

SPRING.

APRIL, 1786.

WHEN winter, with a frown severe,
Had parted with the worn-out year ;
The worn-out year, in health decay'd,
Had run the course—to bloom and fade ;
A snow-wreath'd mantle close infolds,
A clasp of icy diamonds holds ;
Her former pleasantness forgot,
Her woods, her groves, remember'd not.
The lovely varying tints of green
Faded as if they'd never been,
For who that sees that poplar now
Would think e'er verdure cloth'd its brow !
Its robes are gone, and there remain
Autumnal leaves of yellow stain ;
The blustering tyrant long had torn
The lingering leaf from the poor thorn,—
The lingering leaf, though fond to stay,
Was swept by the rude blast away ;
And, falling on the russet ground,
Gave to the ear a wintry sound.

But Time, whom monarchs must obey,
Now melts this frozen pomp away ;
Sending his harbingers the hours
Before, to speak for fragrant bowers ;

Bidding the green-rob'd Spring come forth,
 And strike the Tyrant of the north.
 With lightsome foot they steal away,
 And find her with her birds at play;
 Pouring such songs in the young ear,
 As suit the season of the year.

Flora the pattern flowers was showing,
 Which on her couch were sweetly blowing;
 While the light zephyr, pertly gay,
 Now brought the scents, now bore away.
 "Accept, sweet Spring," gay Flora said,
 "This snowdrop with its lowly head;
 Wrapt up in many a fleece of snow,
 The little lady loves to go;
 But her pale cheek would ne'er be seen,
 Did I not trim her coif with green.
 My sweetest violet next behold,—
 How blue it looks, inhuman cold!
 Yet not thy chilling hand can stay
 Those sweets that scorn to wait for May!
 The harebell now her goblet bears
 With brimful cup of dewy tears,
 Which o'er primroses pale she sheds,
 That scarce have strength to leave their beds,
 Till daisies and gay cowslips lead
 Their weaker sisters o'er the mead,
 And pendant leaves begin to spread
 A waving shelter over head;
 The woods and groves await thy will,
 The sickly plant to spare or kill;

Come then, thou sower of the meads,
And scatter all the promis'd seeds!
When done, wher'er thou mov'st along,
Leaves, plants, and flowers shall round thee throng;
Which wandering near the tinkling rill,
Shall, stooping, seem to listen still."

Not all the incense Flora pours—
Not all the offerings of the hours,
Could make her leave her blessed retreat,
Had Hope not charm'd her from her seat;
She, with a hand held out to bless,
And smiles that look'd like happiness,
Declar'd 'twas ever to be found;
Then folding the sweet hours around,
Bade her their joyous footsteps heed,
Nor fear to sow the smallest seed.

Fearful she rose, lest the rough wind
To infant buds should prove unkind;—
"Though now they seem with health to glow,
Their painted leaves may never blow;
Should blights arise, oft met before,
I ne'er should see these nurslings more;
But since the hours have led the way,
Have bath'd in tears this April day,
Through all the groves once more I'll range,
Once more their dusky liveries change."
A flowery chaplet binds her hair,
(The sweetest wreath a Nymph can wear,)
Her dark green robe was border'd round
With every flower that loves the ground;

Her tresses, negligently gay,
 Stray'd far behind, too fond of play,
 Because her curls it sadly teases
 To be pull'd rudely by the breezes;
 A basket o'er her arm was hung,
 And plenteous were the seeds she flung;
 The fanning zephyrs help'd her toil,
 And mix'd the seeds with every soil;
 To the hoar rock the ashlings bear,
 Who doubt their hold and tremble there,
 But, when a footing once they find,
 Court the rough crag, and scorn the wind.

