



Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) by John Trumbull.

“THE FLOURISHING VILLAGE”

from Timothy Dwight’s *Greenfield Hill* (1794)

The Connecticut (or, as they are also denoted, “Hartford”) Wits,¹ were simply a “Friendly Club,” or philosophical (what we would call “scientific”) and cultural association, of academic and professional people, i.e., a lawyer, clergymen, former Continental army men (one turned author; another legislator), a doctor, and a merchant; who in the early to late 1780s for various reasons just happen to find themselves following their respective vocations in or near to Hartford; with most of them having direct ties to Yale College either as faculty and or as former students there. The most prominent among these Hartford Wits were John Trumbull (second cousin of the Revolutionary War painter of the same name), a practicing attorney; Timothy Dwight, instructor at Yale (and later President of the same) and vicar of (not too distant) Greenfield, Connecticut; Joel Barlow, former army chaplain, Hartford newspaper publisher (of *The American Mercury*), and sometime public orator (among his several occupations); David Humphreys, one of Washington’s aide de camps then serving as a representative in the Connecticut assembly; Lemuel Hopkins, a physician; Richard Alsop, a businessman; and Theodore Dwight, Timothy’s staunchly Federalist brother, barrister and journalist. Others who are also every now and then listed as members are Elihu Hubbard Smith, (also) a medical doctor, intellectual tutor to Brockden Brown, and the first publisher of an anthology of American poetry (1793); and Yale tutor and also attorney, Josiah Meigs.

Despite their different vocations and employments, all were enthusiastic patriots and Federalists² who shared a deep and abiding interest in poetry and literature; and who used that medium to help lay and form the foundations of what they hoped to be the national character and culture. Indignant and disgusted at rising protest movements that threatened to undermine national unity, such as Shays’ Rebellion and disgruntled agitators who grudged Continental army offers being granted (by Congress) five years pay in lieu of the original promised half-pay for life,³ they responded to such as these with a joint mock epic entitled *The Anarchiad* (1786-87), ridiculing the radicals. Barlow acted as editor and writer in chief of the group, but with each “wit” contributing some great or small portion to the larger work. In addition, they put out a series of satirical prose essays and short pieces called *American Antiquities* written on similar topics and in a similar humorous vein. These various writings first appeared before the public in newspapers, in particular *The New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine*, and it was through such mediums that they gained national attention. Although the overall impact and later influence of the Connecticut wits was

¹ And whom we previously made mention of in our monograph on Joel Barlow and David Humphreys.

² Upon a trip to France in 1788, Barlow much to the dismay of his colleagues turned Jacobin, and subsequently became a warm supporter of Jefferson and Madison. It is interesting to parallel him in this regard with John Quincy Adams, also a one time Federalist; who although not a Connecticut Wit in many ways emulated them in his own love of poetry and admirable literary achievements; not least of which his astounding diary of 51 volumes which he diligently kept from 1779 to 1848, and which is housed with the Adams Family Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Noah Webster (1758-1843), author of the famous dictionary, be it noted, is also sometimes mentioned at as one of the Connecticut Wits, but even if allowed that honor was not one of its original members.

³ “[Following a decisive victory] the first moment of the public safety is devoted to gratitude and joy; but the second is diligently occupied by envy and calumny.” Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. IV, ch. 30.

relatively slight, possibly because, as well as being mostly Federalists, they were seen as too removed from and too intellectually elite for most ordinary people, they were nevertheless constituted an impressive assemblage of learning, talent, and wisdom; each of whom produced some literary work or other of lasting historical, if not always (as some will argue) artistic, merit.⁴

Two of the Wits we would take *this* occasion to specifically focus on are Trumbull and Dwight.

Trumbull is most famous as an author for his comic epic *M'Fingal* (1775-1782), written in the manner of Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*, Alexander Pope's, and Charles Churchill's satires; which lampoons a fictional Tory M'Fingal and his Don Quixote-like encounters and struggles with the often tumultuous and rowdy American Whigs. Like Francis Hopkinson, Trumbull later put poetry aside and devoted himself mostly to the legal profession. Yet *M'Fingal* in several respects is a finely penned pasquinade, worthy of Pope. But also like Pope, Trumbull's sparkling wit and gift for drawing analogy from animals, insects, and commonplace articles, and occurrences does not so much evoke laughter as much as mirth; while the sing-song quality of the heroic couplets tends overtime to become somewhat tiresome and monotonous. Moreover, his choice of targets periodically rings false: e.g., repeated slights at British valor (*that* was never a problem of long or deserving note) or fairly absurd insinuations of inquisitorial popery in the Royal government. Still and otherwise, as a conveyor of good spirit and gay fellowship, as well as richly and intricately wrought jewel of a composition, there is ample in *M'Fingal* to be praised and admired by connoisseurs of verse. Trumbull also produced some fervently patriotic as well as *very* routine 18th century sentimental poetry⁵ which speak well of his ability as a meticulous and erudite, if not altogether stirring, craftsman. Of note, he ended up an esteemed and respected judge and jurist, and outlasted the other Hartford Wits by passing away in 1831.

Perhaps most astonishing, if not necessarily the most popular,⁶ of all the Wits was polymath and renaissance thinker the Reverend Timothy Dwight. Both a formal educator and Calvinist-Congregationalist minister, Dwight was another of Jonathan Edwards' illustrious progeny (in this case his grandson). He displayed an extraordinary acumen on various topics; showing himself to be both able, learned, and profound in matters scientific, religious, and literary. In 1777 he served as a chaplain in Gates' army, and where he composed the popular patriotic hymn "Columbia;" which begins with the famous lines:

"COLUMBIA! Columbia! to glory arise,
The queen of the world, and the child of the skies..."

