

Classic Poetry Series

Charlotte Smith
- poems -

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Charlotte Smith(4 May 1749 – 28 October 1806)

Charlotte Turner Smith was an English Romantic poet and novelist. She initiated a revival of the English sonnet, helped establish the conventions of Gothic fiction, and wrote political novels of sensibility.

Smith was born into a wealthy family and received a typical education for a woman during the late 18th century. However, her father's reckless spending forced her to marry early. In a marriage that she later described as prostitution, she was given by her father to the violent and profligate Benjamin Smith. Their marriage was deeply unhappy, although they had twelve children together. Charlotte joined Benjamin in debtor's prison, where she wrote her first book of poetry, *Elegiac Sonnets*. Its success allowed her to help pay for Benjamin's release. Benjamin's father attempted to leave money to Charlotte and her children upon his death, but legal technicalities prevented her from ever acquiring it.

Charlotte Smith eventually left Benjamin and began writing to support their children. Smith's struggle to provide for her children and her frustrated attempts to gain legal protection as a woman provided themes for her poetry and novels; she included portraits of herself and her family in her novels as well as details about her life in her prefaces. Her early novels are exercises in aesthetic development, particularly of the Gothic and sentimentality. "The theme of her many sentimental and didactic novels was that of a badly married wife helped by a thoughtful sensible lover" (Smith's entry in *British Authors Before 1800: A Biographical Dictionary* Ed. Stanley Kunitz and Howard Haycraft. New York: H.W. Wilson, 1952. pg. 478.) Her later novels, including *The Old Manor House*, often considered her best, support the ideals of the French Revolution.

Smith was a successful writer, publishing ten novels, three books of poetry, four children's books, and other assorted works, over the course of her career. She always saw herself as a poet first and foremost, however, as poetry was considered the most exalted form of literature at the time. Smith's poetry and prose was praised by contemporaries such as Romantic poets [William Wordsworth](http://www.poemhunter.com/william-wordsworth/) and [Samuel Coleridge](http://www.poemhunter.com/samuel-taylor-coleridge/) as well as novelist Walter Scott. After 1798, Smith's popularity waned and by 1803 she was destitute and ill—she could barely hold a pen. She had to sell her books to pay off her debts. In 1806, Smith died. Largely forgotten by the middle of the 19th century, her works have now been republished and she is recognized as an important Romantic writer.

Early life

Smith was born on 4 May 1749 in London and baptized on 12 June; she was the oldest child of well-to-do Nicholas Turner and Anna Towers. Her two younger siblings, Nicholas and Catherine Ann, were born within the next five years. Smith's childhood was shaped by her mother's early death (probably in giving birth to Catherine) and her father's reckless spending. After losing his wife, Nicholas Turner traveled and the children were raised by Lucy Towers, their maternal aunt (when exactly their father returned is unknown). At the age of six, Charlotte went to school in Chichester and took drawing lessons from the painter George Smith. Two years later, she, her aunt, and her sister moved to London and she attended a girls school in Kensington where she learned dancing, drawing, music, and acting. She loved to read and wrote poems, which her father encouraged. She even submitted a few to the *Lady's Magazine* for publication, but they were not accepted.

Marriage and first publication

Smith's father encountered financial difficulties upon his return to England and he was forced to sell some of the family's holdings and to marry the wealthy Henrietta Meriton in 1765. Smith entered society at the age of twelve, leaving school and being tutored at home. On 23 February 1765, at the age of fifteen, she married Benjamin Smith, the son of Richard Smith, a wealthy West Indian merchant and a director of the East India Company. The proposal was accepted for her by her father; forty years later, Smith condemned her father's action, which she wrote had turned her into a "legal prostitute".

Smith's marriage was unhappy. She detested living in commercial Cheapside (the family later moved to Southgate and Tottenham) and argued with her in-laws, who she believed were unrefined and uneducated. They, in turn, mocked her for spending time reading, writing, and drawing. Even worse, Benjamin proved to be violent, unfaithful, and profligate. Only her father-in-law, Richard, appreciated her writing abilities, although he wanted her to use them to further his business interests. Richard Smith owned plantations in Barbados and he and his second wife brought five slaves to England, who, along with their descendants, were included as part of the family property in his will. Although Charlotte Smith later argued against slavery in works such as *The Old Manor House* (1793) and "Beachy Head", she herself benefited from the income and slave labor of Richard Smith's plantations.

In 1766, Charlotte and Benjamin had their first child, who died the next year just

days after the birth of their second, Benjamin Berney (1767–77). Between 1767 and 1785, the couple had ten more children: William Towers (1768–), Charlotte Mary (c. 1769–), Braithwaite (1770–), Nicholas Hankey (1771–1837), Married Anni Petroose (1779–1843), Charles Dyer (1773–), Anna Augusta (1774–94), Lucy Eleanor (1776–), Lionel (1778–1842), Harriet (c. 1782–), and George (c.1785–). Only six of Smith's children survived her.

Smith assisted in the family business that her husband had abandoned by helping Richard Smith with his correspondence. She convinced Richard to set Benjamin up as a gentleman farmer in Hampshire and lived with him at Lys Farm from 1774 until 1783. Worried about Charlotte's future and that of his grandchildren and concerned that his son would continue his irresponsible ways, Richard Smith willed the majority of his property to Charlotte's children. However, because he had drawn up the will himself, the documents contained legal problems. The inheritance, originally worth nearly £36,000, was tied up in chancery after his death in 1776 for almost forty years. Smith and her children saw little of it. (It has been proposed that this real case may have inspired the famous fictional case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, in Dickens's *Bleak House*.) In fact, Benjamin illegally spent at least a third of the legacy and ended up in King's Bench Prison in December 1783. Smith moved in with him and it was in this environment that she wrote and published her first work, *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784). *Elegiac Sonnets* achieved instant success, allowing Charlotte to pay for their release from prison. Smith's sonnets helped initiate a revival of the form and granted an aura of respectability to her later novels (poetry was considered the highest art form at the time). Smith revised *Elegiac Poems* several times over the years, eventually creating a two-volume work.

Novelist

After Benjamin Smith was released from prison, the entire family moved to Dieppe, France to avoid further creditors. Charlotte returned to negotiate with them, but failed to come to an agreement. She went back to France and in 1784 began translating works from French into English. In 1787 she published *The Romance of Real Life*, consisting of translated selections from François Gayot de Pitaval's trials. She was forced to withdraw her other translation, *Manon Lescaut*, after it was argued that the work was immoral and plagiarized. In 1786, she published it anonymously.

In 1785, the family returned to England and moved to Wollbeding House near Midhurst, Sussex. Smith's relationship with her husband did not improve and on 15 April 1787, after twenty-two years of marriage, she left him. She wrote that she might "have been contented to reside in the same house with him", had not

"his temper been so capricious and often so cruel" that her "life was not safe". When Charlotte left Benjamin, she did not secure a legal agreement that would protect her profits—he would have access to them under English primogeniture laws. Smith knew that her children's future rested on a successful settlement of the lawsuit over her father-in-law's will, therefore she made every effort to earn enough money to fund the suit and retain the family's genteel status.

Smith claimed the position of gentlewoman, signing herself "Charlotte Smith of Bignor Park" on the title page of *Elegiac Sonnets*. All of her works were published under her own name, "a daring decision" for a woman at the time. Her success as a poet allowed her to make this choice. Throughout her career, Smith identified herself as a poet. Although she published far more prose than poetry and her novels brought her more money and fame, she believed poetry would bring her respectability. As Sarah Zimmerman explains in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, "She prized her verse for the role it gave her as a private woman whose sorrows were submitted only reluctantly to the public."

After separating from her husband, Smith moved to a town near Chichester and decided to write novels, as they would make her more money than poetry. Her first novel, *Emmeline* (1788), was a success, selling 1500 copies within months. She wrote nine more novels in the next ten years: *Ethelinde* (1789), *Celestina* (1791), *Desmond* (1792), *The Old Manor House* (1793), *The Wanderings of Warwick* (1794), *The Banished Man* (1794), *Montalbert* (1795), *Marchmont* (1796), and *The Young Philosopher* (1798). Smith began her career as a novelist during the 1780s at a time when women's fiction was expected to focus on romance and to foreground "a chaste and flawless heroine subjected to repeated melodramatic distresses until reinstated in society by the virtuous hero". Although Smith's novels employed this structure, they also incorporated political commentary, particularly support of the French Revolution, through the voices of male characters. At times, she challenged the typical romance plot by including "narratives of female desire" or "tales of females suffering despotism". Smith's novels contributed to the development of Gothic fiction and the novel of sensibility.

Smith's novels are autobiographical. While a common device at the time, Antje Blank writes in *The Literary Encyclopedia*, "few exploited fiction's potential of self-representation with such determination as Smith". For example, Mr. and Mrs. Stafford in *Emmeline* are portraits of Charlotte and Benjamin. The prefaces to Smith's novels told the story of her own struggles, including the deaths of several of her children. According to Zimmerman, "Smith mourned most publicly for her daughter Anna Augusta, who married an émigré...and died aged twenty in 1795." Smith's prefaces positioned her as both a suffering sentimental heroine as

well as a vocal critic of the laws that kept her and her children in poverty.

Smith's experiences prompted her to argue for legal reforms that would grant women more rights, making the case for these reforms through her novels. Smith's stories showed the "legal, economic, and sexual exploitation" of women by marriage and property laws. Initially readers were swayed by her arguments and writers such as William Cowper patronized her. However, as the years passed, readers became exhausted by Smith's stories of struggle and inequality. Public opinion shifted towards the view of poet [Anna Seward](http://www.poemhunter.com/anna-seward/), who argued that Smith was "vain" and "indelicate" for exposing her husband to "public contempt".

Smith moved frequently due to financial concerns and declining health. During the last twenty years of her life, she lived in: Chichester, Brighton, Storrington, Bath, Exmouth, Weymouth, Oxford, London, Frant, and Elstead. She eventually settled at Tilford, Surrey.

Smith became involved with English radicals while she was living in Brighton from 1791 to 1793. Like them, she supported the French Revolution and its republican principles. Her epistolary novel *Desmond* tells the story of a man who journeys to revolutionary France and is convinced of the rightness of the revolution and contends that England should be reformed as well. The novel was published in June 1792, a year before France and England went to war and before the Reign of Terror began, which shocked the British public, turning them against the revolutionaries. Like many radicals, Smith criticized the French, but she still endorsed the original ideals of the revolution. In order to support her family, Smith had to sell her works, thus she was eventually forced to, as Blank explains, "tone down the radicalism that had characterised the authorial voice in *Desmond* and adopt more oblique techniques to express her libertarian ideals".^[2] She therefore set her next novel, *The Old Manor House* (1793), during the American Revolutionary War, which allowed her to discuss democratic reform without directly addressing the French situation. However, in her last novel, *The Young Philosopher* (1798), Smith wrote a final piece of "outspoken radical fiction". Smith's protagonist leaves Britain for America, as there is no hope for a reform in Britain.

The Old Manor House is "frequently deemed [Smith's] best" novel for its sentimental themes and development of minor characters. Novelist Walter Scott labeled it as such and poet and critic [Anna Laetitia Barbauld](http://www.poemhunter.com/anna-laetitia-barbauld/) chose it for her anthology of *The British Novelists* (1810). As a

successful novelist and poet, Smith communicated with famous artists and thinkers of the day, including musician Charles Burney (father of Frances Burney), poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, scientist and poet Erasmus Darwin, lawyer and radical Thomas Erskine, novelist Mary Hays, playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and poet [Robert Southey](http://www.poemhunter.com/robert-southey/). A wide array of periodicals reviewed her works, including the Anti-Jacobin Review, the Analytical Review, the British Critic, The Critical Review, the European Magazine, the Gentleman's Magazine, the Monthly Magazine, and the Universal Magazine.

Smith earned the most money between 1787 and 1798, after which she was no longer as popular; several reasons have been suggested for the public's declining interest in Smith, including "a corresponding erosion of the quality of her work after so many years of literary labour, an eventual waning of readerly interest as she published, on average, one work per year for twenty-two years, and a controversy that attached to her public profile" as she wrote about the French revolution. Both radical and conservative periodicals criticized her novels about the revolution. Her insistence on pursuing the lawsuit over Richard Smith's inheritance lost her several patrons. Also, her increasingly blunt prefaces made her less appealing to the public.

In order to continue earning money, Smith began writing in less politically charged genres. She published a collection of tales, *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* (1801–02) and the play *What Is She?* (1799, attributed). Her most successful new foray was into children's literature: *Rural Walks* (1795), *Rambles Farther* (1796), *Minor Morals* (1798), and *Conversations Introducing Poetry* (1804). She also wrote two volumes of a history of England (1806) and *A Natural History of Birds* (1807, posthumous). She also returned to writing poetry and *Beachy Head and Other Poems* (1807) was published posthumously. Publishers did not pay as much for these works, however, and by 1803, Smith was poverty-stricken. She could barely afford food and had no coal. She even sold her beloved library of 500 books in order to pay off debts, but feared being sent to jail for the remaining £20.

Illness and death

Smith complained of gout for many years (it was probably rheumatoid arthritis), which made it increasingly difficult and painful for her to write. By the end of her life, it had almost paralyzed her. She wrote to a friend that she was "literally vegetating, for I have very little locomotive powers beyond those that appertain to a cauliflower". On 23 February 1806, her husband died in a debtors' prison and Smith finally received some of the money he owed her, but she was too ill to

do anything with it. She died a few months later, on 28 October 1806, at Tilford and was buried at Stoke Church, Stoke Park, near Guildford. The lawsuit over her father-in-law's estate was settled seven years later, on 22 April 1813, more than thirty-six years after Richard Smith's death.

Legacy

Stuart Curran, the editor of Smith's poems, has written that Smith is "the first poet in England whom in retrospect we would call Romantic". She helped shape the "patterns of thought and conventions of style" for the period. Romantic poet William Wordsworth was the most affected by her works. He said of Smith in the 1830s that she was "a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered". By the second half of the 19th century, Smith was largely forgotten.

Smith's novels were republished again at the end of the 20th century, and "critics interested in the period's women poets and prose writers, the Gothic novel, the historical novel, the social problem novel, and post-colonial studies" have argued for her significance as a writer. They looked to the contemporary documentation of her importance, discovering that she helped to revitalize the English sonnet, a fact recognized by Coleridge and others. Scott wrote that she "preserves in her landscapes the truth and precision of a painter" and poet and Barbauld claimed that Smith was the first to include sustained natural description in novels.

It was not until 2008 however, that Smith's entire prose collection became available to the general public. The edition contains each novel, the children's stories and rural walks.

A Descriptive Ode

Supposed to have been written under the Ruins of Rufus's Castle, among the remains of the ancient Church on the Isle of Portland.

CHAOTIC pile of barren stone,
That Nature's hurrying hand has thrown,
Half finish'd, from the troubled waves;
On whose rude brow the rifted tower
Has frown'd, through many a stormy hour,
On this drear site of tempest-beaten graves.
Sure Desolation loves to shroud
His giant form within the cloud
That hovers round thy rugged head;
And as through broken vaults beneath,
The future storms low-muttering breathe,
Hears the complaining voices of the dead.
Here marks the fiend with eager eyes,
Far out at sea the fogs arise
That dimly shade the beacon'd strand,
And listens the portentous roar
Of sullen waves, as on the shore,
Monotonous, they burst and tell the storm at hand.
Northward the demon's eyes are cast
O'er yonder bare and sterile waste,
Where, born to hew and heave the block,
Man, lost in ignorance and toil,
Becomes associate to the soil,
And his heart hardens like his native rock.

On the bleak hills, with flint o'erspread,
No blossoms rear the purple head;
No shrub perfumes the zephyrs' breath,
But o'er the cold and cheerless down
Grim desolation seems to frown,
Blasting the ungrateful soil with partial death.
Here the scathed trees with leaves half-dress'd,
Shade no soft songster's secret nest,
Whose spring-notes soothe the pensive ear;
But high the croaking cormorant flies,
And mews and hawks with clamorous cries

Tire the lone echoes of these caverns drear.
Perchance among the ruins grey
Some widow'd mourner loves to stray,
Marking the melancholy main
Where once, afar she could discern
O'er the white waves his sail return
Who never, never now, returns again!
On these lone tombs, by storms up-torn,
The hopeless wretch may lingering mourn,
Till from the ocean, rising red,
The misty moon with lurid ray
Lights her, reluctant, on her way,
To steep in tears her solitary bed.
Hence the dire spirit oft surveys
The ship, that to the western bays
With favouring gales pursues its course;
Then calls the vapour dark that blinds
The pilot,--calls the felon winds
That heave the billows with resistless force.
Commixing with the blotted skies,
High and more high the wild waves rise,
Till, as impetuous torrents urge,
Driven on yon fatal bank accursed
The vessel's massy timbers burst,
And the crew sinks beneath the infuriate surge.
There find the weak an early grave,
While youthful strength the whelming wave
Repels; and labouring for the land,

With shorten'd breath and upturn'd eyes,
Sees the rough shore above him rise,
Nor dreams that rapine meets him on the strand.
And are there then in human form
Monsters more savage than the storm,
Who from the gasping sufferer tear
The dripping weed?--who dare to reap
The inhuman harvest of the deep,
From half-drown'd victims whom the tempests spare?
Ah, yes! by avarice once possess'd,
No pity moves the rustic breast;
Callous he proves--as those who haply wait
Till I (a pilgrim weary worn)

To my own native land return,
With legal toils to drag me to my fate!

Charlotte Smith

A Walk In The Shrubbery

To the Cistus or Rock Rose, a beautiful plant, whose flowers expand, and fall off twice in twenty-four hours.

THE Florists, who have fondly watch'd,
Some curious bulb from hour to hour,
And, to ideal charms attach'd,
Derive their glory from a flower;
Or they, who lose in crowded rooms,
Spring's tepid suns and balmy air,
And value Flora's fairest blooms,
But in proportion as they're rare;

Feel not the pensive pleasures known
To him, who, thro' the morning mist,
Explores the bowery shrubs new blown,
A moralizing Botanist.-

He marks, with colours how profuse
Some are design'd to please the eye;
While beauty some combine with use,
In admirable harmony.
The fruit buds, shadow'd red and white,
Amid young leaves of April hue;
Convey sensations of delight,
And promise fruits autumnal too:

And, while the Thrush his home and food,
Hails, as the flowering thorns unfold,
And from its trunk of ebon wood,
Rears Cytisus its floating gold;
The Lilac, whose tall head discloses
Groups of such bright empurpled shade,
And snow-globes form'd of elfin roses,
Seem for exclusive beauty made:
Such too art thou; when light anew
Above the eastern hill is seen,
Thy buds, as fearful of the dew,
Still wear their sheltering veil of green.

But in the next more genial hour
Thy tender rose-shaped cups unfold,

And soon appears the perfect flower,
With ruby spots and threads of gold.
That short and fleeting hour gone by,
And even the slightest breath of air,
Scarce heard among thy leaves to sigh,
Or little bird that flutters there;
Shakes off thy petals thin and frail,
And soon, like half-congealing snow,
The sport of every wandering gale,
They strew the humid turf below.

Yet tho' thy gauzy bells fall fast,
Long ere appears the evening crescent;
Another bloom succeeds the last,
As lovely and as evanescent.
Not so the poet's favourite Rose,
She blooms beyond a second day,
And even some later beauty shews-
Some charm still lingering in decay.
Thus those, who thro' life's path have pass'd,
A path how seldom strewn with flowers !
May have met Friendships formed to last
Beyond the noonday's golden hours.

While quickly formed, dissolv'd as soon,
Some warm attachments I have known
Just flourish for an hour at noon,
But leave no trace when overblown.
Minds that form these, with ardent zeal
Their new connexions fondly cherish,
And for a moment keenly feel
Affection, doomed as soon to perish;
Incapable of Friendship long,
Awake to every new impression,
Old friends, becoming *ci-devant* !
Are still replaced by a Succession.

Charlotte Smith

Apostrophe

TO AN OLD TREE.

WHERE thy broad branches brave the bitter North,
Like rugged, indigent, unheeded, worth,
Lo! Vegetation's guardian hands emboss
Each giant limb with fronds of studded moss,
That clothes the bark in many a fringed fold
Begemm'd with scarlet shields, and cups of gold,
Which, to the wildest winds their webs oppose,
And mock the arrowy sleet, or weltering snows.
--But to the warmer West the woodbine fair
With tassels that perfumed the summer air,
The mantling clematis, whose feathery bowers
Waved in festoons with nightshade's purple flowers,
The silver weed, whose corded fillets wove
Round thy pale rind, even as deceitful love
Of mercenary beauty would engage
The dotard fondness of decrepit age;
All these, that during summer's halcyon days
With their green canopies conceal'd thy sprays,
Are gone for ever; or disfigured, trail
Their sallow relicts in the autumnal gale;
Or o'er thy roots, in faded fragments toss'd,
But tell of happier hours, and sweetness lost!
--Thus in Fate's trying hour, when furious storms
Strip social life of Pleasure's fragile forms,
And awful Justice, as his rightful prey
Tears Luxury's silk, and jewel'd robe, away,
While reads Adversity her lesson stern,
And Fortune's minions tremble as they learn;
The crowds around her gilded car that hung,
Bent the lithe knee, and troul'd the honey'd tongue,
Desponding fall, or fly in pale despair;
And Scorn alone remembers that they were.
Not so Integrity; unchanged he lives
In the rude armour conscious Honour gives,
And dares with hardy front the troubled sky,
In Honesty's uninjured panoply.
Ne'er on Prosperity's enfeebling bed

Or rosy pillows, he reposed his head,

But given to useful arts, his ardent mind
Has sought the general welfare of mankind;
To mitigate their ills his greatest bliss,
While studying them , has taught him what he is ;
He , when the human tempest rages worst,
And the earth shudders as the thunders burst,
Firm, as thy northern branch, is rooted fast,
And if he can't avert , endures the blast.

Charlotte Smith

April

GREEN o'er the copses spring's soft hues are spreading,
High wave the reeds in the transparent floods,
The oak its sear and sallow foliage shedding,
From their moss'd cradles start its infant buds.
Pale as the tranquil tide of summer's ocean,
The willow now its slender leaf unveils;
And through the sky with swiftly fleeting motion,
Driv'n by the wind, the rack of April sails.
Then, as the gust declines, the stealing showers
Fall fresh and noiseless; while at closing day
The low sun gleams on moist and half-blown flowers,
That promise garlands for approaching May.
Bless'd are yon peasant children, simply singing,
Who through the new-sprung grass rejoicing rove;
More bless'd! to whom the time, fond thought is bringing,
Of friends expected, or returning love.
The pensive wanderer bless'd, to whom reflection
Points out some future views that soothe his mind;
Me how unlike!--whom cruel recollection
But tells of comfort I shall never find!

Hope, that on Nature's youth is still attending,
No more to me her syren song shall sing;
Never to me her influence extending,
Shall I again enjoy the days of Spring!
Yet, how I loved them once these scenes remind me,
When light of heart, in childhood's thoughtless mirth,
I reck'd not that the cruel lot assign'd me
Should make me curse the hour that gave me birth!
Then, from thy wild-wood banks, Aruna! roving,
Thy thymy downs with sportive steps I sought,
And Nature's charms, with artless transport loving,
Sung, like the birds, unheeded and untaught.
But now the springtide's pleasant hours returning,
Serve to awaken me to sharper pain;
Recalling scenes of agony and mourning,
Of baffled hope and prayers preferr'd in vain.
Thus shone the sun, his vernal rays displaying,
Thus did the woods in early verdure wave,

While dire disease on all I loved was preying,
And flowers seem'd rising but to strew her grave.
Now, 'mid reviving blooms, I coldly languish,
Spring seems devoid of joy to me alone;
Each sound of pleasure aggravates my anguish,
And speaks of beauty, youth, and sweetness gone.
Yet, as stern duty bids, with faint endeavour
I drag on life, contending with my woe,
Though conscious misery still repeats, that never
My soul one pleasurable hour shall know.
Lost in the tomb, when Hope no more appeases
The fester'd wounds that prompt the eternal sigh,
Grief, the most fatal of the heart's diseases,
Soon teaches, whom it fastens on, to die.

The wretch undone, for pain alone existing,
The abject dread of death shall sure subdue,
And far from his decisive hand resisting,
Rejoice to bid a world like this, adieu.

Charlotte Smith

Beachy Head

ON thy stupendous summit, rock sublime !
That o'er the channel rear'd, half way at sea
The mariner at early morning hails,
I would recline; while Fancy should go forth,
And represent the strange and awful hour
Of vast concussion; when the Omnipotent
Stretch'd forth his arm, and rent the solid hills,
Bidding the impetuous main flood rush between

The rifted shores, and from the continent
Eternally divided this green isle.
Imperial lord of the high southern coast !
From thy projecting head-land I would mark
Far in the east the shades of night disperse,
Melting and thinned, as from the dark blue wave
Emerging, brilliant rays of arrowy light
Dart from the horizon; when the glorious sun
Just lifts above it his resplendent orb.
Advances now, with feathery silver touched,
The rippling tide of flood; glisten the sands,
While, inmates of the chalky clefts that scar
Thy sides precipitous, with shrill harsh cry,
Their white wings glancing in the level beam,
The terns, and gulls, and tarrocks, seek their food,
And thy rough hollows echo to the voice

Of the gray choughs, and ever restless daws,
With clamour, not unlike the chiding hounds,
While the lone shepherd, and his baying dog,
Drive to thy turfy crest his bleating flock.
The high meridian of the day is past,
And Ocean now, reflecting the calm Heaven,
Is of cerulean hue; and murmurs low
The tide of ebb, upon the level sands.
The sloop, her angular canvas shifting still,
Catches the light and variable airs
That but a little crisp the summer sea.
Dimpling its tranquil surface.
Afar off,

And just emerging from the arch immense

Where seem to part the elements, a fleet
Of fishing vessels stretch their lesser sails;
While more remote, and like a dubious spot
Just hanging in the horizon, laden deep,
The ship of commerce richly freighted, makes
Her slower progress, on her distant voyage,
Bound to the orient climates, where the sun
Matures the spice within its odorous shell,
And, rivalling the gray worm's filmy toil,
Bursts from its pod the vegetable down;
Which in long turban'd wreaths, from torrid heat
Defends the brows of Asia's countless casts.
There the Earth hides within her glowing breast
The beamy adamant, and the round pearl
Enchased in rugged covering; which the slave,
With perilous and breathless toil, tears off

From the rough sea-rock, deep beneath the waves.
These are the toys of Nature; and her sport
Of little estimate in Reason's eye:
And they who reason, with abhorrence see
Man, for such gaudes and baubles, violate
The sacred freedom of his fellow man-
Erroneous estimate ! As Heaven's pure air,
Fresh as it blows on this aërial height,
Or sound of seas upon the stony strand,
Or inland, the gay harmony of birds,
And winds that wander in the leafy woods;
Are to the unadulterate taste more worth
Than the elaborate harmony, brought out
From fretted stop, or modulated airs
Of vocal science.-So the brightest gems,
Glancing resplendent on the regal crown,

Or trembling in the high born beauty's ear,
Are poor and paltry, to the lovely light
Of the fair star, that as the day declines,
Attendant on her queen, the crescent moon,
Bathes her bright tresses in the eastern wave.
For now the sun is verging to the sea,

And as he westward sinks, the floating clouds
Suspended, move upon the evening gale,
And gathering round his orb, as if to shade
The insufferable brightness, they resign
Their gauzy whiteness; and more warm'd, assume
All hues of purple. There, transparent gold
Mingles with ruby tints, and sapphire gleams,
And colours, such as Nature through her works
Shews only in the ethereal canopy.
Thither aspiring Fancy fondly soars,

Wandering sublime thro' visionary vales,
Where bright pavilions rise, and trophies, fann'd
By airs celestial; and adorn'd with wreaths
Of flowers that bloom amid elysian bowers.
Now bright, and brighter still the colours glow,
Till half the lustrous orb within the flood
Seems to retire: the flood reflecting still
Its splendor, and in mimic glory drest;
Till the last ray shot upward, fires the clouds
With blazing crimson; then in paler light,
Long lines of tenderer radiance, lingering yield
To partial darkness; and on the opposing side
The early moon distinctly rising, throws
Her pearly brilliance on the trembling tide.

