

**The hospital : a poem, in three books, written in the Devon & Exeter hospital, 1809.**

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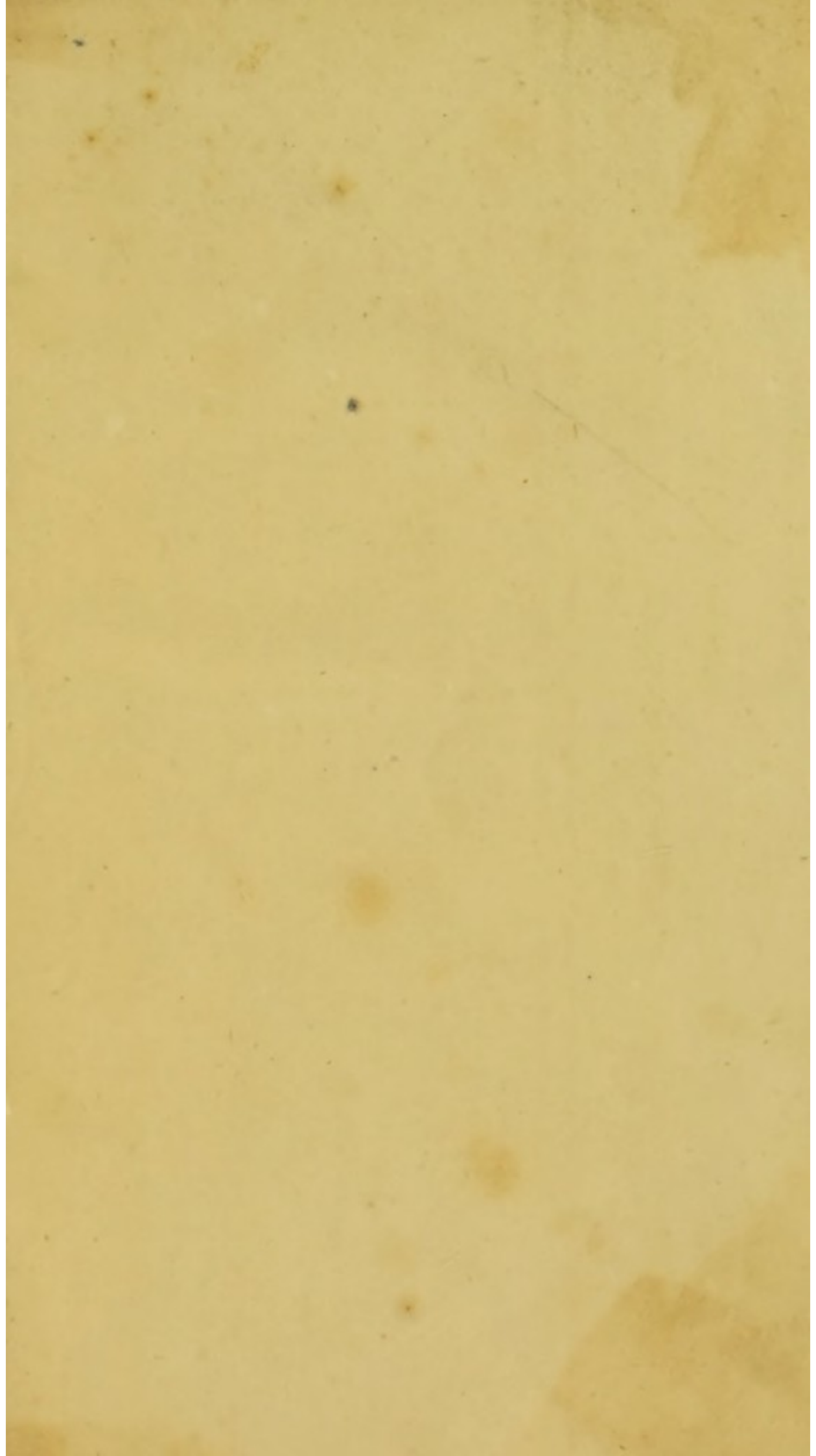
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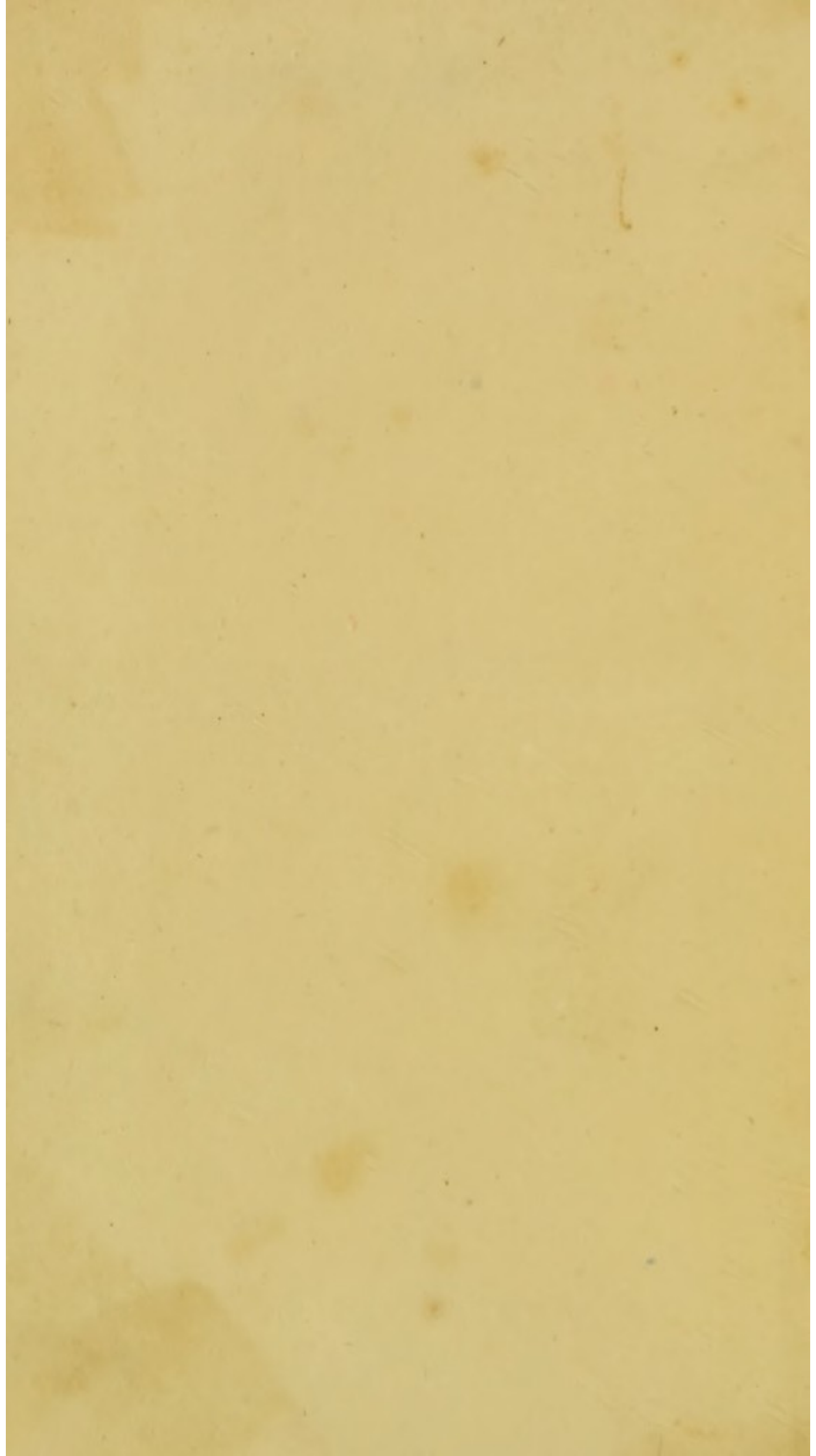
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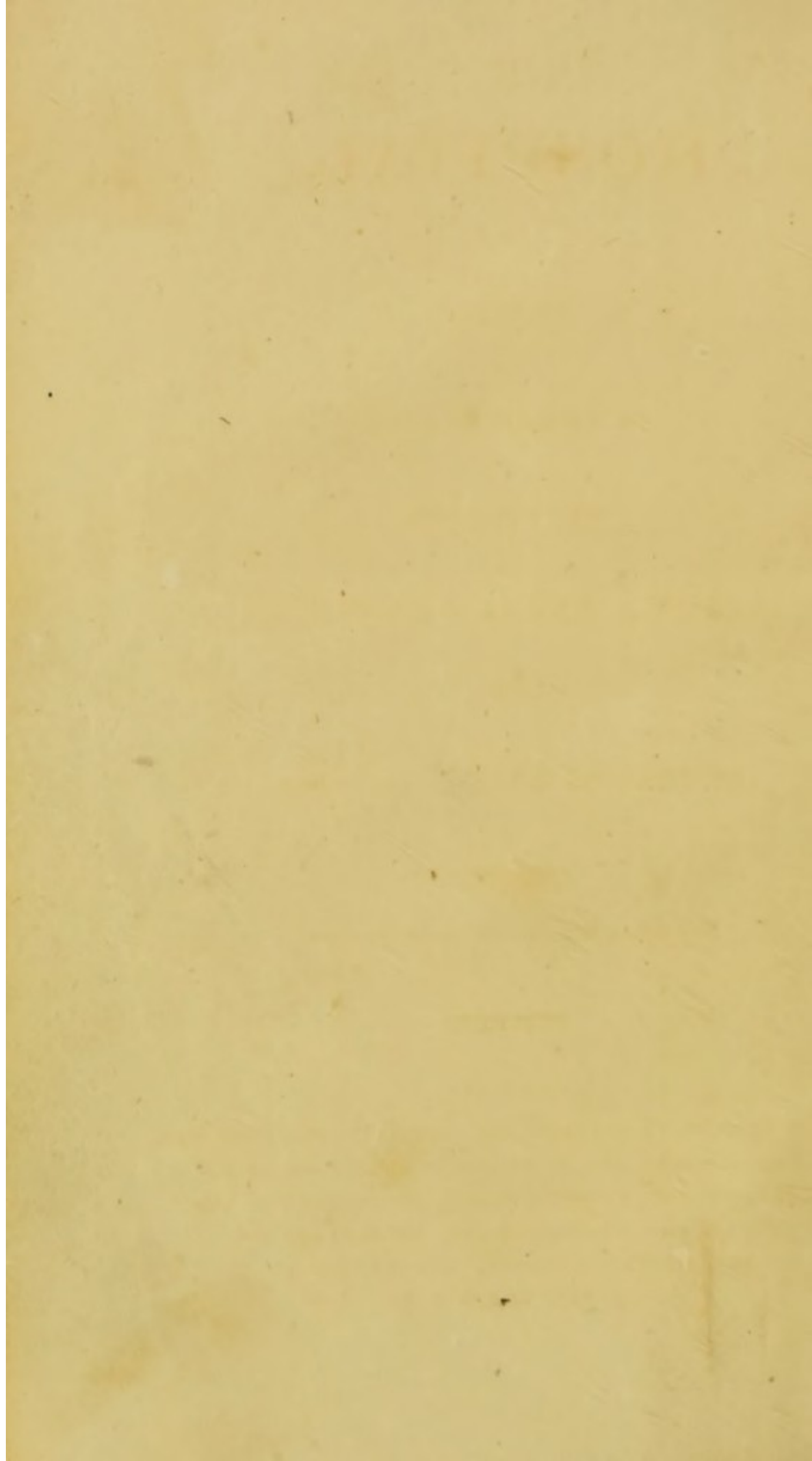
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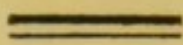
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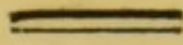
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VIRGIL.



