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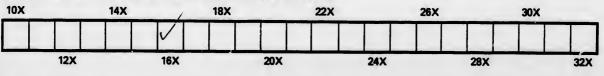
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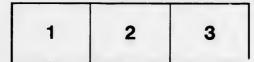
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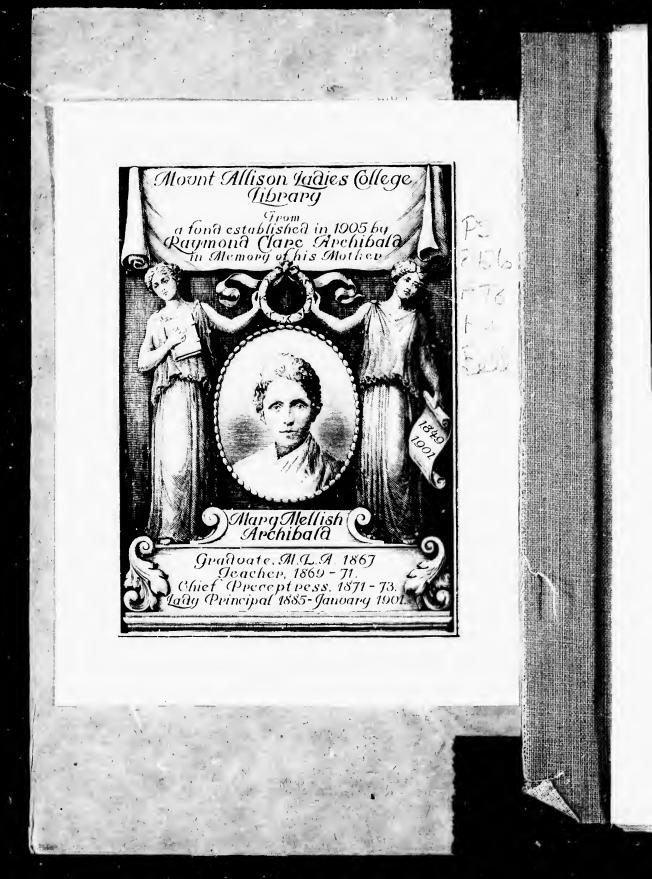
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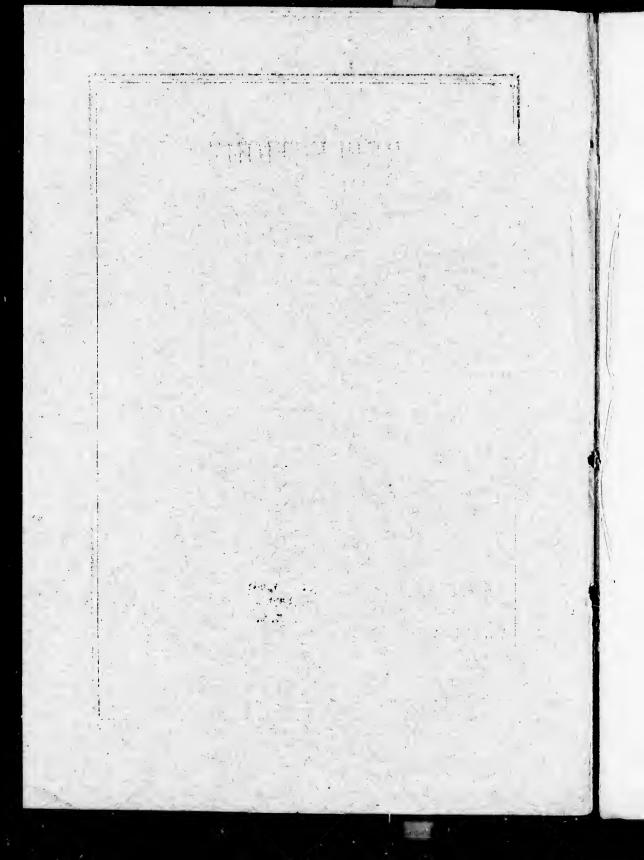
DURING

A VISIT TO MY NATIVE PLACE.

By JOHN G. MARSHALL,

JORMERLY CHIEF JUSTICE, ETC., IN THE ISLAND OF CAPE BRETON

HALIFAX, N. S. RINTED AT WESLEYAN OFFICE, 125 GRANVILLE STREET 1881.



