



***ERASMUS
DARWIN***

***THE TEMPLE
OF NATURE; OR,
THE ORIGIN
OF SOCIETY***

Erasmus Darwin

The Temple of Nature; or, the Origin of Society

A Poem, with Philosophical Notes

EAN 8596547359524

DigiCat, 2022

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Table of Contents

[ORIGIN OF SOCIETY. CANTO I. PRODUCTION OF LIFE.](#)

[ORIGIN OF SOCIETY. CANTO II. REPRODUCTION OF LIFE.](#)

[ORIGIN OF SOCIETY. CANTO III. PROGRESS OF THE MIND.](#)

[ORIGIN OF SOCIETY. CANTO IV. OF GOOD AND EVIL.](#)

[ADDITIONAL NOTES.](#)

PREFACE.

The Poem, which is here offered to the Public, does not pretend to instruct by deep researches of reasoning; its aim is simply to amuse by bringing distinctly to the imagination the beautiful and sublime images of the operations of Nature in the order, as the Author believes, in which the progressive course of time presented them.

The Deities of Egypt, and afterwards of Greece, and Rome, were derived from men famous in those early times, as in the ages of hunting, pasturage, and agriculture. The histories of some of their actions recorded in Scripture, or celebrated in the heathen mythology, are introduced, as the Author hopes, without impropriety into his account of those remote periods of human society.

In the Eleusinian mysteries the philosophy of the works of Nature, with the origin and progress of society, are believed to have been taught by allegoric scenery explained by the Hierophant to the initiated, which gave rise to the machinery of the following Poem.

PRIORY NEAR DERBY,
Jan. 1, 1802.

ORIGIN OF SOCIETY.
CANTO I.
PRODUCTION OF LIFE.

[Table of Contents](#)

CANTO I.
PRODUCTION OF LIFE.

I. By firm immutable immortal laws
Impress'd on Nature by the GREAT FIRST CAUSE,
Say, MUSE! how rose from elemental strife
Organic forms, and kindled into life;
How Love and Sympathy with potent charm
Warm the cold heart, the lifted hand disarm;
Allure with pleasures, and alarm with pains,
And bind Society in golden chains.

Four past eventful Ages then recite,
And give the fifth, new-born of Time, to light; 10
The silken tissue of their joys disclose,
Swell with deep chords the murmur of their woes;
Their laws, their labours, and their loves proclaim,
And chant their virtues to the trump of Fame.

IMMORTAL LOVE! who ere the morn of Time,
On wings outstretch'd, o'er Chaos hung sublime;
Warm'd into life the bursting egg of Night,

And gave young Nature to admiring Light!—
You! whose wide arms, in soft embraces hurl'd
Round the vast frame, connect the whirling world! 20
Whether immers'd in day, the Sun your throne,
You gird the planets in your silver zone;
Or warm, descending on ethereal wing,
The Earth's cold bosom with the beams of spring;
Press drop to drop, to atom atom bind,
Link sex to sex, or rivet mind to mind;
Attend my song!—With rosy lips rehearse,
And with your polish'd arrows write my verse!—
So shall my lines soft-rolling eyes engage,
And snow-white fingers turn the volant page; 30
The smiles of Beauty all my toils repay,
And youths and virgins chant the living lay.

II. WHERE EDEN'S sacred bowers triumphant sprung,
By angels guarded, and by prophets sung,
Wav'd o'er the east in purple pride unfurl'd,
And rock'd the golden [cradle of the World](#);
Four sparkling currents lav'd with wandering tides
Their velvet avenues, and flowery sides;
On sun-bright lawns unclad the Graces stray'd,
And guiltless Cupids haunted every glade; 40
Till the fair Bride, forbidden shades among,
Heard unalarm'd the Tempter's serpent-tongue;
Eyed the sweet fruit, the mandate disobey'd,
And her fond Lord with sweeter smiles betray'd.
Conscious awhile with throbbing heart he strove,
Spread his wide arms, and barter'd life for love!—
Now rocks on rocks, in savage grandeur roll'd,
Steep above steep, the blasted plains infold;
The incumbent crags eternal tempest shrouds,
And livid light'nings cleave the lambent clouds; 50
Round the firm base loud-howling whirlwinds blow,
And sands in burning eddies dance below.

Hence ye profane!—the warring winds exclude
Unhallow'd throngs, that press with footstep rude;
But court the Muse's train with milder skies,
And call with softer voice the good and wise.
—Charm'd at her touch the opening wall divides,
And rocks of crystal form the polish'd sides;
Through the bright arch the Loves and Graces tread,
Innocuous thunders murmuring o'er their head; 60
Pair after pair, and tittering, as they pass,
View their fair features in the walls of glass;
Leave with impatient step the circling bourn,
And hear behind the closing rocks return.