The fishermen, who at set seasons pass
Many a league off at sea their toiling night,
Now hail their comrades, from their daily task
Returning; and make ready for their own,
With the night tide commencing:-The night tide
Bears a dark vessel on, whose hull and sails
Mark her a coaster from the north. Her keel
Now ploughs the sand; and sidelong now she leans,
While with loud clamours her athletic crew
Unload her; and resounds the busy hum
Along the wave-worn rocks. Yet more remote,
Where the rough cliff hangs beetling o'er its base,
All breathes repose; the water's rippling sound
Scarce heard; but now and then the sea-snipe's cry
Just tells that something living is abroad;
And sometimes crossing on the moonbright line,

Glimmers the skiff, faintly discern'd awhile,
Then lost in shadow.
Contemplation here,
High on her throne of rock, aloof may sit,
And bid recording Memory unfold
Her scroll voluminous-bid her retrace
The period, when from Neustria's hostile shore
The Norman launch'd his galleys, and the bay
O'er which that mass of ruin frowns even now
In vain and sullen menace, then received
The new invaders; a proud martial race,
Of Scandinavia the undaunted sons,
Whom Dogon, Fier-a-bras, and Humfroi led
To conquest: while Trinacria to their power
Yielded her wheaten garland; and when thou,

Parthenope ! within thy fertile bay
Receiv'd the victors-
In the mailed ranks
Of Normans landing on the British coast
Rode Taillefer; and with astounding voice
Thunder'd the war song daring Roland sang
First in the fierce contention: vainly brave,
One not inglorious struggle England made-
But failing, saw the Saxon heptarchy
Finish for ever.-Then the holy pile,
Yet seen upon the field of conquest, rose,
Where to appease heaven's wrath for so much blood,
The conqueror bade unceasing prayers ascend,
And requiems for the slayers and the slain.
But let not modern Gallia form from hence

Presumptuous hopes, that ever thou again,
Queen of the isles ! shalt crouch to foreign arms.
The enervate sons of Italy may yield;
And the Iberian, all his trophies torn
And wrapp'd in Superstition's monkish weed,
May shelter his abasement, and put on
Degrading fetters. Never, never thou !
Imperial mistress of the obedient sea;
But thou, in thy integrity secure,

Shalt now undaunted meet a world in arms.
England ! 'twas where this promontory rears
Its rugged brow above the channel wave,
Parting the hostile nations, that thy fame,
Thy naval fame was tarnish'd, at what time
Thou, leagued with the Batavian, gavest to France

One day of triumph-triumph the more loud,
Because even then so rare. Oh ! well redeem'd,
Since, by a series of illustrious men,
Such as no other country ever rear'd,
To vindicate her cause. It is a list
Which, as Fame echoes it, blanches the cheek
Of bold Ambition; while the despot feels
The extorted sceptre tremble in his grasp.
From even the proudest roll by glory fill'd,
How gladly the reflecting mind returns
To simple scenes of peace and industry,
Where, bosom'd in some valley of the hills
Stands the lone farm; its gate with tawny ricks
Surrounded, and with granaries and sheds,
Roof'd with green mosses, and by elms and ash

Partially shaded; and not far remov'd
The hut of sea-flints built; the humble home
Of one, who sometimes watches on the heights,
When hid in the cold mist of passing clouds,
The flock, with dripping fleeces, are dispers'd
O'er the wide down; then from some ridged point
That overlooks the sea, his eager eye
Watches the bark that for his signal waits
To land its merchandize: - Quitting for this
Clandestine traffic his more honest toil,
The crook abandoning, he braves himself
The heaviest snow-storm of December's night,
When with conflicting winds the ocean raves,
And on the tossing boat, unfearing mounts
To meet the partners of the perilous trade,
And share their hazard. Well it were for him,

If no such commerce of destruction known,
He were content with what the earth affords

To human labour; even where she seems
Reluctant most. More happy is the hind,
Who, with his own hands rears on some black moor,
Or turbary, his independent hut
Cover'd with heather, whence the slow white smoke
Of smouldering peat arises--A few sheep,
His best possession, with his children share
The rugged shed when wintry tempests blow;
But, when with Spring's return the green blades rise
Amid the russet heath, the household live
Joint tenants of the waste throughout the day,
And often, from her nest, among the swamps,
Where the gemm'd sun-dew grows, or fring'd buck-bean,
They scare the plover, that with plaintive cries

Flutters, as sorely wounded, down the wind.
Rude, and but just remov'd from savage life
Is the rough dweller among scenes like these,
(Scenes all unlike the poet's fabling dreams
Describing Arcady)-But he is free;
The dread that follows on illegal acts
He never feels; and his industrious mate
Shares in his labour. Where the brook is traced
By crouding osiers, and the black coot hides
Among the plashy reeds, her diving brood,
The matron wades; gathering the long green rush
That well prepar'd hereafter lends its light
To her poor cottage, dark and cheerless else
Thro' the drear hours of Winter. Otherwhile
She leads her infant group where charlock grows
'Unprofitably gay,' or to the fields,

Where congregate the linnnet and the finch,
That on the thistles, so profusely spread,
Feast in the desert; the poor family
Early resort, extirpating with care
These, and the gaudier mischief of the ground;
Then flames the high rais'd heap; seen afar off
Like hostile war-fires flashing to the sky.
Another task is theirs: On fields that shew
As angry Heaven had rain'd sterility,
Stony and cold, and hostile to the plough,

Where clamouring loud, the evening curlew runs
And drops her spotted eggs among the flints;
The mother and the children pile the stones
In rugged pyramids;-and all this toil
They patiently encounter; well content
On their flock bed to slumber undisturb'd

Beneath the smoky roof they call their own.
Oh ! little knows the sturdy hind, who stands
Gazing, with looks where envy and contempt
Are often strangely mingled, on the car
Where prosperous Fortune sits; what secret care
Or sick satiety is often hid,
Beneath the splendid outside: He knows not
How frequently the child of Luxury
Enjoying nothing, flies from place to place
In chase of pleasure that eludes his grasp;
And that content is e'en less found by him,
Than by the labourer, whose pick-axe smooths
The road before his chariot; and who doffs
What was an hat; and as the train pass on,
Thinks how one day's expenditure, like this,

Would cheer him for long months, when to his toil
The frozen earth closes her marble breast.
Ah ! who is happy ? Happiness ! a word
That like false fire, from marsh effluvia born,
Misleads the wanderer, destin'd to contend
In the world's wilderness, with want or woe-
Yet they are happy, who have never ask'd
What good or evil means. The boy
That on the river's margin gaily plays,
Has heard that Death is there-He knows not Death,
And therefore fears it not; and venturing in
He gains a bullrush, or a minnow-then,
At certain peril, for a worthless prize,
A crow's, or raven's nest, he climbs the boll,

Of some tall pine; and of his prowess proud,
Is for a moment happy. Are your cares,
Ye who despise him, never worse applied ?
The village girl is happy, who sets forth

To distant fair, gay in her Sunday suit,
With cherry colour'd knots, and flourish'd shawl,
And bonnet newly purchas'd. So is he
Her little brother, who his mimic drum
Beats, till he drowns her rural lovers' oaths
Of constant faith, and still increasing love;
Ah ! yet a while, and half those oaths believ'd,
Her happiness is vanish'd; and the boy
While yet a stripling, finds the sound he lov'd
Has led him on, till he has given up
His freedom, and his happiness together.

I once was happy, when while yet a child,
I learn'd to love these upland solitudes,
And, when elastic as the mountain air,
To my light spirit, care was yet unknown
And evil unforeseen:-Early it came,
And childhood scarcely passed, I was condemned,
A guiltless exile, silently to sigh,
While Memory, with faithful pencil, drew
The contrast; and regretting, I compar'd
With the polluted smoky atmosphere
And dark and stifling streets, the southern hills
That to the setting Sun, their graceful heads
Rearing, o'erlook the frith, where Vecta breaks
With her white rocks, the strong impetuous tide,
When western winds the vast Atlantic urge
To thunder on the coast-Haunts of my youth !

Scenes of fond day dreams, I behold ye yet !
Where 'twas so pleasant by thy northern slopes
To climb the winding sheep-path, aided oft
By scatter'd thorns: whose spiny branches bore
Small woolly tufts, spoils of the vagrant lamb
There seeking shelter from the noon-day sun;
And pleasant, seated on the short soft turf,
To look beneath upon the hollow way
While heavily upward mov'd the labouring wain,
And stalking slowly by, the sturdy hind
To ease his panting team, stopp'd with a stone
The grating wheel.
Advancing higher still

The prospect widens, and the village church
But little, o'er the lowly roofs around

Rears its gray belfry, and its simple vane;
Those lowly roofs of thatch are half conceal'd
By the rude arms of trees, lovely in spring,
When on each bough, the rosy-tinctur'd bloom
Sits thick, and promises autumnal plenty.
For even those orchards round the Norman farms,
Which, as their owners mark the promis'd fruit,
Console them for the vineyards of the south,
Surpass not these.

Where woods of ash, and beech,
And partial copses, fringe the green hill foot,
The upland shepherd rears his modest home,
There wanders by, a little nameless stream
That from the hill wells forth, bright now and clear,
Or after rain with chalky mixture gray,

But still refreshing in its shallow course,
The cottage garden; most for use design'd,
Yet not of beauty destitute. The vine
Mantles the little casement; yet the briar
Drops fragrant dew among the July flowers;
And pansies rayed, and freak'd and mottled pinks
Grow among balm, and rosemary and rue:
There honeysuckles flaunt, and roses blow
Almost uncultured: Some with dark green leaves
Contrast their flowers of pure unsullied white;
Others, like velvet robes of regal state
Of richest crimson, while in thorny moss
Enshrined and cradled, the most lovely, wear
The hues of youthful beauty's glowing cheek.-
With fond regret I recollect e'en now
In Spring and Summer, what delight I felt

Among these cottage gardens, and how much
Such artless nosegays, knotted with a rush
By village housewife or her ruddy maid,
Were welcome to me; soon and simply pleas'd.
An early worshipper at Nature's shrine;
I loved her rudest scenes-warrens, and heaths,

And yellow commons, and birch-shaded hollows,
And hedge rows, bordering unfrequented lanes
Bowered with wild roses, and the clasping woodbine
Where purple tassels of the tangling vetch
With bittersweet, and bryony inweave,
And the dew fills the silver bindweed's cups-
I loved to trace the brooks whose humid banks
Nourish the harebell, and the freckled pagil;
And stroll among o'ershadowing woods of beech,

Lending in Summer, from the heats of noon
A whispering shade; while haply there reclines
Some pensive lover of uncultur'd flowers,
Who, from the tumps with bright green mosses clad,
Plucks the wood sorrel, with its light thin leaves,
Heart-shaped, and triply folded; and its root
Creeping like beaded coral; or who there
Gathers, the copse's pride, anémones,
With rays like golden studs on ivory laid
Most delicate: but touch'd with purple clouds,
Fit crown for April's fair but changeful brow.
Ah ! hills so early loved ! in fancy still
I breathe your pure keen air; and still behold
Those widely spreading views, mocking alike
The Poet and the Painter's utmost art.

And still, observing objects more minute,
Wondering remark the strange and foreign forms
Of sea-shells; with the pale calcareous soil
Mingled, and seeming of resembling substance.
Tho' surely the blue Ocean (from the heights
Where the downs westward trend, but dimly seen)
Here never roll'd its surge. Does Nature then
Mimic, in wanton mood, fantastic shapes
Of bivalves, and inwreathed volutes, that cling
To the dark sea-rock of the wat'ry world ?
Or did this range of chalky mountains, once
Form a vast bason, where the Ocean waves
Swell'd fathomless ? What time these fossil shells,
Buoy'd on their native element, were thrown
Among the imbedding calx: when the huge hill
Its giant bulk heaved, and in strange ferment

Grew up a guardian barrier, 'twixt the sea
And the green level of the sylvan weald.
Ah ! very vain is Science' proudest boast,
And but a little light its flame yet lends
To its most ardent votaries; since from whence
These fossil forms are seen, is but conjecture,
Food for vague theories, or vain dispute,
While to his daily task the peasant goes,
Unheeding such inquiry; with no care
But that the kindly change of sun and shower,
Fit for his toil the earth he cultivates.
As little reck's the herdsman of the hill,
Who on some turfy knoll, idly reclined,
Watches his wether flock; that deep beneath
Rest the remains of men, of whom is left

No traces in the records of mankind,
Save what these half obliterated mounds
And half fill'd trenches doubtfully impart
To some lone antiquary; who on times remote,
Since which two thousand years have roll'd away,
Loves to contemplate. He perhaps may trace,
Or fancy he can trace, the oblong square
Where the mail'd legions, under Claudius, rear'd,
The rampire, or excavated fossé delved;
What time the huge unwieldy Elephant
Auxiliary reluctant, hither led,
From Afric's forest glooms and tawny sands,
First felt the Northern blast, and his vast frame
Sunk useless; whence in after ages found,
The wondering hinds, on those enormous bones
Gaz'd; and in giants dwelling on the hills
Believed and marvell'd-

Hither, Ambition, come !
Come and behold the nothingness of all
For which you carry thro' the oppressed Earth,
War, and its train of horrors-see where tread
The innumerable hoofs of flocks above the works
By which the warrior sought to register
His glory, and immortalize his name-

The pirate Dane, who from his circular camp
Bore in destructive robbery, fire and sword
Down thro' the vale, sleeps unremember'd here;
And here, beneath the green sward, rests alike
The savage native, who his acorn meal
Shar'd with the herds, that ranged the pathless woods;
And the centurion, who on these wide hills
Encamping, planted the Imperial Eagle.
All, with the lapse of Time, have passed away,

Even as the clouds, with dark and dragon shapes,
Or like vast promontories crown'd with towers,
Cast their broad shadows on the downs: then sail
Far to the northward, and their transient gloom
Is soon forgotten.

But from thoughts like these,
By human crimes suggested, let us turn
To where a more attractive study courts
The wanderer of the hills; while shepherd girls
Will from among the fescue bring him flowers,
Of wondrous mockery; some resembling bees
In velvet vest, intent on their sweet toil,
While others mimic flies, that lightly sport
In the green shade, or float along the pool,
But here seem perch'd upon the slender stalk,

And gathering honey dew. While in the breeze
That wafts the thistle's plumed seed along,
Blue bells wave tremulous. The mountain thyme
Purples the hassock of the heaving mole,
And the short turf is gay with tormentil,
And bird's foot trefoil, and the lesser tribes
Of hawkweed; spangling it with fringed stars.-
Near where a richer tract of cultur'd land
Slopes to the south; and burnished by the sun,
Bend in the gale of August, floods of corn;
The guardian of the flock, with watchful care,
Repels by voice and dog the encroaching sheep-
While his boy visits every wired trap
That scars the turf; and from the pit-falls takes
The timid migrants, who from distant wilds,
Warrens, and stone quarries, are destined thus

To lose their short existence. But unsought
By Luxury yet, the Shepherd still protects
The social bird, who from his native haunts
Of willowy current, or the rushy pool,
Follows the fleecy croud, and flirts and skims,
In fellowship among them.

Where the knoll

More elevated takes the changeful winds,
The windmill rears its vanes; and thitherward
With his white load, the master travelling,
Scares the rooks rising slow on whispering wings,
While o'er his head, before the summer sun
Lights up the blue expanse, heard more than seen,
The lark sings matins; and above the clouds
Floating, embathes his spotted breast in dew.

Beneath the shadow of a gnarled thorn,
Bent by the sea blast, from a seat of turf
With fairy nosegays strewn, how wide the view !
Till in the distant north it melts away,
And mingles indiscriminate with clouds:
But if the eye could reach so far, the mart
Of England's capital, its domes and spires
Might be perceived-Yet hence the distant range
Of Kentish hills, appear in purple haze;
And nearer, undulate the wooded heights,
And airy summits, that above the mole
Rise in green beauty; and the beacon'd ridge
Of Black-down shagg'd with heath, and swelling rude
Like a dark island from the vale; its brow
Catching the last rays of the evening sun
That gleam between the nearer park's old oaks,

Then lighten up the river, and make prominent
The portal, and the ruin'd battlements
Of that dismantled fortress; rais'd what time
The Conqueror's successors fiercely fought,
Tearing with civil feuds the desolate land.
But now a tiller of the soil dwells there,
And of the turret's loop'd and rafter'd halls
Has made an humbler homestead-Where he sees,

Instead of armed foemen, herds that graze
Along his yellow meadows; or his flocks
At evening from the upland driv'n to fold-
In such a castellated mansion once
A stranger chose his home; and where hard by
In rude disorder fallen, and hid with brushwood
Lay fragments gray of towers and buttresses,

Among the ruins, often he would muse-
His rustic meal soon ended, he was wont
To wander forth, listening the evening sounds
Of rushing milldam, or the distant team,
Or night-jar, chasing fern-flies: the tir'd hind
Pass'd him at nightfall, wondering he should sit
On the hill top so late: they from the coast
Who sought bye paths with their clandestine load,
Saw with suspicious doubt, the lonely man
Cross on their way: but village maidens thought
His senses injur'd; and with pity say
That he, poor youth ! must have been cross'd in love-
For often, stretch'd upon the mountain turf
With folded arms, and eyes intently fix'd
Where ancient elms and firs obscured a grange,
Some little space within the vale below,

They heard him, as complaining of his fate,
And to the murmuring wind, of cold neglect
And baffled hope he told.-The peasant girls
These plaintive sounds remember, and even now
Among them may be heard the stranger's songs.
Were I a Shepherd on the hill
And ever as the mists withdrew
Could see the willows of the rill
Shading the footway to the mill
Where once I walk'd with you-

And as away Night's shadows sail,
And sounds of birds and brooks arise,
Believe, that from the woody vale
I hear your voice upon the gale
In soothing melodies;
And viewing from the Alpine height,

The prospect dress'd in hues of air,
Could say, while transient colours bright
Touch'd the fair scene with dewy light,
'Tis, that her eyes are there !
I think, I could endure my lot
And linger on a few short years,
And then, by all but you forgot,
Sleep, where the turf that clothes the spot
May claim some pitying tears.

For 'tis not easy to forget
One, who thro' life has lov'd you still,
And you, however late, might yet
With sighs to Memory giv'n, regret
The Shepherd of the Hill.
Yet otherwhile it seem'd as if young Hope
Her flattering pencil gave to Fancy's hand,
And in his wanderings, rear'd to sooth his soul
Ideal bowers of pleasure-Then, of Solitude
And of his hermit life, still more enamour'd,
His home was in the forest; and wild fruits

And bread sustain'd him. There in early spring
The Barkmen found him, e'er the sun arose;
There at their daily toil, the Wedgecutters
Beheld him thro' the distant thicket move.
The shaggy dog following the truffle hunter,
Bark'd at the loiterer; and perchance at night
Belated villagers from fair or wake,
While the fresh night-wind let the moonbeams in
Between the swaying boughs, just saw him pass,
And then in silence, gliding like a ghost
He vanish'd ! Lost among the deepening gloom.-
But near one ancient tree, whose wreathed roots
Form'd a rude couch, love-songs and scatter'd rhymes,
Unfinish'd sentences, or half erased,
And rhapsodies like this, were sometimes found-

Let us to woodland wilds repair
While yet the glittering night-dews seem
To wait the freshly-breathing air,

Precursive of the morning beam,
That rising with advancing day,
Scatters the silver drops away.
An elm, uprooted by the storm,
The trunk with mosses gray and green,
Shall make for us a rustic form,
Where lighter grows the forest scene;
And far among the bowery shades,
Are ferny lawns and grassy glades.

Retiring May to lovely June
Her latest garland now resigns;
The banks with cuckoo-flowers are strewn,
The woodwalks blue with columbines,
And with its reeds, the wandering stream
Reflects the flag-flower's golden gleam.
There, feathering down the turf to meet,
Their shadowy arms the beeches spread,
While high above our sylvan seat,
Lifts the light ash its airy head;
And later leaved, the oaks between
Extend their bows of vernal green.

The slender birch its paper rind
Seems offering to divided love,
And shuddering even without a wind
Aspens, their paler foliage move,
As if some spirit of the air
Breath'd a low sigh in passing there.
The Squirrel in his frolic mood,
Will fearless bound among the boughs;
Yaffils laugh loudly thro' the wood,
And murmuring ring-doves tell their vows;
While we, as sweetest woodscent rise,
Listen to woodland melodies.

And I'll contrive a sylvan room
Against the time of summer heat,
Where leaves, inwoven in Nature's loom,
Shall canopy our green retreat;
And gales that 'close the eye of day'
Shall linger, e'er they die away.

And when a sear and fallow hue
From early frost the bower receives,
I'll dress the sand rock cave for you,
And strew the floor with heath and leaves,
That you, against the autumnal air
May find securer shelter there.

The Nightingale will then have ceas'd
To sing her moonlight serenade;
But the gay bird with blushing breast,
And Woodlarks still will haunt the shade,
And by the borders of the spring
Reed-wrens will yet be carolling.
The forest hermit's lonely cave
None but such soothing sounds shall reach,
Or hardly heard, the distant wave
Slow breaking on the stony beach;
Or winds, that now sigh soft and low,
Now make wild music as they blow.

And then, before the chilling North
The tawny foliage falling light,
Seems, as it flits along the earth,
The footfall of the busy Sprite,
Who wrapt in pale autumnal gloom,
Calls up the mist-born Mushroom.
Oh ! could I hear your soft voice there,
And see you in the forest green
All beauteous as you are, more fair
You'd look, amid the sylvan scene,
And in a wood-girl's simple guise,
Be still more lovely in mine eyes.

Ye phantoms of unreal delight,
Visions of fond delirium born !
Rise not on my deluded sight,
Then leave me drooping and forlorn
To know, such bliss can never be,
Unless loved like me.
The visionary, nursing dreams like these,
Is not indeed unhappy. Summer woods
Wave over him, and whisper as they wave,

Some future blessings he may yet enjoy.
And as above him sail the silver clouds,
He follows them in thought to distant climes,
Where, far from the cold policy of this,

Dividing him from her he fondly loves,
He, in some island of the southern sea,
May haply build his cane-constructed bower
Beneath the bread-fruit, or aspiring palm,
With long green foliage rippling in the gale.
Oh ! let him cherish his ideal bliss-
For what is life, when Hope has ceas'd to strew
Her fragile flowers along its thorny way ?
And sad and gloomy are his days, who lives
Of Hope abandon'd !
Just beneath the rock
Where Beachy overpeers the channel wave,
Within a cavern mined by wintry tides
Dwelt one, who long disgusted with the world
And all its ways, appear'd to suffer life

Rather than live; the soul-reviving gale,
Fanning the bean-field, or the thymy heath,
Had not for many summers breathed on him;
And nothing mark'd to him the season's change,
Save that more gently rose the placid sea,
And that the birds which winter on the coast
Gave place to other migrants; save that the fog,
Hovering no more above the beetling cliffs
Betray'd not then the little careless sheep
On the brink grazing, while their headlong fall
Near the lone Hermit's flint-surrounded home,
Claim'd unavailing pity; for his heart
Was feelingly alive to all that breath'd;
And outraged as he was, in sanguine youth,
By human crimes, he still acutely felt
For human misery.

Wandering on the beach,
He learn'd to augur from the clouds of heaven,
And from the changing colours of the sea,
And sullen murmurs of the hollow cliffs,

Or the dark porpoises, that near the shore
Gambol'd and sported on the level brine
When tempests were approaching: then at night
He listen'd to the wind; and as it drove
The billows with o'erwhelming vehemence
He, starting from his rugged couch, went forth
And hazarding a life, too valueless,
He waded thro' the waves, with plank or pole
Towards where the mariner in conflict dread
Was buffeting for life the roaring surge;
And now just seen, now lost in foaming gulphs,
The dismal gleaming of the clouded moon

Shew'd the dire peril. Often he had snatch'd
From the wild billows, some unhappy man
Who liv'd to bless the hermit of the rocks.
But if his generous cares were all in vain,
And with slow swell the tide of morning bore
Some blue swol'n cor'se to land; the pale recluse
Dug in the chalk a sepulchre-above
Where the dank sea-wrack mark'd the utmost tide,
And with his prayers perform'd the obsequies
For the poor helpless stranger.
One dark night
The equinoctial wind blew south by west,
Fierce on the shore; -the bellowing cliffs were shook
Even to their stony base, and fragments fell
Flashing and thundering on the angry flood.

At day-break, anxious for the lonely man,
His cave the mountain shepherds visited,
Tho' sand and banks of weeds had choak'd their way-
He was not in it; but his drowned cor'se
By the waves wafted, near his former home
Receiv'd the rites of burial. Those who read
Chisel'd within the rock, these mournful lines,
Memorials of his sufferings, did not grieve,
That dying in the cause of charity
His spirit, from its earthly bondage freed,
Had to some better region fled for ever.

Elegy

'DARK gathering clouds involve the threatening skies,
The sea heaves conscious of the impending gloom,
Deep, hollow murmurs from the cliffs arise;
They come--the Spirits of the Tempest come!

'Oh! may such terrors mark the approaching night
As reign'd on that these streaming eyes deplore!
Flash, ye red fires of heaven, with fatal light,
And with conflicting winds ye waters roar!
'Loud and more loud, ye foaming billows, burst!
Ye warring elements, more fiercely rave!
Till the wide waves o'erwhelm the spot accurst
'Where ruthless Avarice finds a quiet grave!' '
Thus with clasp'd hands, wild looks, and streaming hair,
While shrieks of horror broke her trembling speech,
A wretched maid--the victim of despair,
Survey'd the threatening storm and desert beach.
Then to the tomb where now the father slept
Whose rugged nature bade her sorrows flow,
Frantic she turn'd--and beat her breast and wept,
Invoking vengeance on the dust below.
'Lo! rising there above each humbler heap,
Yon cypher'd stones his name and wealth relate,
Who gave his son--remorseless--to the deep,
While I, his living victim, curse my fate.
'Oh, my lost love! no tomb is placed for thee,
That may to strangers' eyes thy worth impart;
Thou hast no grave but in the stormy sea,
And no memorial but this breaking heart.
'Forth to the world, a widow'd wanderer driven,
I pour to winds and waves the unheeded tear,
Try with vain effort to submit to Heaven,
And fruitless call on him--'who cannot hear.'
'Oh! might I fondly clasp him once again,
While o'er my head the infuriate billows pour,
Forget in death this agonizing pain,
And feel his father's cruelty no more!
'Part, raging waters! part, and show beneath,
In your dread caves, his pale and mangled form;

Now, while the demons of despair and death
Ride on the blast, and urge the howling storm:

'Lo! by the lightning's momentary blaze,
I see him rise the whitening waves above,
No longer such as when in happier days
He gave the enchanted hours--to me and love.
'Such, as when daring the enchafed sea,
And courting dangerous toil, he often said
That every peril, one soft smile from me,
One sigh of speechless tenderness o'erpaid.
'But dead, disfigured, while between the roar
Of the loud waves his accents pierce mine ear,
And seem to say--Ah, wretch! delay no more,
But come, unhappy mourner--meet me here.
'Yet, powerful Fancy, bid the phantom stay,
Still let me hear him!--'Tis already past;
Along the waves his shadow glides away,
I lose his voice amid the deafening blast.
'Ah, wild delusion, born of frantic pain!
He hears not, comes not from his watery bed;
My tears, my anguish, my despair are vain,
The insatiate ocean gives not up its dead.
' 'Tis not his voice! Hark! the deep thunders roll;
Upheaves the ground; the rocky barriers fail;
Approach, ye horrors that delight my soul,
Despair, and Death, and Desolation, hail!
The Ocean hears--The embodied waters come--
Rise o'er the land, and with resistless sweep
Tear from its base the proud aggressor's tomb,
And bear the injured to eternal sleep.

Charlotte Smith

Evening

OH ! soothing hour, when glowing day,
Low in the western wave declines,
And village murmurs die away,
And bright the vesper planet shines;
I love to hear the gale of Even
Breathing along the new-leaf'd copse,
And feel the freshening dew of Heaven,
Fall silently in limpid drops.

For, like a friend's consoling sighs,
That breeze of night to me appears;
And, as soft dew from Pity's eyes,
Descend those pure celestial tears.
Alas ! for those who long have borne,
Like me, a heart by sorrow riven,
Who, but the plaintive winds, will mourn,
What tears will fall, but those of Heaven ?

