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THE COMPLAINT, AND THE CONSOLATION; or, Night Thoughts,
by Edward Young, LL.D.

folio

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YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS

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THE COMPLAINT,

AND

THE CONSOLATION;

OR,

NIGHT THOUGHTS,

BY

EDWARD YOUNG, LL.D.

——fatis contraria fata rependens.

VIRG.

LONDON:
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ADVERTISEMENT.

In an age like the present of literature and of taste, in which the arts, fostered by the general patronage, have attained to growth beyond the experience of former times, no apology can be necessary for offering to the publick an embellished edition of an english classick; or for giving to the great work of Young some of those advantages of dress and ornament which have lately distinguished the immortal productions of Shakspeare and of Milton.

But it was not solely to increase the honours of the british press, or to add a splendid volume to the collections of the wealthy, that the editor was induced to adventure on the present undertaking. Not uninfluenced by professional, he acted also under the impulse of higher motives; and when he selected the

Night Thoughts for the subject of his projected decoration, he wished to make the arts, in their most honourable agency, subservient to the purposes of religion: and by their allurements to solicit the attention of the great for an enforcement of religious and moral truth, which can be ineffectual only as it may not be read.

From its first appearance in the world, this poem has united the suffrages of the critecks in the acknowledgment of its superior merit. If it has not been allowed to be the "sine labe "monstrum," it has been determined to be a composition of great and predominating excellence. Some dusky spots might be observed to float on its surface, but the mass in the whole was confessed to be luminous and burning: something in short might be objected to the judgment or the taste of Young: but the most daring spirit of detraction could never withhold from him the praise of powerful language: of deep knowledge: of a vivid and excursive imagination: of a mind at once vigorous and comprehensive, which could discriminate with the rectitude of philosophy, and adorn with the colouring of poetry. In this work, indeed, which in its structure is original, and in which, to use the author's own words, "the narrative is short, and the moral-"ity arising from it forms the bulk of the poem," the beauties are too numerous to admit of individual notice, and too striking to require particular distinction. In every page the reader finds

his attention held captive by poetry in its boldest and most successful exertion: every where is his imagination soothed with pleasing, or enlarged with grand imagery: every where does he see fancy binding flowers round the altar of truth, while reason in aweful pomp is presenting her sacrifice to heaven.

The principal charges which have been urged against this poem, and which in some degree may have affected its popularity, are the dark tints of its painting; and the obscurities which occasionally occur in it to retard the progress of the reader. With respect to the first of these objections, it must be admitted that, in the work before us, the great poet of christianity offers no flattery to the passions; and, conscious of the demands and dignity of his subject, is less careful to please than to improve; to conciliate than to impress and awe. To court the smile of thoughtless levity was altogether incompatible with the theme which he had chosen. The muse who

"To day's soft-eyed sister paid her court:"

who took her nightly walk among the tombs; and whose office it was to insist on the final termination of the pleasures, and the pride; the expectations, and the pursuits which refer only to this sublunary existence, must necessarily be a foe to that "laughter "which is mad;" and could not reasonably hope to be a favourite with the frivolous, the profligate, or the criminal: to her lighter sisters, who sport beneath the beams of the sun, and are con-

versant in the ranks of common life, must she resign the task of trivial and general entertainment: she presents to the eye nothing

" But solemn counsels, images of awe,
" Truths which eternity lets fall on man," &c.

With these, however, she must always obtain regard from the reflecting and the wise—from all, possessing the feelings proper to a creature like man, who, placed amid the difficulties and dangers of a state of moral trial, must soon render an account on which his everlasting condition is to depend. The gloominess of the NIGHT THOUGHTS respects, indeed, only the sense, and vanishes from the reason—it is nothing more than the mitigated day of a majestick grove, which invites to meditation, and after a short interval of shade opens into strong and full light.

From the imputation of obscurity it may not, perhaps, be equally easy to vindicate the pages of our author. Throughout the poem there prevails a studied and ambitious brevity of expression; the source of much vigour, but the source also of occasional obscurity. The thought in some passages over-informs the language, and " more is actually meant than meets the " ear:" in some passages, while he is conscious of the connexion of his own sense, the poet seems not sufficiently careful to disclose it to his readers; and in some again, though it must be allowed in very few, he appears not to have been perfectly clear

in the distinction and developement of his ideas; or to have involved them in a perplexed and entangled construction of sentence. Instances, however, of obscurity from these latter causes are extremely rare, and may as frequently perhaps be discovered in the writings of our most correct poets, as in the NIGHT THOUGHTS. But if to this fault, on its admission, be added some others which may be discoverable by critical observation, the whole mass of delinquency will be comparatively small; and can be regarded as scarcely of any account when balanced against the weighty and shining merits, poetical and moral, of this noble composition. It may here be proper to remark that this is acknowledged, by the most determined *advocates of rhyme*, to be one of the few poems in our language in which blank verse affords general pleasure, and " could not be changed for rhyme " but with disadvantage." *

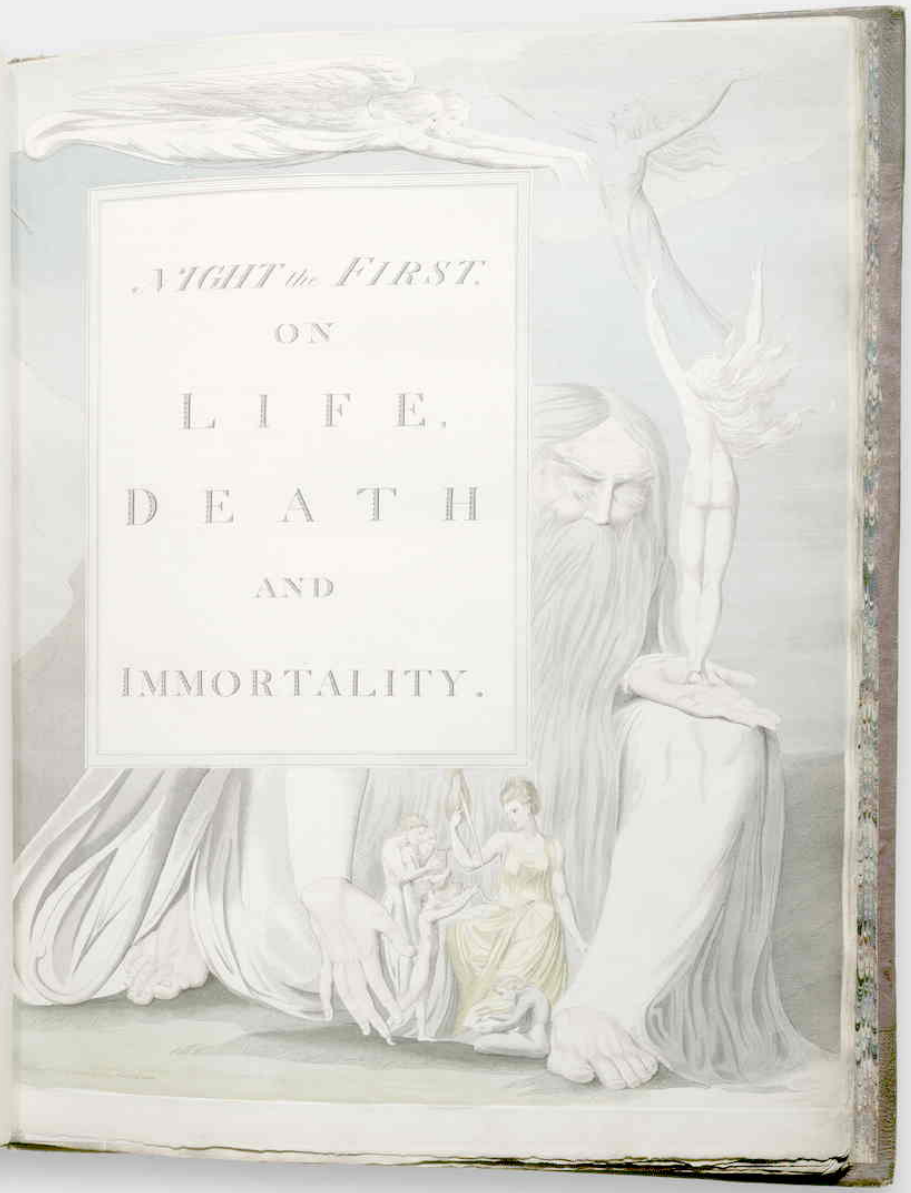
On the immediate subject of the present edition of this valuable work the editor has only to say that he has shrunk from no expence in the preparing of it; and that to make it as worthy in every respect as possible of the public favour has been the object of his particular and solicitous attention. It has been regarded by him, indeed, not as a speculation of advantage, but as an indulgence of inclination;—as an undertaking in which

* Johnson's Lives of the Poets.

fondness and partiality would not permit him to be curiously accurate in adjusting the estimate of profit and loss. If this edition, therefore, of the NIGHT THOUGHTS be found deficient in any essential requisite to its perfection, the circumstance must be imputed to some other cause, than to the œconomy or the negligence of the editor.

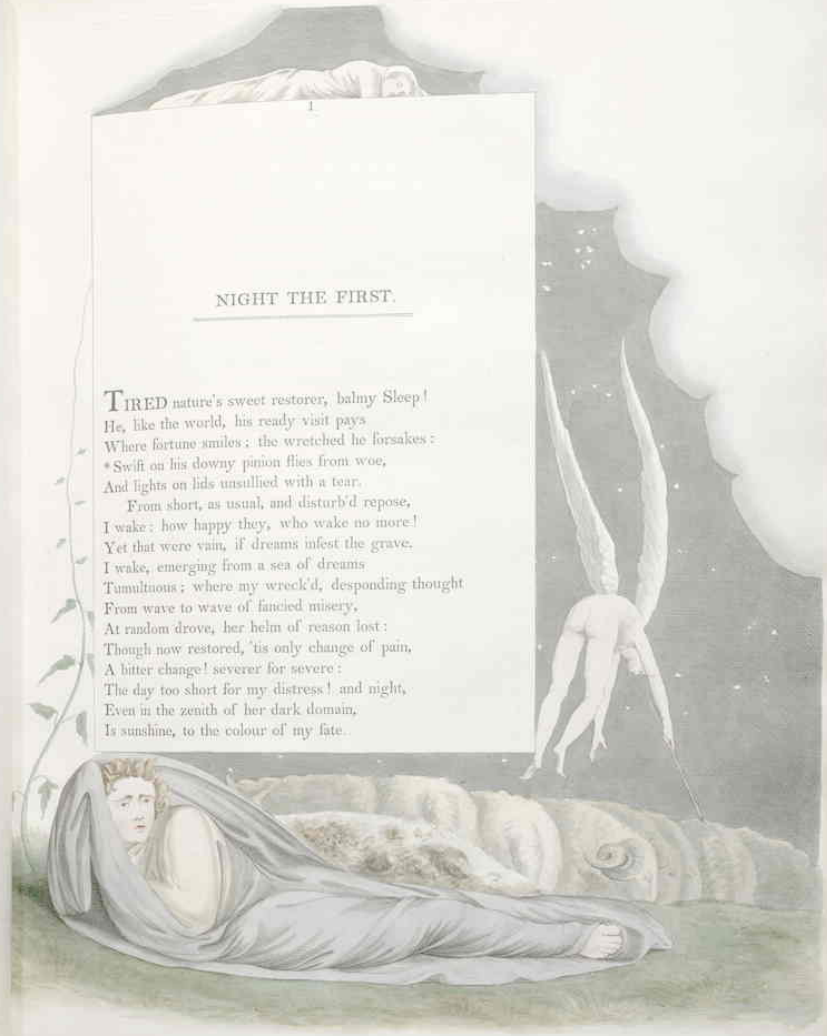
Of the merit of Mr. Blake in those designs which form not only the ornament of the page, but, in many instances, the illustration of the poem, the editor conceives it to be unnecessary to speak. To the eyes of the discerning it need not be pointed out; and while a taste for the arts of design shall continue to exist, the original conception, and the bold and masterly execution of this artist cannot be unnoticed or unadmired.