HERE, high in air, unconscious of the storm.
Thy temple, NATURE, rears it's mystic form;
From earth to heav'n, unwrought by mortal toil,
Towers the vast fabric on the desert soil;
O'er many a league the ponderous domes extend.
And deep in earth the ribbed vaults descend; 70
A thousand jasper steps with circling sweep
Lead the slow votary up the winding steep;
Ten thousand piers, now join'd and now aloof,
Bear on their branching arms the fretted roof.

Unnumber'd ailes connect unnumber'd halls,
And sacred symbols crowd the [pictur'd walls](#);
With pencil rude forgotten days design,
And arts, or empires, live in every line.
While chain'd reluctant on the marble ground,
Indignant TIME reclines, by Sculpture bound; 80
And sternly bending o'er a scroll unroll'd,
Inscribes the future with his style of gold.
—[So erst, when PROTEUS](#) on the briny shore,
New forms assum'd of eagle, pard, or boar;
The wise ATRIDES bound in sea-weed thongs
The changeful god amid his scaly throngs;

Till in deep tones his opening lips at last
Reluctant told the future and the past.

HERE o'er piazza'd courts, and long arcades,
The bowers of PLEASURE root their waving shades; 90
Shed o'er the pamsied moss a checker'd gloom,
Bend with new fruits, with flow'rs successive bloom.
Pleas'd, their light limbs on beds of roses press'd,
In slight undress recumbent Beauties rest;
On tiptoe steps surrounding Graces move,
And gay Desires expand their wings above.

HERE young DIONE arms her quiver'd Loves,
Schools her bright Nymphs, and practises her doves;
Calls round her laughing eyes in playful turns,
The glance that lightens, and the smile that burns;
100
Her dimpling cheeks with transient blushes dies,
Heaves her white bosom with seductive sighs;
Or moulds with rosy lips the magic words,
That bind the heart in adamant cords.

Behind in twilight gloom with scowling mien
The demon PAIN, convokes his court unseen;
Whips, fetters, flames, pourtray'd on sculptur'd stone,
In dread festoons, adorn his ebon throne;
Each side a cohort of diseases stands,
And shudd'ring Fever leads the ghastly bands; 110
O'er all Despair expands his raven wings,
And guilt-stain'd Conscience darts a thousand stings.

Deep-whelm'd beneath, in vast sepulchral caves,
OBLIVION dwells amid unlabell'd graves;
The storied tomb, the laurell'd bust o'erturns,
And shakes their ashes from the mould'ring urns.—
No vernal zephyr breathes, no sunbeams cheer,

Nor song, nor simper, ever enters here;
O'er the green floor, and round the dew-damp wall,
The slimy snail, and bloated lizard crawl; 120
While on white heaps of intermingled bones
The muse of MELANCHOLY sits and moans;
Showers her cold tears o'er Beauty's early wreck,
Spreads her pale arms, and bends her marble neck.

So in rude rocks, beside the Ægean wave,
[TROPHONIUS scoop'd](#) his sorrow-sacred cave;
Unbarr'd to pilgrim feet the brazen door,
And the sad sage returning smil'd no more.

SHRIN'D in the midst majestic NATURE stands,
Extends o'er earth and sea her hundred hands; 130
Tower upon tower her beamy forehead crests,
And births unnumber'd milk her hundred breasts;
Drawn round her brows a lucid veil depends,
O'er her fine waist the purpled woof descends;
Her stately limbs the gather'd folds surround,
And spread their golden selvage on the ground.

From this first altar [fam'd ELEUSIS stole](#)
Her secret symbols and her mystic scroll;
With pious fraud in after ages rear'd
Her gorgeous temple, and the gods rever'd. 140
—First in dim pomp before the astonish'd throng,
Silence, and Night, and Chaos, stalk'd along;
Dread scenes of Death, in nodding sables dress'd,
Froze the broad eye, and thrill'd the unbreathing
breast.
Then the young Spring, with winged Zephyr, leads
The queen of Beauty to the blossom'd meads;
Charm'd in her train admiring Hymen moves,
And tiptoe Graces hand in hand with Loves.
Next, while on pausing step the masked mimes

Enact the triumphs of forgotten times, 150
Conceal from vulgar throngs the mystic truth,
Or charm with Wisdom's lore the initiate youth;
Each shifting scene, some patriot hero trod,
Some sainted beauty, or some saviour god.