REFLECTIONS

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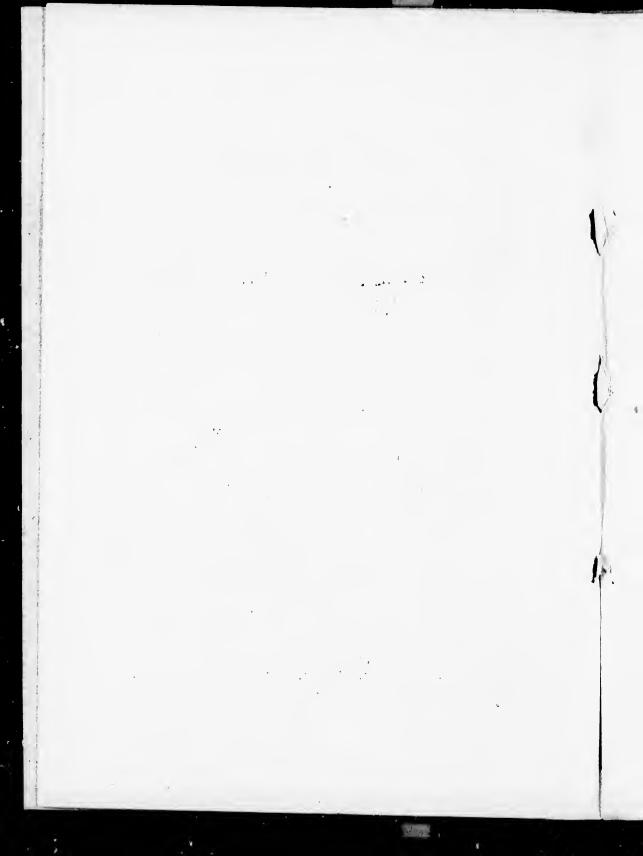
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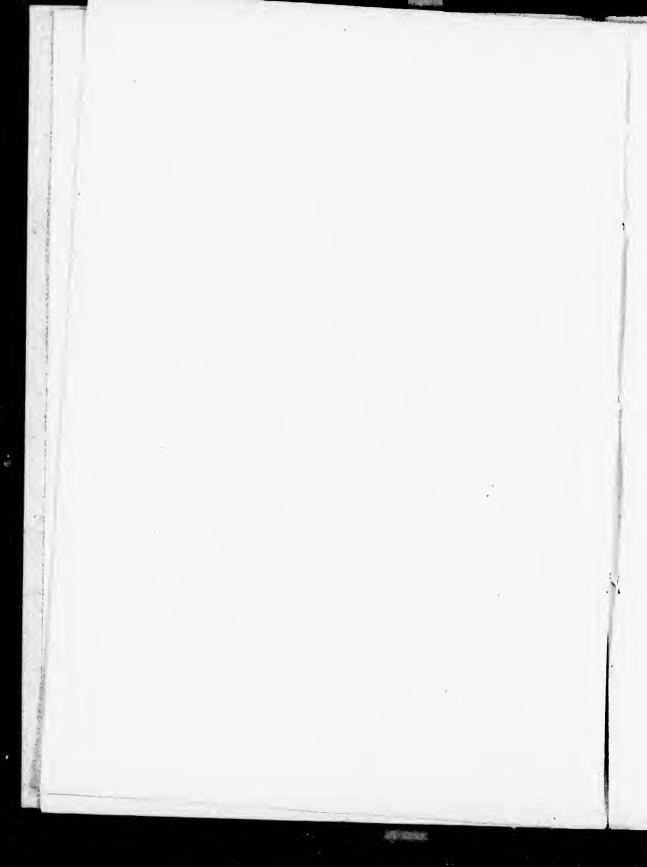


PREFACE.

This fragment was a production of youth. It was intended to form part of an Essay "chiefly designed to exhibit and explain the true causes of the principal portion of human suffer-The completion of this Essay, like many purposes ing." cherished in youth, was prevented by entrance upon a busy The author seems to have accepted this result, since he life. placed the unfinished manuscript in the hands of the publisher of the Halifax Times so early as 1837. These "Reflections" are now republished, not for the review of the critic, though they shew a pleasing maturity of thought in youth, but for the perusal of the many who knew the author in later years, and are thus prepared to revere his memory and value the produc-The preservation of this, one of the earlier tions of his pen. literary efforts of a deceased father, is attempted as an act of filial regard.