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**WITH THE MOST PROFOUND VENERATION**

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**MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,**

**BY THEIR EVER GRATEFUL**

**AND DEVOTED HUMBLE SERVANT,**

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## PREFACE.

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*IT* has been customary of late to consider a preface as only a matter of course, and as a mere compliance with an established practice, without any other use than to break the reader's fall from the lofty title-page to the humble contents of the work itself; but in my particular case, I think far otherwise. The awful consideration of an obscure person's presuming to engage the attention of an enlightened public (conscious at the same time of his own numberless defects) makes it necessary for me to say whatever may with truth be said, to take off from the charge of presumption and self-sufficiency. The particulars of the fatal misfor-

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*tune which has befallen me, and the reason of my procuring an admission into the Exeter Hospital, are stated at full in the poem itself, under the character of THESPIS. It was begun without the most distant idea of ever publishing it, and merely to sooth my own mind in those hours allotted by the rules of the Hospital to repose, but which, to me, from former habits, were much too early to admit of sleep, even if I had been free from pain; and nearly half the poem was written in absolute darkness, the continual interruption making it altogether impossible to proceed in it during the day.*

*After leaving the Hospital I sent the first part to a relation, who advised me to pursue the subject and publish it for my own emolument, and as an encouragement, sent me, with the assistance of my friend, Mr. Fitzgerald,\* a very extensive list of names who pro-*

\* Of the Theatre-Royal, Norwich; whose active exertions in my interest demand and have my grateful thanks.

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*mised to support the undertaking, amongst which were the Managers and Performers of the Norwich Theatre, of which I had formerly been a member. Thus stimulated by the kindness of my friends on one hand, and excited by the now too evident certainty of being for ever rendered unable to pursue my profession, on the other; I finished the poem, such as it is, and now, with trembling solicitude, lay it before a candid, and I hope, indulgent public; having no other merit to plead in its behalf, but that I have endeavoured to promote the interests of piety and virtue, by the most pleasing means in my power. If there should be found in it any thing which may merit the smallest degree of approbation, it is owing to its being a faithful picture of those scenes I have undertaken to represent, and which, I confess, I should have been utterly unable to describe without actual experience. I therefore hope I shall not have to encounter the utmost severity of rigorous criticism, under which I should be but too certain of failing; but rather may be admitted into that class of*

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*poets, who, with but a moderate share of learning, have had the good fortune to succeed, by being considered as the agreeable wild flowers of nature. In which case, I should have the less occasion to defend the present work, on the score of regularity, although an indulgent critic might perhaps be willing to confer on it the title of a lesser epic, as it has, at least, one personage who may be called the Hero, and as the narrative consists, according to the rules of Aristotle, of a beginning, a middle, and an end, which I have distributed into Three Books, constituting respectively, the admission, residence, and departure of THESPIS. And the same indulgent critic will bestow the name of episodes, rather than excrescences, upon those parts of it where the narration is interrupted.*

*After all, if, as the great Lock observes, even natural substances have not been classed, and had names affixed to them according to their several natures, but rather for the convenience of the human mind, pursu-*

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*ing its own ends, how much more ought we to conclude that the rules of poetry, invented by the great father of criticism, were not altogether founded on the nature of things, but on the models he found ready to his hand, in the works of Homer, Hesiod, &c. I shall therefore be content with naming my performance a Something; which Something, if it have the good fortune to meet with that indulgence from the public which it has already met with from my friends, I shall the less regret that misfortune, which in this case will not have proved the occasion of introducing me to the world merely to shew my inability, and which I could not but have considered as a bitter aggravation of my unhappy state. Before I conclude I must beg leave to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all my theatrical friends in particular, and to all those ladies and gentlemen in general, who have so liberally encouraged a work which originated in the profound veneration I entertained for the sublime benevolence of*



PREFACE.

*the Supporters of the great charitable Institution, I have feebly attempted to celebrate; and in my admiration of the inestimable utility of the Institution itself.*

*Dock, January 22d, 1810.*

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**THE HOSPITAL.**

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THE HOSPITAL

THE HOSPITAL

THE HOSPITAL

# THE HOSPITAL.

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## CANTO FIRST.

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**T'** EXPLORE the depth of human misery,  
And trace th' extremes poor mortals may endure,  
Ere the grim tyrant strikes the final blow,  
Which ends at once the suff'ring, and the life:  
This be thy theme, O! Muse of sacred pity!       5  
Whose eye still glistens with ambrosial dew;  
Sweet tears, distill'd from sorrows bitt' rest root.  
Thou didst inspire into the soul of HOWARD  
That active zeal, which urg'd him to surpass  
The deeds of fabled Hercules, and leave       10  
A bright example to remotest times.

Awful the theme! yet not, I trust, unpleasing;  
 If Heav'n vouchsafe to grant celestial aid  
 To me, its lowly servant, who have dar'd,  
 (In deep distress, by deep distress surrounded) 15  
 T' attempt things high, and arduous to achieve:  
 To soften hearts, who haply ne'er have felt  
 Th' extatic gushing of one pitying tear.

Thine too, my Muse, the more delightful task,  
 To paint fair Virtue in her noblest form; 20  
 To shew the world its worthies; to record  
 Those gen'rous souls, who form'd of purest mould  
 Ethereal, make it their supreme delight  
 To lessen still the aggregate of woe:  
 Like guardian angels, to walk round the world, 25  
 Converting bitt'rest sighs to notes of joy,  
 And wiping ev'ry tear from ev'ry eye.

They, as the crown of all their pious labours,  
 Have rais'd, and have endow'd, this HOSPITAL;

This noble monument of human worth ; 30  
 Where I now lie, struck by the awful hand  
 Of Providence, to punish my mistreadings,  
 With scarce a ray of hope to sooth my sorrows.

These, when their bright career on earth is run,  
 Ascend triumphant, to the blest abodes, 35  
 Through ranks of shining angels, who with shouts  
 Of praise, and all the minstrelsy of heav'n,  
 Welcome the conq'rors to their blissful seats,  
 And God receives them as his best belov'd.

Cæsarian triumphs, when with these compar'd, 40  
 How poor ! how less than nothing they appear !  
 Where the proud victor, flush'd from fields of blood,  
 Ascends with pomp the Capitolian hill ;  
 Before him lictors, fasces, and the axe ;  
 Trumpets, and trophies, and the spoils of war ; 45  
 Behind, and fastened to his chariot-wheels,  
 A train of wretched captives follows, sad.