III. Now rose in purple pomp the breezy dawn,
And crimson dew-drops trembled on the lawn;
Blaz'd high in air the temple's golden vanes,
And dancing shadows veer'd upon the plains.—
Long trains of virgins from the sacred grove,
Pair after pair, in bright procession move, 160
With flower-fill'd baskets round the altar throng,
Or swing their censers, as they wind along.
The fair URANIA leads the blushing bands,
Presents their offerings with unsullied hands;
Pleas'd to their dazzled eyes in part unshrouds
The goddess-form;—the rest is hid in clouds.

"PRIESTESS OF NATURE! while with pious awe
Thy votary bends, the mystic veil withdraw;
Charm after charm, succession bright, display,
And give the GODDESS to adoring day! 170
So kneeling realms shall own the Power divine,
And heaven and earth pour incense on her shrine.

"Oh grant the MUSE with pausing step to press
Each sun-bright avenue, and green recess;
Led by thy hand survey the trophied walls,
[The statued galleries](#), and the pictur'd halls;
Scan the proud pyramid, and arch sublime,
Earth-canker'd urn, medallion green with time,
Stern busts of Gods, with helmed heroes mix'd,
And Beauty's radiant forms, that smile betwixt. 180

"Waked by thy voice, transmuted by thy wand,
Their lips shall open, and their arms expand;
The love-lost lady, and the warrior slain,
Leap from their tombs, and sigh or fight again.
—So when ill-fated ORPHEUS tuned to woe
His potent lyre, and sought the realms below;
Charm'd into life unreal forms respir'd,
And list'ning shades the dulcet notes admir'd.—

["Love led the Sage](#) through Death's tremendous
porch,
Cheer'd with his smile, and lighted with his torch;—
190

Hell's triple Dog his playful jaws expands,
[Fawns round the God](#), and licks his baby hands;
In wondering groups the shadowy nations throng,
And sigh or simper, as he steps along;
Sad swains, and nymphs forlorn, on Lethe's brink,
Hug their past sorrows, and refuse to drink;
Night's dazzled Empress feels the golden flame
Play round her breast, and melt her frozen frame;
Charms with soft words, and sooths with amorous
wiles,
Her iron-hearted Lord—and PLUTO smiles.— 200
His trembling Bride the Bard triumphant led
From the pale mansions of the astonish'd dead;
Gave the fair phantom to admiring light—
Ah, soon again to tread irremeable night!"

IV. HER snow-white arm, indulgent to my song,
Waves the fair Hierophant, and moves along.—
High plumes, that bending shade her amber hair,
Nod, as she steps, their silver leaves in air;
Bright chains of pearl, with golden buckles brac'd,
Clasp her white neck, and zone her slender waist; 210
Thin folds of silk in soft meanders wind

Down her fine form, and undulate behind;
The purple border, on the pavement roll'd,
Swells in the gale, and spreads its fringe of gold.

"FIRST, if you can, celestial Guide! disclose
From what fair fountain mortal life arose,
Whence the fine nerve to move and feel assign'd,
Contractile fibre, and ethereal mind:

"How Love and Sympathy the bosom warm,
Allure with pleasure, and with pain alarm, 220
With soft affections weave the social plan,
And charm the listening Savage into Man."

"[GOD THE FIRST CAUSE!](#)—in this terrene abode
[Young Nature lisps](#), she is the child of God.
From embryo births her changeful forms improve,
Grow, as they live, and strengthen as they move.

"Ere Time began, from flaming Chaos hurl'd
Rose the bright spheres, which form the circling world;
[Earths from each sun](#) with quick explosions burst,
And second planets issued from the first. 230
Then, whilst the sea at their coeval birth,
Surge over surge, involv'd the shoreless earth;
Nurs'd by warm sun-beams in primeval caves
Organic Life began beneath the waves.

"[First HEAT from chemic](#) dissolution springs,
And gives to matter its eccentric wings;
With strong REPULSION parts the exploding mass,
Melts into lymph, or kindles into gas.
[ATTRACTION next](#), as earth or air subsides,
The ponderous atoms from the light divides, 240
Approaching parts with quick embrace combines,
Swells into spheres, and lengthens into lines.