Charlotte Smith

Flora

REMOTE from scenes, where the o'erwearied mind
Shrinks from the crimes and follies of mankind,
From hostile menace, and offensive boast,
Peace, and her train of home-born pleasures lost;
To fancy's reign, who would not gladly turn,
And lose awhile, the miseries they mourn
In sweet oblivion ? Come then, Fancy ! deign,
Queen of ideal pleasure, once again,
To lend thy magic pencil, and to bring
Such lovely forms, as in life's happier spring,

On the green margin of my native Wey,
Before mine infant eyes were wont to play,
And with that pencil, teach me to describe
The enchanting goddess of the flowery tribe,
Whose first prerogative it is to chase
The clouds that hang on languid beauty's face;
And, while advancing suns and tepid showers,
Lead on the laughing Spring's delicious hours,
Bid the wan maid the hues of health assume,
Charm with new grace, and blush with fresher bloom.
The vision comes !-While slowly melt away,
Night's hovering shades before the eastern ray,
Ere yet declines the morning's humid star,
Fair Fancy brings her; in her leafy car

Flora descends, to dress the expecting earth,
Awake the germs, and call the buds to birth;
Bid each hybernacle its cell unfold,
And open silken leaves, and eyes of gold !
Of forest foliage of the firmest shade
Enwove by magic hands, the car was made;
Oak, and the ample Plane, without entwined,
And Beech and Ash the verdant concave lin'd;
The Saxifrage, that snowy flowers emboss,
Supplied the seat; and of the mural moss
The velvet footstool rose, where lightly rest,
Her slender feet in Cypripedium drest.
The tufted rush, that bears a silken crown,

The floating feathers of the thistle's down,

In tender hues of rainbow lustre dyed,
The airy texture of her robe supplied,
And wild convolvuli, yet half unblown,
Form'd, with their wreathing buds, her simple zone,
Some wandering tresses of her radiant hair,
Luxuriant floated on the enamour'd air;
The rest were by the Scandix' points confin'd
And graced a shining knot, her head behind-
While, as a sceptre of supreme command,
She waved the Anthoxanthum in her hand.
Around the goddess, as the flies that play,
In countless myriads in the western ray,
The sylphs innumerable throng; whose magic powers
Guard the soft buds, and nurse the infant flowers;

Round the sustaining stems weak tendrils bind,
And save the pollen from dispersing wind;
From suns too ardent, shade their transient hues,
And catch in odorous cups translucent dews.
The ruder tasks of others are, to chase
From vegetable life the insect race,
Break the polluting thread the spider weaves,
And brush the aphis from th' unfolding leaves.
For conquest arm'd these pigmy warriors wield
The thorny lance, and spread the hollow shield
Of lichen tough; or bear, as silver bright,
Lunaria's pearly circlet, firm and light.
On the helm'd head the crimson foxglove glows,
Or Scutellaria guards the martial brows,

While the Leontodon its plumage rears,
And o'er the casque in waving grace appears;
With stern undaunted eye, one warlike chief
Grasps the tall club from Arum's blood-dropt leaf;
This, with the Burdock's hooks annoys his foes,
The purple thorn that borrows from the Rose.
In honeyed nectaries couched, some drive away
The forked insidious earwig from his prey;
Fearless the scaled libellula assail,
Dart their keen lances at the encroaching snail;

Arrest the winged ant, on pinions light,
And strike the headlong beetle in his flight.
Nor less assiduous round their lovely queen,
The lighter forms of female fays are seen;

Rich was the purple vest Floscella wore,
Spun of the tufts the Tradescantia bore;
The Cistus' flowers minute her temple graced,
And threads of Yucca bound her slender waist.
From the wild bee, whose wond'rous labour weaves,
In artful folds the rose's fragrant leaves,
Was borrow'd fair Petalla's light cymar;
And the Hypericum, with spangling star,
O'er her fair locks its bloom minute enwreath'd;
Then, while voluptuous odours round her breath'd,
Came Nectarynia; as the arrowy rays
Of lambent fire round pictur'd seraphs blaze,
So did the Passiflora's radii shed,
Cerulean glory o'er the sylphid's head,

While round her form, the pliant tendrils twined,
And clasp'd the scarf that floated on the wind.
More grave the para-nymph Calyxa drest;
A brown transparent spatha formed her vest;
The silver scales that bound her raven hair,
Xeranthemum's unfading calyx bear;
And a light sash of spiral Ophrys press'd
Her filmy tunic, on her tender breast.
But where shall images or words be found
To paint the fair ethereal forms, that round
The queen of flowers attended ? and the while
Bask'd in her eyes and wanton'd in her smile.

Now towards the earth the gay procession bends,
Lo ! from the buoyant air, the car descends;
Anticipating then the various year,
Flowers of all hues and every month appear,
From every swelling bulb its blossoms rise;
Here, blow the Hyacinths of loveliest dyes,
Breathing of heaven; and there, her royal brows
Begemmed with pearl, the Crown imperial shews;
Peeps the blue Gentian, from the soft'ning ground,

Jonquils and Violets, shed their odours round;
The Honeysuckle rears his scallop'd horn;
A snow of blossoms whiten on the thorn.
Here, like the fatal fruit to Paris given,
That spread fell feuds throughout the fabled heaven,

The yellow Rose her golden globe displays;
There lovelier still, among the spiny sprays
Her blushing rivals glow with brighter dyes,
Than paints the summer sun on western skies.
And the scarce tinged, and paler Rose unveil
Their modest beauties to the sighing gale.
Thro' the deep woodland's wild uncultur'd scene,
Spreads the soft influence of the floral queen;
See a fair pyramid the Chesnut rear,
Its crimson tassels on the Larch appear;
The Fir, dark native of the sullen North,
Owns her soft sway; and slowly springing forth
On the rough Oak are buds minute unfurl'd,
Whose giant produce may command the world !
Each forest thicket feels the balmy air,
And plants that love the shade are blowing there.

Rude rocks with Filices and Bryums smile,
And wastes are gay with Thyme and Chamomile.
Ah ! yet prolong the dear delicious dream,
And trace her power along the mountain stream.
See ! from its rude and rocky source, o'erhung
With female fern, and glossy adder's-tongue
Slowly it wells, in pure and chrystal drops,
And steals soft-gliding, thro' the upland copse;
Then murmuring on, along the willowy sides,
The reed-bird whispers, and the Halcyon hides;
While among sallows pale, and birchen bowers,
Embarks in Fancy's eye the queen of flowers.
O'er her light skiff, of woven bull-rush made,
The Water lily lends a polish'd shade;

While Galium there, of pale and silver hue,
And Epilobiums on the banks that grew,
Form her soft couch; and as the Sylphs divide,
With pliant arms, the still increasing tide,

A thousand leaves along the stream unfold;
Amid its waving swords, in flaming gold
The Iris towers; and here the Arrowhead
And water Crowfoot, more profusely spread
Spangle the quiet current; higher there,
As conscious of her claims, in beauty rare,
Her rosy umbels rears the flow'ring Rush,
While with reflected charms the waters blush.
The naiad now, the year's fair goddess leads,
Through richer pastures and more level meads
Down to the sea; where even the briny sands
Their product offer to her glowing hands;

For there, by sea-dews nurs'd and airs marine,
The Chelidonium blows; in glaucous green,
Each refluent tide the thorn'd Eryngium laves,
And its pale leaves seem tintured by the waves;
And half-way up the cliff, whose rugged brow
Hangs o'er the ever toiling surge below,
Springs the light Tamarisk.-The summit bare,
Is tufted by the Statice; and there,
Crush'd by the fisher, as he stands to mark
Some distant signal or approaching bark,
The Saltwort's starry stalks are thickly sown,
Like humble worth, unheeded and unknown !
From depths where corals spring from chrystal caves,
And break with scarlet branch, the eddying waves,

Where Algæ stream, as change the flowing tides,
And where, half flower, half fish, the Polyp hides,
And long tenacious bands of sea-lace twine
Round palm-shaped leaves impearl'd with coralline.
Enamour'd Fancy now the sea-maids calls,
And from their grottos dim, and shell-paved halls,
Charm'd by her voice, the shining train emerge,
And buoyant float above the circling surge;
Green Byssus, waving in the sea-born gales,
Form'd their thin mantles, and transparent veils,
Panier'd in shells, or bound with silver strings,
Of silken pinna; each her trophy brings
Of plants, from rocks and caverns submarine,
With leathery branch, and bladder'd buds between;

There, its dark folds the pucker'd laver spread,
With trees in miniature of various red;

There flag-shaped olive-leaves, depending hung,
And fairy fans from glossy pebbles sprung;
Then her terrestrial train the nereids meet,
And lay their spoils saline at Flora's feet.
O ! fairest of the fabled forms ! that stream,
Dress'd by wild Fancy, thro' the poet's dream,
Still may thy attributes of leaves and flowers,
Thy garden's rich, and shrub-o'ershadow'd bowers,
And yellow meads, with Spring's first honours bright,
The child's gay heart, and frolic step invite;
And, while the careless wanderer explores,
The umbrageous forest, or the rugged shores,
Climbs the green down, or roams the broom-clad waste,
May Truth, and Nature, form his future taste !
Goddess ! on youth's bless'd hours thy gifts bestow;
Bind the fair wreath on virgin-beauty's brow,

And still may Fancy's brightest flowers be wove
Round the gold chains of hymeneal love.
But most for those, by Sorrow's hands oppress'd,
May thy beds blossom, and thy wilds be dress'd;
And where by Fortune and the world forgot,
The mourner droops in some sequester'd spot,
('Sad luxury to vulgar minds unknown, ')
O'er blighted happiness for ever gone,
Yet the dear image seeks not to forget,
But woos his grief, and cherishes regret;
Loving, with fond and lingering pain, to mourn
O'er joys and hopes that never will return;-
Thou, visionary power ! mayst bid him view
Forms not less lovely, and as transient too;
And while they soothe the wearied pilgrim's eyes,
Afford an antepast of Paradise.

Charlotte Smith

Fragment

Descriptive of the miseries of War; from a Poem called 'The Emigrants,' printed in 1793.

TO a wild mountain, whose bare summit hides
Its broken eminence in clouds; whose steep

Are dark with woods: where the receding rocks
Are worn with torrents of dissolving snow;
A wretched woman, pale and breathless, flies,
And, gazing round her, listens to the sound
Of hostile footsteps:--No! they die away--
Nor noise remains, but of the cataract,
Or surly breeze of night, that mutters low
Among the thickets, where she trembling seeks
A temporary shelter--Clasping close
To her quick throbbing heart her sleeping child,
All she could rescue of the innocent group
That yesterday surrounded her--Escaped
Almost by miracle!--Fear, frantic Fear,
Wing'd her weak feet; yet, half repenting now
Her headlong haste, she wishes she had staid
To die with those affrighted Fancy paints
The lawless soldiers' victims--Hark! again
The driving tempest bears the cry of Death;
And with deep, sudden thunder, the dread sound
Of cannon vibrates on the tremulous earth;
While, bursting in the air, the murderous bomb
Glares o'er her mansion--Where the splinters fall
Like scatter'd comets, its destructive path
Is mark'd by wreaths of flame!--Then, overwhelm'd
Beneath accumulated horror, sinks
The desolate mourner!
The feudal chief, whose gothic battlements
Frown on the plain beneath, returning home
From distant lands, alone, and in disguise,
Gains at the fall of night his castle walls,
But, at the silent gate no porter sits
To wait his lord's admittance!--In the courts
All is drear stillness!--Guessing but too well
The fatal truth, he shudders as he goes

Through the mute hall; where, by the blunted light
That the dim moon through painted casement lends,
He sees that devastation has been there;
Then, while each hideous image to his mind
Rises terrific, o'er a bleeding corse
Stumbling he falls; another intercepts

His staggering feet--All, all who used to
With joy to meet him, all his family
Lie murder'd in his way!--And the day dawns
On a wild raving maniac, whom a fate
So sudden and calamitous has robb'd
Of reason; and who round his vacant walls
Screams unregarded, and reproaches Heaven!

Charlotte Smith

from The Emigrants: A Poem

[Disillusion with the French Revolution]

So many years have passed,
Since, on my native hills, I learned to gaze
On these delightful landscapes; and those years
Have taught me so much sorrow, that my soul
Feels not the joy reviving Nature brings;
But, in dark retrospect, dejected dwells
On human follies, and on human woes.—
What is the promise of the infant year,
The lively verdure, or the bursting blooms,
To those, who shrink from horrors such as War
Spreads o'er the affrighted world? With swimming eye,
Back on the past they throw their mournful looks,
And see the Temple, which they fondly hoped
Reason would raise to Liberty, destroyed
By ruffian hands; while, on the ruined mass,
Flushed with hot blood, the Fiend of Discord sits
In savage triumph; mocking every plea
Of policy and justice, as she shows
The headless corse of one, whose only crime
Was being born a Monarch—Mercy turns,
From spectacle so dire, her swollen eyes;
And Liberty, with calm, unruffled brow
Magnanimous, as conscious of her strength
In Reason's panoply, scorns to distain
Her righteous cause with carnage, and resigns
To Fraud and Anarchy the infuriate crowd.—
What is the promise of the infant year
To those, who (while the poor but peaceful hind
Pens, unmolested, the increasing flock
Of his rich master in this sea-fenced isle)
Survey, in neighboring countries, scenes that make
The sick heart shudder; and the man, who thinks,
Blush for his species? There the trumpet's voice
Drowns the soft warbling of the woodland choir;
And violets, lurking in their turfy beds
Beneath the flowering thorn, are stained with blood.
There fall, at once, the spoiler and the spoiled;

While War, wide-ravaging, annihilates
The hope of cultivation; gives to Fiends,
The meager, ghastly Fiends of Want and Woe,
The blasted land—There, taunting in the van
Of vengeance-breathing armies, Insult stalks;
And, in the ranks, "Famine, and Sword, and Fire,
Crouch for employment."

Charlotte Smith

Hope

Parody on Lord Strangford's 'Just like Love.'

JUST like Hope is yonder bow,
That from the center bends so low,
Where bright prismatic colours shew
How gems of heavenly radiance glow,
Just like Hope !
Yet if, to the illusion new,
The pilgrim should the arch pursue,
Farther and farther from his view,
It flies; then melts in chilling dew,
Just like Hope !

Ye fade, ethereal hues ! for ever,
While, cold Reason, thy endeavour
Sooths not that sad heart, which never
Glowes with Hope.

Charlotte Smith

Huge Vapours Brood Above The Clifted Shore

Huge vapours brood above the clifted shore,
Night o'er the ocean settles, dark and mute,
Save where is heard the repercussive roar
Of drowsy billows, on the rugged foot
Of rocks remote; or still more distant tone
Of seamen, in the anchored bark, that tell
The watch relieved; or one deep voice alone,
Singing the hour, and bidding "strike the bell."
All is black shadow, but the lucid line
Marked by the light surf on the level sand,
Or where afar, the ship-lights faintly shine
Like wandering fairy fires, that oft on land
Mislead the pilgrim; such the dubious ray
That wavering reason lends, in life's long darkling way.

Charlotte Smith

Inscription

On a Stone, in the Church-Yard at Boreham, in
Essex; raised by the Honourable Elizabeth Olmius,
to the memory of Ann Gardner, who died at New
Hall, after a faithful Service of Forty Years.

WHATE'ER of praise, and of regret attend
The grateful servant, and the humble friend,
Where strict integrity and worth unite
To raise the lowly in their Maker's sight,

Are her's; whose faithful service, long approved,
Wept by the mistress whom through life she loved.
Here ends her earthly task; in joyful trust
To share the eternal triumph of the just.

Charlotte Smith

Love And Folly

LOVE, who now deals to human hearts,
Such ill thrown, yet resistless darts,
That hapless mortals can't withstand them,
Was once less cruel and perverse,
Nor did he then his shafts disperse,
So much at random.

It happened, that the thoughtless child
Was rambling thro' a flowery wild,
Like idle lad in school vacation;
Where sauntering now, and now at rest,
Stroll'd Folly, who to Love address'd
His conversation.
On trifles he had much to say,
Then laughing he propos'd to play,
And stake against Love's bow his bauble;
The quiver'd gamester smil'd and won,
But testy Folly soon began
To fret and squabble.

Loud and more loud the quarrel grows;
From words the wranglers went to blows,
For Folly's rage is prompt to rise;
Till bleeding Love a martyr stood-
A stroke from Folly's weapon rude,
Put out his eyes.
Then wild with anguish, Venus pray'd,
For vengeance on the idiot's head,
And begg'd of cloud-compelling Jove,
His swiftest lightning, to destroy,
The mischievous malignant boy
That blinded Love.

'Folly is immortal,' Jove replied,
'But, tho' your prayer must be denied,
'An endless penance is decreed him;
'For Love, tho' blind, will reign around
'The world; but still where-ever found,
'Folly shall lead him.'

Charlotte Smith

Occasional Address

Written for the benefit of a distressed Player, detained at Brighthelmstone for Debt, November 1792.

WHEN in a thousand swarms, the summer o'er,
The birds of passage quit our English shore,
By various routs the feather'd myriad moves;
The Becca-Fica seeks Italian groves,

No more a Wheat-ear ; while the soaring files
Of sea-fowl gather round the Hebrid isles.
But if by bird-lime touch'd, unplumed, confined,
Some poor ill-fated straggler stays behind,
Driven from his transient perch, beneath your eaves
On his unshelter'd head the tempest raves,
While drooping round, redoubling every pain,
His mate and nestlings ask his help in vain.
So we, the buskin and the sock who wear,
And 'strut and fret,' our little season here,
Dismiss'd at length, as fortune bids divide--
Some (lucky rogues!) sit down on Thames's side;
Others to Liffy's western banks proceed,
And some--driven far a-field, across the Tweed:
But, pinion'd here, alas! I cannot fly:
The hapless, unplumed, lingering straggler I!
Unless the healing pity you bestow,
Shall imp my shatter'd wings, and let me go.
Hard is his fate, whom evil stars have led
To seek in scenic art precarious bread,
While still, through wild vicissitudes afloat,
A hero now, and now a Sans Culotte!
That eleemosynary bread he gains
Mingling, with real distresses, mimic pains.
See in our group, a pale, lank Falstaff stare!
Much needs he stuffing:--while young Ammon there
Rehearses--in a garret--ten feet square!
And as his soft Statira sighs consent,
Roxana comes not--but a dun for rent!
Here shiv'ring Edgar, in his blanket roll'd,
Exclaims--with too much reason, 'Tom's a-cold! '
And vainly tries his sorrows to divert,

While Goneril or Regan --wash his shirt!
Lo! fresh from Calais, Edward, mighty king!
Revolves--a mutton chop upon a string!
And Hotspur, plucking 'honour from the moon,'
Feeds a sick infant with a pewter spoon!
More bless'd the fisher, who undaunted braves
In his small bark, the impetuous winds and waves;
For though he plough the sea when others sleep,
He draws, like Glendower, spirits from the deep.

And while the storm howls round, amidst his trouble,
Bright moonshine still illuminates the cobble.
Pale with her fears for him, some fair Poissarde ,
Watches his nearing boat; with fond regard
Smiles when she sees his little canvass handing,
And clasps her dripping lover on his landing.
More bless'd the peasant , who, with nervous toil
Hews the rough oak, or breaks the stubborn soil:
Weary, indeed, he sees the evening come,
But then, the rude, yet tranquil hut, his home,
Receives its rustic inmate; then are his,
Secure repose, and dear domestic bliss.
The orchard's blushing fruit, the garden's store,
The pendant hop, that mantles round the door,
Are his:--and while cheerful faggots burn,
'His lisping children hail their site's return.'
But wandering Players, 'unhousel'd, unanneal'd,'
And unappointed, scour life's common field,
A flying squadron!--disappointments cross 'em,
And the campaign concludes, perhaps, at Horsham.
Oh! ye, whose timely bounty deigns to shed
Compassion's balm upon my luckless head,
Benevolence, with warm and glowing breast,
And soft, celestial mercy, doubly bless'd!
Smile on the generous act!--where means are given,
To aid the wretched--is to merit heaven.

Charlotte Smith

Ode To Death

FRIEND of the wretched! wherefore should the eye
Of blank Despair, whence tears have ceased to flow,
Be turn'd from thee?--Ah! wherefore fears to die
He, who compell'd each poignant grief to know,
Drains to its lowest dregs the cup of woe?
Would Cowardice postpone thy calm embrace,
To linger out long years in torturing pain?
Or not prefer thee to the ills that chase
Him, who too much impoverish'd to obtain
From British Themis right , implores her aid in vain!
Sharp goading Indigence who would not fly,
That urges toil the exhausted strength above?
Or shun the once fond friend's averted eye?
Or who to thy asylum not remove,
To lose the wasting anguish of ungrateful love?
Can then the wounded wretch, who must deplore
What most she loved, to thy cold arms consign'd,
Who hears the voice that soothed her soul no more,
Fear thee , O Death!--Or hug the chains that bind
To joyless, cheerless life, her sick, reluctant mind?

Oh, Misery's cure! who e'er in pale dismay
Has watch'd the angel form they could not save,
And seen their dearest blessing torn away,
May well the terrors of thy triumph brave,
Nor pause in fearful dread before the opening grave!

Charlotte Smith

Ode To Despair

FROM THE NOVEL OF EMMELINE.

THOU spectre of terrific mien!
Lord of the hopeless heart and hollow eye,
In whose fierce train each form is seen
That drives sick Reason to insanity!
I woo thee with unusual prayer,
'Grim visaged, comfortless Despair:'
Approach; in me a willing victim find,
Who seeks thine iron sway--and calls thee kind!
Ah! hide for ever from my sight
The faithless flatterer Hope--whose pencil, gay,
Portrays some vision of delight,
Then bids the fairy tablet fade away;

While in dire contrast, to mine eyes,
Thy phantoms, yet more hideous, rise,
And Memory draws from Pleasure's wither'd flower,
Corrosives for the heart--of fatal power!
I bid the traitor Love adieu!
Who to this fond believing bosom came,
A guest insidious and untrue,
With Pity's soothing voice--in Friendship's name;
The wounds he gave, nor Time shall cure,
Nor Reason teach me to endure.
And to that breast mild Patience pleads in vain,
Which feels the curse--of meriting its pain.
Yet not to me, tremendous Power!
Thy worst of spirit-wounding pangs impart,
With which, in dark conviction's hour,
Thou strik'st the guilty unrepentant heart;
But of illusion long the sport,
That dreary, tranquil gloom I court,
Where my past errors I may still deplore,
And dream of long-lost happiness no more!
To thee I give this tortured breast,
Where Hope arises but to foster pain;
Ah! lull its agonies to rest!
Ah! let me never be deceived again!
But callous, in thy deep repose,

Behold, in long array, the woes
Of the dread future, calm and undismay'd,
Till I may claim the hope--that shall not fade!

Charlotte Smith

Ode To The Poppy

Written by a deceased friend.

NOT for the promise of the labour'd field,
Not for the good the yellow harvests yield,
I bend at Ceres' shrine;
For dull, to human eyes, appear
The golden glories of the year,
Alas!--a melancholy worship's mine,
I hail the goddess for her scarlet flower;
Thou brilliant weed,
That dost so far exceed
The richest gifts gay Flora can bestow:
Heedless I pass'd thee, in life's morning hour,
(Thou comforter of woe)
Till sorrow taught me to confess thy power.
In early days, when Fancy cheats,
A varied wreath I wove,
Of laughing Spring's luxuriant sweets,
To deck ungrateful Love:
The rose, or thorn, my labours crown'd;
As Venus smiled, or Venus frown'd;

But Love and Joy, and all their train, are flown;
E'en languid Hope no more is mine,
And I will sing of thee alone,
Unless, perchance, the attributes of Grief,
The cypress bud, and willow leaf,
Their pale funereal foliage blend with thine.
Hail, lovely blossom!--thou canst ease
The wretched victims of Disease;
Canst close those weary eyes in gentle sleep,
Which never open but to weep;
For, oh! thy potent charm
Can agonizing Pain disarm;
Expel imperious Memory from her seat,
And bid the throbbing heart forget to beat.
Soul-soothing plant! that can such blessings give,
By thee the mourner bears to live!
By thee the hopeless die!

Oh! ever 'friendly to despair,'
Might Sorrow's pallid votary dare,
Without a crime, that remedy implore,
Which bids the spirit from its bondage fly,
I'd court thy palliative aid no more;
No more I'd sue that thou shouldst spread,
Thy spell around my aching head,
But would conjure thee to impart
Thy balsam for a broken heart;
And by thy soft Lethean power,
(Inestimable flower)
Burst these terrestrial bonds, and other regions try.

Charlotte Smith

On The Aphorism

'L'Amitié est l'Amour sans ailes.'

FRIENDSHIP, as some sage poet sings,
Is chasten'd Love, depriv'd of wings,
Without all wish or power to wander;
Less volatile, but not less tender:
Yet says the proverbs-'Sly and slow
'Love creeps, even where he cannot go;'
To clip his pinions then is vain,
His old propensities remain;

And she, who years beyond fifteen,
Has counted twenty, may have seen
How rarely unplum'd Love will stay;
He flies not-but he coolly walks away.

Charlotte Smith

Saint Monica

AMONG deep woods is the dismantled scite
Of an old Abbey, where the chaunted rite,
By twice ten brethren of the monkish cowl,
Was duly sung; and requiems for the soul
Of the first founder: For the lordly chief,
Who flourish'd paramount of many a fief,
Left here a stipend yearly paid, that they,
The pious monks, for his repose might say
Mass and orisons to Saint Monica.

Beneath the falling archway overgrown
With briars, a bench remains, a single stone,
Where sat the indigent, to wait the dole
Given at the buttery; that the baron's soul
The poor might intercede for; there would rest,
Known by his hat of straw with cockles drest,
And staff and humble weed of watchet gray,
The wandering pilgrim; who came there to pray
The intercession of Saint Monica.
Stern Reformation and the lapse of years
Have reft the windows, and no more appears
Abbot or martyr on the glass anneal'd;
And half the falling cloisters are conceal'd

By ash and elder: the refectory wall
Oft in the storm of night is heard to fall,
When, wearied by the labours of the day,
The half awaken'd cotters, starting say,
'It is the ruins of Saint Monica.'
Now with approaching rain is heard the rill,
Just trickling thro' a deep and hollow gill
By osiers, and the alder's crowding bush,
Reeds, and dwarf elder, and the pithy rush,
Choak'd and impeded: to the lower ground
Slowly it creeps; there traces still are found
Of hollow squares, embank'd with beaten clay,
Where brightly glitter'd in the eye of day
The peopled waters of Saint Monica.

The chapel pavement, where the name and date,
Or monkish rhyme, had mark'd the graven plate,
With docks and nettles now is overgrown;
And brambles trail above the dead unknown.-
Impatient of the heat, the straggling ewe
Tinkles her drowsy bell, as nibbling slow
She picks the grass among the thistles gray,
Whose feather'd seed the light air bears away,
O'er the pale relics of Saint Monica.
Reecho'd by the walls, the owl obscene
Hoots to the night; as thro' the ivy green
Whose matted tods the arch and buttress bind,
Sobs in low gusts the melancholy wind:

The Conium there, her stalks bedropp'd with red,
Rears, with Circea, neighbour of the dead;
Atropa too, that, as the beldams say,
Shews her black fruit to tempt and to betray,
Nods by the mouldering shrine of Monica.
Old tales and legends are not quite forgot.
Still Superstition hovers o'er the spot,
And tells how here, the wan and restless sprite,
By some way-wilder'd peasant seen at night,
Gibbers and shrieks, among the ruins drear;
And how the friar's lanthorn will appear
Gleaming among the woods, with fearful ray,
And from the church-yard take its wavering way,
To the dim arches of Saint Monica.

The antiquary comes not to explore,
As once, the unrafter'd roof and pathless floor;
For now, no more beneath the vaulted ground
Is crosier, cross, or sculptur'd chalice found,
Nor record telling of the wassail ale,
What time the welcome summons to regale,
Given by the matin peal on holiday,
The villagers rejoicing to obey,
Feasted, in honour of Saint Monica.
Yet often still at eve, or early morn,
Among these ruins shagg'd with fern and thorn,
A pensive stranger from his lonely seat
Observes the rapid martin, threading fleet

The broken arch: or follows with his eye,
The wall-creeper that hunts the burnish'd fly;
Sees the newt basking in the sunny ray,
Or snail that sinuous winds his shining way,
O'er the time-fretted walls of Monica.
He comes not here, from the sepulchral stone
To tear the oblivious pall that Time has thrown,
But meditating, marks the power proceed
From the mapped lichen, to the plumed weed,
From thready mosses to the veined flower,
The silent, slow, but ever active power
Of Vegetative Life, that o'er Decay
Weaves her green mantle, when returning May
Dresses the ruins of Saint Monica.

