

THE SUNDAY



WATER-PARTY;

With some Account of the Club at the Oak—of the Trip to Richmond, and the melancholy Disaster which befel them on their return Home, whereby the whole Party were Drowned.

Is a village near town, on the banks of the Thames,
There liv'd a good couple, (I don't tell their names :)
This pair you must know, had a son they call'd Ned,
And he to the trade of a grocer was bred ;
As good humour'd a fellow as ever I knew,
And in honour and honesty equal'd by few.
At church he was constant, and always well drest,
And of the psalm-singers, 'twas thought he sang best.

Ned's person was neat and his manners polite,
So the shop was well crowded from morning till night.

His master, who drew near the end of his life,
Had determin'd to give him his daughter to wife ;
And Nancy was pretty and good, and 'tis said
Had long look'd with an eye of affection on Ned.

About this time it happen'd some hard-drinking folk,
[Oak.] Form'd a club at the sign of King Charles in the To drink, and to smoke, and of politics prate,
And tho' drunken themselves, to take care of the State ;

For tho' times were so bad, and provisions so dear,
Their newspapers cost them six guineas a year.
Of this club a young fellow nam'd Jack was the head,

A clerk to a lawyer, next neighbour to Ned ;
For his wit and his humour admir'd and caress'd,
Tho' his morals and conduct were none of the best ;
He was civil to Ned, and whenever they met,
Tried to coax and to wheedle him into the set :—

By what arts he prevail'd 'twould be tedious to tell,
Sufficient to say he succeeded too well.
Soon a wonderful change this new company made ;
He neglected his church, and neglected his trade :
He quickly became a deep politician,

Swore the nation was in the high road to perdition ;
Was eager to find out the faults of the Throne,
The Lords and the Commons, but never his own.
He first learnt to omit, when to ridicule prayer ;
To laugh at his Bible, to drink and to swear :
So alter'd he was, you would scarce think it true,
'Twas the same honest good-humour'd Ned that you knew.

His master, in anger, declar'd they must part,
And Nancy's pale face told the grief of her heart.
His parents reprov'd him again and again,
But reproof and advice were repeated in vain ;
At times his convictions and sorrows were deep,
But a song or a bumper laid conscience to sleep.
While the feelings of virtue still rest, were oppress'd,
By the dread of a laugh, or an infidel jest.
How many a soul has been ruin'd thro' fear,
Regardless of God, though afraid of a sneer !

The party were met on a Saturday night,
They had pretty well drunk, and their spirits were light,
When Jack thus harangued them—" Before we must move,

I've a plan to propose, which I think you'll approve.
To-morrow is Sunday, a still festive day.
When we're not permitted to work nor to play ;
Yet, trust me, I'll find you no bad recreation,
In spite of the law or the King's proclamation ;
For a trip on the water to Richmond I vote,
I'll treat you at dinner, and find you a host ;
As for you who persist in frequenting the church,
Do for once leave the parson and clerk in the lurch.
The rest of the party agreed with delight,
The plan was arrang'd, and they parted that night ;
In the morning betimes they assembled again,
The boat was prepar'd, and they set sail at ten.

The church-bell now summon'd the parish to pray'r,

Ned heard, and he sigh'd, and he long'd to be there.
Jack perceiv'd it, and cried, " What a pity it is,
Thou wilt never get rid of that sanctified phiz ;
I see thou art troubled with one of thy qualms,
So I'll sing you a song, Ned, instead of the psalms."
Then he sang of the folly and madness of thinking,
Of the pleasures of love, and the pleasures of drinking.

That 'twas wisdom to cast away trouble and sorrow.
To be merry to-day, and not think of to-morrow.
" 'Tis foolish," says Ned, " yet I cannot but say,
I wish I were not of this party to-day :
I am not very fond of the water I own,
On a Sunday ; so often I've accidents known.
I was once superstitious, and fancied it then
A judgment from God, and a warning to men."
" Nay, prithee," quoth Jack, " make an end of such cant,

I had rather by half hear a Methodist rant.
I am ruddy that's fine I go the year round,
And you see, master Ned, I have never been drown'd !
But if sometimes it happens, why, tell me, I pray,
Of all the days in the year it should happen to-day ?
He embellish'd his speech with many a curse,
With which I don't chuse to embellish my verse.
A word by the bye—when you hear a man swear,
'Tis useful to make it a motive for prayer : [name,
Thank God that he taught you to reverence his
And beg him to pardon the sin that you blame.

To return to my tale—Ned, asham'd of his fear,
Tried as merry and thoughtless as Jack to appear.
The spring, just return'd, with new foliage was crown'd,

And the landscape was lovely and blooming around ;
For Nature, like Man, in her holiday vest,
Seem'd to hail with delight a new Sabbath of rest.
Inspir'd by such seasons, the Christian will raise
His part in the general chorus of praise.

And the wonders of nature will louder applaud,
When he traces her steps to her Maker and God.
But, frigid and tasteless, the infidel's mind,
Is not form'd to partake in a joy so refin'd ;
Tho' his idol is nature, her power is unknown,
The blind worshipper bows to a stock or a stone.

