



T H E
R U I N S of R O M E.
A
P O E M.

By the Same,

*Aspice murorum moles, præruptaque saxa,
Obrutaque horrenti vasta theatra situ:
Hæc sunt Roma. Viden' velut ipsa cadavera tantæ
Urbis adhuc spirent imperiosa minas?*

Janus Vitalis.

E NOUGH of Grongar, and the shady dales
Of winding Towy, Merlin's fabled haunt,
I sung inglorious. Now the love of arts,
And what in metal or in stone remains
Of proud antiquity, thro' various realms
And various languages and ages fam'd,
Bears me remote, o'er Gallia's woody bounds,
O'er the cloud-piercing Alps remote; beyond
The vale of Arno purpled with the vine,
Beyond the Umbrian and Etruscan hills,
To Latium's wide champain, forlorn and waste,
Where

Where yellow Tiber his neglected wave
Mournfully rolls. Yet once again, my Muse,
Yet once again, and soar a loftier flight;
Lo the resistless theme, imperial Rome.

Fall'n, fall'n, a silent heap; her heroes all
Sunk in their urns; behold the pride of pomp,
The throne of nations fall'n; obscure in dust;
Ev'n yet majestic; the solemn scene
Elates the soul, while now the rising sun
Flames on the ruins in the purer air
Tow'ring aloft, upon the glitt'ring plain,
Like broken rocks, a vast circumference;
Rent palaces, crush'd columns, rifted moles,
Fanes roll'd on fanes, and tombs on buried tombs.

Deep lies in dust the Theban obelisc,
Immense along the waste; minuter art,
Gliconian forms, or Phidian, subtly fair,
O'erwhelming; as th' immense LEVIATHAN
The finny brood, when near Ierne's shore
Out-stretch'd, unwieldly, his island length appears
Above the foamy flood. Globose and huge,
Grey-mould'ring temples swell, and wide o'ercast
The solitary landscape, hills and woods,
And boundless wilds; while the vine-mantled brows
The pendent goats unveil, regardless they
Of hourly peril, though the clefted domes
Tremble to every wind. The pilgrim oft
At dead of night, 'mid his oraison hears

Aghast

Aghast the voice of time, disparting tow'rs,
 Tumbling all precipitate down-dash'd,
 Rattling around, loud thund'ring to the moon :
 While murmurs sooth each awful interval
 Of ever-falling waters ; shrouded Nile ^a,
 Eridanus, and Tiber with his twins,
 And palmy Euphrates ; they with dropping locks,
 Hang o'er their urns, and mournfully among
 The plaintive-echoing ruins pour their streams.

Yet here advent'rous in the sacred search
 Of ancient arts, the delicate of mind,
 Curious and modest, from all climes resort,
 Grateful society ! with these I raise
 The toilsome step up the proud Palatin,
 'Through spiry cypress groves, and tow'ring pine,
 Waving aloft o'er the big ruins brows,
 On num'rous arches rear'd : and frequent stopp'd,
 The sunk ground startles me with dreadful chasm,
 Breathing forth darkness from the vast profound
 Of isles and halls, within the mountain's womb.
 Nor these the nether works ; all these beneath,
 And all beneath the vales and hills around,
 Extend the cavern'd sewers, massy, firm,
 As the Sibyline grot beside the dead
 Lake of Avernus ; such the sewers huge,
 Whither the great Tarquinian genius dooms

^a *Fountains at Rome adorned with the statues of those rivers.*

Each wave impure ; and proud with added rains,
 Hark how the mighty billows lash their vaults,
 And thunder ; how they heave their rocks in vain !
 Though now incessant Time has roll'd around
 A thousand winters o'er the changeful world,
 And yet a thousand since, th' indignant floods
 Roar loud in their firm bounds, and dash and swell,
 In vain ; convey'd to Tiber's lowest wave.