Oh Nature ! ever lovely, ever new,
He whom his earliest vows has paid to you
Still finds, that life has something to bestow;
And while to dark Forgetfulness they go,
Man, and the works of man; immortal Youth,
Unfading Beauty, and eternal Truth,
Your Heaven-indited volume will display,
While Art's elaborate monuments decay,
Even as these shatter'd aisles, deserted Monica !

Charlotte Smith

Song I

FROM THE FRENCH OF CARDINAL BERNIS.

I.

FRUIT of Aurora's tears, fair rose,
On whose soft leaves fond zephyrs play,
Oh! queen of flowers, thy buds disclose,
And give thy fragrance to the day;
Unveil thy transient charms:--ah, no!
A little be thy bloom delay'd,
Since the same hour that bids thee blow,
Shall see thee droop thy languid head.

II.

But go! and on Themira's breast
Find, happy flower! thy throne and tomb;
While, jealous of a fate so blest,
How shall I envy thee thy doom!
Should some rude hand approach thee there,
Guard the sweet shrine thou wilt adorn;
Ah! punish those who rashly dare,
And for my rivals keep thy thorn.

III.

Love shall himself thy boughs compose,
And bid thy wanton leaves divide;
He'll show thee how, my lovely rose,
To deck her bosom, not to hide:
And thou shalt tell the cruel maid
How frail are youth and beauty's charms,
And teach her, ere her own shall fade,
To give them to her lover's arms.

Charlotte Smith

Song II

DOES Pity give, though Fate denies,
And to my wounds her balm impart?
O speak--with those expressive eyes!
Let one low sigh escape thine heart.
The gazing crowd shall never guess
What anxious, watchful Love can see;
Nor know what those soft looks express,
Nor dream that sign is meant for me.

Ah! words are useless, words are vain,
Thy generous sympathy to prove;
And well that sign, those looks explain,
That Clara mourns my hapless love.

Charlotte Smith

Song Iii

FROM THE FRENCH.

I.

'AH! say,' the fair Louisa cried,
'Say where the abode of Love is found?'
Pervading nature, I replied,
His influence spreads the world around.
When Morning's arrowy beams arise,
He sparkles in the enlivening ray,
And blushes in the glowing skies
When rosy evening fades away.

II.

The summer winds that gently blow,
The flocks that bleat along the glades,
The nightingale, that soft and low,
With music fills the listening shades:
The murmurs of the silver surf
All echo Love's enchanting notes,
From violets lurking in the turf,
His balmy breath through ether floats.

III.

From perfumed flowers and dewy leaves
Delicious scents he bids exhale,
He smiles amid autumnal sheaves,
And clothes with green the grassy vale;
But when that throne the god assumes
Where his most powerful influence lies,
'Tis on Louisa's cheek he blooms,
And lightens from her radiant eyes!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet I

o

THE partial Muse, has from my earliest hours,
Smil'd on the rugged path I'm doom'd to tread,
And still with sportive hand has snatch'd wild flowers,
To weave fantastic garlands for my head:
But far, far happier is the lot of those
Who never learn'd her dear delusive art;
Which, while it decks the head with many a rose,
Reserves the thorn, to fester in the heart.
For still she bids soft Pity's melting eye
Stream o'er the ills she knows not to remove,
Points every pang, and deepens every sigh
Of mourning friendship or unhappy love.
Ah! then, how dear the Muse's favours cost,
If those paint sorrow best--who feel it most!

o

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet II

Written at the close of Spring.

THE garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,
Each simple flower, which she had nursed in dew,
Anemonies, that spangled every grove,
The primrose wan, and hare-bell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
Or purple orchis variegate the plain,
Till Spring again shall call forth every bell,
And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.-
Ah! poor humanity! so frail, so fair,
Are the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion and corrosive care
Bid all thy fairy colours fade away!
Another May new buds and flowers shall bring;
Ah! why has happiness-no second spring?

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Iii: To A Nightingale

Poor melancholy bird---that all night long
Tell'st to the Moon, thy tale of tender woe;
From what sad cause can such sweet sorrow flow,
And whence this mournful melody of song?

Thy poet's musing fancy would translate
What mean the sounds that swell thy little breast,
When still at dewy eve thou leav'st thy nest,
Thus to the listening night to sing thy fate!

Pale Sorrow's victims wert thou once among,
Tho' now releas'd in woodlands wild to rove?
Say---hast thou felt from friends some cruel wrong,
Or diedst thou---martyr of disastrous love?
Ah! songstress sad! that such my lot might be,
To sigh and sing at liberty---like thee!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Iv. To The Moon

QUEEN of the silver bow!--by thy pale beam,
Alone and pensive, I delight to stray,
And watch thy shadow trembling in the stream,
Or mark the floating clouds that cross thy way.
And while I gaze, thy mild and placid light
Sheds a soft calm upon my troubled breast;
And oft I think--fair planet of the night,
That in thy orb, the wretched may have rest:
The sufferers of the earth perhaps may go,
Released by death--to thy benignant sphere,
And the sad children of despair and woe
Forget in thee, their cup of sorrow here.
Oh! that I soon may reach thy world serene,
Poor wearied pilgrim--in this toiling scene!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet IX.

BLEST is yon shepherd, on the turf reclined,
Who on the varied clouds which float above
Lies idly gazing--while his vacant mind
Pours out some tale antique of rural love!
Ah! he has never felt the pangs that move
Th' indignant spirit, when with selfish pride
Friends, on whose faith the trusting heart relied,
Unkindly shun th' imploring eye of woe!
The ills they ought to soothe with taunts deride,
And laugh at tears themselves have forced to flow.
Nor his rude bosom those fine feelings melt,
Children of Sentiment and Knowledge born,
Through whom each shaft with cruel force is felt,
Empoison'd by deceit--or barb'd with scorn.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet L.

FROM THE NOVEL OF CELESTINA.

FAREWELL, ye lawns!--by fond remembrance blest,
As witnesses of gay unclouded hours;
Where, to maternal friendships' bosom prest,
My happy childhood past among your bowers.
Ye wood-walks wild!--where leaves and fairy flowers
By Spring's luxuriant hand are strewn anew;
Rocks!--whence with shadowy grace rude nature low'rs
O'er glens and haunted streams!--a long adieu!
And you!--O promised Happiness!--whose voice
Deluded Fancy heard in every grove,
Bidding this tender, trusting heart, rejoice
In the bright prospect of unfailing love:
Though lost to me--still may thy smile serene
Bless the dear lord of this regretted scene.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Li.

FROM THE NOVEL OF CELESTINA.

Supposed to have been written in the Hebrides.

ON this lone island, whose unfruitful breast
Feeds but the summer-shepherd's little flock
With scanty herbage from the half-clothed rock,
Where osprays, cormorants, and sea-mews rest;
Even in a scene so desolate and rude
I could with thee for months and years be blest;
And of thy tenderness and love possess,
Find all my world in this wild solitude!
When Summer suns these Northern seas illumine,
With thee admire the light's reflected charms,
And when drear Winter spreads his cheerless gloom,
Still find Elysium in thy shelt'ring arms:
For thou to me canst sovereign bliss impart,
Thy mind my empire--and my throne thy heart.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lii.

FAULTERING and sad the unhappy pilgrim roves,
Who, on the eve of bleak December's night,
Divided far from all he fondly loves,
Journeys alone, along the giddy height
Of these steep cliffs, and as the sun's last ray
Fades in the West, sees, from the rocky verge,
Dark tempests scowling o'er the shortened day,
And hears, with ear appall'd, the impetuous surge
Beneath him thunder!--So, with heart oppress'd,
Alone, reluctant, desolate, and slow,
By Friendship's cheering radiance now unblest,
Along life's rudest path I seem to go;
Nor see where yet the anxious heart may rest,
That, trembling at the past--recoils from future woe.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Liii.

THE shivering native, who by Tenglio's side
Beholds with fond regret the parting light
Sink far away, beneath the darkening tide,
And leave him to long months of dreary night,
Yet knows, that springing from the eastern wave
The sun's glad beams shall re-illumine his way,
And from the snows secured--within his cave
He waits in patient hope--returning day.
Not so the sufferer feels, who, o'er the waste
Of joyless life, is destin'd to deplore
Fond love forgotten, tender friendship past,
Which, once extinguish'd, can revive no more!
O'er the blank void he looks with hopeless pain;
For him those beams of heaven shall never shine again.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Liv.

THE SLEEPING WOODMAN.

Written in April, 1790.

YE copses wild, where April bids arise
The vernal grasses, and the early flowers;
My soul depress'd--from human converse flies
To the lone shelter of your pathless bowers.
Lo!--where the Woodman, with his toil oppress'd,
His careless head on bark and moss reclined,
Lull'd by the song of birds, the murmuring wind,
Has sunk to calm though momentary rest.
Ah! would 'twere mine in Spring's green lap to find
Such transient respite from the ills I bear!
Would I could taste, like this unthinking hind,
A sweet forgetfulness of human care,
Till the last sleep these weary eyes shall close,
And Death receive me to his long repose.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lix.

Written Sept. 1791, during a remarkable thunder storm, in which the moon was perfectly clear, while the tempest gathered in various directions near the earth.

WHAT awful pageants crowd the evening sky!
The low horizon gathering vapours shroud,
Sudden, from many a deep-embattled cloud
Terrific thunders burst and lightnings fly--
While in serenest azure, beaming high,
Night's regent, of her calm pavilion proud,
Gilds the dark shadows that beneath her lie,
Unvex'd by all their conflicts fierce and loud.
--So, in unsullied dignity elate,
A spirit conscious of superior worth,
In placid elevation firmly great,
Scorns the vain cares that give Contention birth;
And blest with peace above the shocks of Fate,
Smiles at the tumult of the troubled earth.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lv.

BORNE on the warm wing of the western gale,
How tremulously low is heard to float
Thro' the green budding thorns that fringe the vale
The early Nightingale's prelusive note.
'Tis Hope's instinctive power that through the grove
Tells how benignant Heaven revives the earth;
'Tis the soft voice of young and timid love
That calls these melting sounds of sweetness forth.
With transport, once, sweet bird! I hail'd thy lay,
And bade thee welcome to our shades again,
To charm the wandering poet's pensive way
And soothe the solitary lover's pain;
But now!--such evils in my lot combine,
As shut my languid sense--to Hope's dear voice and thine!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lvi.

IF, by his torturing, savage foes untraced,
The breathless captive gain some trackless glade,
Yet hears the war-whoop howl along the waste,
And dreads the reptile-monsters of the shade;
The giant reeds that murmur round the flood,
Seem to conceal some hideous form beneath;
And every hollow blast that shakes the wood,
Speaks to his trembling heart of woe and death.
With horror fraught, and desolate dismay,
On such a wanderer falls the starless night;
But if, far streaming, a propitious ray
Leads to some amicable fort his sight,
He hails the beam benign that guides his way,
As I, my Harriet, bless thy friendship's cheering light.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lvii. To Dependence

DEPENDENCE! heavy, heavy are thy chains,
And happier they who from the dangerous sea,
Or the dark mine, procure with ceaseless pains
A hard-earn'd pittance--than who trust to thee!
More blest the hind, who from his bed of flock
Starts--when the birds of morn their summons give,
And waken'd by the lark--' the shepherd's clock,'
Lives but to labour--labouring but to live.
More noble than the sycophant, whose art
Must heap with tawdry flowers thy hated shrine;
I envy not the meed thou canst impart
To crown his service--while, tho' pride combine
With Fraud to crush me--my unfetter'd heart
Still to the Mountain Nymph may offer mine.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lviii. The Glow-Worm

WHEN on some balmy-breathing night of Spring
The happy child, to whom the world is new,
Pursues the evening moth, of mealy wing,
Or from the heath-bell beats the sparkling dew;
He sees before his inexperienced eyes
The brilliant Glow-worm, like a meteor, shine
On the turf-bank;--amazed, and pleased, he cries,
'Star of the dewy grass!--I make thee mine!--'
Then, ere he sleep, collects 'the moisten'd' flower,
And bids soft leaves his glittering prize enfold,
And dreams that Fairy-lamps illumine his bower:
Yet with the morning shudders to behold
His lucid treasure, rayless as the dust!
--So turn the world's bright joys to cold and blank disgust.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lx. To An Amiable Girl

MIRANDA! mark where shrinking from the gale,
Its silken leaves yet moist with early dew,
That fair faint flower, the Lily of the vale
Droops its meek head, and looks, methinks, like you!
Wrapp'd in a shadowy veil of tender green,
Its snowy bells a soft perfume dispense,
And bending as reluctant to be seen,
In simple loveliness it soothes the sense.
With bosom bared to meet the garish day,
The glaring Tulip, gaudy, undismay'd,
Offends the eye of taste; that turns away
To seek the Lily in her fragrant shade.
With such unconscious beauty, pensive, mild,
Miranda charms--Nature's soft modest child.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxi

Supposed to have been written in America.

ILL-omen'd bird! whose cries portentous float
O'er yon savannah with the mournful wind;
While, as the Indian hears your piercing note,
Dark dread of future evil fills his mind;
Wherefore with early lamentation break
The dear delusive visions of repose?
Why from so short felicity awake
My wounded senses to substantial woes?
O'er my sick soul thus rous'd from transient rest,
Pale Superstition sheds her influence drear,
And to my shuddering fancy would suggest
Thou com'st to speak of ev'ry woe I fear,
Ah! Reason little o'er the soul prevails,
When, from ideal ill, the enfeebled spirit fails!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxii

Written on passing by Moon-light through a Village,
while the ground was covered with Snow.
WHILE thus I wander, cheerless and unblest,
And find in change of place but change of pain;
In tranquil sleep the village labourers rest,
And taste that quiet I pursue in vain!
Hush'd is the hamlet now, and faintly gleam
The dying embers, from the casement low
Of the thatch'd cottage; while the Moon's wan beam
Lends a new lustre to the dazzling snow--
O'er the cold waste, amid the freezing night,
Scarce heeding whither, desolate I stray;
For me, pale Eye of Evening, thy soft light
Leads to no happy home; my weary way
Ends but in sad vicissitudes of care:
I only fly from doubt--to meet despair!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxiii: The Gossamer

O'er faded heath-flowers spun, or thorny furze,
The filmy Gossamer is lightly spread;
Waving in every sighing air that stirs,
As Fairy fingers had entwined the thread:
A thousand trembling orbs of lucid dew
Spangle the texture of the fairy loom,
As if soft Sylphs, lamenting as they flew,
Had wept departed Summer's transient bloom:
But the wind rises, and the turf receives
The glittering web: -- So, evanescent, fade
Bright views that Youth with sanguine heart believes:
So vanish schemes of bliss, by Fancy made;
Which, fragile as the fleeting dews of morn,
Leave but the wither'd heath, and barren thorn!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxiv

HERE from the restless bed of lingering pain
The languid sufferer seeks the tepid wave,
And feels returning health and hope again
Disperse 'the gathering shadows of the grave!'
And here romantic rocks that boldly swell,
Fringed with green woods, or stain'd with veins of ore,
Call'd native genius forth, whose Heaven-taught skill
Charm'd the deep echoes of the rifted shore.
But tepid waves, wild scenes, or summer air,
Restore they palsied Fancy, woe-deprest?
Check they the torpid influence of Despair,
Or bid warm Health re-animate the breast;
Where Hope's soft visions have no longer part,
And whose sad inmate--is a broken heart?

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxix

Written at the same place, on seeing a Seaman return
who had been imprisoned at Rochfort.

CLOUDS, gold and purple, o'er the western ray
Threw a bright veil, and catching lights between,
Fell on the glancing sail, that we had seen
With soft, but adverse winds, throughout the day
Contending vainly: as the vessel nears,
Increasing numbers hail it from the shore;
Lo! on the deck a pallid form appears,
Half wondering to behold himself once more
Approach his home--And now he can discern
His cottage thatch amid surrounding trees;
Yet, trembling, dreads lest sorrow or disease
Await him there, embittering his return:
But all he loves are safe; with heart elate,
Though poor and plunder'd, he absolves his fate!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxv. To Dr. Parry Of Bath

With some botanic drawings which had been made some years.

IN happier hours, ere yet so keenly blew
Adversity's cold blight, and bitter storms,
Luxuriant Summer's evanescent forms,
And Spring's soft blooms with pencil light I drew:
But as the lovely family of flowers
Shrink from the bleakness of the Northern blast,
So fail from present care and sorrow past
The slight botanic pencil's mimic powers--
Nor will kind Fancy even by Memory's aid,
Her visionary garlands now entwine;
Yet while the wreaths of Hope and Pleasure fade,
Still is one flower of deathless blossom mine,
That dares the Lapse of Time, and Tempest rude,
The unfading Amaranth of Gratitude.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxvi: The Night-Flood Rakes

The night-flood rakes upon the stony shore;
Along the rugged cliffs and chalky caves
Mourns the hoarse Ocean, seeming to deplore
All that are buried in his restless waves—
Mined by corrosive tides, the hollow rock
Falls prone, and rushing from its turfy height,
Shakes the broad beach with long-resounding shock,
Loud thundering on the ear of sullen Night;
Above the desolate and stormy deep,
Gleams the wan Moon, by floating mist opprest;
Yet here while youth, and health, and labour sleep,
Alone I wander—Calm untroubled rest,
"Nature's soft nurse," deserts the sigh-swoln breast,
And shuns the eyes, that only wake to weep!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxvii: On Passing Over A Dreary Tract

Swift fleet the billowy clouds along the sky,
Earth seems to shudder at the storm aghast;
While only beings as forlorn as I,
Court the chill horrors of the howling blast.
Even round yon crumbling walls, in search of food,
The ravenous Owl foregoes his evening flight,
And in his cave, within the deepest wood,
The Fox eludes the tempest of the night.
But to my heart congenial is the gloom
Which hides me from a World I wish to shun;
That scene where Ruin saps the mouldering tomb,
Suits with the sadness of a wretch undone.
Nor is the deepest shade, the keenest air,
Black as my fate, or cold as my despair.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxviii.

Written at Exmouth, Midsummer, 1795.

FALL, dews of Heaven, upon my burning breast,
Bathe with cool drops these ever-streaming eyes,
Ye gentle Winds, that fan the balmy West,
With the soft rippling tide of morning rise,
And calm my bursting heart, as here I keep
The vigil of the wretched!--Now away
Fade the pale stars, as wavering o'er the deep
Soft rosy tints announce another day,
The day of Middle Summer!--Ah! in vain
To those who mourn like me, does radiant June
Lead on her fragrant hours; for hopeless pain
Darkens with sullen clouds the Sun of Noon,
And veil'd in shadows Nature's face appears
To hearts o'erwhelm'd with grief, to eyes suffused with tears.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxx: On Being Cautioned Against Walking On An Headland Overlooking The Sea, Because It Was Frequented By A Lunatic

Is there a solitary wretch who hies
To the tall cliff, with starting pace or slow,
And, measuring, views with wild and hollow eyes
Its distance from the waves that chide below;
Who, as the sea-born gale with frequent sighs
Chills his cold bed upon the mountain turf,
With hoarse, half-utter'd lamentation, lies
Murmuring responses to the dashing surf?
In moody sadness, on the giddy brink,
I see him more with envy than with fear;
He has no nice felicities that shrink
From giant horrors; wildly wandering here,
He seems (uncursed with reason) not to know
The depth or the duration of his woe.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxi.

Written at Weymouth in winter.

THE chill waves whiten in the sharp North-east;
Cold, cold the night-blast comes, with sullen sound,
And black and gloomy, like my cheerless breast:
Frowns the dark pier and lonely sea-view round.
Yet a few months--and on the peopled strand
Pleasure shall all her varied forms display;
Nymphs lightly tread the bright reflecting sand,
And proud sails whiten all the summer bay:
Then, from these winds that whistle keen and bleak,
Music's delightful melodies shall float
O'er the blue waters; but 'tis mine to seek
Rather, some unfrequented shade, remote
From sights and sounds of gaiety--I mourn
All that gave me delight--Ah! never to return

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxii. To The Morning Star

THEE! lucid arbiter 'twixt day and night,
The seaman greets, as on the ocean stream
Reflected, thy precursive friendly beam
Points out the long-sought haven to his sight.
Watching for thee, the lover's ardent eyes
Turn to the eastern hills; and as above
Thy brilliance trembles, hails the lights that rise
To guide his footsteps to expecting love!
I mark thee too, as night's dark clouds retire,
And thy bright radiance glances on the sea;
But never more shall thy heraldic fire
Speak of approaching morn with joy to me!
Quench'd in the gloom of death that heavenly ray
Once lent to light me on my thorny way!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxiii. To A Querulous Acquaintance

THOU! whom Prosperity has always led
O'er level paths, with moss and flow'rets strewn;
For whom she still prepares a downy bed
With roses scatter'd, and to thorns unknown,
Wilt thou yet murmur at a misplaced leaf?
Think, ere thy irritable nerves repine,
How many, born with feelings keen as thine,
Taste all the sad vicissitudes of grief;
How many steep in tears their scanty bread;
Or, lost to reason, Sorrow's victims! rave:
How many know not where to lay their head;
While some are driven by anguish to the grave!
Think; nor impatient at a feather's weight,
Mar the uncommon blessings of thy fate!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxiv. The Winter Night

'SLEEP, that knits up the ravel'd sleeve of care,'
Forsakes me, while the chill and sullen blast,
As my sad soul recalls its sorrows past,
Seems like a summons bidding me prepare
For the last sleep of death--Murmuring I hear
The hollow wind around the ancient towers,
While night and silence reign; and cold and drear
The darkest gloom of middle winter lowers;
But wherefore fear existence such as mine,
To change for long and undisturb'd repose?
Ah! when this suffering being I resign
And o'er my miseries the tomb shall close,
By her, whose loss in anguish I deplore,
I shall be laid, and feel that loss no more!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxix. To The Goddess Of Botany

OF Folly weary, shrinking from the view
Of Violence and Fraud, allow'd to take
All peace from humble life; I would forsake
Their haunts for ever, and, sweet Nymph! with you
Find shelter; where my tired, and tear-swollen eyes
Among your silent shades of soothing hue,
Your 'bells and florrets of unnumber'd dyes'
Might rest--And learn the bright varieties
That from your lovely hands are fed with dew;
And every veined leaf, that trembling sighs
In mead or woodland; or in wilds remote,
Or lurk with mosses in the humid caves,
Mantle the cliffs, on dimpling rivers float,
Or stream from coral rocks beneath the ocean's waves.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxv.

WHERE the wild woods and pathless forests frown,
The darkling Pilgrim seeks his unknown way,
Till on the grass he throws him weary down,
To wait in broken sleep the dawn of day:
Through boughs just waving in the silent air,
With pale capricious light the summer moon
Chequers his humid couch; while Fancy there,
That loves to wanton in the night's deep noon,
Calls from the mossy roots and fountain edge
Fair visionary Nymphs that haunt the shade,
Or Naiads rising from the whispering sedge:
And, 'mid the beauteous group, his dear loved maid
Seems beckoning him with smiles to join the train:
Then, starting from his dream, he feels his woes again!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxvi. To A Young Man Entering The World

GO now, ingenious youth!--The trying hour
Is come: The world demands that thou shouldst go
To active life: There titles, wealth, and power,
May all be purchased--Yet I joy to know
Thou wilt not pay their price. The base control
Of petty despots in their pedant reign
Already hast thou felt;--and high disdain
Of tyrants is imprinted on thy soul--
Not, where mistaken Glory, in the field
Rears her red banner, be thou ever found:
But, against proud Oppression raise the shield
Of patriot daring--So shalt thou renown'd
For the best virtues live ; or that denied
May'st die, as Hampden or as Sydney died!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxvii. To The Insect Of The Gossamer

SMALL, viewless aeronaut, that by the line
Of Gossamer suspended, in mid air
Float'st on a sun beam--Living atom, where
Ends thy breeze-guided voyage;--with what design,
In ether dost thou launch thy form minute,
Mocking the eye?--Alas! before the veil
Of denser clouds shall hide thee, the pursuit
Of the keen Swift may end thy fairy sail!--
Thus on the golden thread that Fancy weaves
Buoyant, as Hope's illusive flattery breathes,
The young and visionary poet leaves
Life's dull realities, while sevenfold wreaths
Of rainbow-light around his head revolve.
Ah! soon at Sorrow's touch the radiant dreams dissolve!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxviii. Snowdrops

WAN Heralds of the sun and summer gale!
That seem just fallen from infant Zephyrs' wing;
Not now, as once, with heart revived I hail
Your modest buds, that for the brow of Spring
Form the first simple garland--Now no more
Escaping for a moment all my cares,
Shall I, with pensive, silent, step explore
The woods yet leafless; where to chilling airs
Your green and pencil'd blossoms, trembling, wave.
Ah! ye soft, transient, children of the ground,
More fair was she on whose untimely grave
Flow my unceasing tears! Their varied round
The Seasons go; while I through all repine:
For fix'd regret, and hopeless grief are mine.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxx. To The Invisible Moon

DARK and conceal'd art thou, soft Evening's queen,
And Melancholy's votaries that delight
To watch thee, gliding through the blue serene,
Now vainly seek thee on the brow of night--
Mild Sorrow, such as hope has not forsook,
May love to muse beneath thy silent reign;
But I prefer from some steep rock to look
On the obscure and fluctuating main,
What time the martial star with lurid glare,
Portentous, gleams above the troubled deep;
Or the red comet shakes his blazing hair;
Or on the fire-ting'd waves the lightnings leap;
While thy fair beams illumine another sky,
And shine for beings less accursed than I.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxxi.

HE may be envied, who with tranquil breast
Can wander in the wild and woodland scene,
When summer's glowing hands have newly dress'd
The shadowy forests, and the copses green;
Who, unpursued by care, can pass his hours
Where briony and woodbine fringe the trees,
On thymy banks reposing, while the bees
Murmur 'their fairy tunes, in praise of flowers;'
Or on the rock with ivy clad, and fern
That overhangs the ozier-whispering bed
Of some clear current, bid his wishes turn
From this bad world; and by calm reason led,
Knows, in refined retirement, to possess
By friendship hallow'd--rural happiness!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxxii. To The Shade Of Burns

MUTE is thy wild harp, now, O bard sublime!
Who, amid Scotia's mountain solitude,
Great Nature taught to 'build the lofty rhyme,'
And even beneath the daily pressure, rude,
Of labouring poverty, thy generous blood,
Fired with the love of freedom--Not subdued
Wert thou by thy low fortune: but a time
Like this we live in, when the abject chime
Of echoing parasite is best approved,
Was not for thee--Indignantly is fled
Thy noble spirit; and no longer moved
By all the ills o'er which thine heart has bled,
Associate, worthy of the illustrious dead,
Enjoys with them 'the liberty it loved.'