Dec. 22d. 1796.



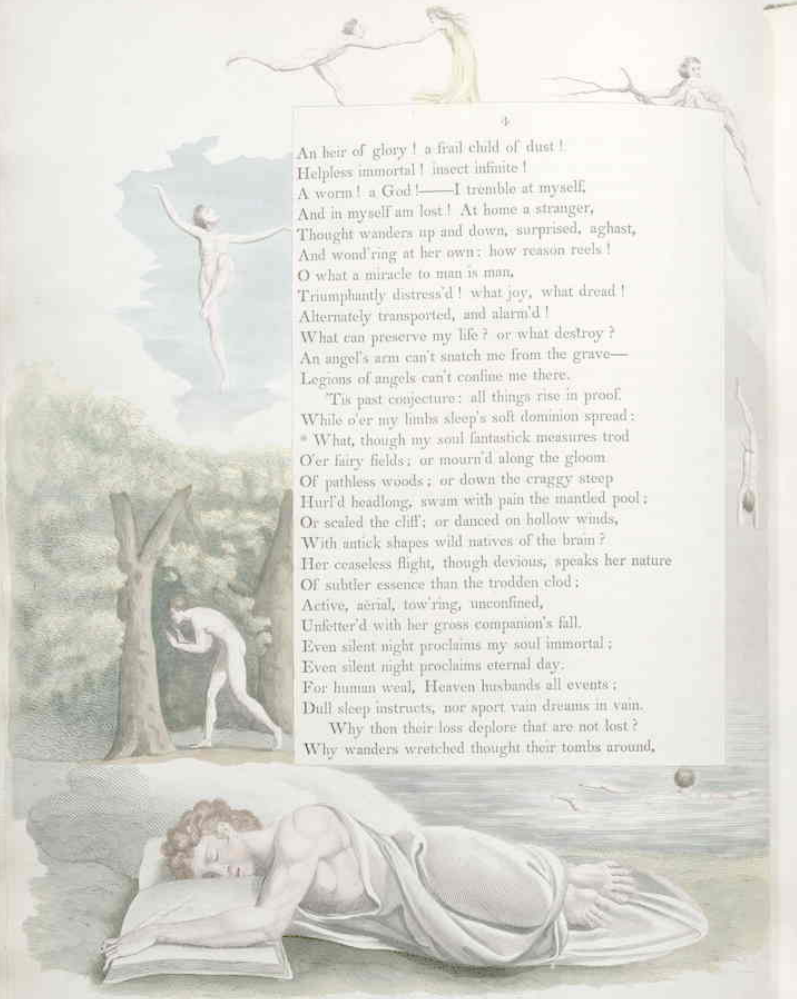
NIGHT THE FIRST.

TIRED nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep!
He, like the world, his ready visit pays
Where fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes:
Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsullied with a tear.
From short, as usual, and disturb'd repose,
I wake: how happy they, who wake no more!
Yet that were vain, if dreams infest the grave.
I wake, emerging from a sea of dreams
Tumultuous; where my wreck'd, desponding thought
From wave to wave of fancied misery,
At random drove, her helm of reason lost:
Though now restored, 'tis only change of pain,
A bitter change! severer for severe:
The day too short for my distress! and night,
Even in the zenith of her dark domain,
Is sunshine, to the colour of my fate.



Night, sable goddess! from her ebon throne,
In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumb'ring world:
Silence, how dead! and darkness, how profound!
Nor eye, nor list'ning ear an object finds;
Creation sleeps. 'Tis, as the general pulse
Of life stood still, and nature made a pause;
An awful pause! prophetick of her end.
And let her prophecy be soon fulfill'd;
Fate! drop the curtain; I can lose no more.
Silence, and Darkness! solemn sisters! twins
From ancient night, who nurse the tender thought
To reason, and on reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man,
Assist me: I will thank you in the grave—
The grave, your kingdom: there this frame shall fall
A victim sacred to your dreary shrine:
But what are ye? THOU, who didst put to flight
Primeval silence, when the morning stars,
Exulting, shouted o'er the rising ball;
O THOU! whose word from solid darkness struck
That spark, the sun; strike wisdom from my soul—
My soul, which flies to THEE, her trust, her treasure,
As misers to their gold, while others rest.
Through this opaque of nature, and of soul,
This double night, transmit one pitying ray,
To lighten, and to cheer: O lead my mind,
A mind that fain would wander from its woe,
Lead it through various scenes of life, and death;
And from each scene, the noblest truths inspire:

Nor less inspire my conduct, than my song:
Teach my best reason, reason; my best will
Teach rectitude; and fix my firm resolve
Wisdom to wed, and pay her long arrear:
Nor let the phial of thy vengeance, pour'd
On this devoted head, be pour'd in vain.
The bell strikes one! We take no note of time,
But from its loss: to give it then a tongue,
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,
It is the knell of my departed hours:
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood:
It is the signal that demands dispatch:
How much is to be done! My hopes and fears
Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—On what? A fathomless abyss!
A dread eternity! how surely mine!
And can eternity belong to me,
Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour?
How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is man!
How passing wonder HE, who made him such!
Who centred in our make such strange extremes?
From different natures marvellously mix'd,
Connexion exquisite of distant worlds!
Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!
Midway from nothing to the Deity!
A beam ethereal, sullied, and absorb'd!
Though sullied and dishonour'd, still divine!
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!

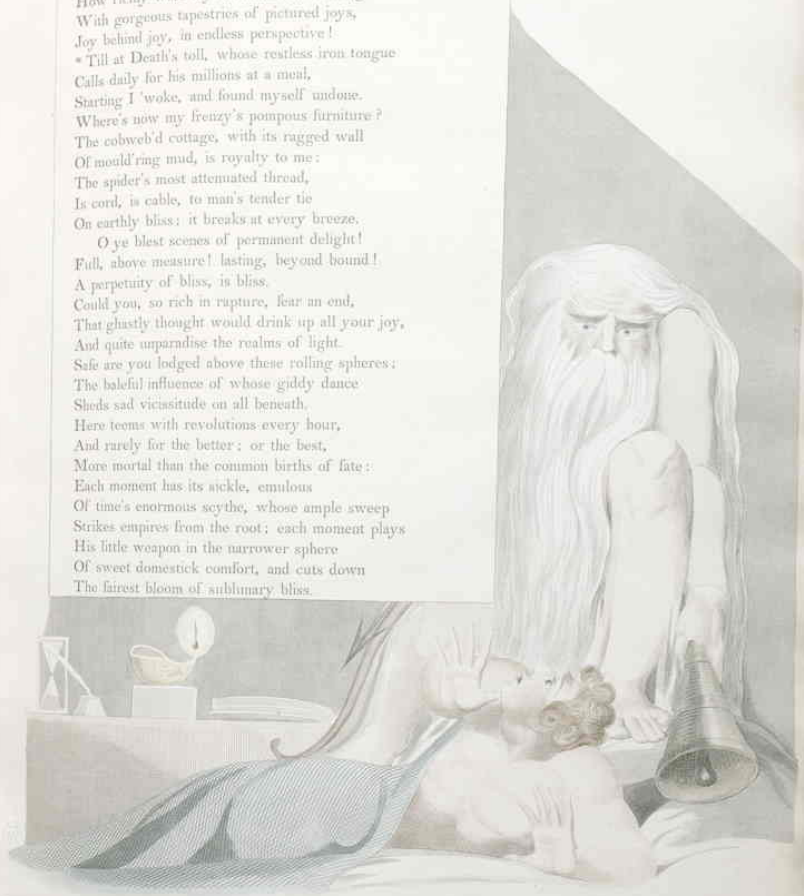


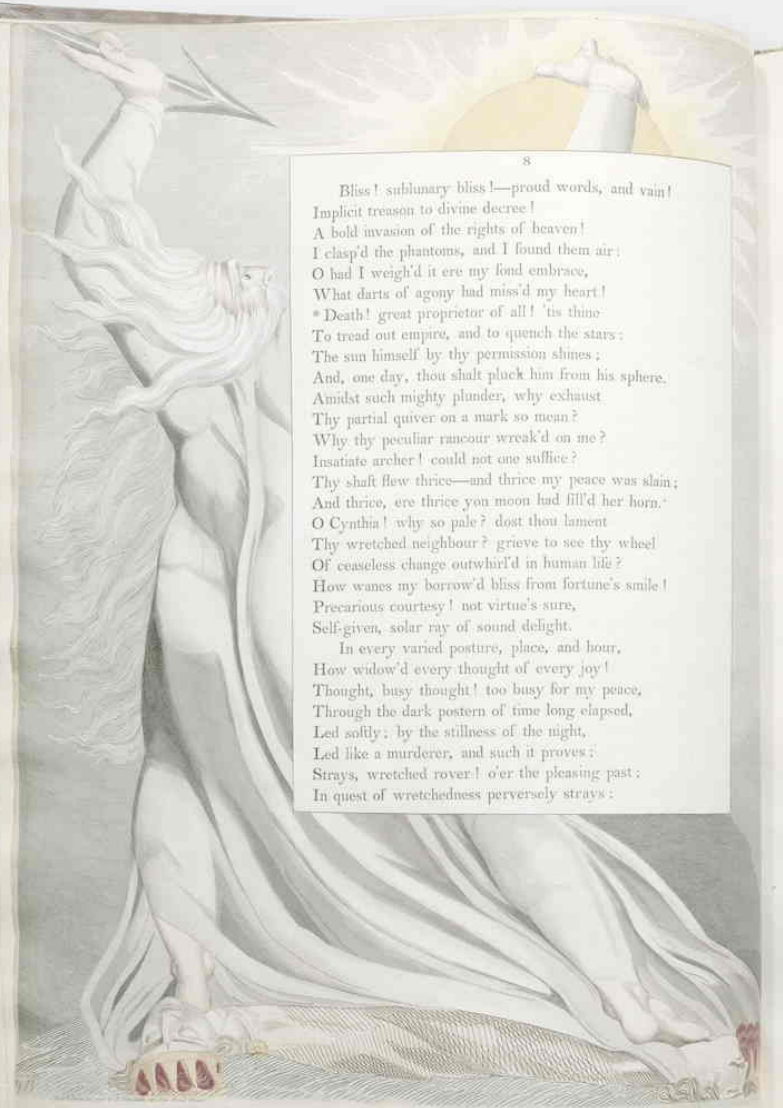
An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!
Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
A worm! a God!——I tremble at myself,
And in myself am lost! At home a stranger,
Thought wanders up and down, surprised, aghast,
And wond'ring at her own: how reason reels!
O what a miracle to man is man,
Triumphantly distress'd! what joy, what dread!
Alternately transported, and alarm'd!
What can preserve my life? or what destroy?
An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave—
Legions of angels can't confine me there.
'Tis past conjecture: all things rise in proof.
While o'er my limbs sleep's soft dominion spread:
What, though my soul fantastick measures trod
O'er fairy fields; or mourn'd along the gloom
Of pathless woods; or down the craggy steep
Hurl'd headlong, swam with pain the mantled pool;
Or scaled the cliff; or danced on hollow winds,
With antick shapes wild natives of the brain?
Her ceaseless flight, though devious, speaks her nature
Of subtler essence than the trodden clod;
Active, aerial, tow'ring, unconfined,
Unfetter'd with her gross companion's fall.
Even silent night proclaims my soul immortal;
Even silent night proclaims eternal day.
For human weal, Heaven husbands all events;
Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain.
Why then their loss deplore that are not lost?
Why wanders wretched thought their tombs around,