Now fluttering leaves crowd on the spray,
 And birds, more fluttering still than they,
 The freshest, softest mosses cull,—
 From warmest sheep the warmest wool,—
 The pliant hair to bind around,—
 The firmest clay to lay the ground,
 And, to support the mossy roof,
 Some well-known twig of 'custom'd proof,
 And, that the nestlings mayn't be found,
 With bark the nest is roughcast round;
 The brittle eggs in feathers lie,
 The leafy door deceives the eye;
 The little parent, doom'd to share
 The pleasures with a parent's care,
 In darkest foliage hides her head,
 Of birds, of beasts, of man afraid;
 While on the leafy neighbouring tree
 Her sweet mate keeps her company;

And, when the young ones chirp for food,
He skims the brook, and scours the wood ;
The gilded insects catch his eye ;—
Why dost thou shine, then, glittering fly ?
Thy lustre only serves to show
Thy covert to thy deadliest foe !

But now still Eve her mantle threw
O'er the soft sky of sweetest blue ;
The happy bird on topmost spray,
“ Singing the last song of the day,”
Rejoic'd aloud that th' hour of rest
Was rocking now her quiet nest,
And that she knew the rising morn
Would show her many a hoard of corn ;
At distance saw a wandering tribe
That every darkening thicket ey'd ;
And, where the matted moss had wound
The hawthorn's antique root around,
All full of mirth, and full of glee,
They hope the blackbird's nest to see,
Whose bright blue eggs, in graceful line,
Would 'midst the rows of pewter shine ;
There speckl'd and the brown unite,
The iron-gray and yellow-white ;
Nor could the little wren's escape,
Though smallest thing of oval shape.
These plunderers, as others do,
Hang out their ill-got wealth to view,
When dressers deck'd for Sunday's show
Call forth their platters row by row ;

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What though by some unlucky stroke
The king or queen or prince is broke;
What though they can no more contain
The mantling juice in every vein,
To show you that they yet are there,
They edge behind, and half appear,
Still eking out the grand design
Of making all the house look fine.
What more could high-priced baubles do!
Go, search the empty world through!
The hard-wrought, far-sought, diamond bring—
That much admired glittering thing;
From China or Japan go draw
The gilded chair and works of show;
Bid France her silken loom employ,
And Gobelins weave the fall of Troy;
Panama bid her pearls dispose
In innocent and humble rows;
Yet still, if such things do but please,
The cottage shelf may rival these;
For all depends, we mostly find,
Upon the eye within the mind;
Then, Ignorance, in quiet rest,
Thou'rt soonest pleas'd, and cheaply blest!

But think not yet the search is o'er,
And school-imps look for eggs no more;
For now among the yellow broom
You hear their little busy hum.
The watching parent from his tower
Listens, and tunes his pipe no more;

But, as the satchel-boy draws near,
His bristling feathers shake with fear;
From bough to bough he hops, and tries
To lead from home their searching eyes;
A broken wing pretends to show
Dragg'd on the ground, and fluttering low,
Disabl'd; see, he cannot fly,
Though oft he lamely seems to try;
Deceiv'd, the imps believe it true,
And through the prickling hedge pursue,
Till scratch'd and miserably torn,
And bled by every wounding thorn,
The happy parent darts on high,
And almost seems to reach the sky.
Amaz'd, provok'd, the sufferers now
Examine every twisted bough;
Too soon the quick-ey'd rifler sees
The well-hid nest midst arching trees;
Soon, soon he bears them into day,
And laughing hurries all away.

Now Morn in all her bloom arose,
Her sleeping-curtains half unclose;
And looking from her crimson bed,
On Night's pale cheek warm blushes spread;
Her saffron robe gay woodbine tied,
Which nodded to the breeze that sigh'd;
Her golden slippers, pearl'd with dew,
A riband bound of azure hue;
And in her hand a vase of flowers
That ope and close at certain hours;

Her chamber leaves ; and in her car,
That erst was once the morning star,
Began her journey through the sky,
Bidding each shade of orient dye
Fall on the mountain's hoary head,
Where curling mists gray honours shed,—
There watch the god of rising day,
And in devotion melt away.

