite as powerful as other poets deemed more “skilled” during her lifetime, feminist scholars have recently championed once again her writings, which speak to a more sentimental, softer view of Britain.

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The Homes of England

BY FELICIA HEMANS

The stately homes of England
How beautiful they stand!
Amidst their tall ancestral trees,
O’er all the pleasant land!
The deer across their green sward bound 5
Through shade and sunny gleam,
And the swan glides past them with the sound
Of some rejoicing stream.

The merry homes of England!
Around their hearths by night, 10
What gladsome looks of household love
Meet in the ruddy light!
There woman’s voice flows forth in song,
Or childhood’s tale is told;
Or lips move tunefully along 15
Some glorious page of old.

The cottage homes of England!
By thousands on her plains,
They are smiling o’er the silv’ry brook,
And round the hamlet-fanes; 20
Through glowing orchards forth they peep,
Each from its nook of leaves;
And fearless there the lowly sleep,
As the bird beneath their eaves.

The free fair homes of England! 25
Long, long in hut and hall
May hearts of native proof be rear’d
To guard each hallow’d wall.
And green for ever be the groves,
And bright the flow’ry sod, 30
Where first the child’s glad spirit loves
Its country and its God.

Casabianca

BY FELICIA HEMANS

The boy stood on the burning deck,
Whence all but he had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck,
Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood, 5
As born to rule the storm;
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud, though childlike form.

The flames rolled on – he would not go,
Without his father's word; 10
That father, faint in death below,
His voice no longer heard.

He called aloud – 'Say, father, say
If yet my task is done?' 15
He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.

'Speak, father!' once again he cried,
'If I may yet be gone!' 20
– And but the booming shots replied,
And fast the flames rolled on.

Upon his brow he felt their breath
And in his waving hair;
And look'd from that lone post of death,
In still yet brave despair. 25

And shouted but once more aloud,
'My father! must I stay?'
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapp'd the ship in splendour wild, 30
They caught the flag on high,
And stream'd above the gallant child,
Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder sound –
The boy – oh! where was he? 35
Ask of the winds that far around

With fragments strew'd the sea!

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
That well had borne their part,
But the noblest thing which perished there, 40
Was that young faithful heart.

Mary Shelley



General Background

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was born on August, 1797, to two of the most well-known writers and intellectuals of the age. Her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was the foremost feminist thinker of her generation, remembered today for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, a passionate plea for education for women, stressing the importance of female independence. Mary (junior)'s father, William Godwin, was a radical political philosopher and novelist (he wrote both *Political Justice* [an intellectual tract] and *Caleb Williams* [a novel] outlining his views). Mary's parents despised the institution of marriage, but they did marry to benefit their daughter. However, sadly, Mary Wollstonecraft died ten days after the birth of her daughter from a fever and childbirth complications.

Godwin remarried four years after Mary's birth and her stepmom primarily raised her until she left for Scotland for a couple years (her relationship with her new mother was strained). Returning home at 16, she fell in love with Percy Shelley and they eloped to Europe, taking her stepsister with them. Their married years were marred by a number of family tragedies and only one of their children (William) survived past the first year. Percy drowned in 1822, leaving Mary alone after only six years of marriage. Mary lived partially off a small inheritance from Percy's father after his husband's death, and beyond her masterwork

(*Frankenstein*), produced several other novels, a novella, and various short stories and poems. Towards the end of her life, she focused her writing efforts primarily on biography, criticism, and editing and protecting her late husband's literary legacy. She lived to middle age, enjoying a number of peaceful years in close connection to her son, who did receive financial support through the estate of his grandfather, and died at age 53.

Style and Works

Although best known today for *Frankenstein* (accepted by almost everyone as one of the best and most important novels of the entire Romantic Period), her nonfiction and travel writings are also excellent (considered by some scholars to actually be superior to her fiction writing). She contributed a number of studies of the literary writers of Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France, displaying a Romantic tendency to explore the inner workings of the subject's mind (she was quite good at getting into the heads of her subjects). The imaginative, human-studies quality of her biographies (which also relied heavily on facts and made careful use of what was known about her subjects) makes them more compelling than the drier, less literary studies done on the same authors before her time. By the end of her life, she spent most of her time as an editor and worked on her late husband's writings extensively.

Key Contributions, Critical Ideas, and Complexities

Shelley's most famous novel is a powerful inspection of many Romantic themes and ideas that project forward well into our times. Her exploration of emergent Gothicism, free will, the nature of life, filial responsibility, the harshness of the human condition, language acquisition, nature, the sublime, and much more make *Frankenstein* the quintessential exploration of the ideals set down by Wordsworth and Coleridge at the beginning of the period. Scholars continue to argue over which version (Shelley came out with several editions over the decades and Percy tried to edit her language use as well) of the novel is the most authentic and powerful, but almost all agree that the novel's relevance to society has not dimmed at all over the last two centuries.

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