

" Yet alas! my fair flower, that bloom will decay,
 " And all thy fine beauties soon wither away;
 " Tho' pluck'd by her hand, to whose touch thou must own
 " Harsh and rough is the cygnet's most delicate down:
 " Thou too, snowy hand;—nay, I mean not to preach;
 " But the Rose, lovely moralist! suffer to teach."

" Extol not, fond maiden, thy beauties o'er mine,
 " They too are short-liv'd, and they too must decline;
 " And small in conclusion, the difference appears
 " In the bloom of few days, or the bloom of few years!
 " But remember a virtue the Rose hath to boast,
 " —Its Fragrance remains, when its Beauties are lost."



THE EQUALITY OF MANKIND.

BY MR. WODHULL.

THERE was a time when from those hapless schools,
 Where Science droops, and pension'd Litchfield rules,
 Inhaling faction, with the Tory race
 On Right Divine, Hereditary Grace,
 Much did I waver, much did I unite
 The names of Patriot, and of Jacobite:

Thanks to my friendly stars those days are o'er,
 And now, not meanly pinion'd as before,
 Untaught to bend the pliant knee, and join
 The slaves, who flock to Grandeur's tinsel shrine,
 Kindling at thy perpetual flame the brand
 Of honest Satire, with officious hand
 To thee, O Truth, I consecrate the blaze;—
 Receive, exalt, invigorate my lays.

The studious Pilgrim, as his bare feet tread
 O'er holy Carmel! with religious dread,
 If, sunk in mouldering rubbish, he descries
 Where some old fane, or massive altar lies,
 Kneeling adores it with a stedfast gaze,
 And ruminates the works of mightier da's,
 Feasts his rapt soul on pure devotion's fires,
 And slowly from the much-lov'd spot retires,
 Led by dark Legend on from clime to clime
 Amid th' historic ravages of Time,
 Thus the bold Muse asserts her liberal plan
 To mark the genuine privilege of man,
 To prove how Fiction, and how Fact agree,
 That God was just, and all Mankind were free.

From Jura's mount, from those inclement skies,
 (Where pale and wan Helvetia's Genius lies,
 His arms revers'd, his shield thrown idly by,
 To note the sad decays of Liberty;) Tby
 Come, stern Philosophy,—that garb of woe
 Befits thee most, majestically flow

Thy gait, while rais'd aloof thy red right hand
 Waves in the gale Repentment's flaming brand,
 Such as, from Seine's proud banks when Rosseau fled,
 Thy Vengeance hurl'd at mitred Beaumont's head:
 Beneath thy auspices in Albion's plain,
 While Justice triumphs in a George's reign,
 Alone, yet scorning Caution's coward mask,
 Will I encounter this adventurous task;
 Tho' far too sanguine to conceal their rage,
 My Foes already curse each opening page,
 And Friends, half shrinking at so rude a test,
 Glance o'er my title, and forswear the rest.

Back to Creation's infancy, when Earth
 Few revolutions dated from its birth,
 My theme invites:—poor Exile doom'd to rove
 Far from the sweets of Eden's happy grove
 Behold our first Progenitor;—his race
 Plung'd in a lineal series of disgrace,
 Become a prey from that ill-fated hour
 To pain, disease, and death's remorseless power.

Some evils soon attain'd their utmost prime,
 To perfect others was a work of time.
 Perhaps in those rude ages, when no law
 Kept the warm passions of mankind in awe,
 Rapine was frequent; from his neighbour's fold
 Some proud Oppressor, of gigantic mold,
 His fleecy charge, his only treasure bore,
 And left the shepherd weltering in his gore:

Yet

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Yet then no dire necessity had made
 Murder a system, war a needful trade;
 No Frederick, foe to nature and to man,
 Justice his pretext, tyranny his plan,
 Born every right of nations to betray,
 O'er Leipzig's walls had forc'd his desperate way;
 Coarse was their food, their fordid dwelling small,
 Such was the lot of one, the lot of all:
 In some deep vale their shapeless altar stood
 Rais'd with the casual turf, or unhewn wood;
 Thither, by grateful adoration taught,
 On some choice festival the Rustic brought
 A decent offering from his little stock,
 Fruits of the ground, or firstlings of his flock:
 No temple rear'd its fretted roof on high,
 No golden censer's blaze perfum'd the sky,
 No vain High-Priest with surly grandeur trod,
 As if to shame the meanness of his God.