Last, as fine goads the gluten-threads excite,
Cords grapple cords, and webs with webs unite;
[And quick CONTRACTION](#) with ethereal flame
Lights into life the fibre-woven frame.—
Hence without parent by [spontaneous birth](#)
Rise the first specks of animated earth;
From Nature's womb the plant or insect swims,
And buds or breathes, with microscopic limbs. 250

"In earth, sea, air, around, below, above,
Life's subtle woof in Nature's loom is wove;
Points glued to points a living line extends,
Touch'd by some goad approach the bending ends;
Rings join to rings, and irritated tubes
Clasp with young lips the nutrient globes or cubes;
And urged by appetencies new select,
Imbibe, retain, digest, secrete, eject.
[In branching cones](#) the living web expands,
Lymphatic ducts, and convoluted glands; 260
Aortal tubes propel the nascent blood,
And lengthening veins [absorb the reflux flood](#);
Leaves, lungs, and gills, the vital ether breathe
On earth's green surface, or the waves beneath.
So Life's first powers arrest the winds and floods,
To bones convert them, or to shells, or woods;
Stretch the vast beds of argil, lime, and sand,
[And from diminish'd oceans](#) form the land!

"Next the long nerves unite their silver train,
[And young SENSATION](#) permeates the brain; 270
Through each new sense the keen emotions dart,
Flush the young cheek, and swell the throbbing heart.
From pain and pleasure quick VOLITIONS rise,
Lift the strong arm, or point the inquiring eyes;
With Reason's light bewilder'd Man direct,
And right and wrong with balance nice detect.

Last in thick swarms ASSOCIATIONS spring,
Thoughts join to thoughts, to motions motions cling;
Whence in long trains of catenation flow
Imagined joy, and voluntary woe. 280

"So, view'd through crystal spheres in drops saline,
Quick-shooting salts in chemic forms combine;
[Or Mucor-stems](#), a vegetative tribe,
Spread their fine roots, the tremulous wave imbibe.
Next to our wondering eyes the focus brings
Self-moving lines, and animated rings;
First Monas moves, an unconnected point,
Plays round the drop without a limb or joint;
Then Vibrio waves, with capillary eels,
And Vorticella whirls her living wheels; 290
While insect Proteus sports with changeful form
Through the bright tide, a globe, a cube, a worm.
Last o'er the field the Mite enormous swims,
Swells his red heart, and writhes his giant limbs.

V. "ORGANIC LIFE [beneath the shoreless waves](#)
Was born and nurs'd in Ocean's pearly caves;
[First forms minute](#), unseen by spheric glass,
Move on the mud, or pierce the watery mass;
These, as successive generations bloom,
New powers acquire, and larger limbs assume; 300
Whence countless groups of vegetation spring,
And breathing realms of fin, and feet, and wing.

"Thus the tall Oak, the giant of the wood,
Which bears Britannia's thunders on the flood;
The Whale, unmeasured monster of the main,
The lordly Lion, monarch of the plain,
The Eagle soaring in the realms of air,
Whose eye undazzled drinks the solar glare,
Imperious man, who rules the bestial crowd,

Of language, reason, and reflection proud, 310
With brow erect who scorns this earthy sod,
And styles himself the image of his God;
Arose from rudiments of form and sense,
[An embryo point](#), or microscopic ens!

"Now in vast shoals beneath the [brineless tide](#),
On earth's firm crust testaceous tribes reside;
Age after age expands the peopled plain,
The tenants perish, but their cells remain;
[Whence coral walls](#) and sparry hills ascend
From pole to pole, and round the line extend. 320

"Next when imprison'd fires in central caves
Burst the firm earth, and [drank the headlong waves](#);
And, as new airs with dread explosion swell,
Form'd lava-isles, and continents of shell;
Pil'd rocks on rocks, on mountains mountains raised,
And high in heaven the first volcanoes blazed;
In countless swarms [an insect-myriad moves](#)
From sea-fan gardens, and from coral groves;
Leaves the cold caverns of the deep, and creeps
On shelving shores, or climbs on rocky steeps. 330
As in dry air the sea-born stranger roves,
Each muscle quickens, and each sense improves;
Cold gills aquatic form respiring lungs,
And sounds aerial flow from slimy tongues.

"[So Trapa rooted](#) in pellucid tides,
In countless threads her breathing leaves divides,
Waves her bright tresses in the watery mass,
And drinks with gelid gills the vital gas;
Then broader leaves in shadowy files advance,
Spread o'er the crystal flood their green expanse; 340
And, as in air the adherent dew exhales,
Court the warm sun, and breathe ethereal gales.

