

An answer to the verses lately published by William Smith, in regard to the raising of the dead / [Bruinowsky].

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AN
ANSWER TO THE VERSES,

LATELY PUBLISHED

BY WILLIAM SMITH,

In regard to the Raising of the Dead ;

WITH

Some other Reflections suggested thereby.

“ For sense he little owes to frugal heaven ;
To please the Mob he vends the little given.”

“ My Son, these maxims mak’ a rule,
And lump them aye thegither ;
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither.”

BURNS’ Translation of Solomon’s Proverbs.

1.

WHAT would this carping Beggar have,
That stuns our ears with such a din ;
And craves a penny from the grave,
That he his hireling lay may sing ?

2.

For this—he rails, with hacknied sighs,
’Gainst those that stroll at peace of night :
For this—he bids the dead to rise,
And scatter all in shameful flight.

2

3.

But does he think the dead will hear?
Or does he think they will complain?
Or will the shade of Haller e'er,
Or Winslow's, listen to his strain?

4.

Immortal men! you well did know,
When Galen's art was rude and green,
That not a step could science go,
Unless the subject dead was seen.

5.

Nor, Harvey, you such wonders wrought,
And thrown such light on vital laws;
Resolved what thousands long had sought,
And clearly pointed out the cause.

6.

You ne'er had those great truths reveal'd,
That wondering ages since have known;
That long had lain so deep conceal'd,
And 'scaped the ken of ages gone.

7.

Unless you, with unwearied toil,
Had viewed the human frame divine;
And labour'd at the midnight oil,
And scann'd those wondrous truths sublime.

8.

No science yet was ever taught,
Or simple truth itself was shown ;
No man for knowledge yet was fraught,
Unless his subject well had known :

9.

Unless he once had studied well,
And day and night with learning fared ;
And could at last, with clearness, tell
What part with part in nature shared.

10.

Was ever famous temple rear'd
By him unskill'd in mason's lore ;
Unless he first had seen and heard,
And piece by piece had studied o'er ?

11.

Or was a watch yet ever made,
By rude and rustic hands, so well
As him who once had learned the trade,
And all its various parts could tell ?

12.

And shall the surgeon's nicer art
By stealth and simple prints be known ?
And can he learn its every part,
Unless the ground-work clear be shown ?

13.

And can he prove the soldier's friend,
 When he, alas ! is levelled low ;
 And can he that assistance lend,
 Which he had never to bestow ?

14.

And can he save the warrior's breath,
 When wounded by a foeman's brand ?
 And can he soothe the pangs of death,
 When weltering on a foreign strand ?

15.

And can he racking pain assuage ?
 Or save the fair in hapless hour ?
 Or crush the fever in its rage,
 And wrest from it its venom'd power ?

16.

Or can he dire contagion seize,
 And check its influence spreading wide ?
 Or give his friends a moment's ease,
 Tho' dying round him, side by side ?

17.

Unless he has foundation laid,
 And well, in youth, has knowledge stor'd ;
 Unless he has attention paid,
 And nature's various paths explor'd :

18.

Unless he's heard, and felt, and seen,
 And view'd his subject o'er and o'er ;
 And long has studied nature keen,
 And catch'd at truth still more and more.—

19.

O! I do feel, and weep, and cry,
 To think Edina's wide renown
 Will soon, from guarded strictness, die,
 And superstition's baneful frown.

20.

It was not thus in olden time,
 When Drummond good high office bore ;
 He, foremost, led the lengthen'd line,
 And came to hear scholastic lore :

21.

And mutely stood, and listen'd by,
 And saw deep College-truth unfurl'd,
 And gave his mighty sanction high ;
 And with its fame then fill'd the world.

22.

Not so like those in these our days,
 That heedless pass our sacred walls ;
 And careless whether shame or praise,
 Or wither'd fame to learning falls.

23.

Is't all alike, when once you wear
 Those robes that speak the guardians true?
 Is't all alike, how false the glare,
 Or friendless science struggles thro'?

24.

O, could you just but wear those weeds
 That once your fost'ring fathers wore:
 And could you just but do those deeds,
 Those things, they practis'd long before!

25.

It sure was wrong—it was to blame—
 When last you that commission gave,
 “Go watch the ways, and guard the lane,
 “Let science no assistance have*.”

26.

And how is science to be learn'd?
 And what can he, the student, know?
 And where has he that knowledge earn'd,
 When call'd upon, his skill to show?

* Alluding to the extraordinary Police that was lately established in Surgeons' Square, and neighbourhood, for the purpose of examining and detecting every thing suspicious that might be carried into the Anatomical Theatres.

27.

Edina, weep ! hang low thy head !
 For now thy great and wide renown,
 Is like a vision'd phantom fled,
 Or war-struck castle mould'ring down.

28.

And are there none will prove thy friend ?
 And are there none will save thy name ?
 And are there none will thee defend,
 And rescue still thy dying fame ?

29.

Yes ! there are some, for strength of soul,
 That long on wing will proudly soar ;
 Shall waft thy fame from pole to pole,
 And ages wonder at their lore.

30.

O, Gregory ! those lasting bays
 Sit sweetly on thy laurell'd brows ;
 And list'ning crowds award the praise,
 What merit justly due bestows.

31.

And Thomson's wide and letter'd name,
 For sense acute, and language strong :
 And Barclay's great and learned fame,
 Will bear their tide of strength along.—

32.

But hard 'twould be to mark the line,
 Where every one would rank so high ;
 'Tis not for me to place the sign,
 Or draw them with a painter's eye.

33.

It was not thus that I begun
 To rouse me in poetic fire :
 It was to quash the ruin done,
 And strike to death a Cobbler's ire.

BRUINOWSKY.