Else the main body of his writings of particular interest to us today are his *Travels in New England and New York* (1821-1822) -- invaluable, not to mention absorbing, as a historical record of his times -- and his poetry.

Respecting this last, Dwight's two most ambitious poetical works are his *The Conquest of Canaan: A Poem in Eleven Books* (1785), a massive Biblical epic written as an allegory on the Revolutionary War and the struggle to establish American society, and his *Greenfield Hill* (1794). While it its been something fashionable among literary historians to brush *Conquest* aside as an unreadable, elephantine tome like Barlow's *Columbiad*, it even so deserves credit as a spiritually endowed and imaginative effort. Perhaps also it ought in fairness to be viewed as one of those works deserving of more attention, for historical reasons if less so for poetical ones, *if and whenever* we finally have the leisure to examine and savor the thing with more patience. The problem here seems to be one of available time as much as anything, and one suspects there is or may be more genius to it than is conventionally allowed. But a *final* conclusion on its place and due in our canon of domestic scripture at least perhaps needs to be postponed.

⁴ A series of biographies of Connecticut Wits John Trumbull, David Humphreys, Lemuel Hopkins, Timothy Dwight, and Joel Barlow -- not least informative and illuminating for their being written in 1798 -- appears in Joseph Dennie, et al.'s, *The Spirit of the Farmer's Museum and Lay Preacher's Gazette* (1801) published at Walpole, N.H., pp. 123-149.

⁵ And which can be well likened to the affected and formulaic romantic poems of Revolutionary War North Carolina governor Thomas Burke.

⁶ Among others, Dwight locked theological and political horns with Ethan Allen over the Vermont (would-be) "Every Man"'s controversial *Reason the Only Oracle of Man: Or, A Compendious System of Natural Religion* (1784).

Greenfield Hill, on the other hand, is easily the more attractive, winsome and winning of the pair of Dwight's epic poems. The greater part of it was penned in 1787, but published with finishing touches in 1794. Notwithstanding the reputation it has acquired among some as a stiff and contrived academic exercise -- Dwight deliberately set out to reproduce, in addition to that of Virgil's *Georgics*, the styles and address of various English poets, including Thomson, Young, Cowper, and Prior⁷ -- *Greenfield Hill* is in many portions a lush and genuinely beautiful work that, with its concomitant appeal to both Nature and high ideals presages the writings of Bryant and Whitman -- each of which poets, rightly or no and like almighty Greek deities, seems to have, in chronological sequence, toppled his immediate predecessor in literary significance. Written in regular iambic pentameter occasionally interspersed with (for a New England clergyman) a flamboyant hendecasyllabic line, it is composed as visionary essay, with occasional digression on historical events, including a lament for the vanished Pequot tribe (while yet rationalizing the fate of such and similar Indians as to a large degree unavoidable); the bane of Black slavery; and a tragical recounting of the British burning of Fairfield, Connecticut; yet whose main theme is the extolling of Nature, high morals -- such as hard work and plain, unencumbered living, and the burgeoning of American liberty.

As a selection from this sometimes underrated and neglected treasure of from our nation's past and heritage, we've chosen for our purpose Part II, "The Flourishing Village" -- titled purposely in contrast to and comparison with Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village."

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FAIR Verna! loveliest village of the west;  
 Of every joy, and every charm, possess'd;  
 How pleas'd amid thy varied walks I rove,  
 Sweet, cheerful walks of innocence, and love,  
 And o'er thy smiling prospects cast my eyes,  
 And see the seats of peace, and pleasure, rise,  
 And hear the voice of Industry resound,  
 And mark the smile of Competence, around!  
 Hail, happy village! O'er thy cheerful lawns,  
 With earliest beauty, spring delighted dawns;  
 The northward sun begins his vernal smile;  
 The spring-bird carols o'er the cressy rill:  
 The shower, that patters in the ruffled stream,  
 The ploughboy's voice, that chides the lingering team,  
 The bee, industrious, with his busy song,  
 The woodman's axe, the distant groves among,  
 The waggon, rattling down the rugged steep,  
 The light wind, lulling every care to sleep,  
 All these, with mingled music, from below,  
 Deceive intruding sorrow, as I go.

How pleas'd, fond Recollection, with a smile,  
 Surveys the varied round of wintery toil!  
 How pleas'd, amid the flowers, that scent the plain,  
 Recalls the vanish'd frost, and sleeted rain;  
 The chilling damp, the ice-endangering street,  
 And treacherous earth that slump'd beneath the feet.

Yet even stern winter's glooms could joy inspire:  
 Then social circles grac'd the nutwood fire;

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<sup>7</sup> It is no small irony that although the Wits espoused the idea of creating and fashioning American forms of writing and expression they without exception were unabashed British imitators.

The axe resounded, at the sunny door;  
The swain, industrious, trimm'd his flaxen store;  
Or thresh'd, with vigorous flail, the bounding wheat,  
His poultry round him pilfering for their meat;  
Or slid his firewood on the creaking snow;  
Or bore his produce to the main below;  
Or o'er his rich returns exulting laugh'd;  
Or pledg'd the healthful orchard's sparkling draught:  
While, on his board, for friends and neighbours spread,  
The turkey smoak'd, his busy housewife fed;  
And Hospitality look'd smiling round,  
And Leisure told his tale, with gleeful sound.