"[So still the Tadpole](#) cleaves the watery vale
With balanc'd fins, and undulating tail;
New lungs and limbs proclaim his second birth,
Breathe the dry air, and bound upon the earth.
So from deep lakes [the dread Musquito springs](#),
Drinks the soft breeze, and dries his tender wings,
In twinkling squadrons cuts his airy way,
Dips his red trunk in blood, and man his prey. 350

"[So still the Diodons](#), amphibious tribe,
With two-fold lungs the sea or air imbibe;
Allied to fish, the lizard cleaves the flood
With one-cell'd heart, and dark frigescent blood;
Half-reasoning Beavers long-unbreathing dart
Through Erie's waves with perforated heart;
With gills and lungs respiring Lampreys steer,
Kiss the rude rocks, and suck till they adhere;
The lazy Remora's inhaling lips,
Hung on the keel, retard the struggling ships; 360
With gills pulmonic breathes the enormous Whale,
And spouts aquatic columns to the gale;
Sports on the shining wave [at noontide hours](#),
And shifting rainbows crest the rising showers.

"So erst, ere rose the science to record
In letter'd syllables the volant word;
Whence chemic arts, disclosed in pictured lines,
Liv'd to mankind by hieroglyphic signs;
And clustering stars, pourtray'd on mimic spheres,
Assumed the forms of lions, bulls, and bears; 370
—So erst, [as Egypt's rude designs](#) explain,
[Rose young DIONE](#) from the shoreless main;
Type of organic Nature! source of bliss!
Emerging Beauty from the vast abyss!
Sublime on Chaos borne, the Goddess stood,
And smiled enchantment on the troubled flood;

The warring elements to peace restored,
And young Reflection wondered and adored."

Now paused the Nymph—The Muse responsive
cries,
Sweet admiration sparkling in her eyes, 380
"Drawn by your pencil, by your hand unfurl'd,
Bright shines the tablet of the dawning world;
Amazed the Sea's prolific depths I view,
And VENUS rising from the waves in You!

"Still Nature's births enclosed in egg or seed
From the tall forest to the lowly weed,
Her beaux and beauties, butterflies and worms,
Rise from aquatic to aerial forms.
Thus in the womb the nascent infant laves
Its natant form in the circumfluent waves; 390
With perforated heart unbreathing swims,
[Awakes and stretches](#) all its recent limbs;
[With gills placental](#) seeks the arterial flood,
And drinks pure ether from its Mother's blood.
Erewhile the landed Stranger bursts his way,
From the warm wave emerging into day;
Feels the chill blast, and piercing light, and tries
His tender lungs, and rolls [his dazzled eyes](#);
Gives to the passing gale his curling hair,
And steps a dry inhabitant of air. 400

"Creative Nile, as taught in ancient song,
So charm'd to life his animated throng;
O'er his wide realms the slow-subsiding flood
Left the rich treasures of organic mud;
While with quick growth young Vegetation yields
Her blushing orchards, and her waving fields;
Pomona's hand replenish'd Plenty's horn,
And Ceres laugh'd amid her seas of corn.—

Bird, beast, and reptile, spring from sudden birth,
Raise their new forms, half-animal, half-earth; 410
The roaring lion shakes his tawny mane,
His struggling limbs still rooted in the plain;
With flapping wings assurgent eagles toil
To rend their talons from the adhesive soil;
The impatient serpent lifts his crested head,
And drags his train unfinish'd from the bed.—
[As Warmth and Moisture](#) blend their magic spells,
And brood with mingling wings the slimy dells;
Contractile earths in sentient forms arrange,
And Life triumphant stays their chemic change." 420

Then hand in hand along the waving glades
The virgin Sisters pass beneath the shades;
Ascend the winding steps with pausing march,
And seek the Portico's susurrant arch;
Whose sculptur'd architrave on columns borne
Drinks the first blushes of the rising morn,
Whose fretted roof an ample shield displays,
And guards the Beauties from meridian rays.
While on light step enamour'd Zephyr springs,
And fans their glowing features with his wings, 430
Imbibes the fragrance of the vernal flowers,
And speeds with kisses sweet the dancing Hours.

Urania, leaning with unstudied grace,
Rests her white elbow on a column's base;
Awhile reflecting takes her silent stand,
Her fair cheek press'd upon her lily hand;
Then, as awaking from ideal trance,
On the smooth floor her pausing steps advance,
Waves high her arm, upturns her lucid eyes,
Marks the wide scenes of ocean, earth, and skies; 440
And leads, meandering as it rolls along
Through Nature's walks, the shining stream of Song.

First her sweet voice in plaintive accents chains
The Muse's ear with fascinating strains;
Reverts awhile to elemental strife,
The change of form, and brevity of life;
Then tells how potent Love with torch sublime
Relights the glimmering lamp, and conquers Time.
—The polish'd walls reflect her rosy smiles,
And sweet-ton'd echoes talk along the ailes. 450

END OF CANTO I.