Hence over airy plains, by crystal founts,
 That weave their glitt'ring waves with tuneful lapse,
 Among the sleeky pebbles, agate clear,
 Cerulean opHITE, and the flow'ry vein
 Of orient jasper, pleas'd I move along,
 And vases boss'd, and huge inscriptive stones,
 And intermingling vines ; and figur'd nymphs,
 Flora's and Chloe's of delicious mould,
 Cheering the darkness ; and deep empty tombs,
 And dells, and mould'ring shrines, with old decay
 Rustick and green and wide-embow'ring shades,
 Shot from the crooked clefts of nodding tow'rs ;
 A solemn wilderness ! With error sweet,
 I wind the ling'ring step, where-e'er the path
 Mazy conducts me, which the vulgar foot
 O'er sculptures main'd has made ; Anubis, Sphinx,
 Idols of antique guise, and horned Pan,
 Terrifick, monstrous shapes ! propost'rous gods,
 Of Fear and Ign'rance, by the sculptor's hand
 Hewn into form, and worship'd ; as ev'n now

Blindly

Blindly they worship at their breathless mouths^b
 In varied appellations : men to these
 (From depth to depth in dark'ning error fall'n)
 At length ascrib'd th' INAPPLICABLE NAME.

How doth it please and fill the memory
 With deeds of brave renown, while on each hand
 Historick urns and breathing statues rise,
 And speaking busts ! Sweet Scipio, Marius stern;
 Pompey superb, the spirit-stirring form
 Of Cæsar raptur'd with the charm of rule
 And boundless fame ; impatient for exploits,
 His eager eyes upcast, he soars in thought
 Above all height : and his own Brutus see,
 Desponding Brutus, dubious of the right,
 In evil days, of faith, of publick weal
 Solicitous and sad. Thy next regard
 Be Tully's graceful attitude ; uprais'd,
 His out-stretch'd arm he waves, in act to speak
 Before the silent masters of the world,
 And eloquence arrays him. There behold
 Prepar'd for combat in the front of war
 The pious brothers ; jealous Alba stands
 In fearful expectation of the strife,
 And youthful Rome intent : the kindred foes
 Fall on each other's neck in silent tears ;
 In sorrowful benevolence embrace —

^b Several statues of the Pagan gods have been converted
 into images of saints.

Howe'er they soon unsheath the flashing sword,
 Their country calls to arms, now all in vain
 The mother clasps the knee, and ev'n the fair
 Now weeps in vain; their country calls to arms.
 Such virtue Clelia, Cocles, Manlius, rous'd;
 Such were the Fabii, Decii; so inspir'd
 The Scipio's battled, and the Gracchi spoke:
 So rose the Roman state. Me now, of these
 Deep-musing, high ambitious thoughts inflame
 Greatly to serve my country, distant land,
 And build me virtuous fame; nor shall the dust
 Of these fall'n piles with shew of sad decay
 Avert the good resolve, mean argument,
 The fate alone of matter. — Now the brow
 We gain enraptur'd; beauteously distinct^c
 The num'rous portico's and domes upswell,
 With obelisks and columns interpos'd,
 And pine, and fir, and oak: so fair a scene
 Sees not the dervise from the spiral tomb
 Of ancient Chammos, while his eye beholds
 Proud Memphis' reliques o'er th' Ægyptian plain:
 Nor hoary hermit from Hymettus' brow,
 Though graceful Athens, in the vale beneath.
 Along the windings of the Muse's stream,
 Lucid Ilyffus, weeps her silent schools,
 And groves, unvisited by bard or sage.

^c From the Palatin hill one sees most of the remarkable antiquities.