61737

M. B.



REFLECTIONS

DURING A VISIT TO MY NATIVE PLACE

WELCOME once more, most welcome to my gaze, Seats of my childish sports, in happiest days, Pleas'd I survey you, and enjoy anew, Those blissful seasons memory brings to view. Each hill and date familiar to my sight, Recals some scene of innocent delight, And as I pause on each remembered spot, Joys long forgotten rush upon my thought. O happy days, when no rude cares annoy'd, Nor threaten'd evil present charms destroy'd, When no perplexing thoughts or views were known, Nor sorrow yet had forc'd the bitter moan, Nor anxious doubts or fears convul-'d the breast, But smiles and frolics inward joy exprest. What bliss was mine, when at the morning's dawn, I rose to sport and ramble o'er the lawn; To call the fragrant flowers, to deck my head, Or ornament the spot by fancy made; To hear the joyous birds on every spray, In sweetest notes salute the rising day. Each scene did then some native charm impart, And joy triumphant wanton'd round my heart. From morn till eve, nor want nor care I knew, But every hour on wings of pleasure flew:

When school-time came, at sweet instruction's call, Cheerful I ran, nor counted learning toil, There was I warn'd of sin, remorse and shame, Instructed to revere the sacred name; To love my parents, their commands obey, And for their welfare tenderly to pray. To win the prize which learning should bestow, There was my bosom taught with hope to glow. And when at eve dismiss'd, what joy was seen, What kindling frolics o'er the neighboring green: To take the prisener or to win the race, Fond expectation brighten'd every face. At rival search, the place of refuge found, Proclaim'd a triumph, and the joy went round, Each boyish feat of strength and skill was tried, While kindly feelings reign'd on every side. Such were the scenes which gladden'd every day, And o'er the heart maintain'd triumphant sway; These, these, had charms more precious than a throne,

These were the joys, which once were all my own. Here as I pause, and think on all those joys, What mix'd emotions in my bosom rise. Succeeding scenes of grief, and wasting care, Of restless doubts and fears, and keen despair, Swift o'er my thoughtful mind, alternate fly, And from my bosom force th' unwilling sigh; I view successive years in folly spent, And long neglect of talents, Heaven had lent. Those hours when bound in sinful pleasure's chain, To mem'ry rise, and fill my breast with pain. Griev'd I reflect on wisdom's call refus'd, And fairest gifts to vainest ends abus'd, But what avails regret for follies past, For time and blessings which no longer last. Let me, (indulgence goodness still may give,) Those days I may be destin'd yet to live, Improve in deep reform, in tracing o'er, Those paths my erring soul disdain'd before; Exert those powers, indulgent Heaven design'd, Should be employ'd to cultivate the mind; Redeem each moment as it swiftly flies, That for eternity 1 may be wise; In storing treasures 'gainst that awful day, When every earthly scene shall pass away; And he who fills a just and holy throne, Shall judge the world in righteousness alone. Here springs the thought, why do we ever view, All with such zeal, Earth's busy ways pursue. What high design calls forth those toils and cares, Those swift vicissitudes of hopes and fears, Which agitate and pain the human breast, And keep it evermore devoid of rest; Which through all ranks of life are felt and known, From the rude cottage to the splendid throne; From the proud nabob, clad in India's spoils, To him who in the field, submissive toils. Tis happiness, that phantom of the mind, Desire of inward bliss, and joys retin'd. The rich, the poor, the mighty and the weak, This darling object, still impassion'd seek. Those varied feelings, which conflicting reign, Spring from desire the promis'd bliss to gain.

For this the hern it seeks, the statesman sighs; The selfish worldlings, busy plans devise; The miser anxions watches round his store; The spendthrift runs his guilty revels o'er, The bold adventurer roams through foreign climes; In gayest garb, the fool of fashion shines. The philosophic mind, with studious pain, The splendid heights of Science toils to gain; The patriot mixes in the public strife; In scenes of blood, the warrior risks his life. All, all, in search of happiness are found, But none alas are with possession crown'd. Some object first proposid, when once securid. With other views, the heart is straight allurid. New hopes succeed, fresh anxious cares arise, The long sought pleasure still in prospect lies. In fresh pursuits, we next our powers employ, And with redoubled ardor seek for joy; But still at close of every struggle find, The promis'd bliss a stranger to the mind. Thus like a shade, we happinoss pursue. Though off deceivel, yet still the search renew; With anxious toils and cares, incessant strive, From fading objects, pleasure to derive, Till age creeps on, and dimness and decay, Then each enchanting vision fades away; And death comes last, with his unwelcome doom, When every blissful prospect finds a tomb. But earth's pursuits, if we but scan aright, We'll find they ne'er can yield unmix'd delight, That neither glittering wealth, nor splendid fame,