When, like the Titans, earth's rebellious crew
 To Heaven's high bulwarks rais'd their hostile view,
 In vain, their boastful arrogance to quell,
 Their leaders were dispers'd, their turret fell;
 On Shinar's plains Despotick Power unroll'd
 Her banner, and to vex the groaning world
 From shore to shore the strange contagion ran;
 Fraternal concord ceas'd, and Monarchy began.

Thus while the storms in hollow caverns sleep,
 And scarce a zephyr fans the quiet deep,

Suddenly

Suddenly from the rock's impending brow
 A cumbrous fragment on the tide below
 Comes rushing downwards; boils the vast profound,
 Waves upon waves dash'd on the beach resound.

Detested Hunter! Nimrod led the way,
 War was his savage pastime, man his prey;
 For brutal strength by trembling vassals fear'd
 The walls of ancient Babylon he rear'd:
 In his high dome, with crayons rude portray'd,
 The warrior's dread atchievements were display'd;
 Here pierc'd with darts th' expiring tyger lay,
 There rush'd embattled hosts in firm array;
 There in his car the thickest ranks he broke,
 And nations yielded to his galling yoke.

Such empire's origin:—with horrid yell
 From the black confines of his native hell
 Emerg'd the Demon of tyrannic pride,
 And Vice came onward with a larger stride:
 Ungrateful were the task, and endless toil
 To trace its progress thro' each distant soil
 Fertile of Tyrants. Craft with Prowess join'd
 Soon tam'd the generous fierceness of mankind.
 Dominion first was gain'd by lawless might;
 The claim of long Hereditary Right
 Succeeded; when to varnish o'er each flaw,
 And bow the world with superstitious awe,
 The Priests dress'd up some bugbear of their own,
 Call'd him a King, and plac'd him on a throne;

Then

Suddenly

Then caught the weakness of those darker times,
And dragg'd in Heaven to sanctify his crimes.

Search well its inmost source, and tell whence springs
This sacred claim of Israel's vaunted Kings:
When that audacious crew renounc'd their God,
Despis'd his mercies, brav'd his heaviest rod;
And for his Patronage too mighty grown
Set up a little Idol of their own:
Say, did their Prophet urge Saul's Right Divine?—
His incense blaz'd not at so vile a shrine.
Or did some ill in mystic leaves foretold,
And chronicled by gravest seers of old,
While on delusive hopes they fondly built,
O'erwhelm them with involuntary guilt?
No; 'twas their baffled pride whose last resource
Dragg'd this perdition on their heads by force.

From that black period each intenser crime,
That brands with infamy its parent clime,
Assail'd the palace, overspread the land,
And in their temple took its guilty stand.

The feat of Chemosh by the purple vine
Was planted, and at Moloch's brazen shrine,
As with inhuman zeal the trembling fire
Consign'd his shrieking infants to the fire,
While with loud din their hideous cymbals rung,
His Worshipers obscene their uncouth orgies sung.

Belief,

Belief, in various senses underflood,
 Is man's severest curse, or surest good.
 Thus, in the meads where hallow'd Jordan glides,
 Enriching Palestine with copious tides,
 Where springs the branching palm, where streams the oil,
 Where fruitful vineyards bless the peasant's toil;
 Deep in the heart of Siddim's odious vale,
 Impregnating with death each tainted gale,
 The black Asphaltos from its slimy bed
 Sees pitchy clouds, sulphureous vapours, spread.

Let Mecca tell, big with aspiring schemes,
 Scraphic trances, counterfeited dreams,
 How subtle Mahomet, of servile birth,
 Diffus'd his tenets thro' th' astonish'd earth,
 By fire and sword the Nations undeceiv'd
 Confess'd their former errors, and believ'd.

In Judah's soil the tree of knowledge grew,
 Whose fruit unfound, yet specious to the view,
 Entrusted to the treacherous Levite's care,
 Fell, ere it ripen'd, in that baleful air;
 Relentless Cowards! with a brutal hand
 Urging their fraudulent progress thro' the land,
 O'er Nature's parting agonies they trod,
 And slaughter'd millions in the name of God,
 Each right of arms infringing, nor forbore
 To dip their reeking blades in infant gore;
 Till mighty conscience, whose prevailing call
 Ope's the dread volume of her laws to all,

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Bewail'd them darken'd by so strong a taint,
That none discern'd the villain from the faint.