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Lxxxiii. The Sea View

THE upland shepherd, as reclined he lies
On the soft turf that clothes the mountain brow,
Marks the bright sea-line mingling with the skies;
Or from his course celestial, sinking slow,
The summer-sun in purple radiance low,
Blaze on the western waters; the wide scene
Magnificent, and tranquil, seems to spread
Even o'er the rustic's breast a joy serene,
When, like dark plague-spots by the demons shed,
Charged deep with death, upon the waves, far seen,
Move the war-freighted ships; and fierce and red,
Flash their destructive fires--The mangled dead
And dying victims then pollute the flood.
Ah, thus man spoils Heaven's glorious works with blood!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet V. To The South Downs

AH! hills beloved!--where once, a happy child,
Your beechen shades, 'your turf, your flowers among,'
I wove your blue-bells into garlands wild,
And woke your echoes with my artless song.
Ah! hills beloved!--your turf, your flowers remain;
But can they peace to this sad breast restore,
For one poor moment soothe the sense of pain,
And teach a breaking heart to throb no more?
And you, Aruna!--in the vale below,
As to the sea your limpid waves you bear
Can you one kind Lethean cup bestow,
To drink a long oblivion to my care?
Ah! no!--when all, e'en Hope's last ray is gone,
There's no oblivion--but in death alone!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Vi. To Hope

OH, Hope! thou soother sweet of human woes.
How shall I lure thee to my haunts forlorn?
For me wilt thou renew the wither'd rose,
And clear my painful path of pointed thorn?
Ah, come sweet nymph! in smiles and softness drest,
Like the young hours that lead the tender year,
Enchantress, come! and charm my cares to rest:--
Alas! the flatterer flies, and will not hear!
A prey to fear, anxiety, and pain,
Must I a sad existence still deplore
Lo!--the flowers fade, but all the thorns remain,
'For me the vernal garland blooms no more.'
Come then, 'pale Misery's love!' be thou my cure,
And I will bless thee, who though slow art sure.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet VII: Sweet Poet Of The Woods

Sweet poet of the woods--a long adieu!
Farewel, soft minstrel of the early year!
Ah! 'twill be long ere thou shalt sing anew,
And pour thy music on the 'night's dull ear,'
Whether on spring thy wandering flights await,
Or whether silent in our groves ye dwell,
The pensive muse shall own thee for her mate,
And still protect the song, she loves so well.
With cautious step, the love-lorn youth shall glide
Thro' the lone brake that shades thy mossy nest;
And shepherd girls, from eyes profane shall hide
The gentle bird, who sings of pity best.
For still thy voice shall soft affections move,
And still be dear to sorrow, and to love!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet VIII. To Spring

AGAIN the wood and long-withdrawing vale
In many a tint of tender green are drest,
Where the young leaves, unfolding, scarce conceal
Beneath their early shade, the half-form'd nest
Of finch or woodlark; and the primrose pale,
And lavish cowslip, wildly scatter'd round,
Give their sweet spirits to the sighing gale.
Ah! season of delight!--could aught be found
To soothe awhile the tortured bosom's pain,
Of sorrow's rankling shaft to cure the wound,
And bring life's first delusions once again,
'Twere surely met in thee!--thy prospect fair,
Thy sounds of harmony, thy balmy air,
Have power to cure all sadness--but despair.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet X. To Mrs. G

AH! why will Mem'ry with officious care
The long lost visions of my days renew?
Why paint the vernal landscape green and fair,
When life's gay dawn was opening to my view?
Ah! wherefore bring those moments of delight,
When with my Anna, on the southern shore,
I thought the future, as the present bright?
Ye dear delusions!--ye return no more!
Alas! how diff'rent does the truth appear,
From the warm picture youth's rash hand portrays!
How fades the scene, as we approach it near,
And pain and sorrow strike--how many ways!
Yet of that tender heart, ah! still retain
A share for me--and I will not complain!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xi. To Sleep

COME, balmy Sleep! tired nature's soft resort!
On these sad temples all thy poppies shed;
And bid gay dreams, from Morpheus' airy court,
Float in light vision round my aching head!
Secure of all thy blessings, partial Power!
On his hard bed the peasant throws him down;
And the poor sea-boy, in the rudest hour,
Enjoys thee more than he who wears a crown.
Clasp'd in her faithful shepherd's guardian arms,
Well may the village girl sweet slumbers prove;
And they, O gentle Sleep! still taste thy charms,
Who wake to labour, liberty, and love.
But still thy opiate aid dost thou deny
To calm the anxious breast; to close the streaming eye.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xix. To Mr. Haley,

On receiving some elegant lines from him.

FOR me the Muse a simple band design'd
Of 'idle' flowers that bloom the woods among,
Which, with the cypress and the willow join'd,
A garland form'd as artless as my song.
And little dared I hope its transient hours
So long would last; composed of buds so brief;
Till Hayley's hand among the vagrant flowers,
Threw from his verdant crown a deathless leaf.
For high in Fame's bright fane has Judgment placed
The laurel wreath Serena's poet won,
Which, woven with myrtles by the hands of Taste,
The Muse decreed for this her favourite son.
And those immortal leaves his temples shade,
Whose fair, eternal verdure--shall not fade!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet XI. From The Same.

FAR on the sands, the low, retiring tide,
In distant murmurs hardly seems to flow;
And o'er the world of waters, blue and wide,
The sighing summer wind forgets to blow.
As sinks the day-star in the rosy west,
The silent wave, with rich reflection glows:
Alas! can tranquil nature give me rest,
Or scenes of beauty soothe me to repose?
Can the soft lustre of the sleeping main,
Yon radiant heaven, or all creation's charms,
'Erase the written troubles of the brain,'
Which memory tortures, and which guilt alarms?
Or bid a bosom transient quiet prove,
That bleeds with vain remorse and unextinguish'd love!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xli. To Tranquility

IN this tumultuous sphere, for thee unfit,
How seldom art thou found--Tranquillity!
Unless 'tis when with mild and downcast eye
By the low cradles thou delight'st to sit
Of sleeping infants--watching the soft breath,
And bidding the sweet slumberers easy lie;
Or sometimes hanging o'er the bed of death,
Where the poor languid sufferer--hopes to die.
Oh, beauteous sister of the halcyon peace!
I sure shall find thee in that heavenly scene
Where care and anguish shall their power resign;
Where hope alike, and vain regret shall cease,
And memory--lost in happiness serene,
Repeat no more--that misery has been mine!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xlii: Composed During A Walk

The dark and pillowy cloud, the fallow trees,
Seem o'er the ruins of the year to mourn;
And, cold and hollow, the inconstant breeze
Sobs thro' the falling leaves and wither'd fern.
O'er the tall brow of yonder chalky bourn,
The evening shades their gather'd darkness fling,
While, by the lingering light, I scarce discern
The shrieking night-jar sail on heavy wing.
Ah! yet a little—and propitious Spring
Crown'd with fresh flowers shall wake the woodland strain;
But no gay change revolving seasons bring
To call forth pleasure from the soul of pain;
Bid Syren Hope resume her long-lost part,
And chase the vulture Care—that feeds upon the heart.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xliii: The Unhappy Exile

The unhappy exile, whom his fates confine
To the bleak coast of some unfriendly isle,
Cold, barren, desart, where no harvests smile,
But thirst and hunger on the rocks repine;
When, from some promontory's fearful brow,
Sun after sun he hopeless sees decline
In the broad shipless sea—perhaps may know
Such heartless pain, such blank despair as mine;
And, if a flattering cloud appears to show
The fancied semblance of a distant sail,
Then melts away—anew his spirits fail,
While the lost hope but aggravates his woe!
Ah! so for me delusive Fancy toils,
Then, from contrasted truth—my feeble soul recoils.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xliv: Press'D By The Moon

Press'd by the Moon, mute arbitress of tides,
While the loud equinox its power combines,
The sea no more its swelling surge confines,
But o'er the shrinking land sublimely rides.
The wild blast, rising from the Western cave,
Drives the huge billows from their heaving bed;
Tears from their grassy tombs the village dead,
And breaks the silent sabbath of the grave!
With shells and sea-weed mingled, on the shore
Lo! their bones whiten in the frequent wave;
But vain to them the winds and waters rave;
They hear the warring elements no more:
While I am doom'd—by life's long storm opprest,
To gaze with envy on their gloomy rest.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xlix. From The Novel Of Celestina

Supposed to have been written in a church-yard, over
the grave of a young woman of nineteen.

THOU! who sleep'st where hazle-bands entwine
The vernal grass, with paler violets drest;
I would, sweet maid! thy humble bed were mine,
And mine thy calm and enviable rest.
For never more by human ills opprest
Shall thy soft spirit fruitlessly repine:
Thou canst not now thy fondest hopes resign
Even in the hour that should have made thee blest.
Light lies the turf upon thy virgin breast;
And lingering here, to love and sorrow true,
The youth who once thy simple heart possest
Shall mingle tears with April's early dew;
While still for him shall faithful Memory save
Thy form and virtues from the silent grave.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xlv. On Leaving A Part Of Sussex

FAREWELL, Aruna!--on whose varied shore
My early vows were paid to Nature's shrine,
When thoughtless joy, and infant hope were mine,
And whose lorn stream has heard me since deplore
Too many sorrows! Sighing I resign
Thy solitary beauties--and no more
Or on thy rocks or in thy woods recline,
Or on the heath, by moonlight lingering, pore
On air-drawn phantoms--while in Fancy's ear,
As in the evening wind thy murmurs swell,
The Enthusiast of the Lyre who wander'd here,
Seems yet to strike his visionary shell,
Of power to call forth Pity's tenderest tear,
Or wake wild Frenzy--from her hideous cell!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xlvi.

Written at Penhurst, in Autumn 1788.

YE towers sublime! deserted now and drear!
Ye woods! deep sighing to the hollow blast,
The musing wanderer loves to linger near,
While History points to all your glories past:
And startling from their haunts the timid deer,
To trace the walks obscured by matted fern,
Which Waller's soothing lyre were wont to hear,
But where now clamours the discordant hern!
The spoiling hand of Time may overturn
These lofty battlements, and quite deface
The fading canvass whence we love to learn
Sydney's keen look, and Sacharissa's grace;
But fame and beauty still defy decay,
Saved by the historic page--the poet's tender lay!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xlvii: To Fancy

Thee, Queen of Shadows! -- shall I still invoke,
Still love the scenes thy sportive pencil drew,
When on mine eyes the early radiance broke
Which shew'd the beauteous rather than the true!
Alas! long since those glowing tints are dead,
And now 'tis thine in darkest hues to dress
The spot where pale Experience hangs her head
O'er the sad grave of murder'd Happiness!
Thro' thy false medium, then, no longer view'd,
May fancied pain and fancied pleasure fly,
And I, as from me all thy dreams depart,
Be to my wayward destiny subdued:
Nor seek perfection with a poet's eye,
Nor suffer anguish with a poet's heart!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xlviii. To Mrs. ****

NO more my wearied soul attempts to stray
From sad reality and vain regret,
Nor courts enchanting fiction to allay
Sorrows that sense refuses to forget:
For of calamity so long the prey,
Imagination now has lost her powers,
Nor will her fairy loom again essay
To dress affliction in a robe of flowers.
But if no more the bowers of Fancy bloom,
Let one superior scene attract my view,
Where heaven's pure rays the sacred spot illumine,
Let thy loved hand with palm and amaranth strew
The mournful path approaching to the tomb,
While Faith's consoling voice endears the friendly gloom.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xv. From Petrarch

WHERE the green leaves exclude the summer beam,
And softly bend as balmy breezes blow,
And where, with liquid lapse, the lucid stream
Across the fretted rock is heard to flow,
Pensive I lay: when she whom Earth conceals,
As if still living, to my eyes appears,
And pitying Heaven her angel form reveals,
To say--'Unhappy Petrarch, dry your tears:
'Ah! why, sad lover! thus before your time,
In grief and sadness should your life decay,
And like a blighted flower, your manly prime
In vain and hopeless sorrow fade away?
Ah! yield not thus to culpable despair,
But raise thine eyes to Heaven--and think I wait thee there.'

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet XVII. From The Thirteenth Cantata Of Metastasio

ON thy grey bark, in witness of my flame,
I carve Miranda's cypher--Beauteous tree!
Graced with the lovely letters of her name,
Henceforth be sacred to my love and me!
Though the tall elm, the oak, and darker pine,
With broader arms, may noon's fierce ardours break,
To shelter me, and her I love, be thine;
And thine to see her smile and hear her speak.
No bird, ill-omen'd, round thy graceful head
Shall clamour harsh, or wave his heavy wing,
But fern and flowers arise beneath thy shade.
Where the wild bees their lullabies shall sing.
And in thy boughs the murmuring Ring-dove rest;
And there the Nightingale shall build her nest.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet XVIII. To The Earl Of Egremont

WYNDHAM! 'tis not thy blood, though pure it runs
Through a long line of glorious ancestry,
Percys and Seymours, Britain's boasted sons,
Who trust the honours of their race to thee:
'Tis not thy splendid domes, where science loves
To touch the canvass, and the bust to raise;
Thy rich domains, fair fields, and spreading groves;
'Tis not all these the Muse delights to praise:
In birth, and wealth, and honours, great thou art!
But nobler in thy independent mind;
And in that liberal hand and feeling heart
Given thee by Heaven--a blessing to mankind!
Unworthy oft may titled fortune be;
A soul like thine--is true Nobility!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xx. To The Countess Od A-----

Written on the anniversary of her marriage.

ON this blest day may no dark cloud, or shower,
With envious shade the Sun's bright influence hide!
But all his rays illumine the favour'd hour,
That saw thee, Mary!--Henry's lovely bride!
With years revolving may it still arise,
Blest with each good approving Heaven can send!
And still, with ray serene, shall those blue eyes
Enchant the husband, and attach the friend!
For you fair Friendship's amaranth shall blow,
And love's own thornless roses bind your brow;
And when--long hence--to happier worlds you go,
Your beauteous race shall be what you are now!
And future Nevills through long ages shine,
With hearts as good, and forms as fair as thine!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxi. Supposed To Written By Werter

GO! cruel tyrant of the human breast!
To other hearts thy burning arrows bear;
Go, where fond hope, and fair illusion rest;
Ah! why should love inhabit with despair!
Like the poor maniac I linger here,
Still haunt the scene where all my treasure lies;
Still seek for flowers where only thorns appear,
'And drink delicious poison from her eyes!'
Tow'rds the deep gulf that opens on my sight
I hurry forward, Passion's helpless slave!
And scorning Reason's mild and sober light,
Pursue the path that leads me to the grave!
So round the flame the giddy insect flies,
And courts the fatal fire by which it dies!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxii. By The Same. To Solitude.

OH, Solitude! to thy sequester'd vale
I come to hide my sorrow and my tears,
And to thy echoes tell the mournful tale
Which scarce I trust to pitying Friendship's ears.
Amidst thy wild-woods, and untrodden glades,
No sounds but those of melancholy move;
And the low winds that die among thy shades,
Seem like soft Pity's sighs for hopeless love.
And sure some story of despair and pain,
In yon deep copse, thy murm'ring doves relate;
And, Hark! methinks in that long plaintive strain,
Thine own sweet songstress weeps my wayward fate;
Ah, Nymph! that fate assist me to endure,
And bear awhile--what death alone can cure!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxiii. By The Same. To The North Star.

TO thy bright beams I turn my swimming eyes,
Fair, favourite planet, which in happier days
Saw my young hopes, ah, faithless hopes!--arise,
And on my passion shed propitious rays.
Now nightly wandering 'mid the tempests drear
That howl the woods and rocky steeps among,
I love to see thy sudden light appear
Through the swift clouds--driven by the wind along:
Or in the turbid water, rude and dark,
O'er whose wild stream the gust of Winter raves,
Thy trembling light with pleasure still I mark,
Gleam in faint radiance on the foaming waves!
So o'er my soul short rays of reason fly,
Then fade:--and leave me to despair and die.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxiv. By The Same.

MAKE there my tomb, beneath the lime-tree's shade,
Where grass and flowers in wild luxuriance wave;
Let no memorial mark where I am laid,
Or point to common eyes the lover's grave!
But oft at twilight morn, or closing day,
The faithful friend with fault'ring step shall glide,
Tributes of fond regret by stealth to pay,
And sigh o'er the unhappy suicide.
And sometimes, when the sun with parting rays
Gilds the long grass that hides my silent bed,
The tear shall tremble in my Charlotte's eyes;
Dear, precious drops!--they shall embalm the dead!
Yes--Charlotte o'er the mournful spot shall weep,
Where her poor Werter--and his sorrows sleep.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxix. To Miss C-----

On being desired to attempt writing a Comedy.

WOULD'ST thou then have me tempt the comic scene
Of gay Thalia? used so long to tread
The gloomy paths of sorrow's cypress shade;
And the lorn lay with sighs and tears to stain?
Alas! how much unfit her sprightly vein,
Arduous to try!--and seek the sunny mead,
And bowers of roses, where she loves to lead
The sportive subjects of her golden reign!
Enough for me, if still, to sooth my days,
Her fair and pensive sister condescend,
With tearful smile to bless my simple lays;
Enough, if her soft notes she sometimes lend,
To gain for me of feeling hearts the praise,
And chiefly thine, my ever partial friend!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxv. By The Same.

Just before his Death.

WHY should I wish to hold in this low sphere
'A frail and feverish being?' wherefore try
Poorly from day to day to linger here,
Against the powerful hand of Destiny?
By those who know the force of hopeless care
On the worn heart--I sure shall be forgiven,
If to elude dark guilt, and dire despair,
I go uncall'd--to mercy and to heaven!
O thou! to save whose peace I now depart,
Will thy soft mind thy poor lost friend deplore,
When worms shall feed on this devoted heart,
Where even thy image shall be found no more?
Yet may thy pity mingle not with pain,
For then thy hapless lover--dies in vain!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxvi. To The River Arun

ON thy wild banks, by frequent torrents worn,
No glittering fanes, or marble domes appear,
Yet shall the mournful muse thy course adorn,
And still to her thy rustic waves be dear.
For with the infant Otway, lingering here,
Of early woes she bade her votary dream,
While thy low murmurs sooth'd his pensive ear
And still the poet--consecrates the stream.
Beneath the oak and birch that fringe thy side,
The first-born violets of the year shall spring;
And in thy hazles, bending o'er the tide,
The earliest nightingale delight to sing:
While kindred spirits, pitying, shall relate
Thy Otway's sorrows, and lament his fate.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxvii.

SIGHING I see yon little troop at play,
By sorrow yet untouch'd; unhurt by care;
While free and sportive they enjoy to-day,
'Content and careless of to-morrow's fare!'
O happy age! when hope's unclouded ray
Lights their green path, and prompts their simple mirth,
Ere yet they feel the thorns that lurking lay
To wound the wretched pilgrims of the earth,
Making them rue the hour that gave them birth,
And threw them on a world so full of pain,
Where prosperous folly treads on patient worth,
And, to deaf pride, misfortune pleads in vain!
Ah!--for their future fate how many fears
Oppress my heart--and fill mine eyes with tears!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxviii. To Friendship

THOU! whose name too often is profaned;
Whose charms celestial, few have hearts to feel;
Unknown to Folly--and by Pride disdain'd!
--To thy soft solace may my sorrows steal!
Like the fair moon, thy mild and genuine ray
Through life's long evening shall unclouded last;
While pleasure's frail attachments fleet away,
As fades the rainbow from the northern blast!
'Tis thine, O Nymph! with 'balmy hands to bind'
The wounds inflicted in misfortune's storm,
And blunt severe affliction's sharpest dart!
--'Tis thy pure spirit warms my Anna's mind,
Beams through the pensive softness of her form,
And holds its altar--on her spotless heart!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxx. To The River Arun

BE the proud Thames of trade the busy mart!
Arun! to thee will other praise belong;
Dear to the lover's and the mourner's heart,
And ever sacred to the sons of song!
Thy banks romantic hopeless Love shall seek,
Where o'er the rocks the mantling bindwith flaunts;
And Sorrow's drooping form and faded cheek
Choose on thy willow'd shore her lonely haunts.
Banks, which inspired thy Otway's plaintive strain!
Wilds,--whose lorn echoes learned the deeper tone
Of Collins' powerful shell! yet once again
Another poet--Hayley is thine own!
Thy classic stream anew shall hear a lay,
Bright as its waves, and various as its way.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxxi.

Written on Farm Wood, South Downs, May 1784.

SPRING'S dewy hand on this fair summit weaves
The downy grass, with tufts of Alpine flowers,
And shades the beechen slopes with tender leaves,
And leads the shepherd to his upland bowers,
Strewn with wild thyme; while slow-descending showers
Feed the green ear, and nurse the future sheaves.
--Ah, blest the hind--whom no sad thought bereaves
Of the gay Season's pleasures!--All his hours
To wholesome labour given, or thoughtless mirth;
No pangs of sorrow past, or coming dread,
Bend his unconscious spirit down to earth,
Or chase calm slumbers from his careless head!
Ah, what to me can those dear days restore,
When scenes could charm that now I taste no more!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxxii. To Melancholy

Written on the banks of the Arun, Oct. 1785.

WHEN latest Autumn spreads her evening veil,
And the grey mists from these dim waves arise,
I love to listen to the hollow sighs,
Through the half-leafless wood that breathes the gale:
For at such hours the shadowy phantom, pale,
Oft seems to fleet before the poet's eyes;
Strange sounds are heard, and mournful melodies,
As of night wanderers, who their woes bewail
Here, by his native stream, at such an hour,
Pity's own Otway I methinks could meet,
And hear his deep sighs swell the sadden'd wind!
O Melancholy!--such thy magic power,
That to the soul these dreams are often sweet,
And sooth the pensive visionary mind!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxxiii. To The Naiad Of The Arun

GO, rural Naiad! wind thy stream along
Through woods and wilds: then seek the ocean caves
Where sea-nymphs meet their coral rocks among,
To boast the various honours of their waves!
'Tis but a little, o'er thy shallow tide,
That toiling trade her burden'd vessel leads;
But laurels grow luxuriant on thy side,
And letters live along thy classic meads.
Lo! where 'mid British bards thy natives shine!
And now another poet helps to raise
Thy glory high--the poet of the MINE ,
Whose brilliant talents are his smallest praise:
And who, to all that genius can impart,
Adds the cool head, and the unblemish'd heart.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxxiv: Charm'D By Thy Suffrage

Charm'd by thy suffrage, shall I yet aspire
(All inauspicious as my fate appears,
By troubles darken'd, that encrease with years,)
To guide the crayon, or to touch the lyre?
Ah me!--the sister Muses still require
A spirit free from all intrusive fears,
Nor will they deign to wipe away the tears
Of vain regret, that dim their sacred fire.
But when thy envied sanction crowns my lays,
A ray of pleasure lights my languid mind,
For well I know the value of thy praise;
And to how few, the flattering meed confin'd,
That thou,---their highly favour'd brows to bind,
Wilt weave green myrtle, and unfading bays!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxxix. To Night. From The Same.

I LOVE thee, mournful, sober-suited Night!
When the faint moon, yet lingering in her wane,
And veil'd in clouds, with pale uncertain light
Hangs o'er the waters of the restless main.
In deep depression sunk, the enfeebled mind
Will to the deaf cold elements complain,
And tell the embosom'd grief, however vain,
To sullen surges and the viewless wind.
Though no repose on thy dark breast I find,
I still enjoy thee--cheerless as thou art;
For in thy quiet gloom the exhausted heart
Is calm, though wretched; hopeless, yet resigned.
While to the winds and waves its sorrows given,
May reach--though lost on earth--the ear of Heaven!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxxv. To Fortitude

NYMPH of the rock! whose dauntless spirit braves
The beating storm, and bitter winds that howl
Round thy cold breast; and hear'st the bursting waves
And the deep thunder with unshaken soul;
Oh come!--and show how vain the cares that press
On my weak bosom--and how little worth
Is the false fleeting meteor, Happiness,
That still misleads the wanderers of the earth!
Strengthen'd by thee, this heart shall cease to melt
O'er ills that poor humanity must bear;
Nor friends estranged, or ties dissolved be felt
To leave regret, and fruitless anguish there:
And when at length it heaves its latest sigh,
Thou and mild Hope shall teach me how to die.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxxvi.

SHOULD the lone wanderer, fainting on his way,
Rest for a moment of the sultry hours,
And though his path through thorns and roughness lay,
Pluck the wild rose, or woodbine's gadding flowers,
Weaving gay wreaths beneath some sheltering tree,
The sense of sorrow he awhile may lose;
So have I sought thy flowers, fair Poesy!
So charm'd my way with Friendship and the Muse.
But darker now grows life's unhappy day,
Dark with new clouds of evil yet to come,
Her pencil sickening Fancy throws away,
And weary Hope reclines upon the tomb;
And points my wishes to that tranquil shore,
Where the pale spectre Care pursues no more.

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxxvii.

The poet's fancy takes from Flora's realm
Her buds and leaves to dress fictitious powers,
With the green olive shades Minerva's helm,
And give to Beauty's queen, the queen of flowers.
But what gay blossoms of luxuriant spring,
With rose, mimosa, amaranth entwined,
Shall fabled Sylphs and fairy people bring,
As a just emblem of the lovely mind?
In vain the mimic pencil tries to blend
The glowing dyes that dress the flowery race,
Scented and colour'd by a hand divine!
Ah! not less vainly would the Muse pretend,
On her weak lyre, to sing the native grace
And native goodness of a soul like thine!

Charlotte Smith

Sonnet Xxxviii.

FROM THE NOVEL OF EMMELINE.

WHEN welcome slumber sets my spirit free,
Forth to fictitious happiness it flies,
And where Elysian bowers of bliss arise,
I seem, my Emmeline--to meet with thee!
Ah! Fancy then, dissolving human ties,
Gives me the wishes of my soul to see;
Tears of fond pity fill thy soften'd eyes:
In heavenly harmony--our hearts agree.
Alas! these joys are mine in dreams alone,
When cruel Reason abdicates her throne!
Her harsh return condemns me to complain
Through life unpitied, unrelieved, unknown.
And as the dear delusions leave my brain,
She bids the truth recur--with aggravated pain.

Charlotte Smith

Studies By The Sea

AH ! wherefore do the incurious say,
That this stupendous ocean wide,
No change presents from day to day,
Save only the alternate tide;
Or save when gales of summer glide
Across the lightly crisped wave;
Or, when against the cliff's rough side,
As equinoctial tempests rave,
It wildly bursts; o'erwhelms the deluged strand,
Tears down its bounds, and desolates the land ?

He who with more enquiring eyes
Doth this extensive scene survey,
Beholds innumerable changes rise,
As various winds its surface sway;
Now o'er its heaving bosom play
Small sparkling waves of silver gleam,
And as they lightly glide away
Illumed with fluctuating beam
The deepening surge; green as the dewy corn
That undulates in April's breezy morn.
The far off waters then assume
A glowing amethystine shade,
That changing like the peacock's plume
Seems in celestial blue to fade;

Or paler, colder hues of lead,
As lurid vapours float on high,
Along the ruffling billows spread,
While darkly lours the threatening sky;
And the small scatter'd barks with outspread shrouds,
Catch the long gleams, that fall between the clouds.
Then day's bright star with blunted rays
Seems struggling thro' the sea-fog pale,
And doubtful in the heavy haze,
Is dimly seen the nearing sail;
'Till from the land a fresher gale
Disperses the white mist, and clear,
As melts away the gauzy veil,

The sun-reflecting waves appear;

So, brighter genuine virtue seems to rise
From envy's dark invidious calumnies.
What glories on the sun attend,
When the full tides of evening flow,
Where in still changing beauty, blend
With amber light, the opal's glow;
While in the east the diamond bow
Rises in virgin lustre bright,
And from the horizon seems to throw,
A partial line of trembling light
To the hush'd shore; and all the tranquil deep
Beneath the modest moon, is sooth'd to sleep.

Forgotten then, the thundering break
Of waves, that in the tempest rise,
The falling cliff, the shatter'd wreck,
The howling blast, the sufferer's cries;
For soft the breeze of evening sighs,
And murmuring seems in Fancy's ear
To whisper fairy lullabies,
That tributary waters bear
From precipices, dark with piny woods,
And inland rocks, and heathy solitudes.
The vast encircling seas within,
What endless swarms of creatures hide ,
Of burnish'd scale, and spiny fin !
These providential instincts guide,

And bid them know the annual tide,
When, from unfathom'd waves that swell,
Beyond Fuego's stormy side,
They come, to cheer the tribes that dwell
In Boreal climes; and thro' his half year's night
Give to the Lapland savage, food and light.
From cliffs, that pierce the northern sky;
Where eagles rear their sanguine brood,
With long awaiting patient eye,
Baffled by many a sailing cloud,
The Highland native marks the flood,
Till bright the quickening billows roll,

And hosts of sea-birds, clamouring loud,
Track with wild wing the welcome shoal,

Swift o'er the animated current sweep,
And bear their silver captives from the deep.
Sons of the North ! your streamy vales
With no rich sheaves rejoice and sing;
Her flowery robe no fruit conceals,
Tho' sweetly smile your tardy spring;
Yet every mountain, clothed with ling,
Doth from its purple brow survey
Your busy sails, that ceaseless bring
To the broad frith, and sheltering bay,
Riches, by Heaven's parental power supplied,-
The harvest of the far embracing tide.

And, where those fractur'd mountains lift
O'er the blue wave their towering crest,
Each salient ledge and hollow cleft
To sea-fowl give a rugged nest.
But with instinctive love is drest
The Eider's downy cradle; where
The mother-bird, her glossy breast
Devotes, and with maternal care,
And plumeless bosom, stems the toiling seas,
That foam round the tempestuous Orcades.
From heights, whence shuddering sense recoils,
And cloud-capped headlands, steep and bare,
Sons of the North ! your venturous toils
Collect your poor and scanty fare.