Nor all the proud distinction titles claim : Not pleasure's flowery paths, nor power can yield, That sweet content we seek to be reveal'd, Nor all this world's possessions can impart, Secure enjoyment to the human heart. Yet here's no cause to murmur or repine, 'Tis our own choice, and not the will divine. For this arraign not fleaven's indulgent king; 'Tis from our sins, our sorrows chiefly spring. Look round this giddy ball, explore the maze Of proud, unthinking man's degenerate ways; View him through every rank and scene of life, In seeming calm retreats, and anxious strife. Where wealth or honors, proud distinction yield, And where each want and hardship stand reveal'd. Survey those scenes where deepest horrors dwell, And where the groans of anguish loudest swell; Through all, the heaviest ills, the lowest need, The keenest pangs of woe, from guilt proceed. Though oft, afflictions we misfertunes call, To disobedience we may charge them all. At first, when all was loveliness, 'twas this Causid man's removal from a state of bliss; Drew down a curse upon his guilty head. And dire disorder through creation spread : Brought death into the world, with all those woes The countless, busy scenes of life disclose. With open view, we oftentimes behold The sins of mea, their punishment unfold; And ever is fulfilled the first decree, That sin and sorrow should companions be.

Here would I point where seenes of woe arise, And trace where fell destruction swiftly files; Explore the streams of folly to their source, And mark where pride displays its deadly force. Bold is the task, to stem the giddy rage, To write the follies of a present age; The vices of proud man to hold to view, And paint the picture, though 'tis e'er so true. Assist me heavenly muse, the task to dare, To trace each varied scene, thy gifts prepare, Wisdom's fair precepts, help me to display, To place her sacred truths in just array; And while I hold my vent'rous course along, Yield here and there a flower, to grace my song. And thou fair truth, thy influence impart, To guide my lines, and animate my heart; Teach me to point where vice and folly reign, To picture faithfully, the proud and vain; To give to virtue what is justly due, And urge her cheering courses to pursue; Incline my will, and temper all my mind, To suit the arduous purpose I've design'd; With zeal for thy blest cause my bosom fill, Call in my roving thoughts, and bind them to thy will.

The crimes of nations be my first essay, Where scenes of slaughter shame the face of day; Where hostile bands in fierce convulsions join, And all the deadliest ills of war combine. Behold where ocean heaves his lordly tide, In dread array, the thundering gallies ride; The hardy warriors there, all dangers brave,

And fir'd with ardour, seek a wat'ry grave; Firm and undaunted they the battle wait, Point all their force, and scorn impending fate. The strife begun, what scenes of horror rise! Keen lightnings flash, and thunders rend the skies; Lash'd side by side, each breast with fury glows, While all around, the purple current flows. To meet their final doom, whole hosts repair, With scarce a moment given to lift a prayer. Some youths, their tender parent's brightest joy. For whom they fondest hopes and cares employ: Some husbands deeply lov'd, some parents dear, Some friends most highly valued, perish here: Mixed with the throng, each, now unheeded dies, No faithful spouse or friend to close his eyes; Far from lov'd home and country meets his fate, An l'midst of horrors, seeks th' eternal state. View next invading armies take their way, Dealing around them carnage and dismay; No pity checks, no justice stays the hand, That's rais'd to desolate the fated land; The banners of destruction are unfurl'd. And every shaft of woe is fiercely hurl'd; Appalling thunders carry ruin round, While heaps of anguish'd victims press the ground; The heart seems spoil'd of every tender tone, Nor heeds the keenest shriek, or deepest groan; The powers of darkness hover o'er the field, And lend their aid the fatal sword to wield; Mild pity stands aloof, and drops a tear, While every baneful passion lords it here;

Fair towns and fruitful plains in ruin lie, And millions utter one bewailing ery. 'The humble peasant here, who toil'd content, With that degree of good which Heaven had lent; Whose tender spouse and children round him smilld, And with their fond endeavours care beguil'd; Who yet had liv'd retir'd from scenes of strife, Nor e'er had felt those pangs which sicken life; Now by the hands of violence driven to roam, To seek for those he loves some sheltering home; He views the flames devour his humble cot, Each charm depart which bound him to the spot; Stript of his little store, each comfort flown. From every pleasing hope and prospect torn; He sees the objects of his heart's delight, Worn out with hardships, perish in his sight; While he, poor mourner, spent with want and grief, Waits for befriending death, to grant relief. The widow and the orphan, here deplore, Their every stay and comfort, now no more; Each tender tie is here asuader broke, Each bosom suffers keen affliction's stroke.