In infidel distress? Are angels there?
Slumbers, raked up in dust, ethereal fire?
They live! they greatly live a life on earth
Unkindled, unconceived! and from an eye
Of tenderness, let heavenly pity fall
On me, more justly number'd with the dead.
This is the desart, this the solitude:
How populous, how vital, is the grave!
This is creation's melancholy vault,
The vale funereal, the sad cypress gloom;
The land of apparitions, empty shades!
All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond
Is substance: the reverse is folly's creed:
How solid all, where change shall be no more!
This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,
The twilight of our day, the vestibule;
Life's theatre as yet is shut, and death,
Strong death alone can heave the massy bar,
This gross impediment of clay remove,
And make us, embryos of existence, free.
From real life, but little more remote
Is he, not yet a candidate for light,
The future embryo, slumb'ring in his sire:
Embryos we must be, till we burst the shell,
Yon ambient azure shell, and spring to life,
The life of gods, O transport! and of man.
Yet man, fool man! here buries all his thoughts;
Inters celestial hopes without one sigh:
Pris'ner of earth, and pent beneath the moon,
Here pinions all his wishes; wing'd by heaven

To fly at infinite; and reach it there,
Where seraphs gather immortality
On life's fair tree, fast by the throne of GOD.
What golden joys ambrosial clust'ring glow
In HIS full beam, and ripen for the just—
Where momentary ages are no more!
Where time, and pain, and chance, and death expire!
And is it in the flight of threescore years,
To push eternity from human thought,
And smother souls immortal in the dust?
A soul immortal, spending all her fires,
Wasting her strength in strenuous idleness,
Thrown into tumult, raptured, or alarm'd
At aught this scene can threaten, or indulge,
Resembles ocean into tempest wrought,
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly.
Where falls this censure? It o'erwhelms myself:
How was my heart incrusted by the world!
O how self-fetter'd was my groveling soul!
How, like a worm, was I wrapt round and round
In silken thought, which reptile fancy spun;
Till darken'd reason lay quite clouded o'er
With soft conceit of endless comfort here,
Nor yet put forth her wings to reach the skies!
Night-visions may befriend, as sung above:
Our waking dreams are fatal: how I dreamt
Of things impossible! could sleep do more?
Of joys perpetual in perpetual change!
Of stable pleasures on the tossing wave!
Eternal sunshine in the storms of life!

How richly were my noontide trances hung
With gorgeous tapestries of pictured joys,
Joy behind joy, in endless perspective!
Till at Death's toll, whose restless iron tongue
Calls daily for his millions at a meal,
Starting I 'woke, and found myself undone.
Where's now my frenzy's pompous furniture?
The cobweb'd cottage, with its ragged wall
Of mould'ring mud, is royalty to me:
The spider's most attenuate thread,
Is cord, is cable, to man's tender tie
On earthly bliss: it breaks at every breeze.
O ye blest scenes of permanent delight!
Full, above measure! lasting, beyond bound!
A perpetuity of bliss, is bliss.
Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an end,
That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy,
And quite unparadise the realms of light.
Safe are you lodged above these rolling spheres:
The baleful influence of whose giddy dance
Sheds sad vicissitude on all beneath.
Here teems with revolutions every hour,
And rarely for the better; or the best,
More mortal than the common births of fate:
Each moment has its sickle, emulous
Of time's enormous scythe, whose ample sweep
Strikes empires from the root; each moment plays
His little weapon in the narrower sphere
Of sweet domestick comfort, and cuts down
The fairest bloom of sublunary bliss.





Bliss! sublunary bliss!—proud words, and vain!
Implicit treason to divine decree!
A bold invasion of the rights of heaven!
I clasp'd the phantoms, and I found them air:
O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace,
What darts of agony had miss'd my heart!
* Death! great proprietor of all! 'tis thine
To tread out empire, and to quench the stars:
The sun himself by thy permission shines;
And, one day, thou shalt pluck him from his sphere.
Amidst such mighty plunder, why exhaust
Thy partial quiver on a mark so mean?
Why thy peculiar rancour wreak'd on me?
Insatiate archer! could not one suffice?
Thy shaft flew thrice—and thrice my peace was slain;
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.
O Cynthia! why so pale? dost thou lament
Thy wretched neighbour? grieve to see thy wheel
Of ceaseless change outwhirl'd in human life?
How wanes my borrow'd bliss from fortune's smile!
Precarious courtesy! not virtue's sure,
Self-given, solar ray of sound delight.
In every varied posture, place, and hour,
How widow'd every thought of every joy!
Thought, busy thought! too busy for my peace,
Through the dark postern of time long elapsed,
Led softly; by the stillness of the night,
Led like a murderer, and such it proves:
Strays, wretched rover! o'er the pleasing past:
In quest of wretchedness perversely strays:

And finds all desert now; and meets the ghosts
Of my departed joys, a numerous train!
I rue the riches of my former fate:
Sweet comfort's blasted clusters I lament:
I tremble at the blessings once so dear;
And every pleasure pains me to the heart.
Yet why complain? or why complain for one?
Hangs out the sun his lustre but for me,
The single man? are angels all beside?
I mourn for millions—'tis the common lot:
In this shape, or in that, has fate entail'd
The mother's throes on all of woman born,
Not more the children, than sure heirs of pain.
War, famine, pest, volcano, storm, and fire,
Intestine broils, oppression, with her heart
Wrapt up in triple brass, besiege mankind:
GOD's image, disinherited of day,
Here, plunged in mines, forgets a sun was made;
There, beings, deathless as their haughty lord,
Are hammer'd to the galling oar for life;
And plough the winter's wave, and reap despair:
Some, for hard masters broken under arms,
In battle lopp'd away, with half their limbs
Beg bitter bread through realms their valour saved,
If so the tyrant, or his minions doom.
Want and incurable disease, fell pair!
On hopeless multitudes remorseless seize
At once; and make a refuge of the grave:
How groaning hospitals eject their dead!
What numbers groan for sad admission there!

What numbers, once in fortune's lap high-fed,
Solicit the cold hand of charity—
To shock us more—solicit it in vain!
Ye silken sons of pleasure! since in pains
You rue more modish visits, visit here,
And breathe from your debauch: give, and reduce
Surfeit's dominion o'er you—but so great
Your impudence, you blush at what is right.
    Happy! did sorrow seize on such alone:
Not prudence can defend, or virtue save:
* Disease invades the chastest temperance,
And punishment the guiltless; and alarm,
Through thickest shades pursues the fond of peace.
Man's caution often into danger turns,
And, his guard falling, crushes him to death.
Not happiness itself makes good her name;
Our very wishes give us not our wish:
How distant oft the thing we doat on most,
From that for which we doat, felicity!
The smoothest course of nature has its pains:
And truest friends, through error, wound our rest.
Without misfortune—what calamities!
And what hostilities—without a foe!
Nor are foes wanting to the best on earth:
But endless is the list of human ills,
And sighs might sooner fail, than cause to sigh.
    A part how small of the terraqueous globe
Is tenanted by man! the rest a waste;
Rocks, deserts, frozen seas, and burning sands—
Wild haunts of monsters, poisons, stings, and death:

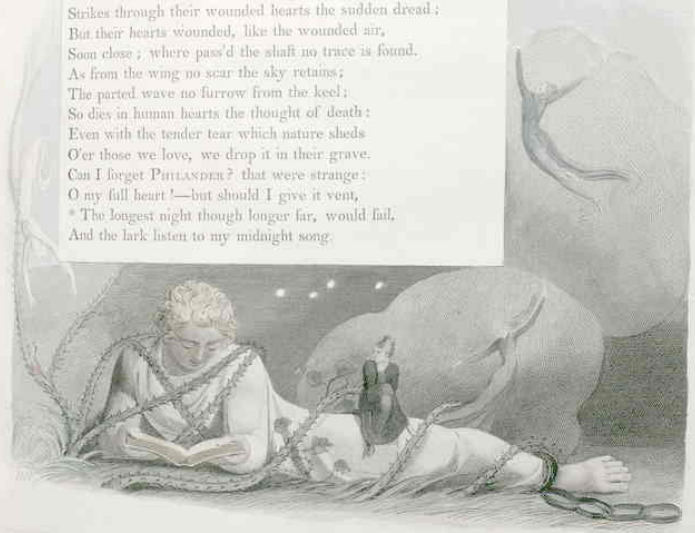
Such is earth's melancholy map! but, far
More sad, this earth is a true map of man:
So bounded are its haughty lord's delights
To woe's wide empire; where deep troubles toss,
Loud sorrows howl, envenom'd passions bite,
Ravenous calamities our vitals seize,
And threatening fate wide opens to devour.
    What then am I, who sorrow for myself?
In age, in infancy, from others aid
Is all our hope—to teach us to be kind—
That, nature's first, last lesson to mankind:
The selfish heart deserves the pain it feels;
More generous sorrow, while it sinks, exalts:
And conscious virtue mitigates the pang:
Nor virtue, more than prudence, bids me give
Swoln thought a second channel; who divide,
They weaken too the torrent of their grief.
Take then, O world! thy much-indebted tear:
How sad a sight is human happiness
To those, whose thought can pierce beyond an hour!
O thou! whate'er thou art, whose heart exults!
Wouldst thou I should congratulate thy fate?
I know thou wouldst; thy pride demands it from me:
Let thy pride pardon, what thy nature needs—
The salutary censure of a friend.
Thou happy wretch! by blindness thou art blest;
By dotage dandled to perpetual smiles:
Know, smiler, at thy peril art thou pleased;
Thy pleasure is the promise of thy pain:
Misfortune, like a creditor severe,

But rises in demand for her delay:
She makes a scourge of past prosperity
To sting thee more, and double thy distress.
    Lorenzo, fortune makes her court to thee;
Thy fond heart dances, while the syren sings:
Dear is thy welfare; think me not unkind,
I would not damp, but to secure thy joys:
Think not that fear is sacred to the storm:
Stand on thy guard against the smiles of fate.
Is heaven tremendous in its frowns? most sure—
And in its favours formidable too:
* Its favours here are trials, not rewards;
A call to duty, not discharge from care;
And should alarm us, full as much as woes;
Awake us to their cause and consequence;
And make us tremble, weigh'd with our desert.
Awe nature's tumults, and chastise her joys,
Lest, while we clasp, we kill them; nay, invert
To worse than simple misery their charms:
Revolted joys, like foes in civil war,
Like bosom friendships to resentment sour'd,
With rage envenom'd rise against our peace.
Beware what earth calls happiness; beware
All joys, but joys that never can expire:
Who builds on less than an immortal base,
Fond as he seems, condemns his joys to death.
    Mine died with thee, Philander! thy last sigh
Dissolved the charm: the disenchanted earth
Lost all her lustre: where her glitt'ring towers?
Her golden mountains where?—all darken'd down