Such were thy sanguinary joys, O Rome!  
 And such thy far-fam'd *Virtue* (falsely-named):  
 Ah! how repugnant to the GOD of MERCY! 50  
 Who gives eternal honours, and rewards,  
 Not to the scourge, but saviours of mankind.

When first the hapless, but ingenuous, THESPIS,  
 (Whom wayward fortune had, in early life,  
 Compell'd to make the Stage his sole profession) 55  
 Driv'n by sad accident to shelter here,  
 Survey'd the exterior of this spacious pile,  
 How did each circumstance impress his soul  
 With thoughts that ne'er found entrance there before!  
 Yet all that architecture meant t' inspire, 60  
 With all the pomp of capitals, and quoins,  
 Friezes and architraves, (if such there were)  
 Pass like a summer's cloud across his mind:  
 Were all Versailles become an Hospital,  
 Its lofty columns, and its swelling domes, 65  
 Would scarcely gain a moment his attention.

His thoughts are all within; there might he find  
 Some *real Sage*, who, with a dext'rous hand,  
 And penetrating eye, may find the cause,  
 (So long o'er-looked by men of high repute,) 70  
 Of all his pain, anxiety and sorrow.

This hope, and this alone sustained his soul,  
 In that most trying moment, when in tears  
 Of anguish, pity, tenderness, and love,  
 He left the faithful partner of his heart, 75  
 To seek relief at this, its fountain-head.

His vehicle is borne within the gates,  
 His faithful friend attending by his side;  
 For Thespis had a friend—and one more true,  
 Or swifter to obey the call of pity, 80  
 Ne'er trod the earth: O! that this humble verse  
 Might live for ever to record his virtues!  
 So should the name of PEAR, the parish clerk,  
 Descend to ages with his mitred lord.



And now he finds himself amongst a crowd 85  
 Of wretched candidates to gain admission ;  
 Each recommended by some kind subscriber :  
 But his, alas ! had fail'd through lack of forms.  
 And now, his long, and agonizing journey,  
 Had all abortive prov'd, but for *this friend*. 90

So when the cripple at Bethesda's pool,  
 Whose mystic waters, by an angel mov'd,  
 Had virtue giv'n them to restore the lame,  
 Helpless, forlorn, long on the brink had lain,  
 For want of some kind hand to lend its aid, 95  
 And bear him in at the appointed hour ;  
 'Twas there his SAVIOUR found him ! with that voice,  
 Which call'd creation forth, he bids him rise,  
 And straight behold ! his pristine strength restor'd.

Such, (to compare small things with infinite,) 100  
 The good man's ardent zeal appear'd, and such

His humble imitation of his *Master*.  
 Though tempests rag'd, and dashing torrents fell,  
 He ran—he flew—fresh application made,  
 And finally succeeded for his friend. 105

Now summon'd to the *Æsculapian* board,  
 'Twas then, O *Thespis*! thy ingenuous soul  
 Met its severest shock! never till then,  
 Hadst thou sustain'd a scene so difficult.  
 When called to answer interrogatories, 110  
 Confusion for an instant held thee mute:  
 And let not stoics blame thy want of firmness.  
 There is a something in the scenic art,  
 But ill-accordant with unfeign'd distress.  
 Poor *Thespis*, more than fancy'd he beheld 115  
 In gravest faces, signs of levity.  
 Let nice logicians tell us, if they can,  
 Why a profession, which, it is confessed,  
 Requires more talents, both in mind and body  
 Than any other, fails to meet respect? 120

Perhaps the wit will say, (so much requir'd,)  
 The Country Actor meets just punishment,  
 For his presumption in attempting it.  
 But trifling this: the cause lies deeper still;  
 For even GARRICK, in these modern times,           125  
 And ROSCIUS in old Rome, though highly honour'd  
 And courted by the princes of the land,  
 Could ne'er succeed, beyond their pers'nal worth,  
 To rescue a profession from mis-prise,  
 That is the purest vehicle of morals;               130  
 The strongest engine to reform the manners,  
 T' enlighten, and to civilize mankind.

May I not hope to meet indulgence, then,  
 If, ere I enter the abodes of sorrow,  
 (Led by the somb'rous Muse) I pause awhile,           135  
 And, on the threshold, cast a parting look  
 On brighter scenes, whilst I attempt to prove,  
 " 'Tis the remains of barbarism, alone,  
 " Or joined with gloomy bigotry, has sunk

“ The stage from that exalted pitch of glory,      140  
 “ Where *Nature* and *True Taste* had fix'd its station,  
 “ To be the jest of fools, the scorn of wealth,  
 “ The good man's pity, and the bigot's horror.”

In Greece! In Greece! alone, that land of science,  
 That nurse of Heroes, and of Demi-gods,      145  
 Where sages vied with warriors, where the bard  
 Found equal honour with the legislator,  
 THALIA and MELPOMENE combin'd  
 To rock the infant cradle of the Drama ;  
 And soon the nurs'ling gain'd its prime of manhood. 150  
 Then first the Thespian car began to roll,  
 And Æschylus and Sophocles appear'd,  
 And grave Euripides, and gay Menander,  
 With Aristophanes, and myriads more,  
 Whose names alone the sweeping hand of time      155  
 Has spar'd ; their works alas ! for ever lost.

In this bright era of dramatic glory,

The victor bards, amidst th' applauding shouts  
 Of nations, at the high Olympic games,  
 Were crown'd with garlands of immortal bays ;      160  
 Their names enroll'd in the archives of state :  
 Such honours Greece bestow'd on scenic worth.

But when the inundating arms of Rome  
 Had quench'd the Attic fire, then fell the stage,  
 With ev'ry gentler science to the ground,      165  
 And nought was priz'd but military arts,  
 And rules imperial which enchain'd the world.

At length transplanted to Italian shores,  
 Again the Drama rose ; but like a tree,  
 Torn from its native soil, its sickly head,      170  
 Awhile it rear'd, then languish'd and expir'd.

For barb'rous was the stock of antient Rome.  
 And though pride grafted the Athenian germ,  
 That stubborn pride infected all the fruit :

Genius with prejudice such conflict held, 175

That even SCIPIO, "*the light of Rome,*"

And LELIUS, "the Wise," both wrote by stealth,

And, in a bondsman's name, enrich'd the world

With comedies, whose fame will never die.

Meantime, the Actors' estimation sunk 180

So low, the Muse refuses to record

Th' opprobrious sentence which the law decreed.

Ev'n TULLY, though an Actor's pupil, scorn'd

His master's calling, whilst he prais'd his art.

But when, fierce-rushing from the stormy north, 185

A total barb'ism had o'er-spread the world ;

When, with the force of waves, impelling waves,

Succeeding swarms of Goths, Huns, Vandals, Picts,

And later Normans fill'd the temp'rate climes

With blood and horror ; never had the world 190

Been plung'd before in such a depth of darkness.

Long, long it slumber'd in this mental gloom :

The savage chieftain and the fiery bigot,  
 'Midst the dire clash of ignorance and zeal,  
 Scarce knew the Drama ever had existed. 195

At length a spurious, senseless species rose,  
 Unknown to happier times ; when parish-clerks  
 In rhymes uncouth, performed their *Mysteries* ;  
 And the rude vulgar saw, with stupid joy,  
 The articles of their religion mock'd, 200  
 And all the Bible turn'd into a farce.  
 Then " The Diverting Comedy," (so call'd)  
 Of " Christ's Nativity," was acted o'er ;  
 Another represented his " Temptation ;"  
 Others, his " Crucifixion," and " Ascent :"  
 205  
 In all of which, to raise the laugh profane,  
 Satan was still the striking character,  
 And all his foils, defeats, and disappointments,  
 Produced the comic int'rest of the scene.

Barbarities like these at length disgusted 210

And dullness took the place of profanation.  
 Then the *Moralities* usurp'd the stage :  
 The shadowy offspring of pedantic brains,  
 Which never touch'd the heart with interest,  
 Or struck the fancy with the glow of truth. 215  
 Faith, Love, Fear, Valour, all the attributes,  
 With half-embodiy'd forms, " unreal mockery,"  
 Stalk'd o'er the stage, harangued awhile, then vanish'd :  
 The tir'd spectator prais'd—and yawn'd—and slept.

At length *immortal* SHAKESPEAR, like the sun 220  
 Arose, and chas'd the flimsy mists of darkness :  
 Exulting Britain hail'd the loftiest bard  
 That ever grac'd the Drama since its birth :  
 Creation brighten'd at his magic touch ;  
 Virtue, by him array'd, shew'd tenfold charms ; 225  
 Vice started at her odious self, when seen  
 In his true mirror ; Fancy leapt for joy ;  
 And Genius own'd him for her darling son.