'Twas now the ploughman whistl'd o'er
Those furrow'd fields he mow'd before ;
And nut-brown Labour, hard of hand,
Had not one moment's leave to stand ;
Not e'en the resting-spade to hold
While some strange village tale was told.
'Tis Eve that Leisure brings along,
Companion of the tale and song ;
At her approach, in sober weeds,
When wandering through the daisied meads,
Her thoughtful musings shepherds tell
To bid the gaudy sun farewell.
Years seem to've shown her all her folly,—
To've thrown a shade of melancholy
Across her brow, and ever hung
Th' instructive lesson on her tongue.

But not to scorn the aids of dress,
And make her person please the less,
Think not, all ornament refusing,
Or subjects that are but amusing,
She will not take an equal part,
Or play—unless to win the heart.

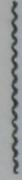
'Tis she who blows the pipe so shrill,
And winds the note around the hill,
Till nymphs and swains the signal hear,
And dancing in the dale appear.
With veil thrown up she joins the throng,
Nor grave nor gay she moves along ;
With matron-mixture in her air,
Nor void of mirth, nor free from care ;
Dress'd in a robe of clouded gray,
Her mourning for the loss of Day,
Whose parting beams her toils renew
To sprinkle every herb with dew ;
The pearly dew, " so sweetly clear,
To hang in every cowslip's ear,"
There trembling till the morning's ray
Shall see it shine and melt away.
For now her mists were curling round,
And tall dark shadows stalk'd the ground,
While twilight close the vapours drew,
Hoodwink'd the sky and clos'd the view ;
Till through th' expanse the sailing moon
Now bright appears, now hid in gloom,
Her face half showing ; then a cloud
Enwraps the whole in fleecy shroud ;
The fleecy shroud grows now more bright,
" Turning its lining on the night,"
Thin and more thin its veil is seen,
Till the full orb looks through between ;
On ether borne it glides in state,
And slowly seeks the western gate ;

Still faintly imitating day,
Lighting the traveller on his way,
Who else had from the cottage seen
The twinkling rush, and blest its light serene.

But sober joys to Eve belong,
The cheerful fire, the happy throng.
She sees the housewife oft prepare
The favourite dish and easy chair,
To welcome home her labouring lord,
And spread some dainty on his board ;
Her face displaying joy and care,
Which spread a change of beauty there,
That by the vague impartial eye
Might on the cheek neglected die.
Not so ; he eats the dish she dresses,
Tells her she's kind, and likes her messes ;
Abroad for dainties he'll not roam,
For every thing is best at home.
The little prattlers have their share
Proportioned with exactest care ;
The young ones on each knee are set,—
Calls this good boy, and that his pet ;
The rest all climbing up his side,
Petition for to-morrow's ride.

Thus closes many a rural day,
From ploughing fields to mowing hay,
And on to harvest's golden reign,
Till winter sweeps the barren plain ;
Still every season finds him blest
Whose wishes on his conscience rest ;

Rest ever must that man attend
Who is to all his kind a friend!



PITY'S DESCENT TO EARTH,

AND ADVICE TO FRIENDSHIP.

WHEN from mount Ida "cloud-compelling Jove"
Cast round his eye of universal love,
And saw mankind with various ills oppress'd,
A heaving sigh came labouring from his breast;
Not e'en can Jove the ills of life restrain,
Nor his the power to free poor man from pain;
E'en he submits to Fate's all-powerful sway,
And the three Sisters all the gods obey;
The web of life keeps them in close employ,
Yet the fair web they weave but to destroy;
In vain the spindle from the distaff whirls,
Lengthens by fits, and as it lengthens twirls;
The chequer'd warp, for longer days begun,
With changeful shades is in succession run;
In the soft loom the silken tissue flows,
And brighter hues succeed the cloud of woes.
But oft as the gay shuttle glides along,
Skimming with ease the lighter shades among,
The fatal shears the fragile threads untie,
And the cropt rose gives up her crimson dye;
The distant views that dawn'd with early morn
Shut up their vistas e'er the eve's return;