Urged by imperious Want, you dare
Scale the loose cliff, where Gannets hide,
Or scarce suspended, in the air
Hang perilous; and thus provide
The soft voluptuous couch, which not secures
To Luxury's pamper'd minions, sleep like yours.
Revolving still, the waves that now
Just ripple on the level shore,
Have borne perchance the Indian's prow,
Or half congeal'd, 'mid ice rocks hoar,
Raved to the Walrus' hollow roar;

Or have by currents swift convey'd
To the cold coast of Labrador,
The relics of the tropic shade;

And to the wondering Esquimaux have shown
Leaves of strange shape, and fruits unlike their own.
No more then, let the incurious say,
No change this world of water shows,
But as the tides the moon obey,
Or tempests rave, or calms repose.-
Shew them, its bounteous breast bestows
On myriads life; and bid them see
In every wave that circling flows,
Beauty and use, and harmony-
Works of the Power Supreme, who poured the flood,
Round the green peopled earth, and call'd it good !

Charlotte Smith

The Bee's Winter Retreat

Go, while the summer suns are bright,
Take at large thy wandering flight,
Go, and load thy tiny feet
With every rich and various sweet;
Cling around the flowering thorn,
Dive in the woodbine's honey'd horn,
Seek the wild rose that shades the dell,
Explore the foxglove's freckled bell;
Or in the heath-flower's fairy cup,
Drink the fragrant spirit up,
But when the meadows shall be mown,
And summer's garlands overblown,
Then come, thou little busy bee,
And let thy homestead be with me:-
There, shelter'd by the straw-built hive,
In my garden thou shalt live,
And that garden shall supply
Thy delicious alchymy;-
There, for thee, in autumn, blows
The Indian pink and latest rose,
The mignonette perfumes the air,
And stocks, unfading flowers, are there.

Yet fear not when the tempests come,
And drive thee to thy waxen home,
That I shall then, most treacherously,
For thy honey murder thee:-
Oh, no! -throughout the winter drear
I'll feed thee, that another year
Thou may'st renew thy industry
Among the flowers, thou busy bee.

Charlotte Smith

The Dead Beggar

AN ELEGY.

Addressed to a Lady, who was affected at seeing the Funeral of a nameless Pauper, buried at the expense of the Parish, in the Church-Yard at Bright-helmstone, in November 1792.

SWELLS then thy feeling heart, and streams thine eye
O'er the deserted being, poor and old,
Whom cold, reluctant, parish charity
Consigns to mingle with his kindred mould?
Mourn'st thou, that here the time-worn sufferer ends
Those evil days still threatening woes to come;
Here, where the friendless feel no want of friends,
Where even the houseless wanderer finds a home!

What though no kindred crowd in sable forth,
And sigh, or seem to sigh, around his bier;
Though o'er his coffin with the humid earth
No children drop the unavailing tear?
Rather rejoice that here his sorrows cease,
Whom sickness, age, and poverty oppress'd;
Where death, the leveller, restores to peace
The wretch who living knew not where to rest.
Rejoice, that though an outcast spurn'd by fate,
Through penury's rugged path his race he ran;
In earth's cold bosom, equall'd with the great,
Death vindicates the insulted rights of man.
Rejoice, that though severe his earthly doom,
And rude, and sown with thorns the way he trod,
Now, (where unfeeling fortune cannot come)
He rests upon the mercies of his God.

Charlotte Smith

The Emigrants: Book I

Scene, on the Cliffs to the Eastward of the Town of
Brightelmstone in Sussex. Time, a Morning in November, 1792.

Slow in the Wintry Morn, the struggling light
Throws a faint gleam upon the troubled waves;
Their foaming tops, as they approach the shore
And the broad surf that never ceasing breaks
On the innumerable pebbles, catch the beams
Of the pale Sun, that with reluctance gives
To this cold northern Isle, its shorten'd day.
Alas! how few the morning wakes to joy!
How many murmur at oblivious night
For leaving them so soon; for bearing thus
Their fancied bliss (the only bliss they taste!) ,
On her black wings away! - Changing the dreams
That sooth'd their sorrows, for calamities
(And every day brings its own sad proportion)
For doubts, diseases, abject dread of Death,
And faithless friends, and fame and fortune lost;
Fancied or real wants; and wounded pride,
That views the day star, but to curse his beams.
Yet He, whose Spirit into being call'd
This wond'rous World of Waters; He who bids
The wild wind lift them till they dash the clouds,
And speaks to them in thunder; or whose breath,
Low murmuring, o'er the gently heaving tides,
When the fair Moon, in summer night serene,
Irradiates with long trembling lines of light
Their undulating surface; that great Power,
Who, governing the Planets, also knows
If but a Sea-Mew falls, whose nest is hid
In these incumbent cliffs; He surely means
To us, his reasoning Creatures, whom He bids
Acknowledge and revere his awful hand,
Nothing but good: Yet Man, misguided Man,
Mars the fair work that he was bid enjoy,
And makes himself the evil he deploras.
How often, when my weary soul recoils

From proud oppression, and from legal crimes
(For such are in this Land, where the vain boast
Of equal Law is mockery, while the cost
Of seeking for redress is sure to plunge
Th' already injur'd to more certain ruin
And the wretch starves, before his Counsel pleads)
How often do I half abjure Society,
And sigh for some lone Cottage, deep embower'd
In the green woods, that these steep chalky Hills
Guard from the strong South West; where round their base
The Beach wide flourishes, and the light Ash
With slender leaf half hides the thymy turf! -
There do I wish to hide me; well content
If on the short grass, strewn with fairy flowers,
I might repose thus shelter'd; or when Eve
In Orient crimson lingers in the west,
Gain the high mound, and mark these waves remote
(Lucid tho' distant) , blushing with the rays
Of the far-flaming Orb, that sinks beneath them;
For I have thought, that I should then behold
The beauteous works of God, unspoil'd by Man
And less affected then, by human woes
I witness'd not; might better learn to bear
Those that injustice, and duplicity
And faithlessness and folly, fix on me:
For never yet could I derive relief,
When my swol'n heart was bursting with its sorrows,
From the sad thought, that others like myself
Live but to swell affliction's countless tribes!
- Tranquil seclusion I have vainly sought;
Peace, who delights solitary shade,
No more will spread for me her downy wings,
But, like the fabled Danaïds- or the wretch,
Who ceaseless, up the steep acclivity,
Was doom'd to heave the still rebounding rock,
Onward I labour; as the baffled wave,
Which yon rough beach repulses, that returns
With the next breath of wind, to fail again.-
Ah! Mourner- cease these wailings: cease and learn,
That not the Cot sequester'd, where the briar
And wood-bine wild, embrace the mossy thatch,
(Scarce seen amid the forest gloom obscure!)

Or more substantial farm, well fenced and warm,
Where the full barn, and cattle fodder'd round
Speak rustic plenty; nor the statelier dome
By dark firs shaded, or the aspiring pine,
Close by the village Church (with care conceal'd
By verdant foliage, lest the poor man's grave
Should mar the smiling prospect of his Lord) ,
Where offices well rang'd, or dove-cote stock'd,
Declare manorial residence; not these
Or any of the buildings, new and trim
With windows circling towards the restless Sea,
Which ranged in rows, now terminate my walk,
Can shut out for an hour the spectre Care,
That from the dawn of reason, follows still
Unhappy Mortals, 'till the friendly grave
(Our sole secure asylum) 'ends the chace 1.'
Behold, in witness of this mournful truth,
A group approach me, whose dejected looks,
Sad Heralds of distress! proclaim them Men
Banish'd for ever and for conscience sake
From their distracted Country, whence the name
Of Freedom misapplied, and much abus'd
By lawless Anarchy, has driven them far
To wander; with the prejudice they learn'd
From Bigotry (the Tut'ress of the blind) ,
Thro' the wide World unshelter'd; their sole hope,
That German spoilers, thro' that pleasant land
May carry wide the desolating scourge
Of War and Vengeance; yet unhappy Men,
Whate'er your errors, I lament your fate:
And, as disconsolate and sad ye hang
Upon the barrier of the rock, and seem
To murmur your despondence, waiting long
Some fortunate reverse that never comes;
Methinks in each expressive face, I see
Discriminated anguish; there droops one,
Who in a moping cloister long consum'd
This life inactive, to obtain a better,
And thought that meagre abstinence, to wake
From his hard pallet with the midnight bell,
To live on eleemosynary bread,
And to renounce God's works, would please that God.

And now the poor pale wretch receives, amaz'd,
The pity, strangers give to his distress,
Because these Strangers are, by his dark creed,
Condemn'd as Heretics- and with sick heart
Regrets 2 his pious prison, and his beads.-
Another, of more haughty port, declines
The aid he needs not; while in mute despair
His high indignant thoughts go back to France,
Dwelling on all he lost- the Gothic dome,
That vied with splendid palaces 3; the beds
Of silk and down, the silver chalices,
Vestments with gold enwrought for blazing altars;
Where, amid clouds of incense, he held forth
To kneeling crowds the imaginary bones
Of Saints suppos'd, in pearl and gold enchas'd,
And still with more than living Monarchs' pomp
Surrounded; was believ'd by mumbling bigots
To hold the keys of Heaven, and to admit
Whom he thought good to share it- Now alas!
He, to whose daring soul and high ambition
The World seem'd circumscrib'd; who, wont to dream,
Of Fleuri, Richelieu, Alberoni, men
Who trod on Empire, and whose politics
Were not beyond the grasp of his vast mind,
Is, in a Land once hostile, still prophan'd
By disbelief, and rites un-orthodox,
The object of compassion- At his side,
Lighter of heart than these, but heavier far
Than he was wont, another victim comes,
An Abbé- who with less contracted brow
Still smiles and flatters, and still talks of Hope;
Which, sanguine as he is, he does not feel,
And so he cheats the sad and weighty pressure
Of evils present; - - Still, as Men misled
By early prejudice (so hard to break) ,
I mourn your sorrows; for I too have known
Involuntary exile; and while yet
England had charms for me, have felt how sad
It is to look across the dim cold sea,
That melancholy rolls its refluent tides
Between us and the dear regretted land
We call our own- as now ye pensive wait

On this bleak morning, gazing on the waves
That seem to leave your shore; from whence the wind
Is loaded to your ears, with the deep groans
Of martyr'd Saints and suffering Royalty,
While to your eyes the avenging power of Heaven
Appears in awful anger to prepare
The storm of vengeance, fraught with plagues and death.
Even he of milder heart, who was indeed
The simple shepherd in a rustic scene,
And, 'mid the vine-clad hills of Languedoc,
Taught to the bare-foot peasant, whose hard hands
Produc'd 4 the nectar he could seldom taste,
Submission to the Lord for whom he toil'd;
He, or his brethren, who to Neustria's sons
Enforc'd religious patience, when, at times,
On their indignant hearts Power's iron hand
Too strongly struck; eliciting some sparks
Of the bold spirit of their native North;
Even these Parochial Priests, these humbled men;
Whose lowly undistinguish'd cottages
Witness'd a life of purest piety,
While the meek tenants were, perhaps, unknown
Each to the haughty Lord of his domain,
Who mark'd them not; the Noble scorning still
The poor and pious Priest, as with slow pace
He glided thro' the dim arch'd avenue
Which to the Castle led; hoping to cheer
The last sad hour of some laborious life
That hasten'd to its close- even such a Man
Becomes an exile; staying not to try
By temperate zeal to check his madd'ning flock,
Who, at the novel sound of Liberty
(Ah! most intoxicating sound to slaves!) ,
Start into licence- Lo! dejected now,
The wandering Pastor mourns, with bleeding heart,
His erring people, weeps and prays for them,
And trembles for the account that he must give
To Heaven for souls entrusted to his care.-
Where the cliff, hollow'd by the wintry storm,
Affords a seat with matted sea-weed strewn,
A softer form reclines; around her run,
On the rough shingles, or the chalky bourn,

Her gay unconscious children, soon amus'd;
Who pick the fretted stone, or glossy shell,
Or crimson plant marine: or they contrive
The fairy vessel, with its ribband sail
And gilded paper pennant: in the pool,
Left by the salt wave on the yielding sands,
They launch the mimic navy- Happy age!
Unmindful of the miseries of Man! -
Alas! too long a victim to distress,
Their Mother, lost in melancholy thought,
Lull'd for a moment by the murmurs low
Of sullen billows, wearied by the task
Of having here, with swol'n and aching eyes
Fix'd on the grey horizon, since the dawn
Solicitously watch'd the weekly sail
From her dear native land, now yields awhile
To kind forgetfulness, while Fancy brings,
In waking dreams, that native land again!
Versailles appears- its painted galleries,
And rooms of regal splendour, rich with gold,
Where, by long mirrors multiply'd, the crowd
Paid willing homage- and, united there,
Beauty gave charms to empire- Ah! too soon
From the gay visionary pageant rous'd,
See the sad mourner start! - and, drooping, look
With tearful eyes and heaving bosom round
On drear reality- where dark'ning waves,
Urg'd by the rising wind, unheeded foam
Near her cold rugged seat:- To call her thence
A fellow-sufferer comes: dejection deep
Checks, but conceals not quite, the martial air,
And that high consciousness of noble blood,
Which he has learn'd from infancy to think
Exalts him o'er the race of common men:
Nurs'd in the velvet lap of luxury,
And fed by adulation- could he learn,
That worth alone is true Nobility?
And that the peasant who, 'amid 5 the sons
'Of Reason, Valour, Liberty, and Virtue,
'Displays distinguish'd merit, is a Noble
'Of Nature's own creation! '- If even here,
If in this land of highly vaunted Freedom,

Even Britons controvert the unwelcome truth,
Can it be relish'd by the sons of France?
Men, who derive their boasted ancestry
From the fierce leaders of religious wars,
The first in Chivalry's emblazon'd page;
Who reckon Gueslin, Bayard, or De Foix,
Among their brave Progenitors? Their eyes,
Accustom'd to regard the splendid trophies
Of Heraldry (that with fantastic hand
Mingles, like images in feverish dreams,
'Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimeras dire,'
With painted puns, and visionary shapes ;) ,
See not the simple dignity of Virtue,
But hold all base, whom honours such as these
Exalt not from the crowd 6 - As one, who long
Has dwelt amid the artificial scenes
Of populous City, deems that splendid shows,
The Theatre, and pageant pomp of Courts,
Are only worth regard; forgets all taste
For Nature's genuine beauty; in the lapse
Of gushing waters hears no soothing sound,
Nor listens with delight to sighing winds,
That, on their fragrant pinions, waft the notes
Of birds rejoicing in the trangled copse;
Nor gazes pleas'd on Ocean's silver breast,
While lightly o'er it sails the summer clouds
Reflected in the wave, that, hardly heard,
Flows on the yellow sands: so to his mind,
That long has liv'd where Despotism hides
His features harsh, beneath the diadem
Of worldly grandeur, abject Slavery seems,
If by that power impos'd, slavery no more:
For luxury wreathes with silk the iron bonds,
And hides the ugly rivets with her flowers,
Till the degenerate triflers, while they love
The glitter of the chains, forget their weight.
But more the Men, whose ill acquir'd wealth
Was wrung from plunder'd myriads, by the means
Too often legaliz'd by power abus'd,
Feel all the horrors of the fatal change,
When their ephemeral greatness, marr'd at once
(As a vain toy that Fortune's childish hand

Equally joy'd to fashion or to crush) ,
Leaves them expos'd to universal scorn
For having nothing else; not even the claim
To honour, which respect for Heroes past
Allows to ancient titles; Men, like these,
Sink even beneath the level, whence base arts
Alone had rais'd them; - unlamented sink,
And know that they deserve the woes they feel.
Poor wand'ring wretches! whosoe'er ye are,
That hopeless, houseless, friendless, travel wide
O'er these bleak russet downs; where, dimly seen,
The solitary Shepherd shiv'ring tends
His dun discolour'd flock (Shepherd, unlike
Him, whom in song the Poet's fancy crowns
With garlands, and his crook with vi'lets binds):
Poor vagrant wretches! outcasts of the world!
Whom no abode receives, no parish owns;
Roving, like Nature's commoners, the land
That boasts such general plenty: if the sight
Of wide-extended misery softens yours
Awhile, suspend your murmurs! - here behold
The strange vicissitudes of fate- while thus
The exil'd Nobles, from their country driven,
Whose richest luxuries were their's, must feel
More poignant anguish, than the lowest poor,
Who, born to indigence, have learn'd to brave
Rigid Adversity's depressing breath! -
Ah! rather Fortune's worthless favourites!
Who feed on England's vitals- Pensioners
Of base corruption, who, in quick ascent
To opulence unmerited, become
Giddy with pride, and as ye rise, forgetting
The dust ye lately left, with scorn look down
On those beneath ye (tho' your equals once
In fortune, and in worth superior still,
They view the eminence, on which ye stand,
With wonder, not with envy; for they know
The means, by which ye reach'd it, have been such
As, in all honest eyes, degrade ye far
Beneath the poor dependent, whose sad heart
Reluctant pleads for what your pride denies):
Ye venal, worthless hirelings of a Court!

Ye pamper'd Parasites! whom Britons pay
For forging fetters for them; rather here
Study a lesson that concerns ye much;
And, trembling, learn, that if oppress'd too long,
The raging multitude, to madness stung,
Will turn on their oppressors; and, no more
By sounding titles and parading forms
Bound like tame victims, will redress themselves!
Then swept away by the resistless torrent,
Not only all your pomp may disappear,
But, in the tempest lost, fair Order sink
Her decent head, and lawless Anarchy
O'erturn celestial Freedom's radiant throne; -
As now in Gallia; where Confusion, born
Of party rage and selfish love of rule,
Sully the noblest cause that ever warm'd
The heart of Patriot Virtue 8 - There arise
The infernal passions; Vengeance, seeking blood,
And Avarice; and Envy's harpy fangs
Pollute the immortal shrine of Liberty,
Dismay her votaries, and disgrace her name.
Respect is due to principle; and they,
Who suffer for their conscience, have a claim,
Whate'er that principle may be, to praise.
These ill-starr'd Exiles then, who, bound by ties,
To them the bonds of honour; who resign'd
Their country to preserve them, and now seek
In England an asylum- well deserve
To find that (every prejudice forgot,
Which pride and ignorance teaches) , we for them
Feel as our brethren; and that English hearts,
Of just compassion ever own the sway,
As truly as our element, the deep,
Obeys the mild dominion of the Moon-
This they have found; and may they find it still!
Thus may'st thou, Britain, triumph! - May thy foes,
By Reason's gen'rous potency subdued,
Learn, that the God thou worshippest, delights
In acts of pure humanity! - May thine
Be still such bloodless laurels! nobler far
Than those acquir'd at Cressy or Poictiers,
Or of more recent growth, those well bestow'd

On him who stood on Calpe's blazing height
Amid the thunder of a warring world,
Illustrious rather from the crowds he sav'd
From flood and fire, than from the ranks who fell
Beneath his valour! - Actions such as these,
Like incense rising to the Throne of Heaven,
Far better justify the pride, that swells
In British bosoms, than the deafening roar
Of Victory from a thousand brazen throats,
That tell with what success wide-wasting War
Has by our brave Compatriots thinned the world.

Charlotte Smith

The Emigrants: Book II

Scene, on an Eminence on one of those Downs, which afford to the South a view of the Sea; to the North of the Weald of Sussex. Time, an Afternoon in April, 1793.

Long wintry months are past; the Moon that now
Lights her pale crescent even at noon, has made
Four times her revolution; since with step,
Mournful and slow, along the wave-worn cliff,
Pensive I took my solitary way,
Lost in despondence, while contemplating
Not my own wayward destiny alone,
(Hard as it is, and difficult to bear!)
But in beholding the unhappy lot
Of the lorn Exiles; who, amid the storms
Of wild disastrous Anarchy, are thrown,
Like shipwreck'd sufferers, on England's coast,
To see, perhaps, no more their native land,
Where Desolation riots: They, like me,
From fairer hopes and happier prospects driven,
Shrink from the future, and regret the past.
But on this Upland scene, while April comes,
With fragrant airs, to fan my throbbing breast,
Fain would I snatch an interval from Care,
That weighs my wearied spirit down to earth;
Courting, once more, the influence of Hope
(For "Hope" still waits upon the flowery prime)
As here I mark Spring's humid hand unfold
The early leaves that fear capricious winds,
While, even on shelter'd banks, the timid flowers
Give, half reluctantly, their warmer hues
To mingle with the primroses' pale stars.
No shade the leafless copses yet afford,
Nor hide the mossy labours of the Thrush,
That, startled, darts across the narrow path;
But quickly re-assur'd, resumes his talk,
Or adds his louder notes to those that rise
From yonder tufted brake; where the white buds
Of the first thorn are mingled with the leaves

Of that which blossoms on the brow of May.
 Ah! 'twill not be:---- So many years have pass'd,
 Since, on my native hills, I learn'd to gaze
 On these delightful landscapes; and those years
 Have taught me so much sorrow, that my soul
 Feels not the joy reviving Nature brings;
 But, in dark retrospect, dejected dwells
 On human follies, and on human woes.----
 What is the promise of the infant year,
 The lively verdure, or the bursting blooms,
 To those, who shrink from horrors such as War
 Spreads o'er the affrighted world? With swimming eye,
 Back on the past they throw their mournful looks,
 And see the Temple, which they fondly hop'd
 Reason would raise to Liberty, destroy'd
 By ruffian hands; while, on the ruin'd mass,
 Flush'd with hot blood, the Fiend of Discord sits
 In savage triumph; mocking every plea
 Of policy and justice, as she shews
 The headless corse of one, whose only crime
 Was being born a Monarch--Mercy turns,
 From spectacle so dire, her swol'n eyes;
 And Liberty, with calm, unruffled brow
 Magnanimous, as conscious of her strength
 In Reason's panoply, scorns to distain
 Her righteous cause with carnage, and resigns
 To Fraud and Anarchy the infuriate crowd.----
 What is the promise of the infant year
 To those, who (while the poor but peaceful hind
 Pens, unmolested, the encreasing flock
 Of his rich master in this sea-fenc'd isle)
 Survey, in neighbouring countries, scenes that make
 The sick heart shudder; and the Man, who thinks,
 Blush for his species? There the trumpet's voice
 Drowns the soft warbling of the woodland choir;
 And violets, lurking in their turfy beds
 Beneath the flow'ring thorn, are stain'd with blood.
 There fall, at once, the spoiler and the spoil'd;
 While War, wide-ravaging, annihilates
 The hope of cultivation; gives to Fiends,
 The meagre, ghastly Fiends of Want and Woe,
 The blasted land--There, taunting in the van

Of vengeance-breathing armies, Insult stalks;
And, in the ranks, "1 Famine, and Sword, and Fire,
"Crouch for employment."--Lo! the suffering world,
Torn by the fearful conflict, shrinks, amaz'd,
From Freedom's name, usurp'd and misapplied,
And, cowl'ring to the purple Tyrant's rod,
Deems that the lesser ill--Deluded Men!
Ere ye prophane her ever-glorious name,
Or catalogue the thousands that have bled
Resisting her; or those, who greatly died
Martyrs to Liberty --revert awhile
To the black scroll, that tells of regal crimes
Committed to destroy her; rather count
The hecatombs of victims, who have fallen
Beneath a single despot; or who gave
Their wasted lives for some disputed claim
Between anointed robbers: 2 Monsters both!
"3 Oh! Polish'd perturbation--golden care!"
So strangely coveted by feeble Man
To lift him o'er his fellows;--Toy, for which
Such showers of blood have drench'd th' affrighted earth--
Unfortunate his lot, whose luckless head
Thy jewel'd circlet, lin'd with thorns, has bound;
And who, by custom's laws, obtains from thee
Hereditary right to rule, uncheck'd,
Submissive myriads: for untemper'd power,
Like steel ill form'd, injures the hand
It promis'd to protect--Unhappy France!
If e'er thy lilies, trampled now in dust,
And blood-bespotted, shall again revive
In silver splendour, may the wreath be wov'n
By voluntary hands; and Freemen, such
As England's self might boast, unite to place
The guarded diadem on his fair brow,
Where Loyalty may join with Liberty
To fix it firmly.--In the rugged school
Of stern Adversity so early train'd,
His future life, perchance, may emulate
That of the brave Bernois 4 , so justly call'd
The darling of his people; who rever'd
The Warrior less, than they ador'd the Man!
But ne'er may Party Rage, perverse and blind,

And base Venality, prevail to raise
To public trust, a wretch, whose private vice
Makes even the wildest profligate recoil;
And who, with hireling ruffians leagu'd, has burst
The laws of Nature and Humanity!
Wading, beneath the Patriot's specious mask,
And in Equality's illusive name,
To empire thro' a stream of kindred blood--
Innocent prisoner!--most unhappy heir
Of fatal greatness, who art suffering now
For all the crimes and follies of thy race;
Better for thee, if o'er thy baby brow
The regal mischief never had been held:
Then, in an humble sphere, perhaps content,
Thou hadst been free and joyous on the heights
Of Pyrennean mountains, shagg'd with woods
Of chesnut, pine, and oak: as on these hills
Is yonder little thoughtless shepherd lad,
Who, on the slope abrupt of downy turf
Reclin'd in playful indolence, sends off
The chalky ball, quick bounding far below;
While, half forgetful of his simple task,
Hardly his length'ning shadow, or the bells'
Slow tinkling of his flock, that supping tend
To the brown fallows in the vale beneath,
Where nightly it is folded, from his sport
Recal the happy idler.--While I gaze
On his gay vacant countenance, my thoughts
Compare with his obscure, laborious lot,
Thine, most unfortunate, imperial Boy!
Who round thy sullen prison daily hear'st
The savage howl of Murder, as it seeks
Thy unoffending life: while sad within
Thy wretched Mother, petrified with grief,
Views thee with stony eyes, and cannot weep!--
Ah! much I mourn thy sorrows, hapless Queen!
And deem thy expiation made to Heaven
For every fault, to which Prosperity
Betray'd thee, when it plac'd thee on a throne
Where boundless power was thine, and thou wert rais'd
High (as it seem'd) above the envious reach
Of destiny! Whate'er thy errors were,

Be they no more remember'd; tho' the rage
Of Party swell'd them to such crimes, as bade
Compassion stifle every sigh that rose
For thy disastrous lot--More than enough
Thou hast endur'd; and every English heart,
Ev'n those, that highest beat in Freedom's cause,
Disclaim as base, and of that cause unworthy,
The Vengeance, or the Fear, that makes thee still
A miserable prisoner!--Ah! who knows,
From sad experience, more than I, to feel
For thy desponding spirit, as it sinks
Beneath procrastinated fears for those
More dear to thee than life! But eminence
Of misery is thine, as once of joy;
And, as we view the strange vicissitude,
We ask anew, where happiness is found?-----
Alas! in rural life, where youthful dreams
See the Arcadia that Romance describes,
Not even Content resides!--In yon low hut
Of clay and thatch, where rises the grey smoke
Of smold'ring turf, cut from the adjoining moor,
The labourer, its inhabitant, who toils
From the first dawn of twilight, till the Sun
Sinks in the rosy waters of the West,
Finds that with poverty it cannot dwell;
For bread, and scanty bread, is all he earns
For him and for his household--Should Disease,
Born of chill wintry rains, arrest his arm,
Then, thro' his patch'd and straw-stuff'd casement, peeps
The squalid figure of extremest Want;
And from the Parish the reluctant dole,
Dealt by th' unfeeling farmer, hardly saves
The ling'ring spark of life from cold extinction:
Then the bright Sun of Spring, that smiling bids
All other animals rejoice, beholds,
Crept from his pallet, the emaciate wretch
Attempt, with feeble effort, to resume
Some heavy task, above his wasted strength,
Turning his wistful looks (how much in vain!)
To the deserted mansion, where no more
The owner (gone to gayer scenes) resides,
Who made even luxury, Virtue; while he gave