Our party ne'er meddled with this train of think-
ing, [drinking.] Their thoughts were engaged about eating and
For the high hill of Richmond was full in their view,
And they soon reach'd the bridge, where they landed
at two.

They made haste to the inn where they settled to
I've forgot, tho' I once heard, the name of the sign.
From the landlord they met with a welcome most
heartly,

When he saw his friend Jack at the head of the party.
" These," says Jack, " are some friends whom I
promised to treat,

You can give us, I hope, a good dinner to eat."
" I'll provide," says the landlord, " the best Lamable,
A fine sirloin of beef just fit for the table :
It was dress'd for ourselves, but 'tis yours if you please,
Tho' my wife and my children must eat bread and
cheese.

But 'tis fair if I give up my dinner to you,
You must e'en with my beef take my company too."
The terms were accepted, the table-cloth laid,
And the sirloin soon fell beneath many a blade :
Then came pipes and tobacco, ale and wine too in
plenty.

And a large bowl of punch, fill'd as often as empty.
The toast and the bottle pass'd merrily round,
And care and reflection in bumpers were drown'd.
The landlord, who plainly perceiv'd their condition,
Said civilly, " Gentlemen, give me permission,
To extend you stay, and take supper and beds ;
You'll be better, I think, with a house o'er your heads ;
You may see that it threatens a storm before 'tis
light,
And I'm certain you cannot reach home while 'tis
light,

If you don't like the quarters you're in I'll engage
To send back the boat, if you'll go in the stage."

Jack replied, " We have laid too much liquor
within,

To feel any without, tho' drench'd to the skin.
As for danger, I scorn it, and all cowards too ;
As for fear, 'tis a vice this heart never knew :
A few heavy heads without loss may be sunk,
I should swim like a duck whether sober or drunk :
Let those who suspect their pates are of lead,
Stay like cowards behind, and sneak safely to bed."

Then he call'd for the bill, and the reck'ning was paid,
While each half drunk hero exclaim'd, " Who's afraid !
One only, less bold, or less drunk, than the rest,
Said he thought the landlord advis'd for the best,
And, unmov'd by the jeers of the party con-bun'd,
Declar'd he would sup and would sleep where he din'd.
They soon re-embark'd, though it blew a fresh gal,
And in spite of persuasion, Jack hoisted the sail.
'Twas not long ere the storm that had threaten'd
drew nigh,
And clouds of thick darkness envelop'd the sky ;
The Almighty, insulted, commission'd the storm,
His power to assert, and his vengeance perform.

Next morning we heard the whole party were
drown'd ;
Too sadly confirm'd when their bodies were found
I was present when all in one grave were inter'd,
And the heart-rending cries of their parents I heard.

The old couple weigh'd down by affliction are
dead,
And Nancy still weeps for the loss of her Ned.

These few simple facts, thus told without art,
Need no labour'd moral to speak to the heart ;
Y't indulge me a moment, my friends while I men-
tion
A few hints, which I hope you'll find worthy atten-
tion.

To rest from our labours, the goodness of Heav'n
Has kindly indulg'd us with one day in seven,
And he who forbade us to work on this day,
Never meant us to spend it in folly and play. [days,
Dost thou grudge him, who gives thee the rest of thy
This one, set apart for his worship and praise ?
Know thy good is the object and end of the plan.
Here, the glory of God is the service of man ;
Improves him in piety, virtue, and worth,
And begins the employment of Heaven upon Earth.
'Tis a singular instance of man's depravation,
That he, the most favour'd of God's whole creation,
To win the low fame of a foolish apostle, should
dishonour his Maker, and mock at his laws.

Tho' fair is her face and enticing her tongue,
Unbelief is from vice and from ignorance sprung.
Say what is the sum of the infidel's gains,
When exulting, he loosens to pleasure the reins ?
To riot in vice, that enfables and cloyes,
And leaves a sharp sting to embitter his joys :
While vainly he strives to pervert Religion a lie,
He lives without hope, and in despair will he die.

In the infidel's sight, and when view'd by his fears,
How deform'd, and how gloomy, Religion appears !
Strip off the disguise, and her visage how bright !
How easy her yoke, and her burden how light !
Hear the glorious Gospel proclaim'd from above,
Its message is peace, and its temper is love ;
Persuasion its arms, and conviction its force,
Its author, thy God ; and his mercy, its source.
Yet not always on earth his children are bless'd ;—
This world's not their home, nor the place of their
rest ;
To a few he gives power, on others show's wealth,
To many, though poor, he gives comfort and health,
And tho' some of his children snarl under his rod,
The hand that afflicts is the hand of their God.

Are you happy ? O thank the Great Giver above
Are you wretched ? O fly to the Fountain of love :
Tho' thousands have tasted his blessings before,
For thousands to come, there are blessings in store.
You're a sinner—the greatest of sinners—'tis true—
Yet try, and you'll find there's a Saviour for you.—
But presume not, O sinner, on mercy alone ;
Lo, justice and judgment attend on his throne.
Tho' the thunders may sleep and the lightning be
still ;

They awake at God's summons, and fly at his will,
And the wretch who has trifled with mercy, shall
know
That his judgments are sure, tho' his anger is slow.