Amid the tow'ry ruins, huge, supreme,
 Th' enormous amphitheatre behold,
 Mountainous pile! o'er whose capacious womb
 Pours the broad firmament its varied light;
 While from the central floor the seats ascend
 Round above round, slow-wid'ning to the verge,
 A circuit vast and high; nor less had held
 Imperial Rome, and her attendant realms,
 When drunk with rule she will'd the fierce delight,
 And op'd the gloomy caverns, whence out-rush'd
 Before th' innumerable shouting crowd
 The fiery, madd'd, tyrants of the wilds,
 Lions and tygers, wolves and elephants,
 And desp'rate men, more fell. Abhorr'd intent!
 By frequent converse with familiar death,
 To kindle brutal daring apt for war;
 To lock the breast, and steel th' obdurate heart,
 Amid the piercing cries of sore distress
 Impenetrable.—But away thine eye;
 Behold yon steepy cliff; the modern pile
 Perchance may now delight, while that rever'd^a
 In ancient days, the page alone declares,
 Or narrow coin through dim cærulean rust.
 The fane was Jove's, its spacious golden roof,
 O'er thick-surrounding temples beaming wide,
 Appear'd, as when above the morning hills
 Half the round sun ascends; and tow'r'd aloft,

^a *The Capitol.*

Sustain'd by columns huge, innumeros
 As cedars proud on Canaan's verdant heights
 Dark'ning their idols, when Astarte lur'd
 Too prosp'rous Israel from his living strength.

And next regard yon venerable dome,
 Which virtuous Latium, with erroneous aim,
 Rais'd to her various deities, and nam'd
 Pantheon; plain and round; of this our world
 Majestick emblem; with peculiar grace,
 Before its ample orb, projected stands
 The many-pillar'd portal; noblest work
 Of human skill, here, curious architect,
 If thou assay'st, ambitious, to surpass
 Palladius, Angelus, or British Jones,
 On these fair walls extend the certain scale,
 And turn th' instructive compass: careful mark
 How far in hidden art, the noble plain
 Extends, and where the lovely forms commence
 Of flowing sculpture: nor neglect to note
 How range the taper columns, and what weight
 Their leafy brows sustain: fair Corinth first
 Boasted their order which Callimachus
 (Reclining studious on Asopus' banks
 Beneath an urn of some lamented nymph)
 Haply compos'd; the urn with foliage curl'd
 Thinly conceal'd, the chapter inform'd.

See the tall obelisks from Memphis old,
 One stone enormous each, or Thebes convey'd;

Like Albion's spires they rush into the skies.
 And there the temple, where the summon'd state^e
 In deep of night conven'd: ev'n yet methinks
 The veh'ment orator in rent attire
 Persuasion pours, ambition sinks her crest;
 And lo the villain, like a troubled sea,
 That tosses up her mire! Ever disguis'd,
 Shall treason walk? shall proud oppression yoke
 The neck of virtue? Lo the wretch abash'd,
 Self-betray'd Catiline! O Liberty,
 Parent of happiness, celestial born;
 When the first man became a living soul,
 His sacred genius thou; be Britain's care;
 With her secure, prolong thy lov'd retreat;
 Thence blest mankind; while yet among her sons,
 Ev'n yet there are, to shield thine equal laws,
 Whose bosoms kindle at the sacred names
 Of Cecil, Raleigh, Walsingham, and Drake.
 May others more delight in tuneful airs;
 In masque and dance excell; to sculptur'd stone
 Give with superior skill the living look;
 More pompous piles erect, or pencil soft
 With warmer touch the visionary board:
 Be thou, thy nobler Britons teach to rule;
 To check the ravage of tyrannick sway;
 To quell the proud; to spread the joys of peace
 And various blessings of ingenious trade.