The scatter'd crumbs to honest Poverty.--
But, tho' the landscape be too oft deform'd
By figures such as these, yet Peace is here,
And o'er our vallies, cloath'd with springing corn,
No hostile hoof shall trample, nor fierce flames
Wither the wood's young verdure, ere it form
Gradual the laughing May's luxuriant shade;
For, by the rude sea guarded, we are safe,
And feel not evils such as with deep sighs
The Emigrants deplore, as, they recal
The Summer past, when Nature seem'd to lose
Her course in wild distemperature, and aid,
With seasons all revers'd, destructive War.
Shuddering, I view the pictures they have drawn
Of desolated countries, where the ground,
Stripp'd of its unripe produce, was thick strewn
With various Death--the war-horse falling there
By famine, and his rider by the sword.
The moping clouds sail'd heavy charg'd with rain,
And bursting o'er the mountains misty brow,
Deluged, as with an inland sea, the vales 5 ;
Where, thro' the sullen evening's lurid gloom,
Rising, like columns of volcanic fire,
The flames of burning villages illum'd
The waste of water; and the wind, that howl'd
Along its troubled surface, brought the groans
Of plunder'd peasants, and the frantic shrieks
Of mothers for their children; while the brave,
To pity still alive, listen'd aghast
To these dire echoes, hopeless to prevent
The evils they beheld, or check the rage,
Which ever, as the people of one land
Meet in contention, fires the human heart
With savage thirst of kindred blood, and makes
Man lose his nature; rendering him more fierce
Than the gaunt monsters of the howling waste.
Oft have I heard the melancholy tale,
Which, all their native gaiety forgot,
These Exiles tell--How Hope impell'd them on,
Reckless of tempest, hunger, or the sword,
Till order'd to retreat, they knew not why,
From all their flattering prospects, they became

The prey of dark suspicion and regret 6 :
Then, in despondence, sunk the unnerv'd arm
Of gallant Loyalty--At every turn
Shame and disgrace appear'd, and seem'd to mock
Their scatter'd squadrons; which the warlike youth,
Unable to endure, often implor'd,
As the last act of friendship, from the hand
Of some brave comrade, to receive the blow
That freed the indignant spirit from its pain.
To a wild mountain, whose bare summit hides
Its broken eminence in clouds; whose steep
Are dark with woods; where the receding rocks
Are worn by torrents of dissolving snow,
A wretched Woman, pale and breathless, flies!
And, gazing round her, listens to the sound
Of hostile footsteps---- No! it dies away:
Nor noise remains, but of the cataract,
Or surly breeze of night, that mutters low
Among the thickets, where she trembling seeks
A temporary shelter--clasping close
To her hard-heaving heart, her sleeping child,
All she could rescue of the innocent groupe
That yesterday surrounded her--Escap'd
Almost by miracle! Fear, frantic Fear,
Wing'd her weak feet: yet, half repentant now
Her headlong haste, she wishes she had staid
To die with those affrighted Fancy paints
The lawless soldier's victims--Hark! again
The driving tempest bears the cry of Death,
And, with deep sudden thunder, the dread sound
Of cannon vibrates on the tremulous earth;
While, bursting in the air, the murderous bomb
Glares o'er her mansion. Where the splinters fall,
Like scatter'd comets, its destructive path
Is mark'd by wreaths of flame!--Then, overwhelm'd
Beneath accumulated horror, sinks
The desolate mourner; yet, in Death itself,
True to maternal tenderness, she tries
To save the unconscious infant from the storm
In which she perishes; and to protect
This last dear object of her ruin'd hopes
From prowling monsters, that from other hills,

More inaccessible, and wilder wastes,
Lur'd by the scent of slaughter, follow fierce
Contending hosts, and to polluted fields
Add dire increase of horrors--But alas!
The Mother and the Infant perish both!--
The feudal Chief, whose Gothic battlements
Frown on the plain beneath, returning home
From distant lands, alone and in disguise,
Gains at the fall of night his Castle walls,
But, at the vacant gate, no Porter sits
To wait his Lord's admittance!--In the courts
All is drear silence!--Guessing but too well
The fatal truth, he shudders as he goes
Thro' the mute hall; where, by the blunted light
That the dim moon thro' painted casements lends,
He sees that devastation has been there:
Then, while each hideous image to his mind
Rises terrific, o'er a bleeding corse
Stumbling he falls; another interrupts
His staggering feet--all, all who us'd to rush
With joy to meet him--all his family
Lie murder'd in his way!--And the day dawns
On a wild raving Maniac, whom a fate
So sudden and calamitous has robb'd
Of reason; and who round his vacant walls
Screams unregarded, and reproaches Heaven!--
Such are thy dreadful trophies, savage War!
And evils such as these, or yet more dire,
Which the pain'd mind recoils from, all are thine--
The purple Pestilence, that to the grave
Sends whom the sword has spar'd, is thine; and thine
The Widow's anguish and the Orphan's tears!--
Woes such as these does Man inflict on Man;
And by the closet murderers, whom we style
Wise Politicians; are the schemes prepar'd,
Which, to keep Europe's wavering balance even,
Depopulate her kingdoms, and consign
To tears and anguish half a bleeding world!--
Oh! could the time return, when thoughts like these
Spoil'd not that gay delight, which vernal Suns,
Illuminating hills, and woods, and fields,
Gave to my infant spirits--Memory come!

And from distracting cares, that now deprive
Such scenes of all their beauty, kindly bear
My fancy to those hours of simple joy,
When, on the banks of Arun, which I see
Make its irriguous course thro' yonder meads,
I play'd; unconscious then of future ill!
There (where, from hollows fring'd with yellow broom,
The birch with silver rind, and fairy leaf,
Aslant the low stream trembles) I have stood,
And meditated how to venture best
Into the shallow current, to procure
The willow herb of glowing purple spikes,
Or flags, whose sword-like leaves conceal'd the tide,
Startling the timid reed-bird from her nest,
As with aquatic flowers I wove the wreath,
Such as, collected by the shepherd girls,
Deck in the villages the turfy shrine,
And mark the arrival of propitious May.--
How little dream'd I then the time would come,
When the bright Sun of that delicious month
Should, from disturb'd and artificial sleep,
Awaken me to never-ending toil,
To terror and to tears!--Attempting still,
With feeble hands and cold desponding heart,
To save my children from the o'erwhelming wrongs,
That have for ten long years been heap'd on me!--
The fearful spectres of chicane and fraud
Have, Proteus like, still chang'd their hideous forms
(As the Law lent its plausible disguise),
Pursuing my faint steps; and I have seen
Friendship's sweet bonds (which were so early form'd,)
And once I fondly thought of amaranth
Inwove with silver seven times tried) give way,
And fail; as these green fan-like leaves of fern
Will wither at the touch of Autumn's frost.
Yet there are those, whose patient pity still
Hears my long murmurs; who, unwearied, try
With lenient hands to bind up every wound
My wearied spirit feels, and bid me go
"Right onward 7 "--a calm votary of the Nymph,
Who, from her adamantine rock, points out
To conscious rectitude the rugged path,

That leads at length to Peace!--Ah! yes, my friends
Peace will at last be mine; for in the Grave
Is Peace--and pass a few short years, perchance
A few short months, and all the various pain
I now endure shall be forgotten there,
And no memorial shall remain of me,
Save in your bosoms; while even your regret
Shall lose its poignancy, as ye reflect
What complicated woes that grave conceals!
But, if the little praise, that may await
The Mother's efforts, should provoke the spleen
Of Priest or Levite; and they then arraign
The dust that cannot hear them; be it yours
To vindicate my humble fame; to say,
That, not in selfish sufferings absorb'd,
"I gave to misery all I had, my tears & ."
And if, where regulated sanctity
Pours her long orisons to Heaven, my voice
Was seldom heard, that yet my prayer was made
To him who hears even silence; not in domes
Of human architecture, fill'd with crowds,
But on these hills, where boundless, yet distinct,
Even as a map, beneath are spread the fields
His bounty cloaths; divided here by woods,
And there by commons rude, or winding brooks,
While I might breathe the air perfum'd with flowers,
Or the fresh odours of the mountain turf;
And gaze on clouds above me, as they sail'd
Majestic: or remark the reddening north,
When bickering arrows of electric fire
Flash on the evening sky--I made my prayer
In unison with murmuring waves that now
Swell with dark tempests, now are mild and blue,
As the bright arch above; for all to me
Declare omniscient goodness; nor need I
Declamatory essays to incite
My wonder or my praise, when every leaf
That Spring unfolds, and every simple bud,
More forcibly impresses on my heart
His power and wisdom--Ah! while I adore
That goodness, which design'd to all that lives
Some taste of happiness, my soul is pain'd

By the variety of woes that Man
For Man creates--his blessings often turn'd
To plagues and curses: Saint-like Piety,
Misled by Superstition, has destroy'd
More than Ambition; and the sacred flame
Of Liberty becomes a raging fire,
When Licence and Confusion bid it blaze.
From thy high throne, above yon radiant stars,
O Power Omnipotent! with mercy view
This suffering globe, and cause thy creatures cease,
With savage fangs, to tear her bleeding breast:
Refrain that rage for power, that bids a Man,
Himself a worm, desire unbounded rule
O'er beings like himself: Teach the hard hearts
Of rulers, that the poorest hind, who dies
For their unrighteous quarrels, in thy sight
Is equal to the imperious Lord, that leads
His disciplin'd destroyers to the field.----
May lovely Freedom, in her genuine charms,
Aided by stern but equal Justice, drive
From the ensanguin'd earth the hell-born fiends
Of Pride, Oppression, Avarice, and Revenge,
That ruin what thy mercy made so fair!
Then shall these ill-starr'd wanderers, whose sad fate
These desultory lines lament, regain
Their native country; private vengeance then
To public virtue yield; and the fierce feuds,
That long have torn their desolated land,
May (even as storms, that agitate the air,
Drive noxious vapours from the blighted earth)
Serve, all tremendous as they are, to fix
The reign of Reason, Liberty, and Peace!

Charlotte Smith

The Female Exile

Written at Brighthelmstone in Nov. 1792.

NOVEMBER'S chill blast on the rough beach is howling,
The surge breaks afar, and then foams to the shore,
Dark clouds o'er the sea gather heavy and scowling,
And the white cliffs re-echo the wild wintry roar.
Beneath that chalk rock, a fair stranger reclining,
Has found on damp sea-weed a cold lonely seat;
Her eyes fill'd with tears, and her heart with repining,
She starts at the billows that burst at her feet.
There, day after day, with an anxious heart heaving,
She watches the waves where they mingle with air;
For the sail which, alas! all her fond hopes deceiving,
May bring only tidings to add to her care.

Loose stream to wild winds those fair flowing tresses,
Once woven with garlands of gay summer flowers;
Her dress unregarded, bespeaks her distresses,
And beauty is blighted by grief's heavy hours.
Her innocent children, unconscious of sorrow,
To seek the gloss'd shell, or the crimson weed stray;
Amused with the present, they heed not to-morrow,
Nor think of the storm that is gathering to-day.
The gilt, fairy ship, with its ribbon sail spreading,
They launch on the salt pool the tide left behind;
Ah! victims--for whom their sad mother is dreading
The multiplied miseries that wait on mankind!
To fair fortune born, she beholds them with anguish,
Now wanderers with her on a once hostile soil,
Perhaps doom'd for life in chill penury to languish,
Or abject dependence, or soul-crushing toil.
But the sea-boat, her hopes and her terrors renewing,
O'er the dim grey horizon now faintly appears;
She flies to the quay, dreading tidings of ruin,
All breathless with haste, half expiring with fears.
Poor mourner!--I would that my fortune had left me
The means to alleviate the woes I deplore;
But like thine my hard fate has of affluence bereft me,
I can warm the cold heart of the wretched no more!

The First Swallow

The gorse is yellow on the heath,
The banks with speedwell flowers are gay,
The oaks are budding, and, beneath,
The hawthorn soon will bear the wreath,
The silver wreath, of May.

The welcome guest of settled Spring,
The swallow, too, has come at last;
Just at sunset, when thrushes sing,
I saw her dash with rapid wing,
And hailed her as she passed.

Come, summer visitant, attach
To my reed roof your nest of clay,
And let my ear your music catch,
Low twittering underneath the thatch
At the gray dawn of day.

Charlotte Smith

The Forest Boy

THE trees have now hid at the edge of the hurst
The spot where the ruins decay
Of the cottage, where Will of the Woodland was nursed,
And lived so beloved, till the moment accursed
When he went from the woodland away.
Among all the lads of the plough or the fold;
Best esteem'd by the sober and good,
Was Will of the Woodlands; and often the old
Would tell of his frolics, for active and bold
Was William the boy of the wood.
Yet gentle was he, as the breath of the May,
And when sick and declining was laid
The woodman his father, young William away
Would go to the forest to labour all day,
And perform his hard task in his stead.
And when his poor father the forester died,
And his mother was sad, and alone,
He toil'd from the dawn, and at evening he hied
In storm or in snow, or whate'er might betide,
To supply all her wants from the town.

One neighbour they had on the heath to the west,
And no other the cottage was near,
But she would send Phoebe, the child she loved best,
To stay with the widow, thus sad and distress'd,
Her hours of dejection to cheer.
As the buds of wild roses, the cheeks of the maid
Were just tinted with youth's lovely hue,
Her form, like the aspen, wild graces display'd,
And the eyes, over which her luxuriant locks stray'd,
As the skies of the summer were blue.
Still labouring to live, yet reflecting the while,
Young William consider'd his lot;
'Twas hard, yet 'twas honest; and one tender smile
From Phoebe at night overpaid ev'ry toil,
And then all his fatigues were forgot.
By the brook where it glides through the copse of Arbeal,
When to eat his cold fare he reclined,
Then soft from her home his sweet Phoebe would steal,

And bring him wood-strawberries to finish his meal,
And would sit by his side while he dined.
And though when employed in the deep forest glade,
His days have seem'd slowly to move,
Yet Phoebe going home, through the wood-walk has stray'd
To bid him good night!--and whatever she said
Was more sweet than the voice of the dove.
Fair Hope, that the lover so fondly believes,
Then repeated each soul-soothing speech,
And touch'd with illusion, that often deceives
The future with light; as the sun through the leaves
Illumines the boughs of the beech.
But once more the tempests of chill winter blow,
To depress and disfigure the earth;
And now ere the dawn, the young woodman must go
To his work in the forest, half buried in snow,
And at night bring home wood for the hearth.

The bridge on the heath by the flood was wash'd down,
And fast fell the sleet and the rain,
The stream to a wild rapid river was grown,
And long might the widow sit sighing alone
Ere sweet Phoebe could see her again.
At the town was a market--and now for supplies,
Such as needed her humble abode,
Young William went forth; and his mother with sighs
Watch'd long at the window, with tears in her eyes,
Till he turn'd through the fields to the road.
Then darkness came on; and she heard with affright
The wind every moment more high;
She look'd from the door; not a star lent its light,
But the tempest redoubled the gloom of the night,
And the rain pour'd in sheets from the sky.
The clock in her cottage now mournfully told
The hours that went heavily on;
'Twas midnight: her spirits sank hopeless and cold,
And it seem'd as each blast of wind fearfully told
That long, long would her William be gone.
Then heart-sick and cold to her sad bed she crept,
Yet first made up the fire in the room
To guide his dark steps; but she listen'd and wept,
Or if for a moment forgetful she slept,

Soon she started!--and thought he was come.
'Twas morn; and the wind with a hoarse sullen moan
Now seem'd dying away in the wood,
When the poor wretched mother still drooping, alone,
Beheld on the threshold a figure unknown,
In gorgeous apparel who stood.
'Your son is a soldier,' abruptly cried he,
'And a place in our corps has obtain'd,
Nay, be not cast down; you perhaps may soon see
Your William a captain, he now sends by me
The purse he already has gain'd.'

So William entrapp'd 'twixt persuasion and force,
Is embark'd for the isles of the West,
But he seem'd to begin with ill omens his course,
And felt recollection, regret, and remorse
Continually weigh on his breast.
With useless repentance he eagerly eyed
The high coast as it faded from view,
And saw the green hills, on whose northernmost side
Was his own silvan home: and he falter'd, and cried,
'Adieu! ah! for ever adieu!
'Who now, my poor mother, thy life shall sustain,
Since thy son has thus left thee forlorn?
Ah! canst thou forgive me? And not in the pain
Of this cruel desertion, of William complain,
And lament that he ever was born?
'Sweet Phoebe!--if ever thy lover was dear,
Now forsake not the cottage of woe,
But comfort my mother; and quiet her fear,
And help her to dry up the vain fruitless tear,
That too long for my absence will flow.
'Yet what if my Phoebe another should wed,
And lament her lost William no more?'
The thought was too cruel; and anguish now sped
The dart of disease--With the brave numerous dead
He has fall'n on the plague-tainted shore.
In the lone village church-yard, the chancel-wall near,
High grass now waves over the spot,
Where the mother of William, unable to bear
His loss, who to her widow'd heart was so dear,
Has both him and her sorrows forgot.

By the brook where it winds through the wood of Arbeal,
Or amid the deep forest, to moan,
The poor wandering Phoebe will silently steal;
The pain of her bosom no reason can heal,
And she loves to indulge it alone.

Her senses are injured; her eyes dim with tears;
She sits by the river and weaves
Reed garlands, against her dear William appears,
Then breathlessly listens, and fancies she hears
His step in the half wither'd leaves.
Ah! such are the miseries to which ye give birth,
Ye statesmen! ne'er dreading a scar;
Who from pictured saloon, or the bright sculptured hearth
Disperse desolation and death through the earth,
When ye let loose the demons of war.

Charlotte Smith

The Horologe Of The Fields

Addressed to a Young Lady, on seeing at the House of an Acquaintance a magnificent French Timepiece.

FOR her who owns this splendid toy,
Where use with elegance unites,
Still may its index point to joy,
And moments wing'd with new delights.
Sweet may resound each silver bell,-
And never quick returning chime,
Seem in reproving notes to tell,
Of hours mispent, and murder'd time.

Tho' Fortune, Emily, deny
To us these splendid works of art,
The woods, the lawns, the heaths supply
Lessons from Nature to the heart.
In every copse, and shelter'd dell,
Unveil'd to the observant eye,
Are faithful monitors, who tell
How pass the hours and seasons by.
The green robed children of the Spring
Will mark the periods as they pass,
Mingle with leaves Time's feather'd wing,
And bind with flowers his silent glass.

Mark where transparent waters glide,
Soft flowing o'er their tranquil bed;
There, cradled on the dimpling tide,
Nymphæa rests her lovely head.
But conscious of the earliest beam,
She rises from her humid rest,
And sees reflected in the stream
The virgin whiteness of her breast.
Till the bright daystar to the west
Declines, in Ocean's surge to lave,
Then folded in her modest vest,
She slumbers on the rocking wave.

See Hieracium's various tribe,
Of plummy seed and radiate flowers,

The course of Time their blooms describe
And wake or sleep appointed hours.
Broad o'er its imbricated cup
The Goatsbeard spreads its golden rays,
But shuts its cautious petals up,
Retreating from the noon-tide blaze:
Pale as a pensive cloister'd nun
The Bethlem-star, her face unveils,
When o'er the mountain peers the Sun,
But shades it from the vesper gales.

Among the loose and arid sands
The humble Arenaria creeps;
Slowly the purple star expands,
But soon within its calyx sleeps.
And those small bells so lightly ray'd
With young Aurora's rosy hue,
Are to the noon-tide Sun display'd,
But shut their plaits against the dew.
On upland slopes the shepherds mark
The hour, when as the dial true,
Cichorium to the towering Lark,
Lifts her soft eyes, serenely blue.

And thou 'Wee crimson tipped flower,'
Gatherest thy fringed mantle round
Thy bosom, at the closing hour,
When night drops bathe the turfy ground.
Unlike Silene, who declines
The garish noontide's blazing light;
But when the evening crescent shines
Gives all her sweetness to the night.
Thus in each flower and simple bell,
That in our path untrodden lie,
Are sweet remembrancers who tell
How fast the winged moments fly.

Time will steal on with ceaseless pace,
Yet lose we not the fleeting hours,
Who still their fairy footsteps trace,
As light they dance among the flowers.

Charlotte Smith

The Lark's Nest

'TRUST only to thyself;' the maxim's sound;
For, tho' life's choicest blessing be a friend,
Friends do not very much abound;
Or, where they happen to be found,
And greatly thou on friendship shouldst depend,
Thou'lt find it will not bear
Much wear and tear;
Nay ! that even kindred, cousin, uncle, brother,
Has each perhaps to mind his own affair;
Attend to thine then; lean not on another.

Esop assures us that the maxim's wise;
And by a tale illustrates his advice:
When April's bright and fickle beams
Saw every feather'd pair
In the green woodlands, or by willowy streams,
Busied in matrimonial schemes;
A Lark, amid the dewy air,
Woo'd, and soon won a favourite fair;
And, in a spot by springing rye protected,
Her labour sometimes shared;
While she, with bents, and wither'd grass collected,
Their humble domicile prepared;
Then, by her duty fix'd, the tender mate
Unwearied prest

Their future progeny beneath her breast;
And little slept, and little ate,
While her gay lover, with a careless heart,
As is the custom of his sex,
Full little recks
The coming family; but like a dart,
From his low homestead, with the morning springs;
And far above the floating vapour, sings
At such an height,
That even the shepherd-lad upon the hill,
Hearing his matin note so shrill,
With shaded eyes against the lustre bright,
Scarce sees him twinkling in a flood of light.

But hunger, spite of all her perseverance,
Was one day urgent on his patient bride;
The truant made not his appearance,

That her fond care might be a while supplied,-
So, because hunger will not be denied,
She leaves her nest reluctant; and in haste
But just allows herself to taste,
A dew drop, and a few small seeds-
Ah ! how her fluttering bosom bleeds,
When the dear cradle she had fondly rear'd
All desolate appear'd !
And ranging wide about the field she saw
A setter huge, whose unrelenting jaw
Had crush'd her half-existing young;
Long o'er her ruin'd hopes the mother hung,
And vainly mourn'd,
Ere from the clouds her wanderer return'd:-
Tears justly shed by beauty, who can stand them ?
He heard her plaintive tale with unfeign'd sorrow,

But, as his motto was, 'Nil desperandum,'
Bade her hope better fortune for to-morrow;
Then from the fatal spot afar, they sought
A safer shelter, having bought
Experience, which is always rather dear;
And very near
A grassy headland, in a field of wheat,
They fix'd, with cautious care, their second seat-
But this took time; May was already past,
The white thorn had her silver blossoms cast,
And there the Nightingale, to lovely June,
Her last farewell had sung;
No longer reign'd July's intemperate noon,
And high in heaven the reaper's moon,
A little crescent hung,
Ere from their shells appear'd the plumeless young.

Oh ! then with how much tender care,
The busy pair,
Watch'd and provided for the panting brood !
For then, the vagrant of the air,

Soar'd not to meet the morning star,
But, never from the nestlings far,
Explor'd each furrow, every sod for food;
While his more anxious partner tried
From hostile eyes, the helpless group to hide;
Attempting now, with labouring bill, to guide
The enwreathing bindweed round the nest;
Now joy'd to see the cornflower's azure crest
Above it waving, and the cockle grow,
Or poppies throw
Their scarlet curtains round;
While the more humble children of the ground,

Freak'd pansies, fumitory, pimpernel,
Circled with arras light, the secret cell:-
But who against all evils can provide ?
Hid, and overshadow'd thus, and fortified,
By teasel, and the scabious' thready disk,
Corn-marygold, and thistles; too much risk
The little household still were doom'd to run,
For the same ardent sun,
Whose beams had drawn up many an idle flower,
To fence the lonely bower,
Had by his powerful heat,
Matured the wheat;
And chang'd of hue, it hung its heavy head,
While every rustling gale that blew along
From neighbouring uplands, brought the rustic song
Of harvest merriment: then full of dread,

Lest, not yet fully fledg'd, her race
The reaper's foot might crush, or reaper's dog might trace,
Or village child, too young to reap or bind,
Loitering around, her hidden treasure find;
The mother bird was bent
To move them, e'er the sickle came more near;
And therefore, when for food abroad she went,
(For now her mate again was on the ramble)
She bade her young report what they should hear:
So the next hour they cried, 'They'll all assemble,
'The farmer's neighbours, with the dawn of light,
'Therefore, dear mother, let us move to night.'

'Fear not, my loves,' said she, 'you need not tremble;
'Trust me, if only neighbours are in question,
'Eat what I bring, and spoil not your digestion
'Or sleep, for this.' Next day away she flew,

And that no neighbour came was very true;
But her returning wings the Larklings knew,
And quivering round her, told, their landlord said,
'Why, John ! the reaping must not be delay'd,
'By peep of day to-morrow we'll begin,
'Since now so many of our kin
'Have promis'd us their help to set about it.'
'Still,' quoth the bird, 'I doubt it;
'The corn will stand to-morrow.' So it prov'd;
The morning's dawn arriv'd-but never saw
Or uncle, cousin, brother, or brother-in-law;
And not a reap-hook mov'd !
Then to his son the angry farmer cried,
'Some folks are little known 'till they are tried;
'Who would have thought we had so few well-wishers !
'What ! neither neighbour Dawes, nor cousin Fishers,

'Nor uncle Betts, nor even my brother Delves,
'Will lend an hand, to help us get the corn in ?
'Well then, let you and me, to-morrow morning,
'E'en try what we can do with it ourselves.'
'Nay,' quoth the Lark, "'tis time then to be gone:
'What a man undertakes himself is done.'
Certes, she was a bird of observation;
For very true it is, that none,
Whatever be his station,
Lord of a province, tenant of a mead,
Whether he fill a cottage, or a throne,
Or guard a flock, or guide a nation,
Is very likely to succeed,
Who manages affairs by deputation.

Charlotte Smith

The Moon

Queen of the silver bow, by thy pale beam
Alone and pensive I delight to stray,
And watch thy shadow trembling in the stream,
Or mark the floating clouds that cross thy way.
And while I gaze, thy mild and placid light
Sheds a soft calm upon my troubled breast;
And oft I think, fair planet of the night,
That in thy orb the wretched may have rest;
The sufferers of the earth perhaps may go,
Released by death, to thy benignant sphere;
And the sad children of despair and woe,
Forget in thee, their cup of sorrow here.
Oh, that I soon may reach thy world serene,
Poor wearied pilgrim in this toiling scene.