Then too, the rough road hid beneath the sleigh,  
The distant friend despis'd a length of way,  
And join'd the warm embrace, and mingling smile,  
And told of all his bliss, and all his toil;  
And, many a month elaps'd, was pleas'd to view  
How well the household far'd, the children grew;  
While tales of sympathy deceiv'd the hour,  
And Sleep, amus'd, resign'd his wonted power.

Yes! let the proud despise, the rich deride,  
These humble joys, to Competence allied:  
To me, they bloom, all fragrant to my heart,  
Nor ask the pomp of wealth, nor gloss of art.  
And as a bird, in prison long confin'd,  
Springs from his open'd cage, and mounts the wind,  
Thro' fields of flowers, and fragrance, gaily flies,  
Or re-assumes his birth-right, in the skies:  
Unprison'd thus from artificial joys,  
Where pomp fatigues, and fustful fashion cloy,  
The soul, reviving, loves to wander free  
Thro' native scenes of sweet simplicity;  
Thro' Peace' low vale, where Pleasure lingers long,  
And every songster tunes his sweetest song,  
And Zephyr hastes, to breathe his first perfume,  
And Autumn stays, to drop his latest bloom:  
'Till grown mature, and gathering strength to roam,  
She lifts her lengthen'd wings, and seeks her home.

But now the wintery glooms are vanish'd all;  
The lingering drift behind the shady wall;  
The dark-brown spots, that patch'd the snowy field;  
The surly frost, that every bud conceal'd;  
The russet veil, the way with slime o'erspread,  
And all the saddening scenes of March are fled.

Sweet-smiling village! loveliest of the hills!  
How green thy groves! How pure thy glassy rills!  
With what new joy, I walk thy verdant streets!  
How often pause, to breathe thy gale of sweets;  
To mark thy well-built walls! thy budding fields!  
And every charm, that rural nature yields;  
And every joy, to Competence allied,  
And every good, that Virtue gains from Pride!

No griping landlord here alarms the door,  
To halve, for rent, the poor man's little store.  
No haughty owner drives the humble swain  
To some far refuge from his dread domain;  
Nor wastes, upon his robe of useless pride,  
The wealth, which shivering thousands want beside;  
Nor in one palace sinks a hundred cots;  
Nor in one manor drowns a thousand lots;  
Nor, on one table, spread for death and pain,  
Devours what would a village well sustain.

O Competence, thou bless'd by HEAVEN's decree,  
How well exchange'd is empty pride for thee!  
Oft to thy cot my feet delighted turn,  
To meet thy chearful smile, at peep of morn;  
To join thy toils, that bid the earth look gay;  
To mark thy sports, that hail the eve of May;  
To see thy ruddy children, at thy board,  
And share thy temperate meal, and frugal hoard;  
And every joy, by winning prattlers giv'n,  
And every earnest of a future HEAVEN.

There the poor wanderer finds a table spread,  
The fireside welcome, and the peaceful bed.  
The needy neighbour, oft by wealth denied,  
There finds the little aids of life supplied;  
The horse, that bears to mill the hard-earn'd grain;  
The day's work given, to reap the ripen'd plain;  
The useful team, to house the precious food,  
And all the offices of real good.

There too, divine Religion is a guest,  
And all the Virtues join the daily feast.  
Kind Hospitality attends the door,  
To welcome in the stranger and the poor;  
Sweet Chastity, still blushing as she goes;  
And Patience smiling at her train of woes;  
And meek-eyed Innocence, and Truth refin'd,  
And Fortitude, of bold, but gentle mind.

Thou pay'st the tax, the rich man will not pay;  
Thou feed'st the poor, the rich man drives away.  
Thy sons, for freedom, hazard limbs, and life,  
While pride applauds, but shuns the manly strife:  
Thou prop'st religion's cause, the world around,  
And shew'st thy faith in works, and not in sound.

Say, child of passion! while, with idiot stare,  
Thou seest proud grandeur wheel her sunny car;  
While kings, and nobles, roll bespangled by,  
And the tall palace lessens in the sky;  
Say, while with pomp thy giddy brain runs round,  
What joys, like these, in splendour can be found?  
Ah, yonder turn thy wealth-inchanted eyes,  
Where that poor, friendless wretch expiring lies!

Hear his sad partner shriek, beside his bed,  
And call down curses on her landlord's head,  
Who drove, from yon small cot, her household sweet,  
To pine with want, and perish in the street.  
See the pale tradesman toil, the livelong day,  
To deck imperious lords, who never pay!  
Who waste, at dice, their boundless breadth of soil,  
But grudge the scanty meed of honest toil.  
See hounds and horses riot on the store,  
By HEAVEN created for the hapless poor!  
See half a realm one tyrant scarce sustain,  
While meagre thousands round him glean the plain!  
See, for his mistress' robe, a village sold,  
Whose matrons shrink from nakedness and cold!  
See too the Farmer prowl around the shed,  
To rob the starving household of their bread;  
And seize, with cruel fangs, the helpless swain,  
While wives, and daughters, plead, and weep, in vain;  
Or yield to infamy themselves, to save  
Their sire from prison, famine, and the grave.

There too foul luxury taints the putrid mind,  
And slavery there imbrutes the reasoning kind:  
There humble worth, in damps of deep despair,  
Is bound by poverty's eternal bar:  
No motives bright the ethereal aim impart,  
Nor one fair ray of hope allures the heart.