ORIGIN OF SOCIETY.

CANTO II.

REPRODUCTION OF LIFE.

[Table of Contents](#)

CANTO II.

REPRODUCTION OF LIFE.

I. "[How short the span of LIFE!](#) some hours possess'd,
Warm but to cool, and active but to rest!—
[The age-worn fibres](#) goaded to contract,
By repetition palsied, cease to act;
When Time's cold hands the languid senses seize,
Chill the dull nerves, the lingering currents freeze;
Organic matter, unreclaim'd by Life,
Reverts to elements by chemic strife.
Thus Heat evolv'd from some fermenting mass
Expands the kindling atoms into gas; 10
Which sink ere long in cold concentric rings,
Condensed, on Gravity's descending wings.

"[But REPRODUCTION](#) with ethereal fires
New Life rekindles, ere the first expires;
Calls up renascent Youth, ere tottering age
Quits the dull scene, and gives him to the stage;
Bids on his cheek the rose of beauty blow,
And binds the wreaths of pleasure round his brow;
With finer links the vital chain extends,
And the long line of Being never ends. 20

"Self-moving Engines by [unbending springs](#)
May walk on earth, or flap their mimic wings;
In tubes of glass mercurial columns rise,
Or sink, obedient to the incumbent skies;
Or, as they touch the figured scale, repeat
The nice gradations of circumfluent heat.
But REPRODUCTION, when the perfect Elf
Forms from fine glands another like itself,
Gives the true character of life and sense,
And parts the organic from the chemic Ens.— 30
Where milder skies protect the nascent brood,
And earth's warm bosom yields salubrious food;
Each new Descendant with superior powers

Of sense and motion speeds the transient hours;
Braves every season, tenants every clime,
And Nature rises on the wings of Time.

"As LIFE discordant elements arrests,
Rejects the noxious, and the pure digests;
[Combines with Heat](#) the fluctuating mass,
And gives a while solidity to gas; 40
Organic forms with chemic changes strive,
Live but to die, and die but to revive!
[Immortal matter](#) braves the transient storm,
Mounts from the wreck, unchanging but in form.—

"So, as the sages of the East record
In sacred symbol, or unletter'd word;
[Emblem of Life](#), to change eternal doom'd,
The beauteous form of fair ADONIS bloom'd.—
On Syrian hills the graceful Hunter slain
Dyed with his gushing blood the shuddering plain; 50
And, slow-descending to the Elysian shade,
A while with PROSERPINE reluctant stray'd;
Soon from the yawning grave the bursting clay
Restor'd the Beauty to delighted day;
Array'd in youth's resuscitated charms,
And young DIONE woo'd him to her arms.—
Pleased for a while the assurgent youth above
Relights the golden lamp of life and love;
Ah, soon again to leave the cheerful light,
And sink alternate to the realms of night. 60

II. "HENCE ere Vitality, as time revolves,
Leaves the cold organ, and the mass dissolves;
The Reproductions of the living Ens
From sires to sons, unknown to sex, commence.
New buds and bulbs the living fibre shoots
On lengthening branches, and protruding roots;

Or on the father's side from bursting glands
The adhering young its nascent form expands;
In branching lines the parent-trunk adorns,
And parts ere long like plumage, hairs, or horns. 70

"[So the lone Truffle](#), lodged beneath the earth,
Shoots from paternal roots the tuberous birth;
No stamen-males ascend, and breathe above,
No seed-born offspring lives by female love.
From each young tree, for future buds design'd
Organic drops exsude beneath the rind;
[While these with appetencies](#) nice invite,
And those with apt propensities unite;
New embryo fibrils round the trunk combine
With quick embrace, and form the living line: 80
Whose plume and rootlet at their early birth
Seek the dry air, or pierce the humid earth.

"So safe in waves [prolific Volvox](#) dwells,
And five descendants crowd his lucid cells;
So [the male Polypus](#) parental swims,
And branching infants bristle all his limbs;
So [the lone Tænia](#), as he grows, prolongs
His flatten'd form with young adherent throngs;
Unknown to sex [the pregnant oyster](#) swells,
[And coral-insects](#) build their radiate shells; 90
Parturient Sires caress their infant train,
[And heaven-born STORGE](#) weaves the social chain;
Successive births her tender cares combine,
And soft affections live along the line.