Yon sorrowing youth, an early orphan left, Can tell how he of parents was bereft, How war unfeeling, swept them both away, Before his heart could own their tender sway; And loft him their untimely fate to wail, When future years had told the hapless tale. A story 'tis, compassion melts to hear, And drops each pause, the tributary tear; Where each successive scone but serves to show,

What countless ills from mad ambition flow. 'Twas when by liberty's blest ardour led, The hosts of Britain, their proud banners spread, To aid Hispania, bound in Gallie chain, Her ancient rights and freedom to regain, That Henry's father, led by gallant Moore, Through fields of blood, his arms undaunted bore. A faithful spouse, by tenderest love impell'd, With him the paths of toil and danger held; Her helpless infant, c.rcled in her arms, Shielded from ills, and bore through fierce alarms; Endur'd each hardship, each affliction shar'd, And borne by love, appalling terrors dar'd. Corunna's heights, now view'd that dreadful day, When weary legions fought their desperate way; Each pain and peril, dauntless struggled through, Proving that nought could free-born souls subdue; When hateful j lousy its power display'd, And Britain's dearest sons its victims made. There, gash'd with wounds, the sire of Henry fell, Bid all the joys and griefs of life farewell; While faint with anguish, on th' ensanguin'd ground, And death in fiercest aspect hover'd round, He cast, with bitterest pangs, one lingering view, Where once sweet love and hope inspiring grew; Thought on his much-loved spouse, and child, bereft Of every stay, and 'midst of horrors left; Expos'd to hardship, poverty, and woe, To all the varied ills the friendless know; Pierc'd at the view, with his last faltering breath, O shield them Heaven, he cried, then sank in death.

Now cast thine eyes, where yon fond breast appears, Convuls'd with anxious doubts, and torturing fears; Waiting that period, which must else disclose, The burst of joy, or whelm in deepcst woes; Soon as that hour the dreadful tale reveals, Who can describe those pangs the mourner feels; In 'midst of strangers left a helpless prey, To want and pain, and grief's corroding sway; Far from that generous land, where some fond heart, To mercy true, its succour might impart; Might shield the friendless, feebleness protect From scornful tyrancy, or cold neglect; She finds no cheering dawn of hope appear, But yield her bosom up to keen despair; Counts o'er the sorrows of her hapless fate, And adds each woe's accumulated weight; Till on her helpless babe she casts her eyes, Then fill'd with all a mother's fondness cries, Yes, my dear infant, for thy sake I'll strive Still to maintain this throbbing pulse alive; For thee, through perils will I toil once more, To gain that much-lov'd hospitable shore, Where yet kind Heaven may grant me to behold Thy father's form and grace in thee unfold; Where I may live thy helplessness to shield From want and pain, and sweet endearments yield; Watch o'er thy tender years, and teach to shun Those fatal paths where thousands are undone; Thou, too, with fond endeavours may'st assuage Each grief and care, and soothe declining age; Repay my tender care with filial love,

And with each kind return thy duty prove. These soothing thoughts revive her troubled breast, While hope, the charmer, lulls her fears to rest; She clasps her babe, and seeks the sounding shore; Where thousands throng in wild tumultuous roar, And toils through scenes of deep distress to gain Some friendly bark to waft her o'er the main; But nature fails, the lamp of life decays, And faintly glimmering sheds its parting rays; With hardships worn, she sinks, and bids adieu To all the soothing hopes her bosom drew; Seems, with last gaze upon her child, to say, O! that for thee, I might yet longer stay; Then folds him to her breast, and lifts her eyes, In keenest agony, to Heaven, and dies.