But, O sweet Competence! how chang'd the scene,  
Where thy soft footsteps lightly print the green!  
Where Freedom walks erect, with manly port,  
And all the blessings to his side resort,  
In every hamlet, Learning builds her schools,  
And beggars' children gain her arts, and rules;  
And mild Simplicity o'er manners reigns,  
And blameless morals Purity sustains.

From thee the rich enjoyments round me spring,  
Where every farmer reigns a little king;  
Where all to comfort, none to danger, rise;  
Where pride finds few, but nature all supplies;  
Where peace and sweet civility are seen,  
And meek good-neighbourhood endears the green.  
Here every class (if classes those we call,  
Where one extended class embraces all,  
All mingling, as the rainbow's beauty blends,  
Unknown where every hue begins or ends)  
Each following, each, with uninvincible strife,  
Wears every feature of improving life.  
Each gains from other comeliness of dress,  
And learns, with gentle mein to win and bless,  
With welcome mild the stranger to receive,  
And with plain, pleasing decency to live.  
Refinement hence even humblest life improves;  
Not the loose fair, that form and frippery loves;  
But she, whose mansion is the gentle mind,

In thought, and action, virtuously refin'd.  
Hence, wives and husbands act a lovelier part,  
More just the conduct, and more kind the heart;  
Hence brother, sister, parent, child, and friend,  
The harmony of life more sweetly blend;  
Hence labour brightens every rural scene;  
Hence cheerful plenty lives along the green;  
Still Prudence eyes her hoard, with watchful care,  
And robes of thrift and neatness, all things wear.

But hark! what voice so gaily fills the wind?  
Of care oblivious, whose that laughing mind?  
'Tis yon poor black, who ceases now his song,  
And whistling, drives the cumbrous wain along.  
He never, dragg'd, with groans, the galling chain;  
Nor hung, suspended, on th' infernal crane;  
No dim, white spots deform his face, or hand,  
Memorials hellish of the marking brand!  
No seams of pincers, scars of scalding oil;  
No waste of famine, and no wear of toil.  
But kindly fed, and clad, and treated, he  
Slides on, thro' life, with more than common glee.  
For here mild manners good to all impart,  
And stamp with infamy th' unfeeling heart;  
Here law, from vengeful rage, the slave defends,  
And here the gospel peace on earth extends.

He toils, 'tis true; but shares his master's toil;  
With him, he feeds the herd, and trims the soil;  
Helps to sustain the house, with clothes, and food,  
And takes his portion of the common good:  
Lost liberty his sole, peculiar ill,  
And fix'd submission to another's will.  
Ill, ah, how great! without that cheering sun,  
The world is chang'd to one wide, frigid zone;  
The mind, a chill'd exotic, cannot grow,  
Nor leaf with vigour, nor with promise blow;  
Pale, sickly, shrunk, it strives in vain to rise,  
Scarce lives, while living, and untimely dies.

See fresh to life the Afric infant spring,  
And plume its powers, and spread its little wing!  
Firm is it's frame, and vigorous is its mind,  
Too young to think, and yet to misery blind.  
But soon he sees himself to slavery born;  
Soon meets the voice of power, the eye of scorn;  
Sighs for the blessings of his peers, in vain;  
Condition'd as a brute, tho' form'd a man.  
Around he casts his fond, instinctive eyes,  
And sees no good, to fill his wishes, rise:  
(No motive warms, with animating beam,  
Nor praise, nor property, nor kind esteem,  
Bless'd independence, on his native ground,  
Nor sweet equality with those around;)  
Himself, and his, another's shrinks to find,  
Levell'd below the lot of human kind.

Thus, shut from honour's paths, he turns to shame,  
And filches the small good, he cannot claim.  
To sour, and stupid, sinks his active mind;  
Finds joys in drink, he cannot elsewhere find;  
Rule disobeys; of half his labour cheats;  
In some safe cot, the pilfer'd turkey eats;  
Rides hard, by night, the steed, his art purloins;  
Serene from conscience' bar himself effoins;  
Sees from himself his sole redress must flow,  
And makes revenge the balsam of his woe.

Thus slavery's blast bids sense and virtue die;  
Thus lower'd to dust the sons of Afric lie.  
Hence sages grave, to lunar systems given,  
Shall ask, why two-legg'd brutes were made by HEAVEN;  
Home seek, what pair first peopled Afric's vales,  
And nice Monboddo calculate their tails.

O thou chief curse, since curses here began;  
First guilt, first woe, first infamy of man;  
Thou spot of hell, deep smirch'd on human kind,  
The uncur'd gangrene of the reasoning mind;  
Alike in church, in state, and household all,  
Supreme memorial of the world's dread fall;  
O slavery! laurel of the Infernal mind,  
Proud Satan's triumph over lost mankind!

See the fell Spirit mount his sooty car!  
While Hell's black trump proclaims the finish'd war;  
Her choicest fiends his wheels exulting draw,  
And scream the fall of God's most holy law.  
In dread procession see the pomp begin,  
Sad pomp of woe, of madness, and of sin!  
Grav'd on the chariot, all earth's ages roll,  
And all her climes, and realms, to either pole.  
Fierce in the flash of arms, see Europe spread!  
Her jails, and gibbets, fleets, and hosts, display'd!  
Awe-struck, see silken Asia silent bow!  
And feeble Afric writhe in blood below!  
Before, peace, freedom, virtue, bliss, move on,  
The spoils, the treasures, of a world undone;  
Behind, earth's bedlam millions clank the chain,  
Hymn their disgrace, and celebrate their pain;  
Kings, nobles, priests, dread senate! lead the van,  
And shout "Te-Deum!" o'er defeated man.

