

Perchance that very hand, now pinion'd flat,
 Has hob-a-nobb'd with Pharaoh, glass to glass :
 Or dropp'd a halfpenny in Homer's hat,
 Or doff'd thine own to let Queen Dido pass,
 Or held, by Solomon's own invitation,
 A torch at the great Temple's dedication.

I need not ask thee if that hand, when arm'd,
 Has any Roman soldier maul'd and knuckled,
 For thou wert dead, and buried, and embalm'd,
 Ere Romulus and Remus had been suckled ;
 Antiquity appears to have begun
 Long after thy primeval race was run.

Thou couldst develop, if that wither'd tongue
 Might tell us what those sightless orbs have seen,
 How the world look'd when it was fresh and young,
 And the great Deluge still had left it green ;
 Or was it then so old, that history's pages
 Contain'd no record of its early ages ?

Still silent ? incommunicative elf !
 Art sworn to secrecy ? then keep thy vows ;
 But prithee tell us something of thyself—
 Reveal the secrets of thy prison-house !
 Since in the world of spirits thou hast slumber'd,
 What hast thou seen—what strange adventures number'd ?

Since first thy form was in this box extended,
 We have, above ground, seen some strange mutations ;
 The Roman empire has begun and ended,
 New worlds have risen—we have lost old nations,
 And countless kings have into dust been humbled,
 Whilst not a fragment of thy flesh has crumbled.

Didst thou not hear the pother o'er thy head,
 When the great Persian conqueror, Cambyses,
 March'd armies o'er thy tomb with thundering tread,
 O'erthrew Osiris, Orus, Apis, Isis,
 And shook the Pyramids with fear and wonder,
 When the gigantic Memnon fell asunder ?

If the tomb's secrets may not be confess'd,
 The nature of thy private life unfold ;
 A heart has throbb'd beneath that leathern breast,
 And tears adown that dusky cheek have roll'd.
 Have children climb'd those knees, and kiss'd that face ?
 What was thy name and station, age and race ?