Far other fame the Christian doctrine gain'd,
From Heaven transmitted, and by Heaven maintain'd,
With scepter'd arrogance to vex the earth,
Yet most those realms which gave his grandeur birth,
To make divided Faith and Virtue foes,
On its firm base no second David rose;
Yet from this pure and unpolluted source,
Ere long, the streams in a perverted course
Ran foul: Fanatics soon began to call
Merit a sound, Religion all in all;
Infuriate Priests the bonds of nature tore,
And Persecution drench'd the world with gore.
Arm'd with the Cross, o'er Asia's ravag'd lands,
See fainted Champions pour their desperate bands,
A dreaming Hermit leads them, and aloud
Preaches salvation to the frantic crowd:
Zeal whets the poniard, and with ruthless joy
They come, they sack, they ravish, they destroy.

The Muse rejecting this historic draught
With bitter truths, strict testimonies fraught,
Its civil discords, and religious strife
O'erlooks, to take a fairer view of life;
Borne on the rapid wings of Thought she flies,
Opes new creations, seeks for other skies,
Revolving all that sportive Ovid told
Of cloudless suns, of ages wing'd with gold,

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Those ages, when in Peneus' chearful grove
 Man knew no sorrows, no disease but Love;
 When Nature's self was unconstrain'd and young,
 And Bards rang'd lawless as the Gods they sung.

Ye happier times of innocence and truth,
 Pleasing instructors of my thoughtless youth,
 When none the image of his God belied,
 No Minions crouch'd beneath a Sultan's pride,
 No wealth ensar'd, no poverty distress'd,
 No ruffians plunder'd, and no kings oppress'd;
 Tho' doom'd to grovel in a baser age,
 Will I from Memory's enchanting page
 Retrace your scatter'd annals.—When of old
 Arcadia's peaceful shepherds uncontroll'd
 Their ranging flocks thro' boundless pastures drove,
 Or tun'd their pipes beneath the myrtle grove,
 Their laws on brazen tablets unimprest
 Were deeply grav'd on each ingenuous breast,
 No proud Vicegerent of Afrea reign'd,
 Afrea's self her own decrees maintain'd.

Books, useless lumber, yet in embryo slept,
 No Damon rav'd in rhyme, no Delia wept;
 Nor had, nor needed they the casuist's page,
 Plain were the duties of that simpler age:
 For Nature, best of methers, pleas'd to teach
 Virtues no modern theorist can reach;
 With characters indelible, on high
 Blazon'd her system of Equality.

Alas!

Alas! how gladly would Illusion's beam
 For ever vibrate on this glittering theme:
 Here let me finish; nor, my soul to wring,
 From Fable's sweets proceed to Fable's sting:
 I must;—these fairy dreams have had their space,
 And now the dreadful sequel claims a place.
 Like the presumptuous Mariner, whose sails,
 Wafted from port with soft Etesian gales,
 Urge his o'erweening eagerness to brave
 Without a Pilot the perfidious wave,
 Soon o'er whose bark th' impetuous tempests sweep,
 And bury all his fortunes in the deep:
 Seduc'd by Fancy's charms, amidst a grove
 Of pleasing errors have I dar'd to rove,
 Till, half desponding, comfortless, aghast,
 I but survey bright Freedom's form at last,
 To see her perish by as sure a wound
 Mid these enchantments, as on vulgar ground.

Fond Epimetheus! when thy luckless hand
 Scatter'd Pandora's curses o'er the land,
 Forth from the casket glittering to the view
 Scepters, and crowns, delusive trumpery, flew;
 Man ey'd the bait, and with an ideot joy
 Eagerly rush'd to snatch the gilded toy:
 Freedom thenceforth, and Peace, and Justice fled,
 Infernal Discord rear'd her snaky head
 From blackest Erebus, whose scorpions hurl'd
 By dread Oppression curb'd a wretched world;

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Too late remorse congeal'd each guilty soul,
And fork'y lightnings flash'd from pole to pole.