Oft, wing'd by thought, I seek those Indian isles,  
Where endless spring, with endless summer smiles,  
Where fruits of gold untir'd Vertumnus pours,  
And Flora dances o'er undying flowers.  
There, as I walk thro' fields as Eden gay,  
And breathe the incense of immortal May,  
Ceaseless I hear the smacking whip resound;  
Hark! that shrill scream! that groan of death-bed sound!  
See those throng'd wretches pant along the plain,  
Tug the hard hoe, and sigh in hopeless pain!

Yon mother, loaded with her sucking child,  
Her rags with frequent spots of blood defil'd,  
Drags slowly fainting on; the fiend is nigh;  
Rings the shrill cowskin; roars the tyger-cry;  
In pangs, th' unfriended suppliant crawls along,  
And shrieks the prayer of agonizing wrong.

Why glows yon oven with a sevenfold fire?  
Crisp'd in the flames, behold a man expire!  
Lo! by that vampyre's hand, yon infant dies,  
It's brains dash'd out, beneath it's father's eyes.  
Why shrinks yon slave, with horror, from his meat?  
HEAVENS! 'tis his flesh, the wretch is whipp'd to eat.  
Why streams the life-blood from that female's throat?  
She sprinkled gravy on a guest's new coat!

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Why croud those quivering blacks yon dock around?  
Those screams announce; that cowskin's shrilling sound.  
See, that poor victim hanging from the crane,  
While loaded weights his limbs to torture strain;  
At each keen stroke, far spouts the bursting gore,  
And shrieks, and dying groans, fill all the shore.  
Around, in throngs, his brother-victims wait,  
And feel, in every stroke, their coming fate;  
While each, with palsied hands, and shuddering fears,  
The cause, the rule, and price, of torment bears.

Hark, hark, from morn to night, the realm around,  
The cracking whip, keen taunt, and shriek, resound!  
O'er cast are all the splendors of the spring;  
Sweets court in vain; in vain the warblers sing;  
Illusions all! 'tis Tartarus round me spreads  
His dismal screams, and melancholy shades.  
The damned, sure, here clank th' eternal chain,  
And waste with grief, or agonize with pain.  
A Tartarus new! inversion strange of hell!  
Guilt wrecks the vengeance, and the guiltless feel.  
The heart, not form'd of flint, here all things rend;  
Each fair a fury, and each man a fiend;  
From childhood, train'd to every baleful ill,  
And their first sport, to torture, and to kill.

Ask not, why earthquakes rock that fateful land;  
Fires waste the city; ocean whelms the strand;  
Why the fierce whirlwind, with electric sway,  
Springs from the storm, and fastens on his prey,  
Shakes HEAVEN, rends earth, upheaves the cumbrous wave,  
And with destruction's besom fills the grave:  
Why dark disease roams swift her nightly round,  
Knocks at each door, and wakes the gasping sound.

Ask, shuddering ask, why, earth-embosom'd sleep  
The unbroken fountains of the angry deep:

Why, bound, and furnac'd, by the globe's strong frame,  
In sullen quiet, waits the final flame:  
Why surge not, o'er yon isles it's spouting fires,  
'Till all their living world in dust expires.  
Crimes sound their ruin's moral cause aloud,  
And all HEAVEN, sighing, rings with cries of brother's blood.

Beside yon church, that beams a modest ray,  
With tidy neatness reputably gay,  
When, mild and fair, as Eden's seventh-day light,  
In silver silence, shines the Sabbath bright,  
In neat attire, the village households come,  
And learn the path-way to the eternal home.  
Hail solemn ordinance! worthy of the Skies;  
Whence thousand richest blessings daily rise;  
Peace, order, cleanliness, and manners sweet,  
A sober mind, to rule submission meet,  
Enlarging knowledge, life from guilt refin'd,  
And love to God, and friendship to mankind.  
In the clear splendour of thy vernal morn,  
New-quicken'd man to light, and life, is born;  
The desert of the mind with virtue blooms;  
It's flowers unfold, it's fruits exhale perfumes;  
Proud guilt dissolves, beneath the searching ray,  
And low debasement, trembling, creeps away;  
Vice bites the dust; foul Error seeks her den;  
And God, descending, dwells anew with men.  
Where yonder humbler spire salutes the eye,  
It's vane slow turning in the liquid sky,  
Where, in light gambols, healthy striplings sport,  
Ambitious learning builds her outer court;  
A grave preceptor, there, her usher stands,  
And rules, without a rod, her little bands.  
Some half-grown sprigs of learning grac'd his brow:  
Little he knew, though much he wish'd to know,  
Inchanted hung o'er Virgil's honey'd lay,  
And smil'd, to see desipient Horace play;  
Glean'd scraps of Greek; and, curious, trac'd afar,  
Through Pope's clear glass, the bright Mæsonian star.  
Yet oft his students at his wisdom star'd,  
For many a student to his side repair'd,  
Surpriz'd, they heard him Dilworth's knots untie,  
And tell, what lands beyond the Atlantic lie.

Many his faults; his virtues small, and few;  
Some little good he did, or strove to do;  
Laborious still, he taught the early mind,  
And urg'd to manners meek, and thoughts refin'd;  
Truth he impress'd, and every virtue prais'd;  
While infant eyes, in wondering silence, gaz'd;  
The worth of time would, day by day, unfold,  
And tell them, every hour was made of gold.  
Brown Industry he lov'd; and oft declar'd  
How hardly Sloth, in life's sad evening, far'd;  
Through grave examples, with sage meaning, ran,  
Whist was each form, and thus the tale began.