To naked waste; a dreary vale of tears:
The great magician's dead! thou poor pale piece
Of outcast earth—in darkness! what a change
From yesterday! thy darling hope so near,
Long-labour'd prize, O how ambition flush'd
Thy glowing cheek! ambition, truly great,
Of virtuous praise: death's subtle seed within,
Sly, treacherous miner! working in the dark,
Smiled at thy well-concerted scheme, and beckon'd
The worm to riot on that rose so red,
Unfaded ere it fell—one moment's prey!
    Man's foresight is conditionally wise;
Lorenzo! wisdom into folly turns
Oft, the first instant its idea fair
To lab'ring thought is born: how dim our eye!
* The present moment terminates our sight:
Clouds, thick as those on doomsday, drown the next;
We penetrate, we prophesy in vain:
Time is dealt out by particles; and each,
Ere mingled with the streaming sands of life,
By fate's inviolable oath is sworn
Deep silence, "where eternity begins."
    By nature's law, what may be, may be now;
There's no prerogative in human hours:
In human hearts what bolder thought can rise,
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?
Where is to-morrow?—in another world!
For numbers this is certain; the reverse
Is sure to none; and yet on this perhaps,
This peradventure—infamous for lies,

As on a rock of adamant we build
Our mountain hopes; spin our eternal schemes,
As we the fatal sisters would outspin,
And, big with life's futurities, expire.
Not even Philander had bespoke his shroud,
Nor had he cause; a warning was denied:
How many fall as sudden—not as safe!
As sudden, though for years admonish'd home.
Of human ills the last extreme beware,
Beware, Lorenzo! a slow-sudden death:
How dreadful that deliberate surprise!
Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life:
Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled;
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene:
If not so frequent, would not this be strange?
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.
Of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears
The palm, "That all men are about to live"—
For ever on the brink of being born.
All pay themselves the compliment to think
They one day shall not drivel; and their pride
On this reversion takes up ready praise,
At least their own, their future selves applauds:
How excellent that life they ne'er will lead!
Time lodged in their own hands is folly's vails;
That lodged in fate's, to wisdom they consign;

The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone:
'Tis not in folly, not to scorn a fool;
And scarce in human wisdom to do more:
All promise is poor dilatory man,
And that through every stage: when young, indeed,
In full content we sometimes nobly rest,
Unanxious for ourselves; and only wish,
As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise:
At thirty man suspects himself a fool;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;
At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves, and re-resolves; then dies the same.
And why? because he thinks himself immortal:
All men think all men mortal, but themselves;
Themselves;—when some alarming shock of fate
Strikes through their wounded hearts the sudden dread;
But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,
Soon close; where pass'd the shaft no trace is found.
As from the wing no scar the sky retains;
The parted wave no furrow from the keel;
So dies in human hearts the thought of death:
Even with the tender tear which nature sheds
O'er those we love, we drop it in their grave.
Can I forget Philander? that were strange:
O my full heart!—but should I give it vent,
The longest night though longer far, would fail,
And the lark listen to my midnight song.



The sprightly lark's shrill matin wakes the morn,
Grief's sharpest thorn hard pressing on my breast;
I strive, with wakeful melody, to cheer
The sullen gloom, sweet philomel! like thee,
And call the stars to listen; every star
Is deaf to mine, enamour'd of thy lay:
Yet be not vain; there are, who thine excel,
And charm through distant ages: wrapp'd in shade,
Pris'ner of darkness! to the silent hours,
How often I repeat their rage divine,
To lull my griefs, and steal my heart from woe!
I roll their raptures, but not catch their fire:
Dark, though not blind, like thee Mæonides!
Or, Milton! thee; ah, could I reach your strain!
Or his, who made Mæonides our own:
Man too he sung—immortal man I sing:
* Oft bursts my song beyond the bounds of life;
What now, but immortality, can please?
O had he press'd his theme, pursued the track,
Which opens out of darkness into day!
O had he mounted on his wing of fire,
Soar'd, where I sink, and sung immortal man!
How had it bless'd mankind, and rescued me!

NIGHT the SECOND

ON

TIME.

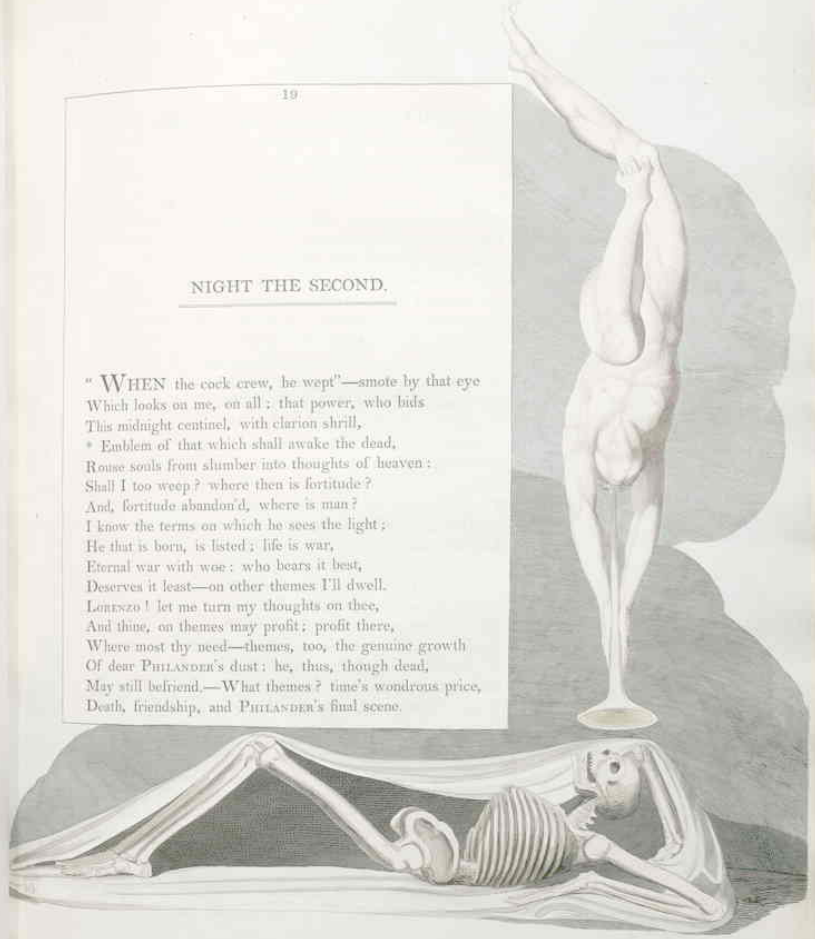
DEATH

AND

FRIENDSHIP.

NIGHT THE SECOND.

"WHEN the cock crew, he wept"—smote by that eye
Which looks on me, on all: that power, who bids
This midnight sentinel, with clarion shrill,
* Emblem of that which shall awake the dead,
Rouse souls from slumber into thoughts of heaven:
Shall I too weep? where then is fortitude?
And, fortitude abandon'd, where is man?
I know the terms on which he sees the light;
He that is born, is listed; life is war,
Eternal war with woe: who bears it best,
Deserves it least—on other themes I'll dwell.
LORENZO! let me turn my thoughts on thee,
And thine, on themes may profit; profit there,
Where most thy need—themes, too, the genuine growth
Of dear PHILANDER's dust: he, thus, though dead,
May still befriend.—What themes? time's wondrous price,
Death, friendship, and PHILANDER's final scene.

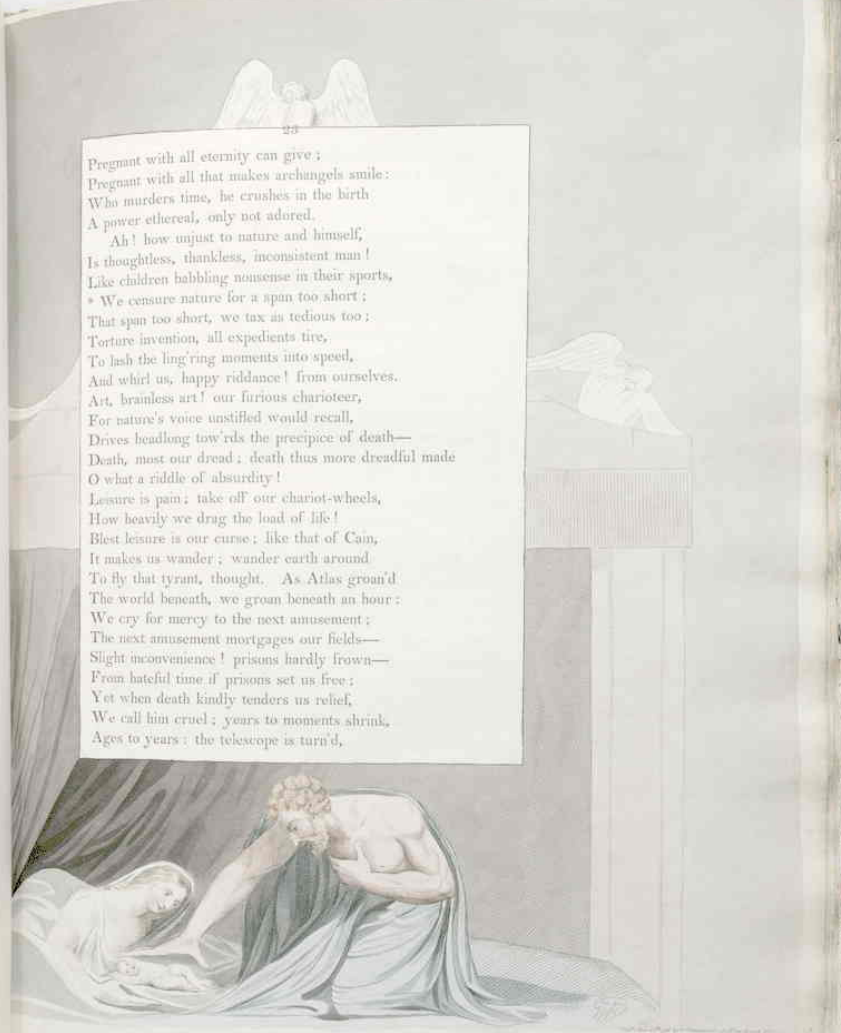


So could I touch these themes, as might obtain
Thine ear, nor leave thy heart quite disengaged,
The good deed would delight me; half impress
On my dark cloud an iris; and from grief
Call glory:—dost thou mourn Philander's fate?
I know thou say'st it: says thy life the same?
He mourns the dead, who lives as they desire.
Where is that thrift, that avarice of time,
O glorious avarice! thought of death inspires,
As rumour'd robberies endear our gold?
O time! than gold more sacred; more a load
Than lead, to fools; and fools reputed wise:
What moment granted man without account?
What years are squander'd, wisdom's debt unpaid!
Our wealth in days all due to that discharge.
Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he's at the door,
Insidious death! should his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the pris'ner free:
Eternity's inexorable chain
Fast binds, and vengeance claims the full arrear.
How late I shudder'd on the brink! how late
Life call'd for her last refuge in despair!
That time is mine, O Mead! to thee I owe;
Fain would I pay thee with eternity:
But ill my genius answers my desire;
My sickly song is mortal, past thy cure:
Accept the will—that dies not with my strain.
For what calls thy disease, Lorenzo? not
For esculapian, but for moral aid:
Thou think'st it folly to be wise too soon.

