

The COUNTRY PARSON.

I.

BETWEEN the smooth descent of yonder hills,
 Deep in the vale with tufted trees beset ;
 Whose antique roots are wash'd with brawling rills,
 Whose leafy arms the summer's rage defeat,
 There stands a country parson's calm retreat.
 View well the silent shade with sober eye,
 And wonder at the courtier's swollen luxury.

II.

See to his garden's pale where close ally'd
 A decent church the neighbouring glebe commands ;
 Whose steeple's stock'd with bells, (the country's pride)
 Whose beams are wreath'd about with virgin bands,
 Wove on the bridal day by virgin hands.
 The surplice clean, and chancel newly whited,
 That with the good man's neatness all must be delighted.

III.

His house stands near, (this church's younger brother)
 Whose furniture shews housewifely, and neat ;
 A little garden runs from one to t' other,
 Stately in use, excluding useless state,
 In which a yew tree stands of ancient date :
 And near it rosemary climbs up the wall ;
 Or else imperfect were the rites of funeral.

IV. Him

IV.

Him liveth near in gentle neighbourhood
 An heartsome friend, replete with bounteous love,
 Whose generous wine long time hath corked stood,
 (Not to avoid the taste but to improve ;)
 With him the good man's moments softly move :
 Nor yet compleat, if I shou'd leave untold
 The dame who of his joys sweet partnership doth hold.

V.

Well knows she when to govern, when obey,
 Vers'd in the rights and laws of womanhood ;
 Nor hath she too much wisdom to be gay,
 Nor hath she so much wit to be o'er-loud :
 Nor hath she so much beauty to be proud ;
 But cheerful sense and decent mirth impart
 The sweet domestic joys of a well-natur'd heart.

VI.

Eight years hath heav'n possess'd them of a boy,
 Who loves a sister younger by a year ;
 And as they prank about, with silent joy
 They sit and smile upon the prattling pair,
 (Who two sweet roses on one stalk appear)
 And think upon themselves once fair and young,
 Before soft Cupid's golden bow became unstrung.

VII. Each

VII.

Each fun arifes fresh with sweet content,
 And leads them on a courfe of new delight ;
 With the fame joy the summer's day is spent,
 And o'er a cheerful fire their winter night.
 Such are their joys who spend their lives aright :
 Tho' feafons change, no fenfe of change they know,
 But with an equal eye view all things here below.

VIII.

When th' amorous earth is woo'd with fmiling weather,
 To wear the verdant mantle of the fpring ;
 Forth walk the little family together
 To fee the wood, and hear its natives fmg ;
 The flow'rs fweet odours to their fenfes bring :
 The world appears in bloffom, far and near
 Joyful they view the purple promife of the year.

IX.

Summer beholds the good man near his bride,
 In fweet contentment fmoaking in his chair ;
 He views the flocks nibbling the mountain's fide,
 And ev'ry tenth he reckons to his fhare.
 Now to the hay field walk the happy pair,
 And with fuch kindnefs greet the country folk,
 The parfon's bufh is plac'd upon the biggeft cock.

X. The

X.

The promis'd fruit now fills the teeming soil,
 And certain plenty all his doubts relieves ;
 The peach he planted pays his honest toil,
 The farmer brings him home his yellow sheaves,
 And his stuff'd barn the willing tax receives.
 His servants to his loaded orchards hye,
 To lay in liquid stores for future jollity.

XI.

When icy bands the stiffened wave enfold,
 Still is the parson with contentment crown'd ;
 The cheerful blaze chaces the chilly cold,
 In circling cups all winter thoughts are drown'd,
 And no ill nature sends the laugh around ;
 Or he, in study pent, thinks what to say,
 May touch, yet not offend the squire next sabbath day.

XII.

Thus, still in age the same, he journeys on,
 Till envious Fate o'ertake him on the road ;
 For the calm pleasures of the holy man
 Claim not the madness of a youthful blood.
 For many winters thus serenely stood,
 Strong in its smooth decline, the sturdy oak,
 Till came from heav'n th' unfear'd and unresisted stroke.