^e *The temple of Concord, where the senate met on Catiline's conspiracy.*

Be these our arts ; and ever may we guard,
 Ever defend thee with undaunted heart,
 Inestimable good ! who giv'st us Truth,
 Whose hand upleads to light, divinest Truth,
 Array'd in ev'ry charm : whose hand benign
 Teaches unwearied toil to cloath the fields,
 And on his various fruits inscribes the name
 Of Property : O nobly hail'd of old
 By thy majestick daughters, Judah fair,
 And Tyrus and Sidonia, lovely nymphs,
 And Libya bright, and all-enchanting Greece,
 Whose num'rous towns and isles, and peopled seas,
 Rejoic'd around her lyre ; th' heroic note
 (Smit with sublime delight) Aufonia caught,
 And plan'd imperial Rome. Thy hand benign
 Rear'd up her tow'ry battlements in strength ;
 Bent her wide bridges o'er the swelling stream
 Of Tuscan Tiber ; thine those solemn domes
 Devoted to the voice of humble pray'r ;
 And thine those piles undeck'd, capacious, vast^f
 In days of dearth, where tender Charity
 Dispens'd her timely succours to the poor.
 Thine too those musically-falling founts
 To flake the clammy lip ; adown they fall,
 Musical ever ; while from yon blue hills
 Dim in the clouds, the radiant aqueducts
 Turn their innumerable arches o'er

^f *The publick granaries.*

The spacious desert, bright'ning in the sun,
 Proud and more proud, in their august approach :
 High o'er irriguous vales and woods and towns,
 Glide the soft whispering waters in the wind,
 And here united pour their silver streams
 Among the figur'd rocks, in murm'ring falls,
 Musical ever. These thy beauteous works :
 And what beside felicity could tell
 Of human benefit : more late the rest ;
 At various times their turrets chanc'd to rise,
 When impious tyranny vouchsaf'd to smile.

Behold by Tiber's flood, where modern Rome ^{is}
 Couches beneath the ruins : there of old
 With arms and trophies gleam'd the field of Mars :
 There to their daily sports the noble youth
 Rush'd emulous ; to fling the pointed lance ;
 To vault the steed ; or with the kindling wheel
 In dusty whirlwinds sweep the trembling goal ;
 Or wrestling, cope with adverse swelling breasts,
 Strong, grappling arms, clos'd heads, and distant feet ;
 Or clash the lifted gauntlets : there they form'd
 Their ardent virtues : lo the bossy piles,
 The proud triumphal arches ; all their wars,
 Their conquests, honours, in the sculptures live.
 And see from every gate those ancient roads,

^{is} *Modern Rome stands chiefly on the old Campus Martius.*

With

With tombs high-verg'd, the solemn paths of Fame:
 Deserve they not regard? O'er whose broad flints
 Such crowds have roll'd, so many storms of war;
 Such trains of consuls, tribunes, sages, kings;
 So many pomps; so many wond'ring realms:
 Yet still through mountains pierc'd, o'er vallies rais'd,
 In even state, to distant seas around,
 They stretch their pavements. Lo the fane of Peace,
 Built by that prince, who to the trust of pow'r^h
 Was honest, the delight of human kind.
 Three nodding isles remain; the rest an heap
 Of sand and weeds; her shrines, her radiant roofs
 And columns proud, that from her spacious floor,
 As from a shining sea, majestick rose
 An hundred foot aloft, like stately beech
 Around the brim of Dion's glassy lake,
 Charming the mimick painter: on the walls
 Hung Salem's sacred spoils; the golden board,
 And golden trumpets, now conceal'd, entomb'd
 By the sunk roof.—O'er which in distant view
 Th' Etruscan mountains swell, with ruins crown'd
 Of ancient towns; and blue Soracte spires,
 Wrapping his sides in tempests. Eastward hence,
 Nigh where the Cestian pyramid dividesⁱ

^h Begun by Vespasian, and finished by Titus.

ⁱ The tomb of Cestius, partly within, and partly without
the walls.

The mould'ring wall, behold yon'fabrick huge,
 Whose dust the solemn antiquarian turns,
 And thence in broken sculptures cast abroad,
 Like Sybil's leaves, collects the builder's name
 Rejoic'd, and the green medals frequent found
 Doom Caracalla to perpetual fame :
 The stately pines, that spread their branches wide
 In the dun ruins of its ample halls, ^k
 Appear but tufts ; as may whate'er is high
 Sink in comparifon, minute and vile.