Blest be that feeling, sympathizing heart, May fairest joys forever be its part; That heart which helplessness did then befriend And timely succour to the orphan lend. Yes, though fell war, ofttimes the bosom steels 'Gainst sympathy for woes its storm reveals ; Though thousands train'd where scenes of horror reign, Behold with unconcern another's pain; E'en there are hearts, where gentlest virtues dwell, And over others' sorrows fondly swell; Some hearts which all those generous feelings know, Which spring to succour want and comfort woe. Such were the feelings which the breast inspir'd Of him who gave that aid by love requir'd; Who, while enduring danger and distress, Could feel for others woes, and joy to bless.

He, while returning from the dreadful fight, Heard the weak cry, and view'd the melting sight, From the chill clasp, the helpless sufferer field, And through surrounding horrors safe convey'd; Consign'd to tender aid, and watchful bore His feeble charge to Britain's friendly shore. There did this generous guardian love disclose, Such as the fondest parent's bosom knows; His work of mercy with delight pursued, And rich returns of bliss in prospect view'd. But ere the tender orphan's heart could name -From whence such sympathizing goodness came, The shafts of war, again destructive sped, And mix'd his fond protector with the dead. Once more of every kind support bereft, A public charge, to sordid strangers left; Now no indulgent bosom watches near, To soothe each weak complaint and childish fear, Each sweet endearment and support to grant, To tend with anxious care each rising want; To animate with smiles each infant sport, And lisping accents of affection court. As years expand those powers which move the breast, While every native feeling stands confest, No guardian waits, to curb the passion's force, To fix the pliant mind in virtue's course; Wisdom's rich volume to display, and arm 'Gainst folly's snares, and pleasures syren charm. Not bless'd like this, but as a tender vine, Whose branches in the shade are left to pine, The friendless orphan, each succeeding day,

Shrinks beneath sordid pride's unfeeling sway; Or chill'd by cold indifference, never feels Those cheering hopes and joys which love reveals. That aid instruction yields each opening grace, Is never offer'd to his heart's embrace; But passion bears the rule, whilst reason's beams Yield but a feeble light 'midst error's dreams. Soon as with rising years his bosom knows The story of each fond protector's woes, A deeper gloom each passing scene pervades, And every soothing hope and prospect shades ; Now oft when cruelty its power extends, Or harsh unfeeling scorn his spirit bends; He flies each busy scene, his griefs to wail, To sigh in secret o'er the mournful tale; There will imagination forturing rise, And paint in glowing colours, absent joys; Oft will disclose its darkest shades to fill His bosom with the dread of future ill. Thus at that season when the genial fire, Is wont to kindle hope and fond desire; The cheering streams of joy he never tastes, But the rich morn of life in sorrow wastes. Such are the woes which war, with ruthless hand, Inflicts in every age, on every land ; Which Heaven in awful justice, leaves to urge Their fearful sway, a guilty world to scourge, Trace to the source from whence those evils rise, When lo ! Ambition of gigantic size, Panting for power, dominion, wealth or fame. Despising all that's good to gain a Name;

A name in few revolving seasons gone, Or only marks the crimes by which 'twas won. The greatest sorrows human nature feels, Ambition's fierce, insatiate power reveals; We trace its dire effects through every age, They stand recorded in th' historic page; There may we view a Cæsar, bearing far Through peaceful nations, all the ills of war; With art and violence, aiming to destroy His country's liberty, her boast and joy ; To seize the sceptre with a treacherous hand, And rule with tyrant sway o'er Freedom's land; There we behold, how by Ambition led, The blood of innocence a Richard shed; Through foulest treasons waded to a throne, And every deed of horror made his own. But why trace back, behold in later day, Whole nations groan'd beneath a tyrant's sway; Whose furious lust of power, no boundary knew, From every conquest more insatiate grew. What countless myriads wept, and groaned, and died, To swell his fame and gratify his pride, For this we saw destruction stalking round, Bursting asunder each endearing bond; Husbands from wives, from parents children torn, The widow and the orphan sink forlorn; The fairest countries, plunder'd and laid waste, Thousands deploring every comfort past; For this the foulest treacheries rose to view, And blacker deeds than e'er a Cromwell knew. Well might that great and pious Bard* implore * Cowper.

A sweet seclusion from the tumult's roar; I too could wish to hail the blissful time, When Peace shall spread her sway through every clime; When men shall cast aside the vengeful sword, And tales of carnage shall no more be heard; That glorious and triumphant season see, When every bond shall burst, and all be free; When Liberty shall o'er the world display Her charms, and light all nations with her ray.

