

To Mr. WHITEHEAD,
On his being made POET LAUREAT.

By the Same.

'T IS so — tho' we're surpriz'd to hear it:
The laurel is bestow'd on merit.

How hush'd is ev'ry envious voice!
Confounded by so just a choice,
Tho' by prescriptive right prepar'd
To libel the selected bard.

But as you see the statesman's fate
In this our democratic state,
Whom virtue strives in vain to guard
From the rude pamphlet and the card;
You'll find the demagogues of Pindus
In envy not a jot behind us:
For each Aonian politician
(Whose element is opposition,)
Will shew how greatly they surpass us,
In gall and wormwood at Parnassus.

Thus as the same detracting spirit
Attends on all distinguish'd merit,
When 'tis your turn, observe, the quarrel
Is not with you, but with the laurel.

Suppose that laurel on your brow,
For cypress chang'd, funereal bough!

See all things take a diff'rent turn !
 The very critics sweetly mourn,
 And leave their satire's pois'nous sting
 In plaintive elegies to sing :
 With solemn threnody and dirge
 Conduct you to Elyfium's verge.
 At Westminster the fupplic'd dean
 The fad but honorable fcene
 Prepares. The well-attended herfe
 Bears you amid the kings of verfe.
 Each rite obferv'd, each duty paid,
 Your fame on marble is difplay'd,
 With fymbols which your genius fuit,
 The mafk, the bufkin, and the flute :
 The laurel crown aloft is hung :
 And o'er the fculptur'd lyre unstrung
 Sad allegoric figures leaning——
 (How folks will gape to find their meaning !)
 And a long epitaph is fpread,
 Which happy you will never read.
 But hold—The change is fo inviting
 I own, I tremble while I'm writing.
 Yet, WHITEHEAD, 'tis too foon to lofe you :
 Let critics flatter or abufe you,
 O ! teach us, e'er you change the fcene
 To Stygian banks from Hippocrene,
 How free-born bards fhould ftrike the ftrings,
 And how a Briton write to kings.