Beneath the banners of this mighty chief,  
 The actor's calling rose to high repute; 230  
 And had not black fanaticism ensu'd,  
 Which palsied all the gen'rous arts of life,  
 The stage, ere this had reach'd its ancient glory:  
 But, rushing to extremes, licentious *wit*,  
 In the succeeding reign, debauch'd the stage, 235  
 And gave that fatal stab to decency,  
 Which all the dramas of the pious YOUNG,  
 The virtuous ADDISON, and polish'd ROWE,  
 With moral CUMBERLAND, could never heal.  
 But yet we doubt not of complete success; 240  
 Since *Managers*, and *Actors*, all combine,  
 To forward the great work of reformation:  
 The stage is now become the School of Virtue;  
 And by its influence happily has check'd  
 The floods of vice pour'd in by ruthless war. 245

Thus have I shewn, " 'tis barbarism alone,

“ That holds the stage in slender estimation,  
 “ O'er looking all its pow'rful aids, that stand  
 “ In bright array to fight in Virtue's cause.”

When Thespis had related his sad story, 250  
 How on the stage, in cursed pantomime,  
 (That sole opprobrium of dramatic art),  
 He fell; and by the fatal accident,  
 The knee, that curious articulation,  
 Receiv'd the rude concussion; then it was 255  
 The truth of Physiognomy appear'd  
 In its full lustre: 'mongst the learned throng,  
 One he beheld, on whose sagacious brow,  
 Hope sat enthron'd, and cheering confidence:  
 “ This, this is he,” the heart of Thespis whisper'd, 260  
 “ From whom, or not at all, my cure must spring.”

At length dismiss'd to his appointed ward,  
 (His mutilated limb with anguish throbbing),

He quits, respectfully, the healing senate,  
 And seeks the destin'd place of his repose. 265

Th' Herculean task remains yet unperform'd,  
 T' ascend the lofty stairs that lead to rest:  
 This he essay'd, preceded by his guide,  
 Who, as he climbs, with painful steps and slow,  
 Signs of impatience shew'd, but none of pity: 270

Her stormy eye gave sad presage of ill  
 Yet undefin'd, and troubles to ensue.

As, in his dark descent, the Trojan chief  
 Follow'd in silence the Cumean sybil,  
 So he his grim conductress—safe at last, 275

He casts his eyes around the spacious ward,  
 And sees aloft, the highly-honour'd names  
 Of those great men, who, by the public voice,  
 Have been proclaim'd most worthy of this charge.

In arts Galenical, who has not heard 280  
 Of Daniel, and of Blacklock, Parr, and Dyer?

In skilful Surg'ry, need the world be told  
 Of Radford, and of Lushcombe, Patch and Peppin?  
 Names all, which ask not the weak aid of verse  
 To blazon forth their praises to the world: 285  
 Thousands of grateful patients can attest  
 The wond'rous cures, accomplish'd by their skill.

But Thespis had peculiar thanks to pay:  
 And first to Radford, for his kind admission,  
 When other hopes had fail'd; and soon to him, 290  
 Under whose care kind Providence had plac'd him:  
 Though all unknown his person, not his fame,  
 When he beheld, conspicuous o'er his couch,  
 The name of PATCH, fresh hopes inspir'd his soul  
 Of quick relief from pain, and final cure. 295

At length he comes, attended by a train  
 Of youths, observant of his ev'ry motion,  
 Again he sees the well-remember'd face,  
 And joys to find his heart had told him true.

And now the awful moment is arriv'd,      300  
Which must decide on all his future days.

With a mixt sense of pleasure, and of pain,  
Of hopes, and chilling fears, he sees advance  
The far-fam'd veteran : soon the limb was bared ;  
And what three grave practitioners had fail'd,      305  
In five long months of wasting pain, to find,  
His gentle hand discover'd in a moment.  
Th' important ligament was quite dissolv'd ;  
And from the lapse of time, and sad mistake,  
The irremediable deed was done,      310  
“ Beyond all surgery”.—for pity then,  
The skilful doctor for awhile was lost  
In the more noble character—the man :  
And though inur'd to sights of deepest woe,  
The starting tear proclaim'd the feeling heart :      315  
This tribute paid to sweet Humanity,  
He calls the list'ning pupilage around him,  
And in the clearest terms of art explains

The case—its nature, and that mode of cure,  
Which, if pursued, had made the suff'rer whole. 320

As in a total rout, when armies fly,  
Left by unskilful, and divided leaders,  
In sad dismay, pursued by cruel foes ;  
Hap'ly some hero of superior mind  
Arrives, and, darting his experienc'd eye 325  
Through all their files, collects the scattered bands,  
The small remains of strength, and (snatch'd from fate),  
A remnant saves, doom'd else to sure destruction.

So the good doctor issues forth his orders,  
T' assist the renovating hand of Nature, 330  
Whose plastic pow'r has fill'd the spacious earth,  
The wide-spread ocean, and the boundless air,  
With countless forms of animated life,  
All wonderful, all perfect, all divine ;  
Struck from the exemplar in th' ETERNAL MIND. 335

These orders soon obey'd, the suff'ring Thespis,  
 (Awhile regardless of surrounding scenes),  
 O'erwhelm'd with pain, fatigue, and grief of mind,  
 Exhausted—sunk into the arms of sleep. 339

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

## THE HOSPITAL.

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### CANTO SECOND.

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**A**LL night thy balmy comforts, gentle Sleep,  
 Upon the exhausted frame of suff'ring **THESPIS**  
 Were pour'd in large effusion : smiling hope,  
 With all her glitt'ring train of bright ideas,  
 And calm delights, descending on a sun-beam, 5  
 Smote on his eye-lids, and proclaim'd the morn.

Full in his view, in all its stately grandeur,  
 And venerable charms, the pride of ages,  
 Rose **Exon's** sacred pile ; the pious labour  
 Of times long past, e'en now with wonder seen. 10



Struck with the sight, his active mind contemplates  
 Th' effects of piety from age to age,  
 And finds, with pleasure, they are still the same ;  
 Though diff'ring in their modes, as seasons vary,  
 'Tis still the love of God, and love of man, 15  
 Express'd by sacrifice of worldly wealth.

When Pagan errors had o'er-spread the world,  
 From east to west, from *Indus* to the pole,  
 With superstitions impious, and absurd,  
 Mankind depriv'd, corrupted, and depress'd, 20  
 Lay prone: a wretched polytheism, worse  
 Than atheism, or was atheism disguis'd,  
 Had dimm'd the light of Nature in all hearts.  
 The Gods their fancy form'd, and fear ador'd,  
 Were cruel, spiteful, lustful, and capricious; 25  
 And to these monsters, term'd divinities,  
 Whole hecatombs of human victims bled,  
 As pride, or fear, or lust, or rage impell'd.

No wonder then, when such the deities,  
 Their wretched worshippers became like fiends, 30

'Tis true, from age to age, some Sages rose,  
 And strove to trim the dimly-burning lamp  
 Of Reason in the breast; for which their names  
 Will be immortal here, as will, in heav'n,  
 The bright reward of their sincere endeavours. 35

But the great vulgar and the small—the herd  
 Of kings and people, wallow'd in the mire  
 Of foulest vice, too horrible to name.

Then cruelty, and lust, were held divine:  
 Revenge, the noblest passion of the soul; 40  
 The very name of Charity unknown,

To remedy abuses so enormous,  
 A purer worship seem'd the one thing needful;  
 And such, in pity to mankind, was giv'n.  
 Then rose the Christian fane **TO ONE ALONE;** 45

Whose essence fills the infinite of worlds;  
 Whose nature is to bless; for GOD IS LOVE—  
 Who call him other, know not yet his name.

From admiration of this parent GOD,  
 Whose bounty shines supreme in all his works, 50  
 Some gen'rous souls, with pious energy,  
 And emulation, truly term'd divine,  
 Presum'd to imitate the SOVEREIGN GOOD,  
 By heaping blessings on their fellow creatures.  
 'Twas then the reign of charity began; 55  
 And Hospitals were rear'd to heal the sick,  
 And raise the poor man who had none to help him.  
 Amongst the rest, and of the earliest date,  
 And noblest in its kind, this mansion rose:  
 The pious neighbour of yon holy Fane 60  
 And let none think (as some have weakly done),  
 They stand in opposition:—Charity,  
 Through the prime virtue of the christian law,

Is but the daughter of Theology ;

And 'tis her highest title to be stil'd 65

“ The purest offspring of the purest faith.”

As thus he lay, absorb'd in meditation,

And pious musings on the ways of Heaven,

His tranquil soul was cheerfully resign'd

To the decrees of Providence above : 70

Whether for life, and health, and strength restor'd,

Or, what now rather seem'd inevitable,

A painful, lonesome, long decrepitude.

Say Muse, for now thy aid I most require,

To raise and dignify my song, which else, 75

(So lowly-simple is my present theme),

Must sterile prove, unworthy nicer ears ;

Assist me, whilst th' occurrences I trace,

And all th' employment of a single day

Within these walls : one single day will prove, 80

(So uniform the life that patients lead)

A faithful view of all that passes here.

As yet 'twas early dawn, and all was hush'd  
 In deepest silence: ev'n the pain-worn wretch,  
 Whose groans had echo'd through the live-long night,  
 Forgot awhile his thrilling agonies,  
 In sleep, long courted, courted long in vain.

