

HEALTH.

A POEM.

BY DR. COYTON.



“ O Health!

“ Without thy chearful active energy

“ No rapture swells the breast, no Poet sings,

“ No more the maids of Helicon delight.

“ Come then with me, O Goddess, heavenly gay!

“ Begin the song; and let it sweetly flow,

“ And let it wisely teach thy wholesome laws

“ How best the fickle fabric to support

“ Of mortal man; in healthful body bow

“ A healthful mind the longest to maintain.”

ARMSTRONG.

GLASGOW:
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H E A L T H.

ATTEND my Vision, thoughtless youth,
Ere long you'll think it weighty truth;
Prudent it were to think so now;
Ere age has silver'd o'er your brow :
For he who at his early years
Has sown in vice, shall reap in tears.
If folly has possess'd his prime,
Disease shall gather strength in time;
Poison shall rage in ev'ry vein,—
Nor penitence dilute the stain :
And when each hour shall urge his fate,
'Thought, like the doctor, comes too late.

The subject of my song is HEALTH,
A good superior far to wealth.
Can the young mind distrust its worth?
Consult the monarchs of the earth :
Imperial czars, and sultans, own
No gem so bright, that decks their throne :
Each for this pearl his crown would quit,
And turn a rustic, or a cit.

Mark, tho' the blessing's lost with ease,
'Tis not recover'd when you please.
Say not that gruels shall avail,
For salutary gruels fail.
Say not, Apollo's sons succeed,
Apollo's son is Egypt's reed.

How fruitless the physician's skill,
 How vain the penitential pill,
 The marble monuments proclaim,
 The humbler turf confirms the same!

Prevention is the better cure,
 So says the proverb, and 'tis sure.

Would you extend your narrow span,
 And make the most of life you can;
 Would you, when med'cines cannot save,
 Descend with ease into the grave;
 Calmly retire, like evening light,
 And cheerful, bid the world good-night?

Let temp'rance constantly preside,
 Our best physician, friend, and guide!
 Would you to wisdom make pretence,
 Proud to be thought a man of sense?
 Let temp'rance (always friend to fame)
 With steady hand direct your aim;
 Or, like an archer in the dark,
 Your random shaft will miss the mark:
 For they who slight her golden rules,
 In wisdom's volume stand for fools.

But morals, unadorn'd by art,
 Are seldom known to reach the heart.
 I'll therefore strive to raise my theme
 With all the scenery of dream.

Soft were my slumbers, sweet my rest,
 Such as the infant's on the breast;
 When Fancy, ever on the wing,
 And fruitful as the genial spring,

Presented, in a blaze of light,
A new creation to my sight.

A rural landscape I describ'd,
Drest in the robes of summer pride;
The herds adorn'd the sloping hills,
That glitter'd with their tinkling rills;
Below the fleecy mothers stray'd,
And round their sportive lambkins play'd.

Nigh to a murmuring brook I saw
An humble cottage thatch'd with straw;
Behind, a garden that supply'd
All things for use, and none for pride:
Beauty prevail'd thro' ev'ry part,
But more of nature than of art.

Hail, thou sweet, calm, unenvied seat!
I said, and bless'd the fair retreat:
Here would I pass my remnant days,
Unknown to censure, or to praise;
Forget the world, and be forgot,
As POPE describes his Vestal's lot.

While thus I mus'd, a beautiful maid
Stept from a thicket's neighb'ring shade;
Not Hampton's gallery can boast,
Nor Hudson paint so fair a toast:
She claim'd the cottage for her own,
To HEALTH a cottage is a throne.

The annals say (to prove her worth)
The Graces solemniz'd her birth.

Garlands of various flow'rs they wrought,
 The orchard's blushing pride they brought
 Hence, in her face the lily speaks,
 And hence the rose which paints her cheeks;
 The cherry gave her lips to glow,
 Her eyes were debtors to the snow;
 And, to complete the lovely fair,
 'Tis said the chefnut stain'd her hair.