Youth is not rich in time; it may be, poor;
Part with it as with money—sparing; pay
No moment but in purchase of its worth;
And what its worth, ask death-beds; they can tell:
Part with it as with life—reluctant; big
With holy hope of nobler time to come;
Time higher aim'd, still nearer the great mark
Of men and angels—virtue more divine.
Is this our duty, wisdom, glory, gain?
These Heaven benign in vital union binds;
And sport we like the natives of the bough,
When vernal suns inspire? amusement reigns
Man's great demand; to trifle is to live:
And is it then a trifle too—to die?
Thou say'st I preach, Lorenzo! 'tis confess'd:
What, if for once I preach thee quite awake?
Who wants amusement in the flame of battle?
Is it not treason to the soul immortal,
Her foes in arms, eternity the prize?
Will toys amuse, when med'cines cannot cure?
When spirits ebb, when life's enchanting scenes
Their lustre lose, and lessen in our sight,
As lands and cities with their glitt'ring spires,
To the poor shatter'd bark, by sudden storm
Thrown off to sea, and soon to perish there:
Will toys amuse?—No: thrones will then be toys,
And earth and skies seem dust upon the scale.
Redeem we time?—Its loss we dearly buy:
What pleads Lorenzo for his high-prized sports?
He pleads time's numerous blanks; he loudly pleads

The straw-like trifles on life's common stream:
From whom those blanks and trifles, but from thee?
No blank, no trifle nature made, or meant.
Virtue, or purposed virtue, still be thine:
This cancels thy complaint at once, this leaves
In act no trifle, and no blank in time:
This greatens, fills, immortalizes all;
This, the blest art of turning all to gold;
This, the good heart's prerogative to raise
A royal tribute from the poorest hours:
Immense revenue! every moment pays.
If nothing more than purpose in thy power;
Thy purpose firm, is equal to the deed:
Who does the best his circumstance allows,
Does well, acts nobly;—angels could no more.
Our outward act, indeed, admits restraint:
'Tis not in things o'er thought to domineer:
Guard well thy thought; our thoughts are heard in heaven.
On all-important time, through every age,
Though much, and warm, the wise have urged: the man
Is yet unborn, who duly weighs an hour.
"I've lost a day"—the prince who nobly cried,
Had been an emperor without his crown—
Of Rome? say rather, lord of human race;
He spoke, as if deputed by mankind:
So should all speak; so reason speaks in all:
From the soft whispers of that God in man,
Why fly to folly, why to frenzy fly,
For rescue from the blessings we possess?
Time, the supreme!—Time is eternity;

Pregnant with all eternity can give;
Pregnant with all that makes archangels smile:
Who murders time, he crushes in the birth
A power ethereal, only not adored.
Ah! how unjust to nature and himself,
Is thoughtless, thankless, inconsistent man!
Like children babbling nonsense in their sports,
We censure nature for a span too short;
That span too short, we tax as tedious too:
Torture invention, all expedients tire,
To lash the ling'ring moments into speed,
And whirl us, happy riddance! from ourselves.
Art, brainless art! our furious charioteer,
For nature's voice unstifled would recall,
Drives headlong tow'rds the precipice of death—
Death, most our dread; death thus more dreadful made
O what a riddle of absurdity!
Leisure is pain; take off our chariot-wheels,
How heavily we drag the load of life!
Blest leisure is our curse; like that of Cain,
It makes us wander; wander earth around
To fly that tyrant, thought. As Atlas groan'd
The world beneath, we groan beneath an hour:
We cry for mercy to the next amusement;
The next amusement mortgages our fields—
Slight inconvenience! prisons hardly frown—
From hateful time if prisons set us free:
Yet when death kindly tenders us relief,
We call him cruel; years to moments shrink,
Ages to years; the telescope is turn'd,



To man's false opticks, from his folly false,
* Time, in advance, behind him hides his wings,
And seems to creep decrepit with his age:
Behold him, when past by: what then is seen,
But his broad pinions swifter than the winds?
And all mankind, in contradiction strong,
Rueful—aghast—cry out on his career.
    Leave to thy foes these errors, and these ills;
To nature just, their cause and cure explore.
Not short Heaven's bounty, boundless our expence;
No niggard nature: men are prodigals:
We waste, not use our time: we breathe, not live:
Time wasted is existence, used is life:
And bare existence, man, to live ordain'd,
Wrings and oppresses with enormous weight:
And why? since time was given for use, not waste,
Enjoin'd to fly: with tempest, tide, and stars
To keep his speed, nor ever wait for man:
Time's use was doom'd a pleasure; waste, a pain;
That man might feel his error, if unseen:
And, feeling, fly to labour for his cure;
Not, blund'ring, split on idleness for ease.
Life's cares are comforts, such by Heaven design'd;
He that has none, must make them, or be wretched.
Cares are employments; and without employ
The soul is on the rack: the rack of rest,
To souls most adverse: action all their joy.
    Here, then, the riddle mark'd above, unfolds;
Then time turns torment, when man turns a fool:
We rave, we wrestle with great nature's plan;

We thwart the DEITY: and 'tis decreed,
Who thwart his will shall contradict their own:
Hence our unnatural quarrel with ourselves;
Our thoughts at enmity: our bosom-broil:
We push time from us, and we wish him back;
Lavish of lustrums, and yet fond of life:
Life we think long, and short; death seek, and shun;
Body and soul, like peevish man and wife,
United jar, and yet are loth to part.
    Oh the dark days of vanity! while here,
How tasteless! and how terrible when gone!
Gone! they ne'er go: when past, they haunt us still;
The spirit walks of every day deceased;
And smiles an angel, or a fury frowns:
Nor death, nor life delight us—if time past,
And time possess'd, both pain us, what can please?
That which the DEITY to please ordain'd—
Time used: the man who consecrates his hours
By vigorous effort and an honest aim,
At once he draws the sting of life and death;
He walks with nature—and her paths are peace.
    Our error's cause and cure are seen: see next
Time's nature, origin, importance, speed:
And thy great gain from urging his career.
All-sensual man, because untouch'd, unseen,
He looks on time as nothing: nothing else
Is truly man's: 'tis fortune's—Time's a God:
Hast thou ne'er heard of time's omnipotence?
For, or against, what wonders can he do—
And will! to stand blank neuter he disdains.

Not on those terms was time, heaven's stranger, sent
On his important embassy to man.
Lorenzo! no: on the long-destined hour,
From everlasting ages growing ripe,
That memorable hour of wondrous birth,
When the DREAD SIRE, on emanation bent,
And big with nature, rising in his might,
Call'd forth creation, for then time was born,
By godhead streaming through a thousand worlds;
Not on those terms, from the great days of heaven,
From old eternity's mysterious orb,
Was time cut off, and cast beneath the skies;
The skies, which watch him in his new abode,
* Measuring his motions by revolving spheres;
That horologe machinery divine:
Hours, days, and months, and years, his children play,
Like numerous wings, around him, as he flies;
Or rather, as unequal plumes they shape
His ample pinions, swift as darted flame,
To gain his goal, to reach his ancient rest,
And join anew eternity his sire;
In his immutability to nest,
When worlds, that count his circles now, unhinged,
Fate the loud signal sounding, headlong rush
To timeless night and chaos, whence they rose.
    Why spur the speedy? why with levities
New-wing thy short, short day's too rapid flight?
Know'st thou, or what thou dost, or what is done?
Man flies from time, and time from man, too soon
In sad divorce this double flight must end:

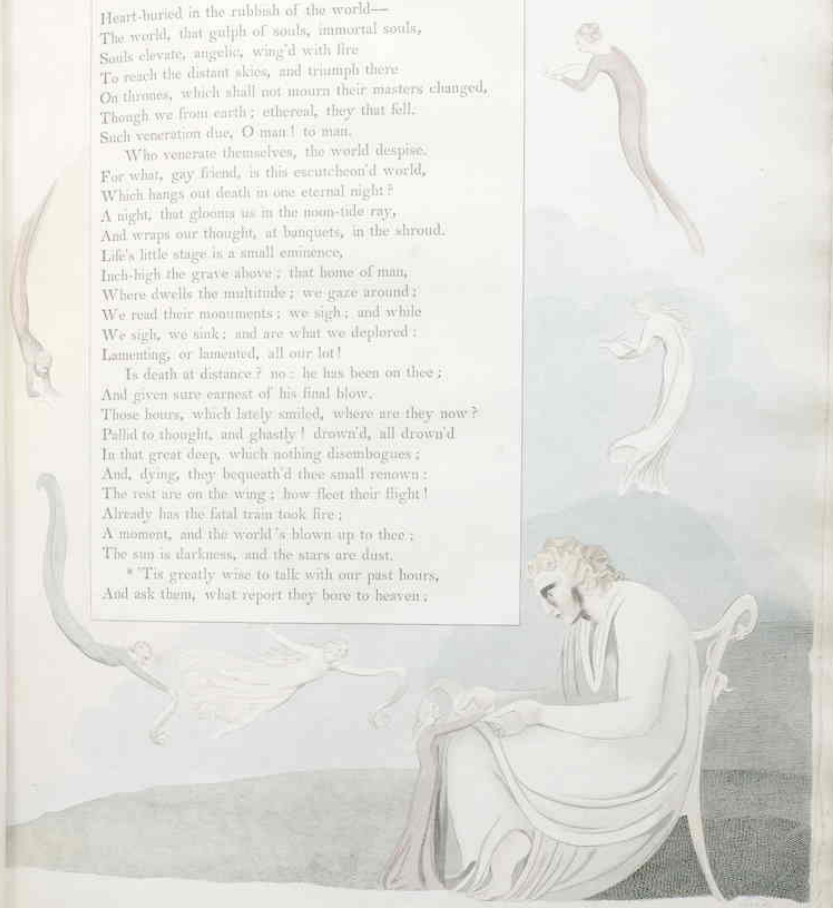
And then, where are we? where, Lorenzo, then
Thy sports—thy pomps?—I grant thee, in a state
Not unambitious: in the ruffled shroud,
Thy parian tomb's triumphant arch beneath:
Has death his fopperies? then well may life
Put on her plume, and in her rainbow shine.
    Ye well-array'd! ye lilies of our land!
Ye lilies male! who neither toil, nor spin,
As sister lilies might;—if not so wise
As Solomon, more sumptuous to the sight!
Ye delicate! who nothing can support,
Yourselves most insupportable! for whom
The winter rose must blow, the sun put on
A brighter beam in Leo, silky-soft
Favonius breathe still softer, or be chid:
And other worlds send odours, sauce, and song,
And robes, and notions framed in foreign looms!
O ye Lorenzos of our age! who deem
One moment unamused, a misery
Not made for feeble man: who call aloud
For every bauble, drivell'd o'er by sense,
For rattles and conceits of every cast,
For change of follies and relays of joy,
To drag your patience through the tedious length
Of a short winter's day—say—sages; say
Wit's oracles; say—dreamers of gay dreams;
How will you weather an eternal night,
Where such expedients fail?
    * O treacherous conscience! while she seems to sleep
On rose and myrtle, lull'd with syren song:

While she seems, nodding o'er her charge, to drop
On headlong appetite the slacken'd rein,
And give us up to licence, unrecall'd,
Unmark'd;—see, from behind her secret stand,
The sly informer minutes every fault,
And her dread diary with horror fills:
Not the gross act alone employs her pen;
She reconnoitres fancy's airy band,
A watchful foe! the formidable spy,
List'ning, o'erhears the whispers of our camp;
Our dawning purposes of heart explores,
And steals our embryos of iniquity.
As all-rapacious usurers conceal
Their doomsday-book from all-consuming heirs,
Thus, with indulgence most severe she treats
Us spendthrifts of inestimable time;
Unnoted, notes each moment misapplied;
In leaves more durable than leaves of brass,
Writes our whole history; which death shall read
In every pale delinquent's private ear,
And judgment publish—publish to more worlds
Than this; and endless age in groans resound.
Lorenzo, such that sleeper in thy breast!
Such is her slumber; and her vengeance such
For slighted counsel:—such thy future peace!
And think'st thou still thou canst be wise too soon?
But why on time so lavish is my song?
On this great theme kind nature keeps a school,
To teach her sons herself: each night we die,
Each morn are born anew: each day—a life!