At length, perchance, some convalescent, first,  
 Salutes his neighbour with a kind good-morrow,  
 And asks, with real solicitude, to know 90  
 How he has slept, and whether his complaints  
 Begin to yield to the physician's skill.  
 Unlike the complaisance of common life;  
 Where compliments unmeaning pass in change  
 From hand to hand, till all th' inscription's gone, 95  
 Which once they bore, and now are left quite bare.  
 For here, all hearts are soften'd by distress:

Inur'd to *suffer*, they have learnt to *feel*;  
 And pity other's sorrows as their own.

Now all arise, whose ills will *let* them rise;      100  
 And now, the sound of crutches and of staves  
 Is heard through all the ward; but not to sloth,  
 Or listless sauntering are they uprose:  
 All who can wield an instrument of labour  
 Are busily employ'd in cleanliness;      105  
 Till the whole ward, for neatness, might compare,  
 And wholesome sweetness, with a monarch's palace.  
 Meanwhile, with social chat and harmless jest,  
 They lighten labour, till the breakfast hour;  
 And many a tale of former feats is heard;      110  
 Chiefly of active strength, where the narrator  
 Is still the hero of his little story,  
 And present honour claims for past exploits—  
 Such harmless vanities possess all minds.

But most delight in super-nat'ral things;      115

Death-tokens, and departed spirits seen,  
 And awful voices heard, and judgments dire,  
 Sent down from heaven, (inverting Nature's laws)  
 Upon the heads of secret murderers.

Of these the firm belief is grafted deep 120

In uninstructed minds : they seem to give

An elevation, and a nameless grandeur,

To their grotesque ideas, though they spring

From fear alone, and sense of wrath divine.

And let not those, whom Providence has blest 125

With juster notions and sublimer views

Of the divine œconomy, despise,

But pity error, unally'd to guilt.

Next comes the harbinger of their repast,

The Nurse, who gives to each his daily bread ; 130

And never were the gifts of GOD, or man,

Distributed by more ungracious hands :

Of this hereafter ; for the bell below,

Announces breakfast : one is soon deputed

To bear it in : a frugal meal, compos'd 135

Of simple viands, wholesome, soon dispatch'd ;  
 Proportion'd only to the wants of nature.

The lame, and those too sick to leave their beds,  
 Are now attended by their happier neighbours,  
 Deferring their own meal till they are serv'd : 140

Delightful picture of humanity !

Then, Thespis, didst thou find the great reward  
 Of former temperance, in sweet content.

Hadst thou indulg'd, when fortune smil'd upon thee,  
 In the low joys of pamper'd appetite, 145

This scant, and simple fare, had prov'd insipid.

But he whose mind a kingdom is within,  
 Feels small solicitude for ought beside.

As he, with thankful heart, enjoyed his meal,  
 Reflections, such as these, his mind employ'd : 150

“ Sure happiness is dealt with ev'ner hand,

“ Than proud Prosperity could e'er conceive.

“ No doubt the peasant tastes more heart-felt joy,

“ More thrilling raptures, the first time he hears

“ His infant call him by the name of father, 155



“ Than ever king does, when he mounts his throne,  
 “ Or hears his conq’ring arms have gain’d a field,  
 “ That adds to his dominions half the globe—  
 “ Or than the brightest genius ever feels,  
 “ When first his master-work is crown’d with glory. 160

“ Exalted station has peculiar woes,  
 “ Which oft depress the mercury of life,  
 “ Sadly below the point that marks fair weather.  
 “ Connubial bliss is oft more truly felt  
 “ In the low cot, than in the princely palace. 165  
 “ And though, I grant, ’tis wretched vanity,  
 “ In men like me, to quit their humble sphere,  
 “ And mix in matters of concernment high ;  
 “ Yet when, from motives of state policy,  
 “ God’s laws, and man’s, are made to disagree, 170  
 “ I, who had Nature’s leave to choose my mate,  
 “ Pity the royal victims from my soul.”

Now sounds a bell they least desire to hear,

Which calls the most restor'd, from ev'ry ward,  
 To the performance of their daily task ; 175  
 But all obey, and some the pestle ply,  
 And some the pump, as each have been allotted.  
 Some, highly favour'd have permission giv'n,  
 To visit their acquaintance in the city.  
 Ah ! then beware ye thoughtless—let not friends, 180  
 Though in their kindness, tempt you to indulge,  
 Beyond the bounds of strict sobriety.  
 Let not your joy of half-recovered strength  
 Defeat the means which have been us'd to save you.  
 Think on the tortures you have undergone ; 185  
 Your dreadful state, when first you were admitted,  
 Too often caus'd by similar indulgence ;  
 At least in some : ah ! shun the proffer'd cup,  
 And dash th' untasted liquor from your lips :  
 Preserve the share of health you have acquired, 190  
 Which not long since you would have bought with  
 worlds,  
 Had worlds been yours, & thought the purchase cheap.

The greater part of those that now remain,  
 Must there remain, tho' flames should burst their way,  
 And wrap the ward in total conflagration. 195  
 Of these some groan, some weep, some sigh, some talk,  
 As deep or slight the shafts of sorrow drive.  
 Some read, some spell, as more, or less, instructed ;  
 Some muse, some tell their dreams, and all are struck,  
 To find their neighbours' dreams so like their own. 200  
 For here, a strange phœnomenon appears :  
 The dreams of cripples, for the greater part,  
 All turn on this, that suddenly they find  
 Their nerves restor'd to action, and they bound  
 O'er hill and dale, as in their happier days. 205  
 But ah ! the grief of heart, when they awake !  
 To find their limbs still fail to lend their aid !  
 Stung with the disappointment, all aghast,  
 Hopeless they sink, in bitt'rest sorrow drown'd.

One of the dreams, which most attention claim'd, 210  
 Was by a gallant veteran related.

Full opposite the couch, where Thespis lay,  
 The hardy seaman stretch'd his batter'd frame,  
 Which oft had brav'd the fearfulest extremes,  
 That winds, and waves, & deadliest foes could threaten.  
 In private warfare 'gainst the public foe,  
 In hottest fight, an envious ball had struck him,  
 Just in that fatal part where Thespis suffer'd.  
 Unhappy state of privateers ! depriv'd  
 Of that relief the public warrior claims ;                    220  
 Without resource, in bitt'rest agony,  
 He languish'd, till kind Fortune plac'd him here.

“ Now hear my dream, (he cry'd) and if you can,  
 “ Interpret for me, what it may portend.  
 “ Methought, in former dreams I oft had seen                    125  
 “ A sword of that uncommon form and sharpness,  
 “ Beyond the razor's edge, that wheresoe'er  
 “ It slightly touch'd, it still would force its way  
 “ Through all th' impediments, that knotted oak  
 “ Or hardest steel could e'er oppose against it.                    230

- “ O ! then, I cry’d, had such a noble weapon  
 “ Been in my grasp, when boarding the *Tonnant*,  
 “ How I had strew’d the decks with slaughter’d foes,  
 “ Methought I then awoke, and, though in pain,  
 “ From my late wound, I wander’d through the city  
 “ And saw, expos’d for sale, the very sword  
 “ My dreams had shewn me : soon I made the purchase,  
 “ And suddenly I found myself alone,  
 “ On the wild sea-beach ; when methought a band  
 “ Of armed foes came suddenly to land. 240  
 “ It chanc’d the much-lov’d monarch of these realms,  
 “ With his attendants, to enjoy the breeze  
 “ Had bent their steps towards the craggy cliffs,  
 “ That skirt the winding shore : with horrid shouts,  
 “ The enemy attack’d the royal party. 245  
 “ The fight grew hot, and much I did lament,  
 “ The distance, and my wounds prevented me  
 “ From soon arriving at the scene of action.  
 “ At length I reach’d them ; but the loyal train,  
 “ Though by the valour of their king inspir’d, 250

- “ By dint of numbers had been overpower’d,  
 “ And all had bravely fought, and bravely fell.  
 “ Whether captivity or death was meant,  
 “ I knew not, but they bore the royal prize,  
 “ In triumph to their boat. Beyond all bounds, 255  
 “ My fury then arose.—I grasp’d my sword,  
 “ And rush’d amongst the thickest of the foes.  
 “ Where’er my whirling steel but touch’d, they fell,  
 “ The life-blood issuing from each gaping wound,  
 “ Till all were slain: but soon my victory 260  
 “ Was follow’d by a wonder greater still.  
 “ Whether my ardour had new-strung my nerves,  
 “ Or the swift motion of my limbs had push’d  
 “ The dislocated bone into its seat,  
 “ I knew not; but as swift as lightnings shoot, 265  
 “ I found at once, my former strength renew’d:  
 “ And though all cover’d with the reeking gore,  
 “ I rais’d the wounded monarch from the ground,  
 “ And there supported; till a gallant troop  
 “ Of horsemen, who had been in haste appriz’d 270

“ Of their lov'd master's danger, came to aid him.  
 “ Their care had brought the royal chariot too ;  
 “ Where, with distinguish'd honor, I was plac'd  
 “ Beside my sovereign, at his own command ;  
 “ And in this state, amidst th' applauding shouts, 275  
 “ And almost mad rejoicings of the people,  
 “ We reach'd the town :—the universal burst  
 “ Of gratitude to heav'n and praise to me,  
 “ Its chosen instrument to save their King,  
 “ Struck on mine ear too loudly for repose ; 280  
 “ And 'midst the glad confusion I awoke.”