These, and unnumber'd, yet their brows uplift,
 Rent of their graces ; as Britannia's oaks
 On Merlin's mount, or Snowden's rugged fides,
 Stand in the clouds, their branches scatter'd round,
 After the tempest ; Mausoleums, Cirques,
 Naumachios, Forums ; Trajan's column tall,
 From whose low base the sculptures wind aloft,
 And lead through various toils, up the rough steep,
 Its hero to the skies : and his dark tow'r ^l
 Whose execrable hand the city fir'd,
 And while the dreadful conflagration blaz'd,
 Play'd to the flames ; and Phœbus' letter'd dome ; ^m
 And the rough reliques of Carinæ's street,
 Where now the shepherd to his nibbling sheep
 Sits piping with his oaten reed ; as erst

^k *The baths of Caracalla, a vast ruin.*

^l *Nero's.*

^m *The Palatin library.*

There pip'd the shepherd to his nibbling sheep,
 When th' humble roof Anchifes' son explor'd
 Of good Evander, wealth-despising king,
 Amid the thickets: so revolves the scene;
 So time ordains, who rolls the things of pride
 From dust again to dust. Behold that heap
 Of mould'ring urns (their ashes blown away,
 Dust of the mighty) the same story tell;
 And at its base, from whence the serpent glides
 Down the green desert street, yon hoary monk
 Laments the same, the vision as he views,
 The solitary, silent, solemn scene,
 Where Cæsars, heroes, peasants, hermits lie,
 Blended in dust together; where the slave
 Rests from his labours; where th' insulting proud
 Relinquishes his pow'r; the miser drops his hoard;
 Where human folly sleeps.—There is a mood,
 (I sing not to the vacant and the young)
 There is a kindly mood of melancholy,
 That wings the soul, and points her to the skies;
 When tribulation cloaths the child of man,
 When age descends with sorrow to the grave,
 'Tis sweetly-soothing sympathy to pain,
 A gently wak'ning call to health and ease.
 How musical! when all-devouring Time,
 Here sitting on his throne of ruins hoar,
 While winds and tempests sweep his various lyre,
 How sweet thy diapason, Melancholy!

Cool

Cool ev'ning comes ; the setting sun displays
 His visible great round between yon tow'rs,
 As through two shady cliffs ; away, my Muse,
 Though yet the prospect pleases, ever new
 In vast variety, and yet delight
 The many-figur'd sculptures of the path
 Half beauteous, half effac'd ; the traveller
 Such antique marbles to his native land
 Oft hence conveys ; and ev'ry realm and state
 With Rome's august remains, heroes and gods,
 Deck their long galleries and winding groves ;
 Yet miss we not th' innumerable thefts,
 Yet still profuse of graces teems the waste.

Suffice it now th' Esquilian mount to reach
 With weary wing, and seek the sacred rests
 Of Maro's humble tenement ; a low
 Plain wall remains ; a little sun-gilt heap,
 Grotesque and wild ; the gourd and olive brown
 Weave the light roof ; the gourd and olive fan
 Their am'rous foliage, mingling with the vine,
 Who drops her purple clusters through the green.
 Here let me lie, with pleasing fancy sooth'd :
 Here flow'd his fountain ; here his laurels grew ;
 Here oft the meek good man, the lofty bard
 Fram'd the celestial song, or social walk'd
 With Horace and the ruler of the world ;
 Happy Augustus ! who so well inspir'd
 Could'ft throw thy pomps and royalties aside,