And shall we kill each day? If trifling kills,
Sure vice must butcher: O what heaps of slain
Cry out for vengeance on us! time destroy'd
Is suicide, where more than blood is spilt:
Time flies, death urges, knells call, heaven invites,
Hell threatens: all exerts; in effort, all
More than creation labours!—labours more?
And is there in creation, what, amidst
This tumult universal, wing'd dispatch,
And ardent energy, supinely yawns?—
Man sleeps—and man alone; and man, whose fate—
Fate irreversible, entire, extreme,
Endless, hair-hung, breeze-shaken, o'er the gulph
A moment trembles—drops! and man, for whom
All else is in alarm; man, the sole cause
Of this surrounding storm! and yet he sleeps,
As the storm rock'd to rest.——Throw years away—
Throw empires—and be blameless?—moments seize;
Heaven's on their wing: a moment we may wish,
When worlds want wealth to buy:—bid day stand still,
Bid him drive back his car, and remport
The period past, regive the given hour.
Lorenzo, more than miracles we want;
Lorenzo—O for yesterdays to come!
Such is the language of the man awake;
His ardour such, for what oppresses thee:
And is his ardour vain, Lorenzo? no,
That more than miracle the gods indulge;
To-day is yesterday return'd; return'd
Full-power'd to cancel, expiate, raise, adorn,

And reinstate us on the rock of peace.
Let it not share its predecessor's fate;
Nor, like its elder sisters, die a fool:
Shall it evaporate in fumo—fly off
Fuliginous, and stain us deeper still?
Shall we be poorer for the plenty pour'd?
More wretched for the clemencies of heaven?
Where shall I find him? angels! tell me where—
You know him: he is near you—point him out:
Shall I see glories beaming from his brow?
Or trace his footsteps by the rising flowers?
Your golden wings, now hov'ring o'er him, shed
Protection; now, are waving in applause
To that blest son of foresight—lord of fate—
That aweful independent on to-morrow!
Whose work is done; who triumphs in the past;
Whose yesterdays look backward with a smile,
Nor, like the Parthian, wound him as they fly;
That common, but opprobrious lot! past hours,
If not by guilt, yet wound us by their flight,
If folly bounds our prospect by the grave,
All feeling of futurity benumb'd;
All god-like passion for eternals quench'd;
All relish of realities expired;
Renounced all correspondence with the skies;
Our freedom chain'd; quite wingless our desire;
In sense dark-prison'd all that ought to soar;
Prone to the centre; crawling in the dust;
Dismounted every great and glorious aim;
Embruted every faculty divine:

Heart-buried in the rubbish of the world—
The world, that gulph of souls, immortal souls,
Souls elevate, angelic, wing'd with fire
To reach the distant skies, and triumph there
On thrones, which shall not mourn their masters changed,
Though we from earth; ethereal, they that fell.
Such veneration due, O man! to man,
Who venerate themselves, the world despise.
For what, gay friend, is this escutcheon'd world,
Which hangs out death in one eternal night?
A night, that glooms us in the noon-tide ray,
And wraps our thought, at banquets, in the shroud.
Life's little stage is a small eminence,
Inch-high the grave above; that home of man,
Where dwells the multitude; we gaze around;
We read their monuments; we sigh; and while
We sigh, we sink; and are what we deplored:
Lamenting, or lamented, all our lot!
Is death at distance? no: he has been on thee;
And given sure earnest of his final blow.
Those hours, which lately smiled, where are they now?
Pallid to thought, and ghastly! drown'd, all drown'd
In that great deep, which nothing disembogues;
And, dying, they bequeath'd thee small renown:
The rest are on the wing; how fleet their flight!
Already has the fatal train took fire;
A moment, and the world 's blown up to thee;
The sun is darkness, and the stars are dust.
'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
And ask them, what report they bore to heaven;



And how they might have borne more welcome news:
Their answers form what men experience call;
If wisdom's friend, her best; if not, worst foe.
O reconcile them! kind experience cries,
"There 's nothing here, but what as nothing weighs;
"The more our joy, the more we know it vain;
"And by success are tutor'd to despair."
Nor is it only thus, but must be so:
Who knows not this, though gray, is still a child:
Loose then from earth the grasp of fond desire,
Weigh anchor, and some happier clime explore.
Art thou so moor'd thou canst not disengage,
Nor give thy thoughts a ply to future scenes?
Since, by life's passing breath, blown up from earth,
Light, as the summer's dust, we take in air
A moment's giddy flight, and fall again;
Join the dull mass, increase the trodden soil,
And sleep 'till earth herself shall be no more;
Since then, as emmets, their small world o'erthrown,
We, sore amazed, from out earth's ruins crawl,
And rise to late extreme of foul or fair,
As man's own choice, controller of the skies!
As man's despotic will, perhaps one hour
O how omnipotent is time! decrees;
Should not each warning give a strong alarm—
Warning, far less than that of bosom torn
From bosom, bleeding o'er the sacred dead?
Should not each dial strike us as we pass,
Portentous, as the written wall which struck,
O'er midnight bowls, the proud Assyrian pale,

Erewhile high-flush'd with insolence and wine?
"Like that, the dial speaks; and points to thee,
Lorenzo! loth to break thy banquet up.
"O man, thy kingdom is departing from thee:
"And, while it lasts, is emptier than my shade."
Its silent language such; nor need'st thou call
Thy magi, to decypher what it means:
Know, like the Median, fate is in thy walls:
Dost ask, how? whence? Belshazzar-like, amazed?
Man's make encloses the sure seeds of death:
Life feeds the murderer: ingrate! he thrives
On her own meal, and then his nurse devours.
But here, Lorenzo, the delusion lies:
That solar shadow, as it measures life,
It life resembles too: life speeds away
From point to point, though seeming to stand still:
The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth,
Too subtle is the movement to be seen;
Yet soon man's hour is up, and we are gone.
Warnings point out our danger: gnomons, time:
As these are useless when the sun is set;
So those, but when more glorious reason shines:
Reason should judge in all; in reason's eye,
That sedentary shadow travels hard:
But such our gravitation to the wrong,
So prone our hearts to whisper what we wish,
'Tis later with the wise, than he's aware;
A Wilmington goes slower than the sun:
And all mankind mistake their time of day:
Even age itself: fresh hopes are hourly sown

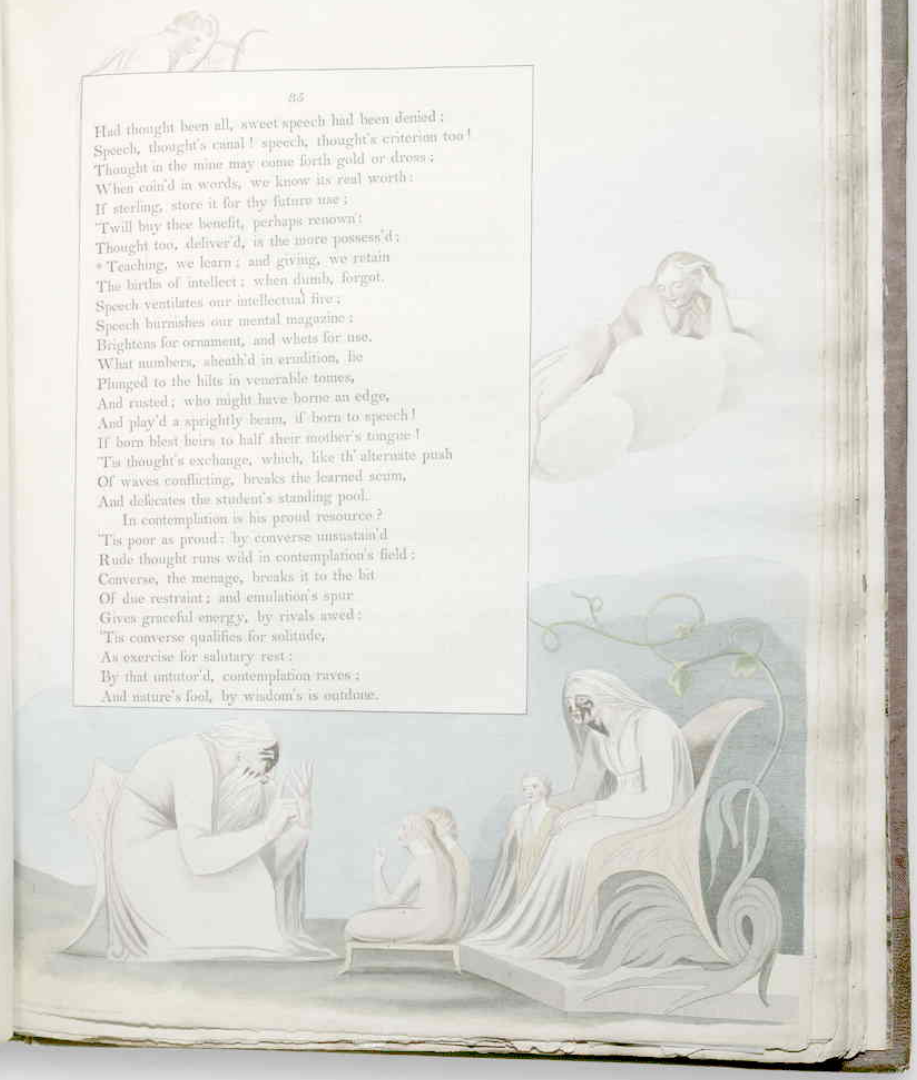
In furrow'd brows: so gentle life's descent,
We shut our eyes, and think it is a plain.
We take fair days in winter for the spring;
And turn our blessings into bane: since oft
Man must compute that age he cannot feel,
He scarce believes he 's older for his years:
Thus, at life's latest eve, we keep in store
One disappointment sure, to crown the rest—
The disappointment of a promised hour.

On this, or similar, Philander! thou,
Whose mind was moral, as the preacher's tongue;
And strong to wield all science, worth the name;
How often we talk'd down the summer's sun,
And cool'd our passions by the breezy stream!
How often thaw'd and shorten'd winter's eve,
By conflict kind, that struck out latent truth,
Best found, so sought: to the recluse more coy!
Thoughts disentangle passing o'er the lip:
Clean runs the thread; if not, 'tis thrown away,
Or kept to tie up nonsense for a song—
Song, fashionably fruitless! such as stains
The fancy, and unhallow'd passion fires:
Chiming her saints to Cytherea's fane.

Know'st thou, Lorenzo! what a friend contains?
As bees mix'd nectar draw from fragrant flowers,
So men from friendship, wisdom and delight:
Twins tied by nature; if they part, they die.
Hast thou no friend to set thy mind abroach?
Good sense will stagnate: thoughts shut up, want air,
And spoil, like bales unopen'd to the sun.