This sailor's wildly-warring in his dreams,  
 To the quick-glancing thought alone of Thespis,  
 But prov'd his courage and his loyalty :  
 The rest, in dark conjectures, and the maze 285  
 Of vain interpretations, found no end.

Thus they with friendly converse soothe their pains ;  
 Thus innocently pass their hours away ;

Thus free from cares, and all their wants supply'd,  
 And most in cheering hopes of speedy cure, 290  
 Their happy state, in intervals of ease,  
 Might be compar'd (if not the thought too bold),  
 To those blest scenes the pious hope hereafter :  
 Where the celestials, on their golden beds,  
 In full content, partake immortal joy, 295  
 And, giving and receiving, bliss increase.

And now the Master pays his morning visit,  
 Through every ward, t' enquire, the state of each ;  
 To learn their wants ; to know if ought amiss  
 Demands redress ; if well administer'd 300  
 The remedies to each complaint prescrib'd ;  
 To cheer the sad ; to chide the querulous ;  
 The careless warn ; th' irregular reprove ;  
 And wholesome counsel kindly give to all.

This duty done, he silently retires ; 305  
 And ev'ry Patient busily prepares



To meet the most important scene of all :  
 The scene, for which this ample theatre,  
 This temple, sacred to the pow'rs of healing,  
 Was rais'd, endow'd, supported, and thrown open, 310  
*“ The daily visit of the prime physicians,  
 And still more awful presence of the surgeons.”*  
 At the fix'd hour, each cripple ready lays  
 His wounds all bare ; those who are able haste,  
 And stand before their own peculiar beds, 315  
 Like statues rang'd ; and now the whole presents  
 A just resemblance of that ancient fane,  
 Where rest the ashes of th' illustrious dead ;  
 And each appears a marble monument ;  
 The lame recumbent, and the sick erect : 320  
 Thus wait they all, in solemn silence hush'd.

And now the sound of clatt'ring feet proclaims  
 Th' assistants near ; the sprightly harbingers  
 Of their grave principal's approach. All these  
 Are well instructed to bind up the wound, 325

**T'** apply, with neat address and lenient hand,  
 The caustic sharp and healing cataplasm :  
 To ply the lancet, and the searching probe,  
 And all the small minutiae of the art.  
 But some are skill'd beyond these rudiments,      330  
 And early tokens give of future greatness :  
 Such well might claim the *Poet's* celebration,  
 Were he inclin'd to pass for *Prophet* too.

And now the venerable train appears,  
 And each directed by his name aloft,      335  
 Finds his own patient.—But the *Muse* recoils  
 To paint the reeking wounds, the tumours vast,  
 Surcharg'd with long-collected humours dire,  
 The limb distorted, and the fractur'd bone,  
 The livid flesh, and all the num'rous ills      340  
 That happier mortals never can conceive.

All these with patient firmness, gained by habit,  
 Are carefully examin'd on the spot,

And lesser operations are performed.  
 The more important are awhile reserv'd, 345  
 Till (out of hearing of the timid patient)  
 Haply a consultation is appointed ;  
 Where, after full deliberation had,  
 It is decreed, th' excruciating stone  
 T' extract by deep incision, or the limb, 350  
 The life to save, to take by amputation ;  
 Which, when resolv'd on, th' unhappy man,  
 (His own consent first gain'd,) is then remov'd  
 To a remote apartment, far from noise,  
 Which might distract him in his sad affliction ; 355  
 Where now he is attended all alone.

But these are solemn and unfrequent acts ;  
 Return we then, into the public ward,  
 Where Thespis, in his turn was visited.  
 Alas ! no present help his case admits : 360  
 The candid doctor solely recommends  
 Patience and resignation, to await

Th' effects the lenient hand of time produces.  
 But not the less his gratitude was due,  
 Or felt, for all th' attention he receiv'd. 365

This awful business ended, the good doctors  
 (Their charitable visit paid) retire  
 To wealthier patients, where 'tis hop'd they meet  
 That due reward, which they expect not here.

Now comes the dinner, serv'd in homely guise, 370  
 And slender, as their sev'ral states require.  
 The most have "Common Diet," once nam'd "Low;"  
 And some are favour'd with a double portion :  
 "Full Diet," to repair their wasted strength.

A few (so weak and desperate their state,) 375  
 Are to their primal aliment reduc'd :  
 Milk their sole bev'rage, milk their only food.  
 But none of this is by capricious pow'r  
 Adjudg'd, but as wise doctors have prescrib'd.

Now comes the hour, which oft more comfort brings

To the lone wretch, than choicest viands give,  
 Or cordials rich—the cordial of a friend !  
 This is the hour, to visitors permitted,  
 To see their suff'ring friends and kindred dear :  
 To hear their converse, to enquire their health ; 385  
 If hopes may be indulg'd of their return,  
 With speed, to their accustom'd avocations,  
 Long intermitted, thence to thought more dear.  
 But not to Thespis comes this welcome hour :  
 His only friend, by sickness is confin'd ; 390  
 Sickness, perhaps, by friendly zeal incurr'd.  
 He mourns his absence much, but more th' occasion :  
 But one, one only being near, with whom  
 He might have interchang'd ideas sweet !  
 And he, by cruel stroke of fate, is absent ! 395  
 Hard lot of strangers ! Then had Thespis envy'd,  
 (Could envy e'er have harbour'd in his breast)  
 The kind endearments and the mutual joys,  
 Before his eyes, of friend by friend embrac'd ;  
 But far his gentle nature from such thoughts— 400

His *own* abridg'd, he finds reflected pleasure  
 In *others'* happiness, and shares their bliss.

Hark! a loud voice resounds through ev'ry ward,  
 And warns all strangers to depart with speed.  
 Reluctant, torn from all her soul holds dear, 405  
 The *wife* her much-lov'd husband must forsake:  
 With clay-cold heart, she seeks her widow'd home,  
 And tender infants, wan with piteous pining,  
 And well-nigh fatherless—but cease, poor mourner,  
 Thy husband lives, and lives the care of Heav'n 410  
 And of his fellow-man, and soon with joy  
 May visit his lov'd mansion once again.

The *mother*, leaves her darling son behind,  
 Whilst her sad fears still magnify his danger.  
 The *sister*, her dear brother—*friends* divide— 415  
 And some alas! shall never meet again.

Another slight repast; then all prepare

For sleep, the grand restorative of health ;  
 Ordain'd, by heavenly mechanism, to wind  
 The springs of life and all its movements up. 420

Four hours e'er midnight, is the time appointed,  
 For all, in every ward, to seek repose.  
 Here, as in all the rest, with friendly aid,  
 The strong assist the weak, make soft their beds,  
 And smooth officiously the sick man's pillow. 425

Now awful night, in sable clouds descending  
 O'er sea and land, veils up the fires of heav'n.  
 Embower'd in darkness, some to friendly talk  
 Address themselves ; to meditation some ;  
 And some, as Nature bids, to soft repose. 430

What then, O ! Thespis, were thy contemplations ?  
 Say *Muse*, for thou canst tell : through thickest gloom  
 Thy pow'r can pierce, and inmost thoughts reveal.  
 Thus then, surrounded by the shades of night,  
 He pour'd his plaints on Fancy's list'ning ear. 435

O ! fate, or fortune, or divine decree !

How heavy has thy hand been laid upon me !

Already thrice three times its force I've felt ;

The tenth transfix'd me, ne'er to rise again.

Almost the number of thy *fabled* labours, 440

Alcides ! have my *real* suff'rings been ;

And each has prov'd a blow, might well subdue

The stoutest nature and the firmest heart.

How then shall I sustain, that am but weak,

The double force of accident and age ? 445

O yes ! I feel the hand that gave the blow,

(Like that fam'd spear which Painim bards have sung)

Has brought the balsam too—divine *Content*,

And ever-smiling *Patience*, pour their balms :

My heart is heal'd, and I complain no more. 450

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.



THE HOSPITAL

CIVIL WARD

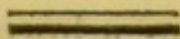
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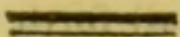
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## THE HOSPITAL.



### *CANTO THIRD.*



**A**S the tir'd Traveller in regions drear,  
 O'er-spread with difficult and dang'rous paths,  
 Through which he needs must pass to find repose,  
 Inly rejoices, that he has surmounted  
 So large a portion of his destin'd toil, 5  
 And fondly hopes, his journey all to come  
 Will more delightful prove, at least less irksome ;  
 Sudden, th' impetuous hurricane descends ;  
 The sky is darken'd ; thunder rends the air,  
 And shakes the solid ground ; on every side, 10  
 He sees, aghast, the frightful precipice ;  
 The pitfall fathomless ; and plung'd, at length,

In total darkness, dreadful shapes present  
 To his bewilder'd fancy : horrid gulphs,  
 On gulphs more horrid, op'ning without end ; 15  
 And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep,  
 On his appall'd imagination, yawns.