“Beside yon lonely tree, whose branches bare  
Rise white, and murmur to the passing air,  
There, where the twining briars the yard enclose,  
The house of Sloth stands hush’d in long repose.”

“In a late round of solitary care,  
My feet instinct to rove, they knew not where,  
I thither came. With yellow blossoms gay,  
The tall rank weed begirt the tangled way:  
Curious to view, I forc’d a path between,  
And climb’d the broken stile, and gaz’d the scene.”

“O’er an old well, the curb half-fallen spread,  
Whose boards, end-loose, a mournful creaking made;  
Poiz’d on a leaning post, and ill-sustain’d,  
In ruin sad, a mouldering swepe remain’d;  
Useless, the crooked pole still dangling hung,  
And, tied with thrumbs, a broken bucket swung.”

“A half-made wall around the garden lay,  
Mended, in gaps, with brushwood in decay.  
No culture through the woven briars was seen,  
Save a few sickly plants of faded green:  
The starv’d potatoe hung it’s blasted seeds,  
And fennel struggled to o’ertop the weeds,  
There gaz’d a ragged sheep, with wild surprise,  
And too lean geese upturn’d their slanting eyes.”

“The cottage gap’d, with many a dismal yawn,  
Where, rent to burn, the covering boards were gone;  
Or, by one nail, where others endwise hung,  
The sky look’d thro’, and winds portentous rung.  
In waves, the yielding roof appear’d to run,  
And half the chimney-top was fallen down.”

“The ancient cellar-door, of structure rude,  
With tatter’d garments calk’d, half open stood.  
There, as I peep’d, I saw the ruin’d bin;  
The sills were broke; the wall had crumbled in;  
A few, long-emptied casks lay mouldering round,  
And wasted ashes sprinkled o’er the ground;  
While, a sad sharer in the household ill,  
A half-starv’d rat crawl’d out, and bade farewell.”

“One window dim, a loop-hole to the sight,  
Shed round the room a pale, penurious light;  
Here rags gay-colour’d eked the broken glass;  
There panes of wood supplied the vacant space.”

“As, pondering deep, I gaz’d, with gritty roar,  
The hinges creak’d, and open stood the door.  
Two little boys, half-naked from the waist,  
With staring wonder, ey’d me, as I pass’d.  
The smile of Pity blended with her tear --  
Ah me! how rarely Comfort visits here!”

“On a lean hammoc, once with feathers fill’d,  
His limbs by dirty tatters ill conceal’d,  
Tho’ now the sun had rounded half the day,  
Stretch’d at full length, the lounge snoring lay:  
While his sad wife, beside her dresser stood,  
And wash’d her hungry household’s meagre food,  
His aged sire, whose beard, and flowing hair,  
Wav’d silvery, o’er his antiquated chair,  
Rose from his seat; and, as he watch’d my eye,  
Deep from his bosom heav’d a mournful sigh --  
“Stranger, he cried, once better days I knew;”  
And, trembling, shed the venerable dew.  
I wish’d a kind reply; but wish’d in vain;  
No words came timely to relieve my pain:  
To the poor parent, and her infants dear,  
Two mites I gave, besprinkled with a tear;  
And, fix’d again to see the wretched shed,  
Withdrew in silence, clos’d the door, and fled.”

“Yet this so lazy man I’ve often seen  
Hurrying, and bustling, round the busy green;  
The loudest prater, in a blacksmith’s shop;  
The wisest statesman, o’er a drunken cup;  
(His sharp-bon’d horse, the street that nightly fed,  
Tied, many an hour, in yonder tavern-shed)  
In every gambling, racing match, abroad:  
But a rare hearer, in the house of God.”

“Such, such, my children, is the dismal cot,  
Where drowsy Sloth receives her wretched lot:  
But O how different is the charming cell,  
Where Industry and Virtue love to dwell!”

“Beyond that hillock, topp’d with scatter’d trees,  
That meet, with freshest green, the hastening breeze,  
There, where the glassy brook reflects the day,  
Nor weeds, nor sedges, choke its crystal way,  
Where budding willows feel the earliest spring,  
And wonted red-breasts safely nest, and sing,  
A female Worthy lives; and all the poor  
Can point the way to her sequester’d door.”

“She, uneduc’d by dress and idle shew,  
The forms, and rules, of fashion never knew;  
Nor glittering in the ball, her form display’d;  
Nor yet can tell a diamond, from a spade.  
Far other objects claim’d her steady care;  
The morning chapter, and the nightly prayer;  
The frequent visit to the poor man’s shed;  
The wakeful nursing, at the sick man’s bed;  
Each day, to rise, before the early sun;  
Each day, to see her daily duty done;  
To cheer the partner of her household cares,  
And mould her children, from their earliest years.

“Small is her house; but fill’d with stores of good;  
Good, earn’d with toil, and with delight bestow’d.  
In the clean cellar, rang’d in order neat,  
Gay-smiling Plenty boasts her casks of meat,  
Points, to small eyes, the bins where apples glow,  
And marks her cyder-butts, in stately row.  
Her granary, fill’d with harvest’s various pride,  
Still sees the poor man’s bushel laid aside;  
Here swells the flaxen, there the fleecy store,  
And the long wood-pile mocks the winter’s power:  
White are the swine; the poultry plump and large;  
For every creature thrives, beneath her charge.”

“Plenteous, and plain, the furniture is seen;  
All form’d for use, and all as silver clean.  
On the clean dresser, pewter shines arow;  
The clean-scower’d bowls are trimly set below;  
While the wash’d coverlet, and linen white,  
Assure the traveller a refreshing night.”