Where-e'er we search the vast instructive page
Of Fa^{ct}, or Fiction, we in every age
See Saints impal'd and tortur'd at the stake
Thro' fervent zeal, and for Religion's sake;
Murders and forceries, and Men, whose heart
Ne'er prompted one humane, one generous part,
While some vain Mortal, arbiter of ill,
Govern'd the rest; at whose imperious will
Millions of slaughter'd Heroes bit the dust
To soothe a Tyrant's pride, a Strumpet's lust;
Till loathing both the present, and the past,
We learn this melancholy truth at last;
“ On Life's rough sea by stormy passions tost,
“ Freedom and Virtue were together lost.”

Shame on our vaunted reason, when we find
No creature else so senseless, and so blind;
The Brutes indeed to force superior yield,
And leave the strongest master of the field,
Yet this imperial claim to none descends,
With the possessor's strength his title ends;
Nor, if their enterprizing Leader calls,
Do they forsake their well-replenish'd stalls,
And with heroic frenzy risk their life,
Fomenting some unnecessary strife.
Unfall'n, and uncorrupted, they fulfil
Their Nature's end, their mighty Maker's will:

Stoop then, ye sons of Reason, stoop, and own
The veriest beast more worthy of a throne.

The Chain, whose two Extremities unite,
Presenting still a middle to our fight,
Where link by link in fruitless search we tend,
Yet find not a beginning, or an end,
Talk as we please, dissemble how we can,
Presents a just similitude of Man;
Who, in each state of life constrain'd to own
A strict dependance, useles when alone,
Cleaves, tho' a Monarch, to his native dung,
And venerates the soil from whence he sprung.

View first the Slave, whom his unhappy fate
In galling fetters to some foreign state
Tears from his dearest home; there basely sold
By those, who truck humanity for gold,
Abus'd, neglected, sinking with distress,
When all is dark, and Hope alone can bless;
Ev'n then thro' Life's dim curtain he descends
Some happier regions, and serener skies,
Where Commerce never rears her impious head,
No Fiends approach, no Missionaries tread.

Next him the Peasant, whose incessant toil,
Harshly requited, tills the rugged soil,
Pres'd by the barbarous insults of the great,
The foolish prodigality of state:

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Yet his low couch no thorny cares molest,
His even spirits yield unbroken rest.

Those restless Beings next in order place,
Whose motley stations wear a doubtful face,
Who dragg'd by Fortune into Middle Life,
That vortex of malevolence and strife,
Envyng the great, and scoffing at the mean,
Or swol'n with pride, or wasted with chagrin,
Like Mahomet's unsettled ashes, dwell,
Midway suspended, between Heaven and Hell.

Clad with those Titles antient Justice gave
To grace the wise, the generous, and the brave,
O'er these ascend the Sycophants of Power,
Their master's tools, the minions of an hour.

Last of the Group, to close this irksome scene,
Childishly great, and eminently mean,
Behold the Monarch, whose exalted throne,
Dupes to their fear, his Eastern Vassals own;
When by the toil, which earns the Hind's hard bread,
His splendor is maintain'd, his lux'ry fed;
Is not a wretch like this, to either side
Of Life's perverse extremities allied?
Here to its source the line revolving tends,
Here close the points, and here the circle ends.

When lust, when rapine, when ungovern'd rage
Strongly characteris'd the iron age,

Law soon became a necessary ill,
 Vice edg'd the sword, and gave it force to kill;
 Monarchs, we see, were then at first design'd
 A general good, a blessing unconfin'd:
 For public welfare, not for private ends,
 From fire to son the regal crown descends.
 When Kings support afflicted Virtue's cause,
 Curb potent Vice, and vindicate the laws,
 Our high respect deservedly they share,
 Not for themselves, but for the trust they bear.

As on the slippery pinnacle they stand
 Of brittle grandeur, with rapacious hand
 If they assume unlimited domain,
 And madly govern with perverted rein
 'The vast Machine of Empire; to the skies
 Ascend the widow's tears, the orphan's cries;
 A Cato's spirit, or a Cicero's tongue
 With keen resentment animates the throng;
 Some Hampden hears his gasping country's groan,
 And in just vengeance shakes a guilty throne.