O ! then behoves to call forth all his pow'rs ;  
 To strain each nerve, and ev'ry faculty  
 Of mind and body summon to his aid, 20  
 That now he sink not overpower'd, and lost.

So I, my melancholy theme pursuing,  
 Would fain, at length repose my wearied fancy,  
 On more delightful scenes ; but awful Truth,  
 With voice severe, forbids, and deeper horrors 25  
 And blacker shades of woe presents before me :  
 Such woe, as baffles all th' attempts of Fancy,  
 Or Poesy, though eagle-wing'd, to reach.

O Pain ! thou worst of evils here below !

(Whate'er the boastful Stoics have pretended) 30

Thy strange mysterious pow'r has never yet,

In strains proportion'd to the argument,

Been sung by ancient or by modern bard.

Who shall describe, or who, that has not heard,

Conceive the cries of yon' poor suff'ring wretch, 35

Whose tortures seem each moment to increase:

In ev'ry vary'd tone that pain e'er wrung

From human organs, he confounds the senses,

And utters cries, till even Pity's self,

Herself now pitying, stops her tortur'd ear, 40

And lies in silent horror. O! th' extremes

Of agony! when others, ev'n in pangs,

Suppress as by consent their own complaints,

And their involuntary pray'rs prefer

To Heav'n, for mercy on their tortur'd brother! 45

But not unheard his cries, nor unattended,

Nor unredress'd, as far as human pow'r

Can give redress to tortures so immense :  
 Rous'd from his bed, the master kindly strives  
 With opiates to administer relief, 50  
 Or whatsoever else has been invented  
 By learn'd Philanthropy to soften pain.  
 With frantic haste he drinks the healing draught—  
 Regardless whether life or death th' event,  
 So it release him from his mighty woes. 55

O, blest narcotic ! sovereign remedy !  
 Thou richest gift that heaven e'er sent down  
 In pity to th' afflicted sons of men !  
 Already has thy pleasing torpor spread  
 Through all his frame, and now rejoic'd they hear 60  
 His frightful and half-execratiuous screams  
 All chang'd to mutter'd thanks, for ease restor'd,  
 And gratitude to him who wrought the change :  
 And never were the strains of eloquence  
 Heard with more pleasure by admiring senates, 65

Than now they hear the incoherent talk,  
 And murmur'd nothings, which proclaim th' approach  
 Of sleep, the comforter, the friend of man.

*His* leaden sceptre now is wav'd o'er all,  
 O'er all his mild dominion now extends;                   70  
 When lo! a sudden tumult, heard below,  
 Disturbs, with rude revolt, his peaceful reign:  
 All start amaz'd, save only the poor wretch  
 So lately rescu'd from affliction's gripe—  
 “An accident! an accident!” resounds                   75  
 Through all the pile, “An accident!” repeats  
 Each waken'd patient—straight th' unhappy man  
 Supported by his sorrowing friends appears.

Alas! th' unequal lot of human life!  
 Alas! what dangers wait on poverty!                   80  
 This poor man, destin'd to the builder's calling,  
 Besides enduring summer's scorching heats  
 And winter's piercing cold, with constant toil,

Is, from the nature of his calling still  
 In hourly danger too. In haste descending, 85  
 To leave the labours of his lofty station,  
 And taste the comforts of his cheerful home,  
 On the frail ladder's topmost round he steps;  
 His footing fails him, and with hideous crash  
 Headlong he falls, a senseless weight to earth. 90  
 The frighten'd crowd, with trembling haste surround  
 him,  
 And strive, with feeble art, to lend him aid.  
 Alas! too plain th' enormous wound appears:  
 The skull, deep-gash'd, leaves little room for hope.  
 Cover'd with blood, and senseless quite, they bear him  
 To the near cottage, but no help is near.  
 Far from the city; what was to be done?  
 Where fly for succour, where no surgeons practise?  
 The wisest counsel they adopt at once:  
 They lay him on the car, and hither bear him, 100  
 To this blest house, whose doors stand ever open,  
 T' admit and cherish all of woman born,

The servants all are rous'd; with breathless haste  
 Fly the swift messengers; the well-known bell\*  
 With loud alarm is rung, denouncing danger. 105  
 Th' alert assistant, when his weekly round  
 Of duty calls, like sentinels in war,  
 Each night in awful preparation lies,  
 And in each passing footstep fears a summons.  
 The world 's an army vast, in battle rang'd, 110  
 An hospital the fearful forlorn hope:  
 There, on the edge of peril, man resists,  
 And oft successfully, his mortal foe.  
 In matters of small moment, oft suffices  
 The Tyro, without further aid t' attend; 115  
 Not so in cases desperate, as this  
 Behoves them now to call the principal,  
 He rises quick, and seizing on his arms  
 Meet for th' occasion seeks the post of danger.

\* At the Surgeon's house.



Meanwhile the master, vigilant, prepares 120  
 The couch, drawn forth into the midst, that those  
 Whose aid is needed may surround the patient  
 And all in silence wait their chief's arrival.

He comes! and terror seems to fly before him.  
 He comes! and with him comes returning hope. 125  
 But ah! the dreadful operation follows:  
 The wound, wide gaping, is made wider still,  
 And instruments of keenest search apply'd.  
 The sense, by strength of pain, till now subdu'd,  
 By fiercer pain is now again awaken'd. 130  
 O! then, the shrieks unutterable—no,  
 Let shudd'ring silence only speak the rest.

The dreadful fracture found, with utmost art,  
 Beyond the poet's skill to celebrate,  
 Is now reduc'd; then bound with nicest care: 135

A supernumerary watch appointed;

And all besides, dismiss'd to seek repose.

But sleep now banish'd from the eyes of Thespis,

Reflections various as the various scenes

Which had in swift succession past before him, 140

Now crowd into his mind: but chief the last—

On this his thoughts revolving, thus broke forth:

“Blest Institution! as in all the rest,

“So most in this—*the cure of accidents!*

“Next to prevention is an early care, 145

“And prompt access to skill, and due attention.

“O! had it been my lot to have apply'd,

“Ere time each fatal symptom had confirm'd,

“What shoals of sorrow had I then escap'd!”

Thus Nature prompted, and one mournful sigh 150

His bosom heav'd, though Patience harbour'd there.

Thus past his days away, and thus his nights,  
 (Save that, through Heav'n's indulgence, scenes so sad,  
 So full of horror as the last, were rare),  
 For nine long weeks ; but smiling hope was fled, 155  
 And from his pain no respite Thespis knew,  
 This only consolation sooth'd his mind,  
 That Providence had giv'n him to the care  
 Of one, whose kindness and abilities,  
 Had cure been possible, must have perform'd it. 160  
 Th' impartial Muse must now, with deep regret,  
 Unfold a cause, perhaps the only cause,  
 Of just complaint e'er found within these walls,  
 But justice bids, and pity for th' oppress'd.

Thespis had long observ'd with deep concern, 165  
 The woes unfeeling nurses may inflict,  
 Unknown to their superiors, on the wretched ;  
 And had resolv'd, by gen'rous zeal inspir'd,  
 And duty prompted, to attempt redress.

A custom, (and 'tis sure the most humane 170  
 That charity could dictate) is observ'd,  
 That some select subscribers should attend  
 And visit, unawares, each sep'rate ward,  
 To learn from their own lips, if ev'ry patient  
 Be well or ill attended; these enquiries 175  
 Extend to each, the most minute regard,  
 From the prime doctor to the lowest nurse.  
 But yet, these visits have not all th' effect  
 The gen'rous patrons wish; for gratitude  
 And awe will often check the just complaint 180  
 From the full heart fast rising to the lip.  
 This Thespis knew—this awe, this gratitude  
 He strongly felt, but felt his duty stronger:  
 And thus, in modest speech, his answer made:

" Words cannot speak the gratitude I feel 185  
 " For all the comforts I have here receiv'd.  
 " My heart is warm'd, whene'er I have reflected  
 " On all the benefits the poor enjoy

- “ From this most sacred, best of Charities.  
 “ But, ah! it is the universal lot, 190  
 “ Which still attends all human institutions,  
 “ To be abused, corrupted, and depraved,  
 “ By those appointed their administrators.  
 “ What feeling heart but swells with indignation,  
 “ To see yon Fury in a human shape 195  
 “ Insult poor wretches she was plac'd to cheer,  
 “ And sharpen sorrows she was bound to succour.  
 “ Her, not the tend'rest weakness e'er could move,  
 “ Or lowliest humility assuage,  
 “ Or the most strict propriety content: 200  
 “ Nay, such the cruel nature of this pest,  
 “ 'Tis scarcely hyperbolical to say,  
 “ Her tongue kills more than ablest doctors cure.  
  