"On angel-wings the GODDESS FORM descends,
Round her fond broods her silver arms she bends;
White streams of milk her tumid bosom swell,
And on her lips ambrosial kisses dwell.
Light joys on twinkling feet before her dance

With playful nod, and momentary glance; 100
Behind, attendant on the pansied plain,
Young PSYCHE treads with CUPID in her train.

III. "IN these lone births no tender mothers blend
Their genial powers to nourish or defend;
No nutrient streams from Beauty's orbs improve
These orphan babes of solitary love;
Birth after birth the line unchanging runs,
And fathers live transmitted in their sons;
Each passing year beholds the unvarying kinds,
The same their manners, and the same their minds.
110

Till, as erelong successive buds decay,
And insect-shoals successive pass away,
Increasing wants the pregnant parents vex
With the fond wish to form [a softer sex](#);
Whose milky rills with pure ambrosial food
Might charm and cherish their expected brood.
The potent wish in the productive hour
Calls to its aid [Imagination's power](#),
O'er embryo throngs with mystic charm presides,
And sex from sex the nascent world divides, 120
With soft affections warms the callow trains,
And gives to laughing Love [his nymphs and swains](#);
Whose mingling virtues interweave at length
The mother's beauty with the father's strength.

"So tulip-bulbs emerging from the seed,
Year after year unknown to sex proceed;
Erewhile the stamens and the styles display
Their petal-curtains, and adorn the day;
The beaux and beauties in each blossom glow
With wedded joy, or amatorial woe. 130
Unmarried Aphides prolific prove
For nine successions uninformed of love;

New sexes next with softer passions spring,
Breathe the fond vow, and woo with quivering wing.

"So erst in Paradise creation's LORD,
As the first leaves of holy writ record,
From Adam's rib, who press'd the flowery grove,
And dreamt delighted of untasted love,
To cheer and charm his solitary mind,
Form'd a new sex, [the MOTHER OF MANKIND](#). 140
—Buoy'd on light step the Beauty seem'd to swim,
And stretch'd alternate every pliant limb;
Pleased on Euphrates' velvet margin stood,
And view'd her playful image in the flood;
Own'd the fine flame of love, as life began,
And smiled enchantment on adoring Man.
Down her white neck and o'er her bosom roll'd,
Flow'd in sweet negligence her locks of gold;
Round her fine form the dim transparence play'd,
And show'd the beauties, that it seem'd to shade. 150
—Enamour'd ADAM gaz'd with fond surprise,
And drank delicious passion from her eyes;
Felt the new thrill of young Desire, and press'd
The graceful Virgin to his glowing breast.—
The conscious Fair betrays her soft alarms,
Sinks with warm blush into his closing arms,
Yields to his fond caress with wanton play,
And sweet, reluctant, amorous, delay.

IV. "WHERE no new Sex with glands nutritious feeds,
Nurs'd in her womb, the solitary breeds; 160
No Mother's care their early steps directs,
Warms in her bosom, with her wings protects;
The clime unkind, or noxious food instills
To embryo nerves hereditary ills;
The feeble births [acquired diseases](#) chase,
Till Death extinguish the degenerate race.

["So grafted trees](#) with shadowy summits rise,
Spread their fair blossoms, and perfume the skies;
Till canker taints the vegetable blood,
Mines round the bark, and feeds upon the wood. 170
So, years successive, from perennial roots
The wire or bulb with lessen'd vigour shoots;
Till curled leaves, or barren flowers, betray
A waning lineage, verging to decay;
Or till, amended by connubial powers,
Rise seedling progenies from sexual flowers.

"E'en where unmix'd the breed, in sexual tribes
Parental taints the nascent babe imbibes;
Eternal war the Gout and Mania wage
With fierce uncheck'd hereditary rage; 180
Sad Beauty's form foul Scrofula surrounds
With bones distorted, and putrescent wounds;
[And, fell Consumption!](#) thy unerring dart
Wets its broad wing in Youth's reluctant heart.

"With pausing step, at night's refulgent noon,
Beneath the sparkling stars, and lucid moon,
Plung'd in the shade of some religious tower,
The slow bell counting the departed hour,
O'er gaping tombs where shed umbrageous Yews
On mouldering bones their cold unwholesome dewes;
190
While low aerial voices whisper round,
And moondrawn spectres dance upon the ground;
Poetic MELANCHOLY loves to tread,
And bend in silence o'er the countless Dead;
Marks with loud sobs infantine Sorrows rave,
And wring their pale hands o'er their Mother's grave;
Hears on the new-turn'd sod with gestures wild
The kneeling Beauty call her buried child;
Upbraid with timorous accents Heaven's decrees,

And with sad sighs augment the passing breeze. 200
'Stern Time,' She cries, 'receives from Nature's womb
Her beauteous births, and bears them to the tomb;
Calls all her sons from earth's remotest bourn,
And from the closing portals none return!'

