

A FAITHFUL FRIEND IS THE MEDICINE OF
LIFE.

SON OF SIRACH.

IN the dreams of delight, which with ardour we seek,
Oft the phantom of sorrow appears ;
And the roses of pleasure, which bloom in your cheek,
Must be steeped in the dew of your tears :

Mid the fountain of bliss, when it sparkles most bright,
Salt mixtures embitter the spring,
Though its lustre may tremble through bowers of delight,
In the draught disappointment will sting.

But if Heaven hath one cup of enjoyment bestowed,
Unmingled and sweet as its own,
In the streams of affection its bounty hath flowed,
And there we may taste it alone.

But the pure simple drops Love would seize as his prize
And defile them with passion's foul tide;
While the bowl he prepares as it dazzles our eyes
The poison of anguish can hide.

Let Friendship the stream, as it flows calm and clear,
Receive unpolluted for me;
Or if tenderness mingle a sigh or a tear,
The draught still the sweeter will be.

But let me reject the too-high flavoured bowl
Affectation or Flattery compose,
From Sincerity's urn thus transparent shall roll
The cordial of peace and repose.

Oh! give me the friend, from whose warm, faithful breast
The sigh breathes responsive to mine,
Where my cares may obtain the soft pillow of rest,
And my sorrows may love to recline.

Not the friend who my hours of pleasure will share,
But abide not the season of grief;
Who fies from the brow that is darkened by care,
And the silence that looks for relief.

Not the friend who, suspicious of change or of guile,
Would shrink from a confidence free;
Nor him who with fondness complacent can smile
On the eye that looks coldly on me.

As the mirror that, just to each blemish or grace,
To myself will my image reflect,
But to none but myself will that image retrace,
Nor picture one absent defect.

To my soul let my friend be a mirror as true,
Thus my faults from all others conceal;
Nor, absent, those failings or follies renew,
Which from Heaven and from man he should veil.