Attentive

Attentive to the wise, the great of soul,
 And dignify thy mind. Thrice glorious days,
 Auspicious to the Muses! then rever'd,
 Then hallow'd was the fount, or secret shade,
 Or open mountain, or whatever scene
 The poet chose to tune th' ennobling rhyme
 Melodious; ev'n the rugged sons of war,
 Ev'n the rude hinds rever'd the Poet's name:
 But now—another age, alas! is ours—
 Yet will the Muse a little longer soar,
 Unless the clouds of care weigh down her wing,
 Since nature's stores are shut with cruel hand,
 And each aggrieves his brother; since in vain
 The thirsty pilgrim at the fountain asks
 Th' o'erflowing wave—Enough—the plaint disdain.—

See'st thou yon fane? ev'n now incessant timeⁿ
 Sweeps her low mould'ring marbles to the dust;
 And Phœbus' temple, nodding with its woods
 Threatens huge ruin o'er the small rotund.
 'Twas there beneath a fig-tree's umbrage broad,
 Th' astonish'd swains with rev'rend awe beheld
 Thee, O Quirinus, and thy brother-twin,
 Pressing the teat within a monster's grasp
 Sportive; while oft the gaunt and rugged wolf
 Turn'd her stretch'd neck and form'd your tender limbs:
 So taught of Jove, ev'n the fell savage fed

ⁿ *The temple of Romulus and Remus under mount Palatin.*

Your

Your sacred infancies, your virtues, toils,
 The conquests, glories, of th' Ausonian state,
 Wrapp'd in their secret feeds. Each kindred soul,
 Robust and stout, ye grapple to your hearts,
 And little Rome appears. Her cots arise,
 Green twigs of osier weave the slender walls,
 Green rushes spread the roofs; and here and there
 Opens beneath the rock the gloomy cave.
 Elate with joy Etruscan Tiber views
 Her spreading scenes enamelling his waves,
 Her huts and hollow dells, and flocks and herds,
 And gath'ring swains; and rolls his yellow car
 To Neptune's court with more majestic train.
 Her speedy growth alarm'd the states around
 Jealous, yet soon by wond'rous virtue won,
 They sink into her bosom. From the plough
 Rose her dictators; fought, o'ercame, return'd,
 Yes, to the plough return'd, and hail'd their peers;
 For then no private pomp, no household state,
 The publick only swell'd the gen'rous breast.
 Who has not heard the Fabian heroes sung?
 Dentatus' scars, or Mutius' flaming hand?
 How Manlius sav'd the Capitol? the choice
 Of steady Regulus? As yet they stood,
 Simple of life; as yet seducing wealth
 Was unexplor'd, and shame of poverty
 Yet unimagin'd—Shine not all the fields
 With various fruitage? murmur not the brooks

Along

Along the flow'ry vallies ? They, content,
 Feasted at nature's hand, indelicate,
 Blithe, in their easy taste ; and only fought
 To know their duties ; that their only strife,
 Their gen'rous strife, and greatly to perform.
 They through all shapes of peril and of pain,
 Intent on honour, dar'd in thickest death
 To snatch the glorious deed. Nor Trebia quell'd,
 Nor Thrasymene, nor Cannæ's bloody field,
 Their dauntless courage ; storming Hannibal
 In vain the thunder of the battle roll'd,
 The thunder of the battle they return'd
 Back on his Punick shores ; 'till Carthage fell,
 And danger fled afar. The city gleam'd
 With precious spoils : alas prosperity !
 Ah baneful state ! yet ebb'd not all their strength
 In soft luxurious pleasures ; proud desire
 Of boundless sway, and fev'rish thirst of gold,
 Rous'd them again to battle. Beauteous Greece,
 Torn from her joys, in vain with languid arm
 Half rais'd her rusty shield ; nor could avail
 The sword of Dacia, nor the Parthian dart ;
 Nor yet the car of that fam'd British chief,
 Which seven brave years beneath the doubtful wing
 Of vict'ry, dreadful roll'd its griding wheels
 Over the bloody war : the Roman arms
 Triumph'd, 'till Fame was silent of their foes.