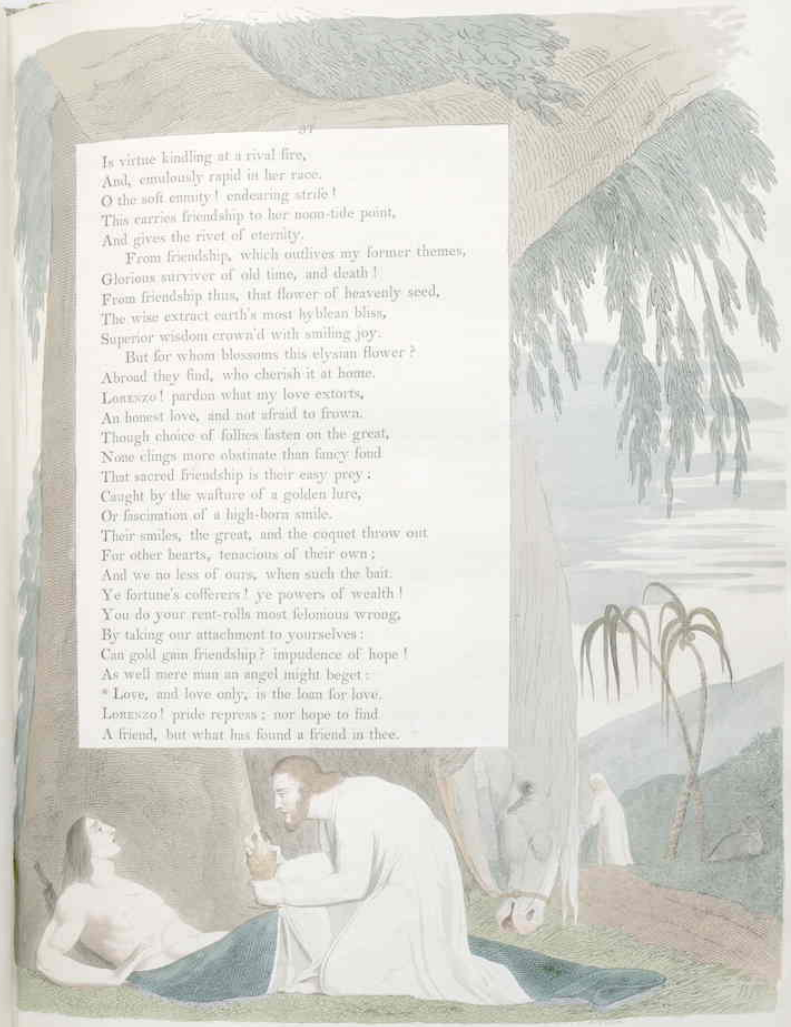
Had thought been all, sweet speech had been denied:
Speech, thought's canal! speech, thought's criterion too!
Thought in the mine may come forth gold or dross;
When coin'd in words, we know its real worth:
If sterling, store it for thy future use;
'Twill buy thee benefit, perhaps renown:
Thought too, deliver'd, is the more possess'd;
Teaching, we learn; and giving, we retain
The births of intellect: when dumb, forgot.
Speech ventilates our intellectual fire;
Speech burnishes our mental magazine:
Brightens for ornament, and whets for use.
What numbers, sheath'd in erudition, lie
Plunged to the hilts in venerable tomes,
And rusted; who might have borne an edge,
And play'd a sprightly beam, if born to speech!
If born blest heirs to half their mother's tongue!
'Tis thought's exchange, which, like th' alternate push
Of waves conflicting, breaks the learned scum,
And delicates the student's standing pool.

In contemplation is his proud resource?
'Tis poor as proud: by converse unsustain'd
Rude thought runs wild in contemplation's field:
Converse, the menage, breaks it to the bit
Of due restraint; and emulation's spur
Gives graceful energy, by rivals awed:
'Tis converse qualifies for solitude,
As exercise for salutary rest:
By that untutor'd, contemplation raves;
And nature's fool, by wisdom's is outdone.



Wisdom, though richer than Peruvian mines,
And sweeter than the sweet ambrosial hive,
What is she but the means of happiness?
That unobtain'd, than folly more a fool;
A melancholy fool, without her bells.
Friendship, the means of wisdom, richly gives
The precious end, which makes our wisdom wise.
Nature, in zeal for human amity,
Denies, or damps an undivided joy:
Joy is an import—joy is an exchange—
Joy flies monopolists; it calls for two:
Rich fruit! heaven-planted! never pluck'd by one.
Needful auxiliars are our friends, to give
To social man true relish of himself.
Full on ourselves descending in a line,
Pleasure's bright beam is feeble in delight:
Delight intense is taken by rebound;
Reverberated pleasures fire the breast.
Celestial happiness, where'er she stoops
To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,
And one alone, to make her sweet amends
For absent heaven—the bosom of a friend;
Where heart meets heart, reciprocally soft,
Each other's pillow to repose divine.
Beware the counterfeit: in passion's flame
Hearts melt: but melt like ice, soon harder froze:
True love strikes root in reason, passion's foe:
Virtue alone entenders us for life—
I wrong her much—entenders us for ever:
Of friendship's fairest fruits, the fruit most fair

Is virtue kindling at a rival fire,
And, emulously rapid in her race.
O the soft enmity! endearing strife!
This carries friendship to her noon-tide point,
And gives the rivet of eternity.
From friendship, which outlives my former themes,
Glorious survivor of old time, and death!
From friendship thus, that flower of heavenly seed,
The wise extract earth's most hyblean bliss,
Superior wisdom crown'd with smiling joy.
But for whom blossoms this elysian flower?
Abroad they find, who cherish it at home.
Lorenzo! pardon what my love extorts,
An honest love, and not afraid to frown.
Though choice of follies fasten on the great,
None clings more obstinate than fancy fond
That sacred friendship is their easy prey:
Caught by the wafture of a golden lure,
Or fascination of a high-born smile.
Their smiles, the great, and the coquet throw out
For other hearts, tenacious of their own;
And we no less of ours, when such the bait.
Ye fortune's cofferers! ye powers of wealth!
You do your rent-rolls most felonious wrong,
By taking our attachment to yourselves:
Can gold gain friendship? impudence of hope!
As well mere man an angel might beget:
"Love, and love only, is the loan for love.
Lorenzo! pride repress; nor hope to find
A friend, but what has found a friend in thee.



All like the purchase—few the price will pay;
And this makes friends such miracles below.
What if, since daring on so nice a theme,
I shew thee friendship delicate as dear,
Of tender violations apt to die?
Reserve will wound it, and distrust destroy:
Deliberate on all things with thy friend:
But since friends grow not thick on every bough,
Nor every friend unrotten at the core,
First on thy friend deliberate with thyself;
Pause, ponder, sift; not eager in the choice,
Nor jealous of the chosen, fixing fix:
Judge before friendship, then confide till death:
Well for thy friend; but nobler far for thee;
How gallant danger for earth's highest prize!
A friend is worth all hazard we can run:
"Poor is the friendless master of a world;
"A world in purchase for a friend is gain."
So sung he, angels hear that angel sing!
Angels from friendship gather half their joy;
So sung Philander, as his friend went round
In the rich ichor, in the generous blood
Of Bacchus, purple god of joyous wit,
A brow solute, and ever-laughing eye:
He drank long health, and virtue to his friend;
His friend, who warm'd him more, who more inspired.
Friendship's the wine of life; but friendship new,
Not such was his, is neither strong nor pure.
O! for the bright complexion, cordial warmth,
And elevating spirit of a friend,

For twenty summers ripening by my side:
All feculence of falsehood long thrown down—
All social virtues rising in his soul—
As crystal clear, and smiling as they rise!
Here nectar flows; it sparkles in our sight;
Rich to the taste, and genuine from the heart:
High-flavour'd bliss for gods! on earth how rare!
On earth how lost!—Philander is no more.
Think'st thou the theme intoxicates my song?
And I too warm?—too warm I cannot be.
I loved him much; but now I love him more.
Like birds whose beauties languish, half conceal'd,
Till, mounted on the wing, their glossy plumes
Expanded shine with azure, green, and gold;
How blessings brighten as they take their flight!
His flight Philander took—his upward flight,
If ever soul ascended: had he dropt,
That eagle genius! O had he let fall
One feather as he flew! I then had wrote
What friends might flatter; prudent foes forbear;
Rivals scarce damn; and Zoilus reprieve:
Yet what I can, I must: it were profane
To quench a glory lighted at the skies,
And cast in shadows his illustrious close.
Strange! the theme most affecting, most sublime,
Momentous most to man, should sleep unsung!
And yet it sleeps by genius unawaked
Pagan or christian, to the blush of wit.
Man's highest triumph! man's profoundest fall!
The death-bed of the just—is yet undrawn

By mortal hand—it merits a divine:
*Angels should paint it, angels ever there;
There on a post of honour, and of joy.
Dare I presume then? but PHILANDER bids,
And glory tempts, and inclination calls:
Yet am I struck; as struck the soul beneath
Aerial groves' impenetrable gloom:
Or in some mighty ruin's solemn shade;
Or gazing by pale lamps on high-born dust
In vaults; thin courts of poor unflatter'd kings!
Or at the midnight altar's hallow'd flame:
It is religion to proceed: I pause——
And enter, awed, the temple of my theme:
Is it his death-bed? no—it is his shrine:
Behold him, there, just rising to a god.
The chamber, where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven.
Fly, ye profane! if not, draw near with awe,
Receive the blessing, and adore the chance
That threw in this Bethesda your disease;
If unrestored by this, despair your cure:
For here resistless demonstration dwells;
A death-bed 's a detecter of the heart;
Here tired dissimulation drops her mask,
Through life's grimace that mistress of the scene!
Here real and apparent are the same—
You see the man; you see his hold on heaven;
If sound his virtue, as PHILANDER's sound.
Heaven waits not the last moment; owns her friends

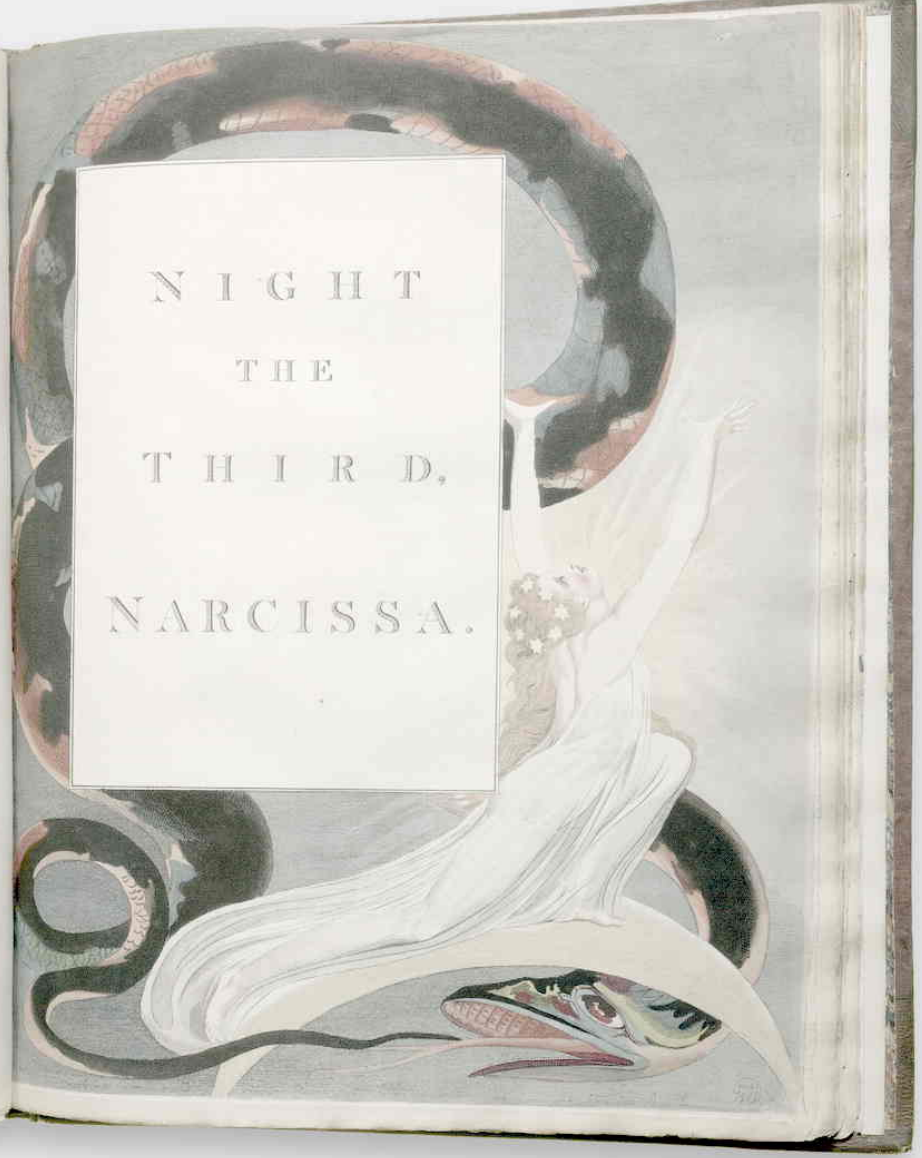
On this side death; and points them out to men:
A lecture silent, but of sovereign power!
To vice, confusion; and to virtue, peace.
Whatever farce the boastful hero plays,
Virtue alone has majesty in death:
And greater still, the more the tyrant frowns:
PHILANDER! he severely frown'd on thee:
"No warning given—unceremonious fate!
"A sudden rush from life's meridian joys!
"A wrench from all we love—from all we are!
"A restless bed of pain! a plunge opaque
"Beyond conjecture! feeble nature's dread!
"Strong reason's shudder at the dark unknown!
"A sun extinguish'd! a just opening grave!
"And oh! the last—last—what? can words express?
"Thought reach? the last, last—silence of a friend!"
Where are those horrors, that amazement where,
This hideous group of ills, which singly shock?
Demand from man—I thought him man till now.
Through nature's wreck, through vanquish'd agonies,
Like the stars struggling through this midnight gloom,
What gleams of joy! what more than human peace!
Where, the frail mortal? the poor abject worm?
No, not in death, the mortal to be found.
His conduct is a legacy for all,
Richer than Mammon's for his single heir:
His comforters he comforts: great in ruin,
With unreluctant grandeur gives, not yields
His soul sublime; and closes with his fate.