The virgin was averse to courts,
 But often seen in rural sports:
 When in her rosy vest the dawn
 Walks o'er the dew-bespangled lawn,
 The nymph is first to form the race,
 Or wind the horn, and lead the chace:

Sudden I heard a shouting train,
 Glad acclamations fill'd the plain;
 Unbounded joy improv'd the scene,
 For HEALTH was loud proclaim'd a queen.

Two smiling cherubs grac'd her throne,
 (To modern courts, I fear, unknown;)
 One was the nymph, that loves the light,
 Fair INNOCENCE, array'd in white;
 With sister PEACE in close embrace,
 And heav'n all opening in her face.

The reign was long, the empire great,
 And VIRTUE, minister of state,
 In other kingdoms, ev'ry hour,
 You hear of vice prefer'd to pow'r;
 Vice was a perfect stranger here:
 No knaves engross'd the royal ear:

No fools obtain'd this monarch's grace;
Virtue dispos'd of ev'ry place.

What sickly appetites are ours,
Still varying with the varying hours!
And tho' from good to bad we range,
"No matter," says the fool, "'tis change."

Her subjects now express'd apace
Dissatisfaction in their face:
Some view'd the state with envy's eye,
Some were displeas'd, they knew not why;
When Faction, ever bold and vain,
With rigour tax'd their monarch's reign.
Thus, should an angel from above,
Fraught with benevolence and love,
Descend to earth, and here impart
Important truths to mend the heart;
Would not the instructive guest dispense
With passion, appetite, and sense,
We should his heav'nly lore despise,
And send him to his former skies.

A dang'rous hostile power arose
To HEALTH, whose household were her foes:
A harlot's loose attire she wore,
And LUXURY the name she bore.
This princess of unbounded sway,
Whom Asia's foster sons obey,
Made war against the queen of HEALTH,
Assisted by the troops of WEALTH.

The queen was first to take the field,
Arm'd with her helmet and her shield;

Temper'd with such superior art,
 That both were proof to ev'ry dart.
 Two warlike chiefs approach'd the green,
 And wondrous fav'rites with the queen:
 Both were of Amazonian race,
 Both high in merit, and in place.
 Here, RESOLUTION march'd, whose soul
 No fear could shake, no pow'r controul;
 The heroine wore a Roman vest,
 A lion's heart inform'd her breast.
 There PRUDENCE shone, whose bosom wrought
 With all the various plans of thought;
 'Twas her's to bid the troops engage,
 And teach the battle where to rage.

And now the Siren's armies press,
 Their van was headed by EXCESS:
 The mighty wings, that form'd the side,
 Commanded by that giant PRIDE:
 While SICKNESS, and her sisters PAIN
 And POVERTY, the centre gain:
 REPENTANCE, with a brow severe,
 And DEATH, were station'd in the rear.

HEALTH rang'd her troops with matchless art,
 And acted the defensive part:
 Her army posted on a hill,
 Plainly bespoke superior skill:
 Hence were discover'd thro' the plain,
 The motions of the hostile train:
 While PRUDENCE, to prevent surprize,
 Oft sally'd with her trusty spies;
 Explor'd each ambuscade below,
 And reconnoitred well the foe.

Afar when LUXURY defery'd
 Inferior force by art supply'd,
 The Siren spake—Let FALSO prevail,
 Since all my numerous hosts must fail;
 Henceforth hostilities shall cease,
 I'll send to HEALTH and offer peace.
 Strait she dispatch'd, with pow'rs compleat,
 PLEASURE, her minister, to treat.
 This wicked strumpet topp'd her part,
 And sow'd sedition in the heart,
 Thro' ev'ry troop, the poison ran,
 All were infected to a man.
 The wary generals were won,
 By PLEASURE'S wiles, and both undone.

Jove held the troops in high disgrace,
 And bad diseases blast their race;
 Look'd on the queen with melting eyes,
 And snatch'd his darling to the skies;
 Who still regards those wiser few,
 That dare her dictates to pursue,
 For where her stricter law prevails,
 Tho' PASSION prompts, or VICE assails;
 Long shall they cloudless skies behold,
 And their calm sun-set beam with gold.

F I N I S.