V. URANIA paused—upturn'd her streaming eyes,
And her white bosom heaved with silent sighs;
With her the MUSE laments the sum of things,
And hides her sorrows with her meeting wings;
Long o'er the wrecks of lovely Life they weep,
Then pleased reflect, "to die is but to sleep;" 210
From Nature's coffins to her cradles turn,
Smile with young joy, with new affection burn.

And now the Muse, with mortal woes impress'd,
Thus the fair Hierophant again address'd.
—"Ah me! celestial Guide, thy words impart
Ills undeserved, that rend the nascent heart!
O, Goddess, say, if brighter scenes improve
Air-breathing tribes, and births of sexual love?"—
The smiling Fair obeys the inquiring Muse,
And in sweet tones her grateful task pursues. 220

"Now on broad pinions from the realms above
Descending CUPID seeks the Cyprian grove;
To his wide arms [enamour'd PSYCHE](#) springs,
And clasps her lover with aurelian wings.
A purple sash across His shoulder bends,
And fringed with gold the quiver'd shafts suspends;
The bending bow obeys the silken string,
And, as he steps, the silver arrows ring.
Thin folds of gauze with dim transparence flow
O'er HER fair forehead, and her neck of snow; 230
The winding woof her graceful limbs surrounds,
Swells in the breeze, and sweeps the velvet grounds;

As hand in hand along the flowery meads
His blushing bride the quiver'd hero leads;
Charm'd round their heads pursuing Zephyrs throng,
And scatter roses, as they move along;
Bright beams of Spring in soft effusion play,
And halcyon Hours invite them on their way.

"Delighted HYMEN hears their whisper'd vows,
And binds his chaplets round their polish'd brows, 240
Guides to his altar, ties the flowery bands,
And as they kneel, unites their willing hands.
'Behold, he cries, Earth! Ocean! Air above,
'And hail the DEITIES OF SEXUAL LOVE!
'All forms of Life shall this fond Pair delight,
'And sex to sex the willing world unite;
'Shed their sweet smiles in Earth's unsocial bowers,
'Fan with soft gales, and gild with brighter hours;
'Fill Pleasure's chalice unalloy'd with pain,
'And give SOCIETY his golden chain.' 250

"Now young DESIRES, on purple pinions borne,
Mount the warm gales of Manhood's rising morn;
With softer fires through virgin bosoms dart,
Flush the pale cheek, and goad the tender heart.
Ere the weak powers of transient Life decay,
And Heaven's ethereal image melts away;
LOVE with nice touch renews the organic frame,
Forms a young Ens, another and the same;
Gives from his rosy lips the vital breath,
And parries with his hand the shafts of death; 260
[While BEAUTY broods](#) with angel wings unfurl'd
O'er nascent life, and saves the sinking world.

"HENCE on green leaves the sexual Pleasures dwell,
And Loves and Beauties crowd the blossom's bell;
The wakeful Anther in his silken bed

O'er the pleased Stigma bows his waxen head;
With meeting lips and mingling smiles they sup
Ambrosial dewdrops [from the nectar'd cup](#);
Or buoy'd in air the plummy Lover springs,
And seeks his panting bride on Hymen-wings. 270

"The Stamen males, [with appetencies just](#),
Produce a formative prolific dust;
With apt propensities, the Styles recluse
Secrete a formative prolific juice;
These in the pericarp erewhile arrive,
Rush to each other, and embrace alive.
—Form'd by new powers progressive parts succeed,
Join in one whole, and swell into a seed.

"So in fond swarms the living Anthers shine
[Of bright Vallisner](#) on the wavy Rhine; 280
Break from their stems, and on the liquid glass
Surround the admiring stigmas as they pass;
The love-sick Beauties lift their essenced brows,
Sigh to the Cyprian queen their secret vows,
Like watchful Hero feel their soft alarms,
And clasp their floating lovers in their arms.

"Hence the male Ants their gauzy wings unfold,
[And young Lampyris](#) waves his plumes of gold;
The Glow-Worm sparkles with impassion'd light
On each green bank, and charms the eye of night;
290
While new desires the painted Snail perplex,
And twofold love unites the double sex.

"Hence, when the Morus in Italia's lands
To spring's warm beam its timid leaf expands;
The Silk-Worm broods in countless tribes above
Crop the green treasure, uninform'd of love;