Should inauspicious Fortune tear away
 From Virtue's grasp the triumphs of a day,
 Should Tyranny, by long successes grown great,
 Crush the defenceless victims of her hate,
 Grim Superstition with an haggard eye
 Points to the spoils, and rears her torch on high,
 From regal conquest her own inference draws,
 And blends with that of Heaven its dearer cause.

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Blind to the treacherous snare, when Fate decreed
 That Troy should perish by the wooden steed;
 The rest stood fix'd with hesitating fear,
 While bold Laocoon hurl'd his forceful spear
 Against the monster, from whose knotty side
 Refounding arms, and Grecian shrieks replied;
 Stung by a snake the pious Priest expir'd,
 While Folly gaz'd, and Ignorance admir'd;
 This moral curb'd th' infatuated crew—
 "The sacrilegious wretch Minerva slew."

When virtuous^s Greville thus in civil strife
 Crown'd with that honest prayer his closing life;
 Can we unmov'd with indignation bear
 To see grave Clarendon, whose stile, whose air,
 'Twixt tortur'd facts, and scripture-phrases quaint,
 Shews half the royalist, and half the faint,
 Stamp on his ashes with a dotard's pride,
 And execrate the cause for which he died?

Ye fields of Naseby, where the thundering hand
 Of Freedom greatly prosper'd; where that band
 Of hardy Patriots resolutely bore,
 Thro' storms of horror, and thro' seas of gore,
 Their country's charter, snatch'd in happiest hour
 From Sacerdotal wrath, and Kingly power:
 Oft as your towers, on which dread Vengeance wrote
 Strong characters, and blasted where she smote,

^s Lord Brooke, see Clarendon's History.

In youth's gay season fix'd my roving eye,
 How did I hail that scene of victory!
 Ev'n now methinks I see brave Fairfax tread
 Th' ensanguin'd plain;—to grace the warrior's head
 From Fame's unfillied grove let Virtue bring
 Those laurels green with everlasting spring:
 Illustrious meed, too oft profusely strewn
 To deck the precincts of Ambition's throne,
 To crown some proud Infringer of the laws:
 But due to vengeance, due to Britain's cause.

Nor, tho' the Muse forlorn and helpless stray
 O'er thy bare coast, nor glean one fragrant bay,
 Bleak Caledonia, shalt thou pass unsung,
 For Freedom on thy hills her arm new-strung:
 When thy firm sons, who lov'd the public weal,
 Or inly burn'd to see tyrannic Zeal
 Against their altars lift an impious hand,
 And threat th' accustom'd worship of the land,
 From their huge cliffs descending like a flood,
 Stood forth, prepar'd to seal their faith with blood;
 At their approach while perjur'd Holland fled,
 False to his Master's cause, his Master's bed;
 And Hierarchy, that fiend, whom Scripture paints
 Drunk with the blood of Martyrs and of Saints,
 Consign'd by Fate in penal chains to dwell,
 Slunk unregarded to her native hell.

Curse on the shouts of that licentious Throng,
 Whose merriment (more brutal than the song

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Of mad Agave, when wild Hæmus o'er
 Her Pentheus' mangled limbs the mother bore;
 Proclaims the fall of Liberty:—ye shades
 Of mighty Chiefs, from your Elyfian glades
 Look down benign, avert the dire presage,
 Nor with two Charles's brand one sinful age.
 O, my poor country! what capricious tide
 Of Fortune swells the Tyrant's motley pride!
 Around his brows yon servile Prelates twine
 The stale and blasted wreath of Right Divine;
 While Harlots, like the Coan Venus fair,
 Move their light feet to each lascivious air,

Hence with your orgies!—righteous Heaven ordains
 A purer worship, less audacious strains.
 When falls by William's sword (as soon it must)
 This Edifice of bigotry and lust,
 The Muse shall start from her inglorious trance,
 And give to Satire's grasp her vengeful lance,
 At Truth's historic shrine shall victims smoke,
 And a fresh Stuart bleed at every stroke:
 Thine too, perfidious Albemarle (whose steel,
 Drawn to protect embroil'd Britannia's weal,
 Shrunk from thy coward arm, consign'd the reins
 Of power to Charles, and forg'd a nation's chains)
 Compar'd with nobler villainies of old,
 High deeds, on plates of adamant enroll'd,
 Shall meet the felon's undistinguish'd fate,
 Sure of contempt, unworthy of our hate.