O Liberty ! thou spring of every joy, Thou for whom love, no bondage can destroy; I long to view thy influence spread around, And all mankind rejoicing at thy sound. When thou art fled, no other good can cheer The path of life, or make existence dear. Depriv'd of thee, the slave resigns his breath With joy, and kindly greets approaching death. Here my sad thoughts to India's climes repair, To mark the mingled woes of slavery there, With faintest image only can I trace Those scenes of human nature's foul disgrace. Torn from his native land, from every tie, Which once did charms of fairest form supply ; From every scene which pleasure could impart, From every object sacred to the heart; Trembling in chains, I see the captive stand, Exposed to barter in a foreign land; All home's endearments destined to forego; And native pleasures never more to know; There far from country, relatives and friends, In galling slavery remnant life he spends,

Where never Hope emits her faintest ray, O'er his desponding mind to cheer his way; But doom'd a tyrant's cruci sway to bear, He toils and and groans, and nourishes despair; Yields his tir'd shoulders to the galling yoke, And bends beneath the proud oppressor's stroke. For him, a tender wife in anguish pines, And o'er her helpless babes, with tears, inclines. Life once to her presented every charm, With nought to yield her sorrow or alarm; Content and gladness all around her smil'd, While heartfelt pleasures every hour beguiled; But now, of cheering joys and hopes bereft, To darkest forms of woes, and hardships left, She hears her needy children's plaintive cries, And for their future fate desparing sighs; Unceasingly bewails her mournful doom, And verges fast in sorrow to the tomb. He too, poor wretch, while faint and worn with toil, Casts a fond thought toward his native soil; Thinks on his wife and children, ever dear, Of every scene which could his bosom cheer, Of friends and relatives whom once he knew, And pleasures which from love and freedom grew; Then views his present state, a dread reverse. Ordain'd to human nature's deadliest curse; To nourish every hour, the bitterest woe, To hide the tears which sorrow prompts to flow; Beneath a scorching sun, to toil and faint, To bear the scourge, nor utter a complaint; Sunk at the view, he yields himseif a prey

To hopeless grief, and lingers life away. O! breasts of adamant, and hearts of steel, Which for such sorrows can forbear to feel; Thou sordid wretch, who for a thirst of gold, Canst on thy fellow man such griefs unfold, Think not to scape, from Him who's just and true, That vengeance which to guilt like thine is due; Though now, unfeeling, thou may'st bind the chain Round the weak slave, and hear his soul complain; His heart with multiplied afflictions wring; With tortures cause the bitter tear to spring; Uumov'd behold him raise his languid eye, And beg of Heaven the privilege to die: Yet know, a righteous power is looking on, Who will avenge the sufferings he has borne; Who counts his secret sorrows, and will roll Convulsing torments through thy guilty soul.

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Grant me, indulgent Heaven, while here below, While any earthly good can joy bestow; While feeling, thought, and memory remain, Or this weak heart is sensible of pain; In freedom's smiles, O give me to rejoice, To feel her animate my heart and voice; My soul's just purpose, freely to obey, Nor e'er to suffer proud oppression's sway; Each other earthly good, or give or take, But grant me freedom, for thy mercy's sake.

O! that I here possessed some poet's flame, To sing in worthy strains, that deathless fame Those pure exalted patriots have acquired, Who in the cause of freedom were inspired;

Who rid their country of her prime disgrace, That hateful traffic of the human race. With their applause all Afric's climes shall ring, And genius yet unborn their praise shall sing. Long had our guilty nation bore this brand, Which stamps disgrace upon a Christian land; Long had each sympathising heart bewailed A brother's fate, with every woe assailed; Till honor, justice, and compassion rose In Freedom's cause, and triumphed o'er her foes. Hail Wilberforce! to Freedom ever dear, Thy glad success far distant nations cheer; Compassion owns thee for her daring son, While Truth exulting tells what thou hast done. Long as a sense of goodness shall remain, Or mercy strive to soothe another's pain; While love and honor shall reside below, Or sympathy shall melt at others woe, Thy generous toils with blessings shall be crown'd; In nations far and near thy praise resound; In ev'ry virtuous mind thy memory dwell; At thoughts of thee the feeling bosom swell; The friends of freedom kindle at thy name, And all the Christian world thy worth proclaim; Through thee Britannia learns again to smile, And joyful hails the Genius of her Isle.