 “ O! could the blest supporters of this house  
 “ But see these evils in their full extent, 205  
 “ The sight would move the *tender* hearts to pity,  
 “ And stimulate the *active* to redress them.

“ See yon poor wretch, o'erwhelm'd by dire disease,  
 “ And long experience of the world's indifference,  
 “ Or worse, its cruelty—his last resource 210  
 “ Is in this mansion—here he hopes to find,  
 “ At least, alleviation of his woes :  
 “ He knows his gen'rous patrons have provided  
 “ One of the gentler sex, in ev'ry ward,  
 “ To be his more immediate consolation : 215  
 “ How great his disappointment and dismay,  
 “ When, for the comfort which he hop'd to meet,  
 “ He finds, or thinks he finds, the world all bad !  
 “ Alike inimical to poverty !  
 “ Then sinks life's wav'ring balance, hope expires— 220  
 “ Struck to the heart—he dies in deep despair.

“ It is inherent in the human mind,  
 “ To spurn at evils caus'd by wilfulness,  
 “ (Therefore I fall thus early to complaining)  
 “ The strokes of heav'n are easy to be borne. 225  
 “ There is a holy pleasure in submitting

“ To his decrees, who has created us,

“ No doubt, for final happiness, unless

“ By our own faults we forfeit his high favour.

“ But when base man, by vicious passions driven 230

“ Injures his fellow creatures; injures those

“ Who ne'er offended him, or wish'd t' offend,

“ 'Tis the severest trial of our patience,

“ And he who bears it best deserves it least.”

Now comes the day when Thespis must depart: 235

His own desire and the good doctor's judgment

Concurring both to leave the rest to time.

Time, that can all but miracles perform,

That strikes vast empires from their deep foundations;

The lofty levels, and exalts the low; 240

Whose pow'r, omnipotent on earth, delights

As well to raise new wonders as destroy,

That often heals, where utmost art despairs,

And strikes no less with wonder than with joy.

All that the most consummate skill could do, 245

Already had been done, and done in vain ;  
 Why then delay ? Though helpless in th' extreme,  
 By kind assistance from his weak associates  
 He now prepares to visit his lov'd home.  
 His home though temporary, still is dear, 250  
 And dear the welcome that shall meet him there,  
 Though mixt with sorrow for his hopeless state.

Design'd by Providence for social bliss,  
 The mind of man, how wonderfully fram'd,  
 And fitted to enjoy this feast of nature ! 255  
 If for a few short days, together pent  
 in the same vehicle, souls sometimes mix  
 With souls, till both are quite averse to part ;  
 How much more closely drawn did Thespis feel  
 This mortal tie, for nine long weeks immur'd 260  
 In one apartment, not a moment absent  
 From these his dear companions in affliction.

Join'd in one common mis'ry, grief attracts  
 By stronger bonds than pleasure ever knew ;



The bonds of pity ! What though diff'rent far 265

The scenes each diff'rent man is doom'd to act ;

The play of life is still the same to all,

And still the same its most essential duties ;

The same its natural wants, the same its end.

Fill'd with these genuine, best of human feelings,

This wide philanthropy, embracing all,

His heart expanding rises to his lips,

And thus, in tender accents, he bespeaks them :

“ My dear companions, partners in mischance,

“ Brothers by nature, by affliction friends, 275

“ And dearer grown by mutual acts of kindness,

“ Full many a day, together we have past

“ In friendly intercourse, not uninstrucive ;

“ Where I've endeavour'd, and I hope not vainly,

“ To merit and to gain your approbation. 280

“ Your kind assistance in my weak condition,

“ Has often fill'd my heart with gratitude ;

“ And such return as I had pow'r to make

“ I still have made, and made it cheerfully.  
 “ My hands, my eyes, my thoughts have been employ'd  
 “ To aid your correspondence with your friends,  
 “ T' explain to them your wants and speak your love :  
 “ I know your kind concern will follow me,  
 “ And earnest prayers for my restoration.  
 “ If, while from petty tyranny you suffer'd, 290  
 “ I have endeavour'd to amend your state,  
 “ Think not I ran imprudent risk to serve you ;  
 “ I knew the gen'rous wishes of your patrons  
 “ Were for your welfare, and my heart (I trust  
 “ Not uncongenial with their noble natures) 295  
 “ With ardour urg'd me to attempt your rescue :  
 “ Either the object of your just complaints  
 “ Will be *remov'd*, or, (rather to be wish'd)  
 “ Through fear, remorse, or policy *reform'd* ;  
 “ In either case, shall future patients bless me. 300  
 “ How many of you I congratulate,  
 “ That your diseases, or decrepitude,  
 “ By means of this blest Charity are heal'd,  
 “ And you will go rejoicing to your homes.

“ You that remain endue your hearts with patience, 305

“ That panoply divine, and trust in God ;

“ Who, in his own good time, will give you ease,

“ Or take you to himself.—And now farewell,

“ May blessings here and ever still await you.”

He ended, and departing dropt a tear ; 310

A mingled tear of tenderness and pain.

Pity for others, sorrow for himself,

Possess'd his mind : and now the dread descent,

A frightful task appear'd, beyond his pow'rs—

Thus on the margin of his downy nest, 315

The half-plum'd bird, with trembling pinions stands,

Fearful to trust his sinews, yet untry'd,

To the thin substance of the yielding air.

So he, but far more conscious of his weakness,

Shrinks at the sad reality of danger. 320

At length with clinging hands and steps suspended,

And after many a painful pause between,

He gains the lowest floor : the weekly summons,

“ Continue or discharge,” sounds in his ears ;

And now another awful scene presents : 325

A mournful number of fresh applicants

Throng all the avenues for sad admission.

Then might you see Grief's empire ; her pale flag

The gloomy goddess waves aloft o'er all :

On every face her sad impress is seen 330

In various forms emblazon'd : the swoln hydrofy,

The panting asthma, the corroding cancer,

And the dire pest, the Muse abhors to sing.

All these and more now crowd her dismal courts,

And nought is heard but sighs and lamentations. 335

But near them, a far other court, throws wide

Its gracious doors, far other pow'rs preside :

The pow'rs of Pity and Humanity.

In full divan the godlike heroes sit,

Their standard rear'd to combat grief and pain, 340

And put to flight the num'rous ills of life.

This holy court presents a spectacle,

Angels lean down from Heav'n well pleas'd to see ;

And more than angels shall with glory crown.

First, as befits their prudence and compassion, 345  
 The recent candidates are introduc'd,  
 Whose sev'ral cases, (previously examin'd)  
 Had by the faculty, apart, been deem'd  
 Most proper to receive this benefit.  
 These, all at once, are tenderly admonish'd, 350  
 And to immediate care are now dismiss'd,  
 With gracious wishes for their restoration.

Now comes the last and most delightful scene,  
 To see the fruits of their benevolence  
 Display'd before their eyes, in those recover'd; 355  
 To hear their blessings and receive their thanks;  
 The sweet and just reward of all their goodness.

Amongst this happy throng poor Thespis came,  
 With heart as grateful as the happiest there.  
 Was it in fancy, or reality? 360  
 Or did his grateful mind infuse the thought?  
 A heav'nly fragrance seem'd to fill the air;  
 A heav'nly smile appear'd on every face

Of this august and truly great assembly :

His heart was wrapt in reverential love 365

And silent awe—at length the moment came

When all expected he should silence break,

And thus with modest diffidence he spake:—

“ When I reflect on all I have beheld,

“ On all I have experienc'd in this mansion, 370

“ When I survey the heart-affecting sight,

“ Which now presents itself before mine eyes,

“ These, the restor'd, and you their blest restorers,

“ My heart, o'erwhelm'd, becomes too full for praise ;

“ And praise, if I could utter, were presumptuous, 375

“ Where thanks and blessings only should be pour'd.

“ That I am thankful for the kindness shewn me,

“ Witness these tears which flow not now for grief,

“ Or disappointment at my loss of hope :

“ My heart has long been satisfy'd in this, 380

“ 'Tis not in Science to avert my fate,

“ Else had I found my restoration here.

“ O ! grant indulgence then to one short pray'r :

“ That all the blessings which you daily heap  
 “ On suff’ring indigence, may on yourselves 385  
 “ And on your happy families be pour’d  
 “ In large abundance; may those dreadful evils,  
 “ From which you save your helpless fellow-creatures,  
 “ Be far from you and from your habitations.  
 “ Where-e’er I languish, or whate’er my fate, 390  
 “ This still shall be my pray’r: long may you live  
 “ To serve at once your Country and your GOD,  
 “ And when late time shall call you to your rest,  
 “ May bliss eternal be your great reward.”

He ceas’d, and bending took his final leave, 395  
 And now his long and fearful journey home  
 Fill’d all his thoughts—whilst anguish shook his frame.  
 But he had learnt with calmness to submit  
 To the harsh laws of stern Necessity,  
 And thus he took his melancholy way; 400  
 Patience and Resignation his companions,  
 His cordial Hope, and Providence his guide.