Once more emerging from this baleful reign
 Of Stuart Kings, and from the Pontiff's chain,
 By Boyne's swift current Freedom rear'd her head,
 When from those banks the Papal Tyrant fled;
 Then every vale with lo Pæans rung
 As the glad reaper at his harvest sung,
 Thee, great Nassau, benevolently brave,
 Equally born to conquer, and to save,
 When Glory's founding trump to Gallia's shore,
 Th' exulting shouts of British Freedom bore,
 Dismay'd she saw the kindling ardor burn,
 And Seine hung trembling o'er her wasted urn.

Warm with the same benevolence of mind,
 Friends to the native rights of human kind,
 Succeeding Kings extend the generous plan,
 And Brunswick perfects what Nassau began.
 Thrice happy Albion! in whose favour'd land
 Impartial Justice with a steady hand
 Poises the scales of empire; where the names
 Of servile tenure, and the feudal claims
 Of Norman Peers in musty tomes decay,
 Swept by obliterating years away.

But if in Faction's loud and empty strain
 Yon frontless rabble vex a gentle reign,
 In Peace itself ideal dangers find,
 Provoke new wars, and challenge half mankind;
 What tho' another Tully at their head
 From breast to breast the rank contagion spread:

say, what are we? some pension'd Patriot's tools,
Meer artless, unsuspecting, British fools.

Born in a changeful clime, beneath a sky
Whence storms descend, and hovering vapours fly,
Stung with the fever, tortur'd with the spleen,
Boisterously merry, churlishly serene,
By each vague blast dejected or elate,
Dupes in their love, immoderate in their hate,
With strange formality, or bearish ease,
Then most disgustful, when they strive to please,
No happy mean the sons of Albion know,
Their wavering tempers ever ebb and flow,
Rank contraries, in nothing they agree;
Untaught to serve, unable to be free.

While parties rage, O Truth! with honest zeal
To thee, protectress of my lays, I kneel;
O deign to shew me in their real light,
Strip'd of that glare which cheats the dazzled sight,
The Chiefs, whose blazon'd deeds and sounding worth
Usurp a sphere above the sons of earth;
Ope dark Futurity's instructive womb,
Conduct me to the mansions of the tomb,
Where titles cease, where worldly pomp is o'er,
Mute are the Nine, and Flattery soothes no more:
So may I take a more impartial view,
Forget the rank, and give the man his due.

Yet

Yet what regards it or the world, or me,
 How Fame awards her posthumous decree,
 If man, unconscious of her loudest breath,
 Sleep a cold tenant of the vale of death?
 Let the delirious Siamois compute
 How Sommonokodon his worshipp'd brute,
 Thro' being's long progressive stages trod,
 Began an Ox, and ended in a God.
 Our fleeting souls let the weak ' Samian trace
 In birds, in beasts, and all the finny race;
 These baseless structures, fictions light and vain,
 Coin'd in the foldings of an idle brain,
 To their absurd inventors I resign,
 They are not in the Church's creed, or mine.

But shall the Peasant from his turf-bound grave
 Or rise no more, or wake again a Slave?
 And shall the Monarch in a future state,
 With the same visionary pomp elate,
 Resume the trappings of his lost command,
 And wield a mimic scepter in his hand?

Tho' gloomy Bigots paint a partial God,
 Bare his red arm, and lift his scorpion rod;
 Tho' on a text perverting Zealots dwell,
 Till Scripture suits the purposes of hell;
 Think for thyself;—suppose life's voyage o'er;
 Think for thyself, and envy Kings no more:

' Pythagoras.

Resign'd

Resign'd and calm await that awful hour,
That crisis of all sublunary power,
When wreaths of glory shall adorn the Just,
And Empire's proud Colossus sink to dust.



L O V E E L E G I E S.

B Y

E L E G Y I.

TIS night, dead night; and o'er the plain
Darkness extends her ebon ray,

While wide along the gloomy scene

Deep Silence holds her solemn sway:

Throughout the earth no chearful beam

The melancholic eye surveys,

Save where the worm's fantastic gleam

The 'nighted traveller betrays:

The savage race (so Heaven decrees)

No longer thro' the forest rove;

All nature rests, and not a breeze

Disturbs the stillness of the grove: