



The PLEASURE of POETRY.

An O D E.

By Mr. VANSITTART.

I.

HAPPY the babe whose natal hour
The Muse propitious deigns to grace,
No frowns on his soft fore-head lowr,
No cries distort his tender face ;
But o'er her child, forgetting all her pangs,
Infatiate of her smiles, the raptur'd parent hangs.

II.

Let statesmen on the sleepless bed
The fate of realms and princes weigh,
While in the agonizing head
They form ideal scenes of sway ;
Not long, alas ! the fancied charms delight,
But melt, like spectre-forms, in silent shades of night.

III. Ye

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Ye heavy pedants, dull of lore,
 Nod o'er the taper's livid flame;
 Ye misers, still increase your store;
 Still tremble at the robber's name:
 Or shudd'ring from the recent dream arise,
 While visionary fire glows dreadful to your eyes.

IV.

Far other joys the Muses show'r
 Benignant, on the aching breast,
 'Tis theirs in the lone, cheerless hour,
 To lull the lab'ring heart to rest:
 With bright'ning calms they glad the prospect drear,
 And bid each groan subside, and dry up ev'ry tear.

V.

From earthly mists, ye gentle Nine!
 Whene'er you purge the visual ray,
 Sudden the landscapes fairer shine,
 And blander smiles the face of day:
 Ev'n Chloe's lips with brighter vermil glow,
 And on her youthful cheek the rose-buds fresher blow.

VI.

When Boreas sounds his fierce alarms,
 And all the green-clad nymphs are fled,
 Oh! then I lie in Fancy's arms
 On fragrant May's delicious bed;
 And thro' the shade, flow-creeping from the dale,
 Feel on my drowsy face the lilly-breathing gale.

VII.

Or on the mountain's airy height
 Hear Winter call his howling train,
 Chas'd by the Spring and Dryads light,
 That now resume their blisful reign :
 While smiling Flora binds her Zephyr's brows,
 With ev'ry various flow'r that Nature's lap bestows.

VIII.

More potent than the Sybil's gold
 That led Æneas' bold emprize,
 When you, Calliope, unfold
 Your laurel branch, each phantom flies !
 Slow cares with heavy wings beat the dull air,
 And dread, and pale-ey'd grief, and pain and black despair.

IX.

With you Elysium's happy bow'rs,
 The mansions of the glorious dead,
 I visit oft, and cull the flow'rs
 That rise spontaneous to your tread ;
 Such active virtue warms that pregnant earth,
 And heav'n with kindlier hand assists each genial birth.

X.

Here oft I wander thro' the gloom,
 While pendent fruit the leaves among
 Gleams thro' the shade with golden bloom,
 Where lurk along the feather'd throng,
 Whose notes th' eternal spring unceasing chear,
 Nor leave in mournful silence half the drooping year.

XI. And

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And oft I view along the plain
 With slow and solemn steps proceed
 Heroes and chiefs, an awful train,
 And high exalt the laurell'd head ;
 Submits I honour every sacred name,
 Deep in the column grav'd of adamantine fame.

XII.

But cease, my Muse, with tender wing
 Unfledg'd, ethereal flight to dare,
 Stern Cato's bold discourse to sing,
 Or paint immortal Brutus' air ;
 May Britain ne'er the weight of slav'ry feel,
 Or bid a Brutus shake for her his crimson steel !

XIII.

Lo ! yonder negligently laid
 Fast by the stream's impurpled side,
 Where thro' the thick-entangled shade,
 The radiant waves of nectar glide,
 Each sacred poet strikes his tuneful lyre,
 And wakes the ravish'd heart, and bids the soul aspire.

XIV.

No more is heard the plaintive strain,
 Or pleasing Melancholy's song,
 Tibullus here forgets his pain,
 And joins the love-exulting throng ;
 For Cupid flutters round with golden dart,
 And fiercely twangs his bow at ev'ry rebel heart.

XV.

There stretch'd at ease Anacreon gay;
 And on his melting Lesbia's breast,
 With eye half-rais'd Catullus lay,
 And gaz'd himself to balmy rest:
 While Venus' self thro' all the am'rous groves
 With kisses fresh-distill'd supply'd their constant loves.

XVI.

Now Horace' hand the string inspir'd,
 My soul, impatient as he sung,
 The Muse unconquerable fir'd,
 And heavenly accents seiz'd my tongue;
 Then lock'd in admiration sweet I bow'd,
 Confess'd his potent art, nor could forbear aloud. *

XVII.

Hail glorious bard! whose high command,
 A thousand various strings obey,
 While joins and mixes to thy hand
 At once the bold and tender lay!
 Nor mighty Homer down Parnassus steep,
 Rolls the full tide of verse so clear, and yet so deep.

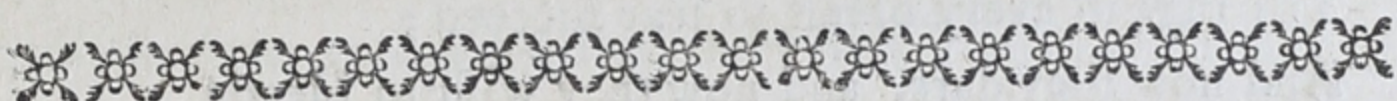
XVIII.

O could I catch one ray divine
 From thy intolerable blaze!
 To pour strong lustre on my line,
 And my aspiring song to raise;
 Then should the Muse her choicest influence shed,
 And with eternal wreaths entwine my lofty head.

* *Milton.*

XIX.

Then would I sing the sons of Fame,
 Th' immortal chiefs of ancient age,
 Or tell of love's celestial flame,
 Or ope fair friendship's sacred page,
 And leave the sullen thought and struggling groan,
 To take their watchful stands around the gaudy throne.



The POWER of POETRY.

I.

WHEN tuneful Orpheus strove by moving strains
 To sooth the furious hate of rugged swains :
 The list'ning multitude was pleas'd,
 Ev'n Rapine drop'd her ravish'd prey,
 Till by the soft oppression seiz'd,
 Each savage heard his rage away ;
 And now o'ercome, in kind consent they move,
 And all is harmony, and all is love !

II.

Not so, when Greece's chief by heav'n inspir'd,
 With love of arms each glowing bosom fir'd :
 But now the trembling soldier fled
 Regardless of the glorious prize ;
 And his brave thirst of honour dead,
 He durst not meet with hostile eyes ;
 Whilst glittering shields and swords, war's bright array,
 Were either worn in vain, or basely thrown away.