Charlotte Smith

The Origin Of Flattery

WHEN Jove, in anger to the sons of the earth,
Bid artful Vulcan give Pandora birth,
And sent the fatal gift which spread below
O'er all the wretched race contagious woe,
Unhappy man, by vice and folly tost,
Found in the storms of life his quiet lost,
While Envy, Avarice, and Ambition, hurl'd
Discord and death around the warring world;
Then the blest peasant left his fields and fold,
And barter'd love and peace for power and gold;
Left his calm cottage and his native plain,
In search of wealth to tempt the faithless main;
Or, braving danger, in the battle stood,
And bathed his savage hands in human blood;
No longer then, his woodland walks among,
The shepherd lad his genuine passion sung,
Or sought at early morn his soul's delight,
Or grav'd her name upon the bark at night;
To deck her flowing hair no more he wove
The simple wreath, or with ambitious love
Bound his own brow with myrtle or with bay,
But broke his pipe, or threw his crook away.
The nymphs forsaken, other pleasures sought;
Then first for gold their venal hearts were bought,
And nature's blush to sickly art gave place,
And affectation seized the seat of grace:
No more simplicity by sense refined,
Or generous sentiment, possess'd the mind:
No more they felt each other's joy and woe,
And Cupid fled, and hid his useless bow.
But with deep grief propitious Venus pined,
To see the ills which threaten'd womankind;
Ills that she knew her empire would disarm,
And rob her subjects of their sweetest charm;
Good humour's potent influence destroy,
And change for lowering frowns the smile of joy,
Then deeply sighing at the mournful view,
She tried at length what heavenly art could do

To bring back Pleasure to her pensive train,
And vindicate the glories of her reign.
A thousand little loves attend the task,
And bear from Mars's head his radiant casque,
The fair enchantress on its silver bound
Weaved with soft spells her magic cestus round,
Then shaking from her hair ambrosial dew,
Infused fair hope, and expectation new,
And stifled wishes, and persuasive sighs,
And fond belief, and 'eloquence of eyes,
And falt'ring accents, which explain so well
What studied speeches vainly try to tell;
And more pathetic silence, which imparts
Infectious tenderness to feeling hearts;
Soft tones of pity; fascinating smiles;
And Maia's son assisted her with wiles,
And brought gay dreams, fantastic visions brought,
And waved his wand o'er the seducing draught.
Then Zephyr came: to him the goddess cried,
'Go fetch from Flora all her flowery pride
To fill my charm, each scented bud that blows,
And bind my myrtles with her thornless rose;
Then speed thy flight to Gallia's smiling plain,
Where rolls the Loire, the Garonne, and the Seine;
Dip in their waters thy celestial wing,
And the soft dew to fill my chalice bring;
But chiefly tell thy Flora, that to me
She send a bouquet of her fleurs de lys;
That poignant spirit will complete my spell.'
--'Tis done: the lovely sorceress says 'tis well.
And now Apollo lends a ray of fire,
The caldron bubbles, and the flames aspire;
The watchful Graces round the circle dance,
With arms entwined to mark the work's advance;
And with full quiver sportive Cupid came,
Temp'ring his favourite arrows in the flame.
Then Venus speaks, the wavering flames retire,
And Zephyr's breath extinguishes the fire.
At length the goddess in the helmet's round
A sweet and subtile spirit duly found,
More soft than oil, than ether more refined,
Of power to cure the woes of womankind,

And call'd it Flattery:--balm of female life,
It charms alike the widow, maid, and wife;
Clears the sad brow of virgins in despair,
And smooths the cruel traces left by care;

Bids palsied age with youthful spirit glow,
And hangs May's garlands on December's snow.
Delicious essence! howsoe'er applied,
By what rude nature is thy charm denied?
Some form seducing still thy whisper wears,
Stern Wisdom turns to thee her willing ears,
And Prudery listens and forgets her fears.
The rustic nymph whom rigid aunts restrain,
Condemn'd to dress, and practise airs in vain,
At thy first summons finds her bosom swell,
And bids her crabbed gouvernantes farewell;
While, fired by thee with spirit not her own,
She grows a toast, and rises into ton .
The faded beauty who, with secret pain,
Sees younger charms usurp her envied reign,
By thee assisted, can with smiles behold
The record where her conquests are enroll'd;
And dwelling yet on scenes by memory nursed,
When George the Second reign'd, or George the First;
She sees the shades of ancient beaux arise,
Who swear her eyes exceeded modern eyes,
When poets sung for her, and lovers bled,
And giddy fashion follow'd as she led.
Departed modes appear in long array,
The flowers and flounces of her happier day;
Again her locks the decent fillets bind,
The waving lappet flutters in the wind.
And then comparing with a proud disdain
The more fantastic tastes that now obtain,
She deems ungraceful, trifling and absurd,
The gayer world that moves round George the Third.
Nor thy soft influence will the train refuse,
Who court in distant shades the modest Muse,
Though in a form more pure and more refined,
Thy soothing spirit meets the letter'd mind.
Not death itself thine empire can destroy;
Tow'rds thee, even then, we turn the languid eye;

Still trust in thee to bid our memory bloom,
And scatter roses round the silent tomb.

Charlotte Smith

The Peasant Of The Alps

FROM THE NOVEL OF CELESTINA.

WHERE cliffs arise by winter crown'd,
And through dark groves of pine around,
Down the deep chasms the snow-fed torrents foam,
Within some hollow, shelter'd from the storms,
The Peasant of the Alps his cottage forms,
And builds his humble, happy home.
Unenvied is the rich domain,
That far beneath him on the plain
Waves its wide harvests and its olive groves;
More dear to him his hut with plantain thatch'd,
Where long his unambitious heart attach'd,
Finds all he wishes, all he loves.
There dwells the mistress of his heart,
And Love , who teaches every art,
Has bid him dress the spot with fondest care;
When borrowing from the vale its fertile soil,
He climbs the precipice with patient toil,
To plant her favourite flowerets there.
With native shrubs, a hardy race,
There the green myrtle finds a place,
And roses there the dewy leaves decline;
While from the crags abrupt, and tangled steeps,
With bloom and fruit the Alpine berry peeps,
And, blushing, mingles with the vine.
His garden's simple produce stored,
Prepared for him by hands adored,
Is all the little luxury he knows.
And by the same dear hands are softly spread,
The Chamois' velvet spoil that forms the bed,
Where in her arms he finds repose.

But absent from the calm abode,
Dark thunder gathers round his road,
Wild raves the wind, the arrowy lightnings flash,
Returning quick the murmuring rocks among,
His faint heart trembling as he winds along;
Alarm'd--he listens to the crash
Of rifted ice!--Oh, man of woe!

O'er his dear cot--a mass of snow,
By the storm sever'd from the cliff above,
Has fallen--and buried in its marble breast,
All that for him--lost wretch--the world possest,
His home, his happiness, his love!
Aghast the heart-struck mourner stands,
Glazed are his eyes--convulsed his hands,
O'erwhelming anguish checks his labouring breath;
Crush'd by despair's intolerable weight,
Frantic he seeks the mountain's giddiest height,
And headlong seeks relief in death.
A fate too similar is mine,
But I--in lingering pain repine,
And still my lost felicity deplore;
Cold, cold to me is that dear breast become
Where this poor heart had fondly fix'd its home,
And love and happiness are mine no more.

Charlotte Smith

The Swallow

THE gorse is yellow on the heath,
The banks with speedwell flowers are gay,
The oaks are budding; and beneath,
The hawthorn soon will bear the wreath,
The silver wreath of May.
The welcome guest of settled Spring,
The Swallow too is come at last;
Just at sun-set, when thrushes sing,
I saw her dash with rapid wing,
And hail'd her as she pass'd.

Come, summer visitant, attach
To my reed roof your nest of clay,
And let my ear your music catch
Low twittering underneath the thatch
At the gray dawn of day.
As fables tell, an Indian Sage,
The Hindostani woods among,
Could in his desert hermitage,
As if 'twere mark'd in written page,
Translate the wild bird's song.
I wish I did his power possess,
That I might learn, fleet bird, from thee,
What our vain systems only guess,
And know from what wide wilderness
You came across the sea.

I would a little while restrain
Your rapid wing, that I might hear
Whether on clouds that bring the rain,
You sail'd above the western main,
The wind your charioteer.
In Afric, does the sultry gale
Thro' spicy bower, and palmy grove,
Bear the repeated Cuckoo's tale ?
Dwells there a time, the wandering Rail
Or the itinerant Dove ?
Were you in Asia ? O relate,
If there your fabled sister's woes

She seem'd in sorrow to narrate;
Or sings she but to celebrate
Her nuptials with the rose ?

I would enquire how journeying long,
The vast and pathless ocean o'er,
You ply again those pinions strong,
And come to build anew among
The scenes you left before;
But if, as colder breezes blow,
Prophetic of the waning year,
You hide, tho' none know when or how,
In the cliff's excavated brow,
And linger torpid here;
Thus lost to life, what favouring dream
Bids you to happier hours awake;
And tells, that dancing in the beam,
The light gnat hovers o'er the stream,
The May-fly on the lake ?

Or if, by instinct taught to know
Approaching dearth of insect food;
To isles and willowy aits you go,
And crouding on the pliant bough,
Sink in the dimpling flood:
How learn ye, while the cold waves boom
Your deep and ouzy couch above,
The time when flowers of promise bloom,
And call you from your transient tomb,
To light, and life, and love ?
Alas ! how little can be known,
Her sacred veil where Nature draws;
Let baffled Science humbly own,
Her mysteries understood alone,
By Him who gives her laws.

Charlotte Smith

The Truant Dove, From Pilpay

A MOUNTAIN stream, its channel deep
Beneath a rock's rough base had torn;
The cliff, like a vast castle wall, was steep
By fretting rains in many a crevice worn;
But the fern wav'd there, and the mosses crept,
And o'er the summit, where the wind
Peel'd from their stems the silver rind,
Depending birches wept--
There, tufts of broom a footing used to find,

And heath and straggling grass to grow,
And half-way down from roots enwreathing, broke
The branches of a scathed oak,
And seem'd to guard the cave below,
Where each revolving year,
Their twins, two faithful doves were wont to rear;
Choice never join'd a fonder pair;
To each their simple home was dear,
No discord ever enter'd there;
But there the soft affections dwell'd,
And three returning springs beheld
Secure within their fortress high
The little happy family.
'Toujours perdrix, messieurs, ne valent rien'-
So did a Gallic monarch once harangue,
And evil was the day whereon our bird

This saying heard,
From certain new acquaintance he had found,
Who at their perfect ease,
Amid a field of peas
Boasted to him, that all the country round,
The wheat, and oats, and barley, rye and tares,
Quite to the neighbouring sea, were theirs;
And theirs the oak, and beech-woods, far and near,
For their right noble owner was a peer,
And they themselves, luxuriantly were stored
In a great dove-cote-to amuse my lord !
'Toujours perdrix ne valent rien.' That's strange !

When people once are happy, wherefore change ?
So thought our stock-dove, but communication,
With birds in his new friend's exalted station,
Whose means of information,

And knowledge of all sorts, must be so ample;
Who saw great folks, and follow'd their example,
Made on the dweller of the cave, impression;
And soon, whatever was his best possession,
His sanctuary within the rock's deep breast,
His soft-eyed partner, and her nest,
He thought of with indifference, then with loathing;
So much insipid love was good for nothing.-
But sometimes tenderness return'd; his dame
So long belov'd, so mild, so free from blame,
How should he tell her, he had learn'd to cavil
At happiness itself, and longed to travel ?
His heart still smote him, so much wrong to do her,
He knew not how to break the matter to her.
But love, tho' blind himself, makes some discerning;
His frequent absence, and his late returning,

With ruffled plumage, and with alter'd eyes,
His careless short replies,
And to their couplets, coldness or neglect
Had made his gentle wife suspect,
All was not right; but she forbore to tease him,
Which would but give him an excuse to rove:
She therefore tried by every art to please him,
Endur'd his peevish starts with patient love,
And when (like other husbands from a tavern)
Of his new notions full, he sought his cavern
She with dissembled cheerfulness, 'beguiled
'The thing she was,' and gaily coo-ed and smiled.
'Tis not in this most motley sphere uncommon,
For man, (and so of course more feeble woman)
Most strongly to suspect, what they're pursuing
Will lead them to inevitable ruin,

Yet rush with open eyes to their undoing;
Thus felt the dove; but in the cant of fashion
He talk'd of fate, and of predestination,

And in a grave oration,
He to his much affrighted mate related,
How he, yet slumbering in the egg, was fated,
To gather knowledge, to instruct his kind,
By observation elevate his mind,
And give new impulse to Columbian life;
'If it be so,' exclaim'd his hapless wife,
'It is my fate, to pass my days in pain,
'To mourn your love estrang'd, and mourn in vain;
'Here in our once dear hut, to wake and weep,
'When thy unkindness shall have `murder'd sleep;'
'And never that dear hut shall I prepare,
'And wait with fondness your arrival there,

'While me, and mine forgetting, you will go
'To some new love.' 'Why, no, I tell you no,-
'What shall I say such foolish fears to cure ?
'I only mean to make a little tour,
'Just-just to see the world around me; then
'With new delight, I shall come home again;
'Such tours are quite the rage-at my return
'I shall have much to tell, and you to learn;
'Of fashions-some becoming, some grotesque
'Of change of empires, and ideas novel;
'Of buildings, Grecian, Gothic, Arabesque,
'And scenery sublime and picturesque;
'And all these things with pleasure we'll discuss-'
'Ah, me ! and what are all these things to us ?'
'So then, you'd have a bird of genius grovel,
'And never see beyond a farmer's hovel ?

'Even the sand-martin, that inferior creature,
'Goes once a year abroad.' 'It is his nature,
'But yours how different once !' and then she sigh'd,
'There was a time, Ah ! would that I had died,
'E'er you so chang'd ! when you'd have perish'd rather
'Than this poor breast should heave a single feather
'With grief and care. And all this cant of fashion
'Would but have rais'd your anger, or compassion,-
'O my dear love ! You sought not then to range,
'But on my changeful neck as fell the light,
'You sweetly said, you wish'd no other change

'Than that soft neck could shew; to berries bright
'Of mountain ash, you fondly could compare
'My scarlet feet and bill; my shape and air,
'Ah ! faithless flatterer, did you not declare
'The soul of grace and beauty center'd there ?

'My eyes you said, were opals, brightly pink,
'Enchas'd in onyx; and you seem'd to think,
'Each charm might then the coldest heart enthrall:
'Those charms were mine. Alas ! I gave you all-
'Your farthest wanderings then were but to fetch
'The pea, the tare, the beechmast, and the vetch,
'For my repast; within my rocky bower,
'With spleenwort shaded, and the blue-bell's flower,
'For prospects then you never wish'd to roam,
'But the best scenery was our happy home;
'And when, beneath my breast, then fair and young,
'Our first dear pair, our earliest nestlings sprung,
'And weakly, indistinctly, tried to coo-
'Were not those moments picturesque to you ?'
'Yes, faith, my dear; and all you say is true.'

'Oh ! hear me then; if thus we have been blest,
'If on these wings it was your joy to rest,
'Love must from habit still new strength be gaining-'
'From habit ? 'tis of that, child, I'm complaining
'This everlasting fondness will not be
'For birds of flesh and blood. We sha'nt agree,
'So why dispute ? now prithee don't torment me;
'I shall not long be gone; let that content ye:
'Pshaw ! what a fuss ! Come, no more sighs and groans,
'Keep up your spirits; mind your little ones;
'My journey won't be far-my honour's pledged-
'I shall be back again before they're fledged;
'Give me a kiss; and now my dear, adieu !'
So light of heart and plumes, away he flew;
And, as above the sheltering rock he springs,
She listen'd to the echo of his wings;

Those well-known sounds, so soothing heretofore,
Which her heart whisper'd she should hear no more.
Then to her cold and widow'd bed she crept,

Clasp'd her half-orphan'd young, and wept !
Her recreant mate, by other views attracted,
A very different part enacted;
He sought the dove-cote, and was greeted there
With all that's tonish, elegant, and rare,
Among the pigeon tribes; and there the rover
Lived quite in clover !
His jolly comrades now, were blades of spirit;
Their nymphs possess'd most fascinating merit;
Nor fail'd our hero of the rock to prove,
He thought not of inviolable love
To his poor spouse at home. He bow'd and sigh'd,
Now to a fantail's, now a cropper's bride;

Then cow'ring low to a majestic powder,
Declared he should not suffer life without her;
And then with upturn'd eyes, in phrase still humbler,
Implor'd the pity of an almond tumbler;
Next, to a beauteous carrier's feet he'd run,
And lived a week, the captive of a nun:
Thus far in measureless content he revels,
And blest the hour when he began his travels.
Yet some things soon occur'd not quite so pleasant;
He had observ'd that an unfeeling peasant,
It silence mounting on a ladder high,
Seiz'd certain pigeons just as they could fly,
Who never figur'd more, but in a pie;
That was but awkward; then, his lordship's son
Heard from the groom, that 'twould be famous fun
To try on others his unpractis'd gun;

Their fall, the rattling shot, his nerves perplex'd;
He thought perhaps it might be his turn next.
It has been seen ere now, that, much elated,
To be by some great man caress'd and fêted,
A youth of humble birth, and mind industrious,
Foregoes in evil hour his independance;
And, charm'd to wait upon his friend illustrious,
Gives up his time to flattery and attendance.
His patron, smiling at his folly, lets him-
Some newer whim succeeds, and he forgets him.
So fared our bird; his new friend's vacant stare,

Told him he scarce remember'd he was there;
And, when he talk'd of living more securely,
This very dear friend, yawning, answered, 'Surely !
'You are quite right to do what's most expedient,
'So, au revoir !-Good bye ! Your most obedient.'

Allies in prosperous fortune thus he prov'd,
And left them, unregretting, unbelov'd;
Yet much his self-love suffer'd by the shock,
And now, his quiet cabin in the rock,
The faithful partner of his every care,
And all the blessings he abandon'd there,
Rush'd on his sickening heart; he felt it yearn,
But pride and shame prevented his return;
So wandering farther-at the close of day
To the high woods he pensive wing'd his way;
But new distress at every turn he found-
Struck by an hawk, and stunn'd upon the ground,
He once by miracle escaped; then fled
From a wild cat, and hid his trembling head
Beneath a dock; recovering, on the wind
He rose once more, and left his fears behind;

And, as above the clouds he soar'd, the light
Fell on an inland rock; the radiance bright
Shew'd him his long deserted place of rest,
And thitherward he flew; his throbbing breast
Dwelt on his mate, so gentle, and so wrong'd,
And on his memory throng'd
The happiness he once at home had known;
Then to forgive him earnest to engage her,
And for his errors eager to atone,
Onward he went; but ah ! not yet had flown
Fate's sharpest arrow: to decide a wager,
Two sportsmen shot at our deserter; down
The wind swift wheeling, struggling, still he fell,
Close to the margin of the stream that flow'd
Beneath the foot of his regretted cell,
And the fresh grass was spotted with his blood;

To his dear home he turn'd his languid view,
Deplor'd his folly, while he look'd his last,

And sigh'd a long adieu !
Thither to sip the brook, his nestlings, led
By their still pensive mother, came;
He saw; and murmuring forth her dear lov'd name,
Implor'd her pity, and with shortening breath,
Besought her to forgive him ere his death.-
And now, how hard in metre to relate
The tears and tender pity of his mate !
Or with what generous zeal, his faithful moitie
Taught her now feather'd young, with duteous piety,
To aid her, on their mutual wings to bear,
With stork-like care,
Their suffering parent to the rock above;
There, by the best physician, Love,

His wounds were heal'd.-His wanderings at an end,
And sober'd quite, the husband, and the friend,
In proof of reformation and contrition,
Gave to his race this prudent admonition;
Advice, which this, our fabling muse, presumes
May benefit the biped without plumes:
'If of domestic peace you are possess'd,
'Learn to believe yourself supremely bless'd;
'And gratefully enjoying your condition,
'Frisk not about, on whims and fancies strange,
'For ten to one, you for the worse will change:
'And 'tis most wise, to check all vain ambition-
'By such aspiring pride the angels fell;
'So love your wife, and know when you are well.'

Charlotte Smith

Thirty-Eight

IN early youth's unclouded scene,
The brilliant morning of eighteen,
With health and sprightly joy elate
We gazed on life's enchanting spring ,
Nor thought how quickly time would bring
The mournful period--Thirty-eight.
Then the starch maid, or matron sage,
Already at the sober age,
We view'd with mingled scorn and hate;
In whose sharp words, or sharper face,
With thoughtless mirth we loved to trace
The sad effects of--Thirty-eight.
Till saddening, sickening at the view
We learn'd to dread what Time might do;
And then preferr'd a prayer to Fate
To end our days ere that arrived;
When (power and pleasure long survived)
We met neglect and--Thirty-eight.
But time, in spite of wishes, flies
And Fate our simple prayer denies,
And bids us death's own hour await:
The auburn locks are mix'd with grey,
The transient roses fade away,
But reason comes at--Thirty-eight.

Her voice the anguish contradicts
That dying vanity inflicts;
Her hand new pleasures can create,
For us she opens to the view
Prospects less bright--but far more true,
And bids us smile at--Thirty-eight.
No more shall scandal's breath destroy
The social converse we enjoy
With bard or critic tete a tete;--
O'er youth's bright blooms her blights shall pour,
But spare the improving friendly hour
That science gives to --Thirty-eight.
Stripp'd of their gaudy hues by Truth,
We view the glitt'ring toys of youth,

And blush to think how poor the bait
For which to public scenes we ran
And scorn'd of sober sense the plan
Which gives content at--Thirty-eight.
Though Time's inexorable sway
Has torn the myrtle bands away,
For other wreaths 'tis not too late,
The amaranth's purple glow survives,
And still Minerva's olive lives
On the calm brow of--Thirty-eight.
With eye more steady we engage
To contemplate approaching age,
And life more justly estimate;
With firmer souls, and stronger powers,
With reason, faith, and friendship ours,
We'll not regret the stealing hours
That lead from Thirty--even to Forty-eight.

Charlotte Smith

To the Fire-Fly of Jamaica, Seen in a Collection

How art thou alter'd! since afar,
Thou seem'dst a bright earth wandering star;
When thy living lustre ran,
Tall majestic trees between,
And Guazume, or Swietan,
Or the Pimento's glossy green,
As caught their varnish'd leaves, thy glancing light
Reflected flying fires, amid the moonless night.

From shady heights, where currents spring,
Where the ground dove dips her wing,
Winds of night reviving blow,
Thro' rustling fields of maize and cane,
And wave the Coffee's fragrant bough;
But winds of night, for thee in vain
May breathe, of the Plumeria's luscious bloom,
Or Granate's scarlet buds, or Plinia's mild perfume.

The recent captive, who in vain,
Attempts to break his heavy chain,
And find his liberty in flight;
Shall no more in terror hide,
From thy strange and doubtful light,
In the mountain's cavern'd side,
Or gully deep, where gibbering monkies cling,
And broods the giant bat, on dark funereal wing.

Nor thee his darkling steps to aid,
Thro' the forest's pathless shade,
Shall the sighing Slave invoke;
Who, his daily task perform'd,
Would forget his heavy yoke;
And by fond affections warm'd,
Glide to some dear sequester'd spot, to prove,
Friendship's consoling voice, or sympathising love.

Now, when sinks the Sun away,
And fades at once the sultry day,
Thee, as falls the sudden night,

Never Naturalist shall view,
Dart with corruscation bright,
Down the cocoa avenue;
Or see thee give, with transient gleams to glow,
The green Banana's head, or Shaddock's loaded bough.

Ah! never more shalt thou behold,
The midnight Beauty, slow unfold
Her golden zone, and thro' the gloom
To thee her radiant leaves display,
More lovely than the roseate bloom
Of flowers, that drink the tropic day;
And while thy dancing flames around her blaze,
Shed odours more refin'd, and beam with brighter rays.

The glass thy faded form contains,
But of thy lamp no spark remains;
That lamp, which through the palmy grove,
Floated once with sapphire beam,
As lucid as the star of Love,
Reflected in the bickering stream;
Transient and bright! so human meteors rise,
And glare and sink, in pensive Reason 's eyes.

Ye dazzling comets that appear
In Fashion's rainbow atmosphere,
Lightning and flashing for a day;
Think ye, how fugitive your fame?
How soon from her light scroll away,
Is wafted your ephemeron name?
Even tho' on canvas still your forms are shewn,
Or the slow chisel shapes the pale resembling stone.

Let vaunting O STENTATION trust
The pencil's art, or marble bust,
While long neglected modest worth
Unmark'd, unhonor'd, and unknown,
Obtains at length a little earth,
Where kindred merit weeps alone;
Yet there, tho' V ANITY no trophies rear,
Is Friendship 's long regret, and true A FFECTION 's tear!

Charlotte Smith

To The Snowdrop

Like pendent flakes of vegetating snow,
The early herald of the infant year,
Ere yet the adventurous crocus dares to blow,
Beneath the orchard boughs thy buds appear.

While still the cold north-east ungenial lours,
And scarce the hazel in the leafless copse,
Or sallows shew their downy powder'd flowers,
The grass is spangled with thy silver drops.

Yet when those pallid blossoms shall give place
To countless tribes, of richer hue and scent,
Summer's gay blooms, and autumn's yellow race,
I shall thy pale inodorous bells lament.

So journeying onward in life's varying track,
Ev'n while warm youth its bright illusion lends,
Fond memory often with regret looks back
To childhood's pleasures, and to infant friends.

Charlotte Smith

Verses I

O'ERWHELM'D with sorrow, and sustaining long
'The proud man's contumely, th' oppressor's wrong,'
Languid despondency, and vain regret,
Must my exhausted spirit struggle yet?
Yes!--Robb'd myself of all that fortune gave,
Even of all hope--but shelter in the grave,
Still shall the plaintive lyre essay its powers
To dress the cave of Care with Fancy's flowers,
Maternal Love the fiend Despair withstand,
Still animate the heart and guide the hand.
--May you, dear objects of my anxious care,
Escape the evils I was born to bear!
Round my devoted head while tempests roll,
Yet there, where I have treasured up my soul,
May the soft rays of dawning hope impart
Reviving patience to my fainting heart;--
And when its sharp solitudes shall cease,
May I be conscious in the realms of peace
That every tear which swells my children's eyes,
From sorrows past, not present ills arise,
Then, with some friend who loves to share your pain,
For 'tis my boast that some such friends remain,
By filial grief, and fond remembrance prest,
You'll seek the spot where all my sorrows rest;
Recall my hapless days in sad review
The long calamities I bore for you,
And, with a happier fate, resolve to prove
How well you merited your mother's love.

Charlotte Smith

Verses II

Supposed to have been written in the New Forest,
in early Spring.

AS in the woods, where leathery Lichen weaves
Its wint'ry web among the fallow leaves,
Which (through cold months in whirling eddies blown)
Decay beneath the branches once their own,
From the brown shelter of their foliage sear,
Spring the young blooms that lead the floral year:
When, waked by vernal suns, the Pilewort dares
Expand her spotted leaves, and shining stars
And (veins empurpling all her tassels pale)
Bends the soft Wind-flower in the tepid gale;
Uncultured bells of azure Jacynth's blow,
And the breeze-scenting Violet lurks below:
So views the wanderer, with delighted eyes,
Reviving hopes from black despondence rise,
When, blighted by adversity's chill breath,
Those hopes had felt a temporary death;

Then with gay heart he looks to future hours,
When love shall dress for him the summer bowers.
And, as delicious dreams enchant his mind,
Forgets his sorrows past, or gives them to the wind.

Charlotte Smith

Verses Iii

Written by the same lady on seeing her two sons
at play.

SWEET age of bless'd delusion! blooming boys,
Ah! revel long in childhood's thoughtless joys,
With light and pliant spirits, that can stoop
To follow, sportively, the rolling hoop;

To watch the sleeping top with gay delight,
Or mark, with raptured gaze, the sailing kite;
Or, eagerly pursuing Pleasure's call,
Can find it center'd in the bounding ball.
Alas! the day will come, when sports like these
Must lose their magic, and their power to please:
Too swiftly fled, the rosy hours of youth
Shall yield their fairy charms to mournful Truth;
Even now, a mother's fond prophetic fear
Sees the dark train of human ills appear;
Views various fortune for each lovely child,
Storms for the bold, and anguish for the mild;
Beholds already those expressive eyes
Beam a sad certainty of future sighs;
And dreads each suffering those dear breasts may know
In their long passage through a world of woe;
Perchance predestined every pang to prove,
That treacherous friends inflict, or faithless love;
For, ah! how few have found existence sweet,
Where grief is sure, but happiness deceit.

Charlotte Smith

Verses Iv

On the Death of the same Lady, written in Sept. 1794.

LIKE a poor ghost the night I seek;
Its hollow winds repeat my sighs;
The cold dews mingle on my cheek
With tears that wander from mine eyes.
The thorns that still my couch molest,
Have robb'd these heavy eyes of sleep;
But though deprived of tranquil rest,
I here at last am free to weep.
Twelve times the moon, that rises red
O'er yon tall wood of shadowy pine,
Has fill'd her orb, since low was laid
My Harriet! that sweet form of thine!

While each sad month, as slow it pass'd,
Brought some new sorrow to deplore;
Some grief more poignant than the last,
But thou canst calm those griefs no more.
No more thy friendship soothes to rest
This wearied spirit tempest-toss'd;
The cares that weigh upon my breast
Are doubly felt since thou art lost.
Bright visions of ideal grace
That the young poet's dreams inflame,
Were not more lovely than thy face;
Were not more perfect than thy frame.
Wit, that no sufferings could impair,
Was thine, and thine those mental powers
Of force to chase the fiends that tear
From Fancy's hands her budding flowers.
O'er what, my angel friend, thou wert,
Dejected Memory loves to mourn;
Regretting still that tender heart,
Now withering in a distant urn.
But ere that wood of shadowy pine
Twelve times shall yon full orb behold,
This sickening heart, that bleeds for thine,
My Harriet!--may like thine be cold!

Verses, On The Death Of The Same Lady

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Charlotte Smith

Written Near A Port On A Dark Evening

o

Huge vapours brood above the clifted shore,
Night on the ocean settles dark and mute,
Save where is heard the repercussive roar
Of drowsy billows on the rugged foot
Of rocks remote; or still more distant tone
Of seamen in the anchored bark that tell
The watch relieved; or one deep voice alone
Singing the hour, and bidding "Strike the bell!"

All is black shadow but the lucid line
Marked by the light surf on the level sand,
Or where afar the ship-lights faintly shine
Like wandering fairy fires, that oft on land
Mised the pilgrim--such the dubious ray
That wavering reason lends in life's long darkling way.

o

Charlotte Smith