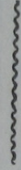


Hard labour can rest on a bed
That would not your slumbers invite.
Ah! no; trust the plain simple Muse,
Whom Nature appoints as her scribe;
Nor, tempted by day-dreams, refuse
Those gifts which Contentment can bribe.
'Tis ease both of fortune and mind
This smiling companion can gain;
'Tis a friend, as correcting as kind,
And a heart wholly free from all stain!



WRITTEN ON A GLOOMY DAY, IN SICKNESS.

THACKWOOD, 4TH JUNE, 1786.

THE gloomy lowering of the sky,
The milky softness of the air,
The hum of many a busy fly,
Are things the cheerful well can spare;
But, to the pensive, thoughtful mind,
Those kindred glooms are truly dear,
When in dark shades such wood-notes wind
As woo and win Reflection's ear;—
The birds that warble over head,
The bees that visit every flower,
The stream that murmurs o'er its bed,
All aid the melancholy hour.

Added to this, the wasting frame,
 Through which life's pulses slowly beat,
 Would fain persuade that nought's the same
 As when health glow'd with genial heat.
 Where are the spirits, light as air,
 That self-amus'd, would carol loud?
 Would find out pleasure everywhere,
 And all her paths with garlands strow'd?
 Nature's the same: the Spring returns,
 The leaf again adorns the tree;
 How tasteless this to her who mourns—
 To her who droops and fades like me!
 No emblem for myself I find,
 Save what some dying plant bestows—
 Save where its drooping head I bind,
 And mark how strong the likeness grows.
 No more sweet Eve with drops distill'd
 Shall melt o'er thee in tender grief;
 Nor bid Aurora's cup be fill'd
 With balmy dew from yonder leaf.
 What, though some seasons more had roll'd
 Their golden suns to glad thine eye!
 Yet as a flower of mortal mould
 'Twas still thy lot—to bloom and die.