“Oft have I seen, and oft still hope to see,  
This friend, this parent to the poor and me,  
Tho’ bent with years, and toil, and care, and woe,  
Age lightly silver’d on her surrow’d brow,  
Her frame still useful, and her mind still young,  
Her judgment vigorous, and her memory strong,  
Serene her spirits, and her temper sweet,  
And pleas’d the youthful circle still to meet,  
Cheerful, the long-accustom’d task pursue,  
Prevent the rust of age, and life renew;  
To church, still pleas’d, and able still, to come,  
And shame the lounging youth, who sleep at home.”

“Such as her toils, has been the bright reward;  
For HEAVEN will always toils like these regard.  
Safe, on her love, her truth and wisdom tried,  
Her husband’s heart, thro’ lengthened life, relied;  
From little, daily saw his wealth increase,  
His neighbours love him, and his household bless;  
In peace and plenty liv’d, and died resign’d,  
And, dying, left six thousand pounds behind.  
Her children, train’d to usefulness alone,  
Still love the hand, which led them kindly on,  
With pious duty, own her wise behest,  
And, every day, rise up, and call her bless’d.”

“More would ye know, of each poor hind enquire,  
Who sees no sun go down upon his hire;  
A cheerful witness, bid each neighbour come;  
Ask each sad wanderer, where he finds a home;  
His tribute even the vilest wretch will give,  
And praise the useful life, he will not live.”

“Oft have the prattlers, God to me has giv’n,  
The flock, I hope, and strive, to train for HEAVEN,  
With little footsteps, sought her mansion dear,

To meet the welcome, given with heart sincere;  
And cheer'd with all, that early minds can move,  
The smiles of gentleness, and acts of love,  
At home, in lisp'ing tales, her worth display'd,  
And pour'd their infant blessings on her head."

"Ye kings, of pomp, ye nobles proud of blood,  
Heroes of arms, of science sages proud!  
Read, blush, and weep, to see, with all your store,  
Fame, genius, knowledge, bravery, wealth, and power,  
Crown'd, laurell'd, worshipp'd, GODs beneath the sun,  
Far less of real good enjoy'd, or done."

Such lessons, pleas'd, he taught. The precepts new  
Oft the young train to early wisdom drew;  
And, when his influence willing minds confess'd,  
The children lov'd him, and the parents bless'd;  
But, when by soft indulgence led astray,  
His pupil's hearts had learn'd the idle way,  
Tho' constant, kind, and hard, his toils had been,  
For all those toils, small thanks had he, I ween.

Behold yon humbler mansion lift its head!  
Where infant minds to science door are led.  
As now, by kind indulgence loos'd to play,  
From place to place, from sport to sport, they stray,  
How light their gambols frolic o'er the green!  
How their shrill voices cheer the rural scene!  
Sweet harmless elves! in Freedom's household born,  
Enjoy the raptures of your transient morn;  
And let no hour of anxious manhood see  
Your minds less innocent, or bless'd, or free!

See too, in every hamlet, round me rise  
A central school-house, dress'd in modest guise!  
Where every child for useful life prepares,  
To business moulded, ere he knows its cares;  
In worth matures, to independence grows,  
And twines the civic garland o'er his brows.

Mark, how invited by the vernal sky,  
Yon cheerful group of females passes by!  
Whose hearts, attun'd to social joy, prepare  
A friendly visit to some neighbouring fair.  
How neatness glistens from the lovely train!  
Bright charm! which pomp to rival tries in vain.

Ye Muses! dames of dignified renown,  
Rever'd alike in country, and in town,  
Your bard the mysteries of a visit show;  
For sure your Ladyships those mysteries know:  
What is it then, obliging Sisters! say,  
The debt of social visiting to pay?

'Tis not to toil before the idol pier;  
To shine the first in fashion's lunar sphere;

By sad engagements forc'd, abroad to roam,  
And dread to find the expecting fair, at home!  
To stop at thirty doors, in half a day,  
Drop the gilt card, and proudly roll away;  
To alight, and yield the hand, with nice parade;  
Up stairs to rustle in the stiff brocade;  
Swim thro' the drawing room, with studied air;  
Catch the pink'd beau, and shade the rival fair;  
To sit, to curb, to toss, with bridled mien,  
Mince the scant speech, and lose a glance between;  
Unfurl the fan, display the snowy arm,  
And ope, with each new motion, some new charm:  
Or sit, in silent solitude, to spy  
Each little failing, with malignant eye;  
Or chatter, with incessancy of tongue,  
Careless, if kind, or cruel, right, or wrong;  
To trill of us, and ours, of mine, and me,  
Our house, our coach, our friends, our family,  
While all th' excluded circle sit in pain,  
And glance their cool contempt, or keen disdain:  
T' inhale, from proud Nanking, a sip of tea,  
And wave a curtesy trim, and flirt away:  
Or waste, at cards, peace, temper, health and life,  
Begin with sullenness, and end in strife,  
Lose the rich feast, by friendly converse given,  
And backward turn from happiness, and HEAVEN.

It is, in decent habit, plain and neat,  
To spend a few choice hours, in converse sweet;  
Careless of forms, to act th' unstudied part,  
To mix in friendship, and to blend the heart;  
To choose those happy themes, which all must feel,  
The moral duties, and the household weal,  
The tale of sympathy, the kind design,  
Where rich affections soften, and refine;  
T' amuse, to be amus'd, to bless, be bless'd,  
And tune to harmony the common breast;  
To cheer, with mild good-humour's sprightly ray,  
And smooth life's passage, o'er its thorny way;  
To circle round the hospitable board,  
And taste each good, our generous climes afford;  
To court a quick return, with accents kind,  
And leave, at parting, some regret behind.