And

And now the world unrivall'd they enjoy'd
 In proud security : the crested helm,
 The plated greave and corselet hung unbrac'd ;
 Nor clank'd their arms, the spear and sounding shield,
 But on the glitt'ring trophy to the wind.

Diffolv'd in ease and soft delights they lie,
 'Till ev'ry sun annoys, and ev'ry wind
 Has chilling force, and ev'ry rain offends :
 For now the frame no more is girt with strength
 Masculine, nor in lustiness of heart
 Laughs at the winter storm, and summer beam,
 Superior to their rage : enfeebling vice
 Withers each nerve, and opens every pore
 To painful feeling : flow'ry bow'rs they seek
 (As æther prompts, as the sick sense approves)
 Or cool Nymphæan grotts ; or tepid baths
 (Taught by the soft Ionians) they, along
 The lawny vale, of ev'ry beauteous stone,
 Pile in the roseat air with fond expence :
 Through silver channels glide the vagrant waves,
 And fall on silver beds crystalline down,
 Melodious murmuring ; while luxury
 Over their naked limbs, with wanton hand,
 Sheds roses, odours, sheds unheeded bane.

Swift is the flight of wealth ; unnumber'd wants,
 Brood of volupt'ousness, cry out aloud
 Necessity, and seek the splendid bribe.
 The citron board, the bowl emboss'd with gems,

And

And tender foliage wildly wreath'd around
 Of seeming ivy, by that artful hand,
 Corinthian Thericles ; whate'er is known
 Of rarest acquisition ; Tyrian garbs,
 Neptunian Albion's high testaceous food,
 And flavour'd Chian wines with incense fum'd
 To shake Patrician thirst : for these, their rights
 In the vile streets they prostitute to sale ;
 Their ancient rights, their dignities, their laws,
 Their native glorious freedom. Is there none,
 Is there no villain, that will bind the neck
 Stretch'd to the yoke ? they come ; the market throngs.
 But who has most by fraud or force amass'd ?
 Who most can charm corruption with his doles ?
 He be the monarch of the state ; and lo !
 Didius, vile us'rer, through the crowd he mounts,^o
 Beneath his feet the Roman eagle cow'rs,
 And the red arrows fill his grasp uncouth.
 O Britons, O my countrymen, beware,
 Gird, gird your hearts ; the Romans once were free,
 Were brave, were virtuous.—Tyranny howe'er
 Deign'd to walk forth awhile in pageant state,
 And with licentious pleasures fed the rout,
 The thoughtless many : to the wanton sound
 Of fifes and drums they danc'd, or in the shade
 Sung Cæsar, great and terrible in war,
 Immortal Cæsar ! lo, a God, a God,

^o *Didius Julianus, who bought the empire.*

He cleaves the yielding skies ! Cæsar mean while
 Gathers the ocean pebbles ; or the gnat
 Enrag'd pursues ; or at his lonely meal
 Starves a wide province ; tastes, dislikes, and flings
 To dogs and sycophants : a God, a God !
 The flow'ry shades and shrines obscene return.

But see along the north the tempest swell
 O'er the rough Alps, and darken all their snows !
 Sudden the Goth and Vandal, dreaded names,
 Rush as the breach of waters, whelming all
 Their domes, their villa's ; down the festive piles,
 Down fall their Parian porches, gilded baths,
 And roll before the storm in clouds of dust.

Vain end of human strength, of human skill,
 Conquest, and triumph, and domain, and pomp,
 And ease and luxury ! O luxury,
 Bane of elated life, of affluent states,
 What dreary change, what ruin is not thine ?
 How doth thy bowl intoxicate the mind !
 To the soft entrance of thy rosy cave
 How dost thou lure the fortunate and great !
 Dreadful attraction ! while behind thee gapes
 Th' unfathomable gulph where Ashur lies
 O'erwhelm'd, forgotten ; and high-boasting Cham ;
 And Elam's haughty pomp ; and beauteous Greece ;
 And the great queen of earth, imperial ROME.