Such, here, the social intercourse is found;  
So slides the year, in smooth enjoyment, round.

Thrice bless'd the life, in this glad region spent,  
In peace, in competence, and still content;  
Where bright, and brighter, all things daily smile,  
And rare and scanty, flow the streams of ill;  
Where undecaying youth sits blooming round,  
And Spring looks lovely on the happy ground;  
Improvement glows, along life's cheerful way,  
And with soft lustre makes the passage gay.  
Thus oft, on yonder Sound, when evening gales

Breath'd o'er th' expanse, and gently fill'd the sails,  
The world was still, the HEAVENS were dress'd in smiles,  
And the clear moon-beam tipp'd the distant isles,  
On the blue plain a lucid image gave,  
And capp'd, with silver light, each little wave;  
The silent splendour, floating at our side,  
Mov'd as we mov'd, and wanton'd on the tide;  
While shadowy points, and havens, met the eye,  
And the faint-glimmering landmark told us home was nigh.

Ah, dire reverse! in yonder eastern clime,  
Where heavy drags the sluggish car of time;  
The world unalter'd by the change of years,  
Age after age, the same dull aspect wears;  
On the bold mind the weight of system spread,  
Resistless lies, a cumbrous load of lead;  
One beaten course, the wheels politic keep,  
And slaves of custom, lose their woes in sleep;  
Stagnant is social life; no bright design,  
Quickens the sloth, or checks the sad decline.  
The friend of man casts round a wishful eye,  
And hopes, in vain, improving scenes to spy;  
Slow o'er his head, the dragging moments roll,  
And damp each cheerful purpose of the soul.

Thus the bewilder'd traveller, forc'd to roam  
Through a lone forest, leaves his friends, and home;  
Dun evening hangs the sky; the woods around  
Join their sad umbrage o'er the russet ground;  
At every step, new gloom inshrouds the skies;  
His path grows doubtful, and his fears arise:  
No woodland songstress soothes his mournful way;  
No taper gilds the gloom with cheering ray;  
On the cold earth he laps his head forlorn,  
And watching, looks, and looks, to spy the lingering morn.

And when new regions prompt their feet to roam, .  
And fix, in untrod fields, another home,  
No dreary realms our happy race explore,  
Nor mourn their exile from their native shore.  
For there no endless frosts the glebe deform,  
Nor blows, with icy breath, perpetual storm:  
No wrathful suns, with sickly splendour glare,  
Nor moors, impoison'd, taint the balmy air,  
But medial climates change the healthful year;  
Pure streamlets wind, and gales of Eden cheer;  
In misty pomp the sky-topp'd mountains stand,  
And with green bosom humbler hills expand:  
With flowery brilliance smiles the woodland glade;  
Full teems the soil, and fragrant twines the shade.  
There cheaper fields the numerous household charm,  
And the glad sire gives every son a farm;  
In falling forests, Labour's axe resounds;  
Opes the new field; and wind the fence's bounds;  
The green wheat sparkles; nods the towering corn;  
And meads, and pastures, lessening wastes adorn.

Where howl'd the forest, herds unnumber'd low;  
The fleecy wanderers fear no prowling foe;  
The village springs; the humble school aspires;  
And the church brightens in the morning fires!  
Young Freedom wantons; Art exalts her head;  
And infant Science prattles through the shade.  
There changing neighbours learn their manners mild;  
And toil and prudence dress th' improving wild:  
The savage shrinks, nor dares the bliss annoy;  
And the glad traveller wonders at the joy.

All hail, thou western world! by HEAVEN design'd  
Th' example bright, to renovate mankind.  
Soon shall thy sons across the mainland roam;  
And claim, on far Pacific shores, their home;  
Their rule, religion, manners, arts, convey,  
And spread their freedom to the Asian sea.  
Where erst six thousand suns have roll'd the year  
O'er plains of slaughter, and o'er wilds of fear,  
Towns, cities, fanes, shall lift their towery pride;  
The village bloom, on every streamlets side;  
Proud Commerce' mole the western surges lave;  
The long, white spire lie imag'd on the wave;  
O'er morn's pellucid main expand their sails,  
And the starr'd ensign court Korean gales.  
Then nobler thoughts shall savage trains inform;  
Then barbarous passions cease the heart to storm:  
No more the captive circling flames devour;  
Through the war path the Indian creep no more;  
No midnight scout the slumbering village fire;  
Nor the scalp'd infant stain his gasping sire:  
But peace, and truth, illumine the twilight mind,  
The gospel's sunshine, and the purpose kind.  
Where marshes teem'd with death, shall meads unfold;  
Untrodden cliffs resign their stores of gold;  
The dance refin'd on Albion's margin move,  
And her lone bowers rehearse the tale of love.  
Where slept perennial night, shall science rise,  
And new-born Oxfords cheer the evening skies;  
Miltonic strains the Mexic hills prolong,  
And Louis murmur to Sicilian song.

Then to new climes the bliss shall trace its way,  
And Tartar desarts hail the rising day;  
From the long torpor startled China wake;  
Her chains of misery rous'd Peruvia break;  
Man link to man; with bosom bosom twine;  
And one great bond the house of Adam join:  
The sacred promise full completion know,  
And peace, and piety, the world o'erflow.

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