How our hearts burnt within us at the scene!
Whence this brave bound o'er limits fix'd to man?
His GOD sustains him in his final hour—
His final hour brings glory to his GOD!
Man's glory HEAVEN vouchsafes to call her own.
We gaze; we weep—mix'd tears of grief and joy!
Amazement strikes: devotion bursts to flame:
Christians adore—and infidels believe.

As some tall tower, or lofty mountain's brow
Detains the sun, illustrious from its height;
While rising vapours and descending shades
With damps and darkness drown the spacious vale;
Undamp'd by doubt, undarken'd by despair
PHILANDER, thus, augustly rears his head
At that black hour, which general horror sheds
On the low level of the inglorious throng:
Sweet peace, and heavenly hope, and humble joy
Divinely beam on his exalted soul,
Destruction gild, and crown him for the skies,
With incommunicable lustre bright.

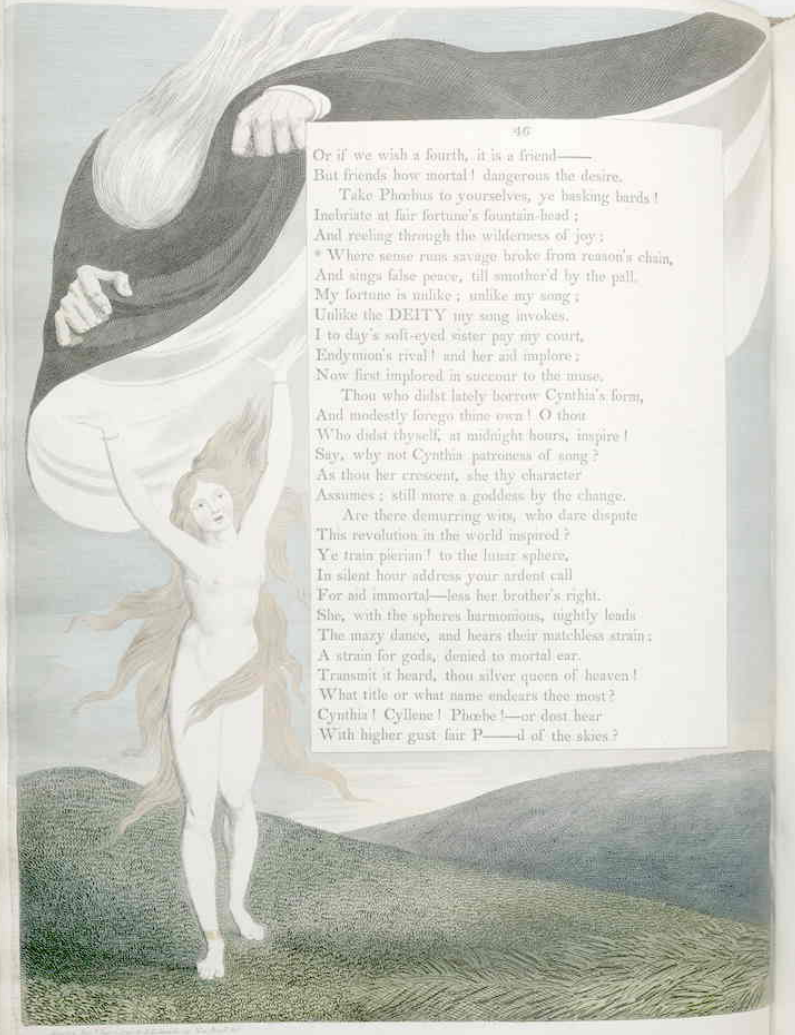
NIGHT THE THIRD,

NARCISSA.



NIGHT THE THIRD.

FROM dreams where thought in fancy's maze runs mad,
To reason, that heaven-lighted lamp in man,
Once more I wake: and at the destined hour,
Punctual as lovers to the moment sworn,
I keep my assignation with my woe.
O lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,
Lost to the noble sallies of the soul,
Who think it solitude to be alone!
Communion sweet! communion large and high!
Our reason, guardian angel, and our God!
Then nearest these, when others most remote;
And all, ere long shall be remote, but these.
How dreadful then to meet them all alone,
A stranger! unacknowledged! unapproved!
Now woo them, wed them, bind them to thy breast;
To win thy wish creation has no more;

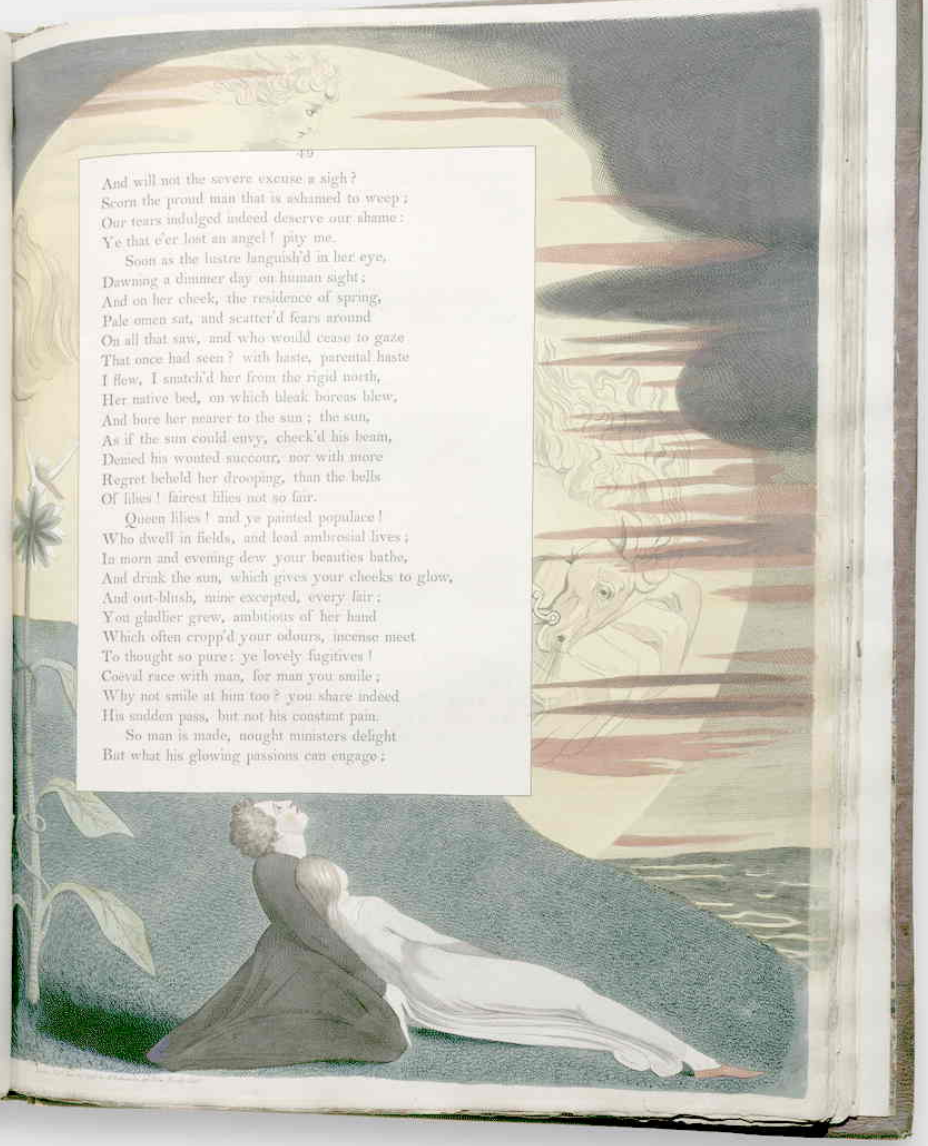


Or if we wish a fourth, it is a friend——
But friends how mortal! dangerous the desire.
Take Phœbus to yourselves, ye basking bards!
Inebriate at fair fortune's fountain-head;
And reeling through the wilderness of joy;
* Where sense runs savage broke from reason's chain,
And sings false peace, till smother'd by the pall.
My fortune is unlike; unlike my song;
Unlike the DEITY my song invokes.
I to day's soft-eyed sister pay my court,
Endymion's rival! and her aid implore;
Now first implored in succour to the muse.
Thou who didst lately borrow Cynthia's form,
And modestly forego thine own! O thou
Who didst thyself, at midnight hours, inspire!
Say, why not Cynthia patroness of song?
As thou her crescent, she thy character
Assumes; still more a goddess by the change.
Are there demurring wits, who dare dispute
This revolution in the world inspired?
Ye train pierian! to the lunar sphere,
In silent hour address your ardent call
For aid immortal—less her brother's right.
She, with the spheres harmonious, tightly leads
The mazy dance, and hears their matchless strain;
A strain for gods, denied to mortal ear.
Transmit it heard, thou silver queen of heaven!
What title or what name endears thee most?
Cynthia! Cyllene! Phœbe!—or dost hear
With higher gust fair P——d of the skies?

Is that the soft enchantment calls thee down,
More powerful than of old circean charm?
Come: but from heavenly banquets with thee bring
The soul of song, and whisper in mine ear
The theft divine; or in propitious dreams
For dreams are thine, transfuse it through the breast
Of thy first votary——but not thy last
If, like thy namesake, thou art ever kind.
And kind thou wilt be; kind on such a theme—
A theme so like thee, a quite lunar theme,
Soft, modest, melancholy, female, fair—
A theme that rose all pale, and told my soul
'Twas night: on her fond hopes perpetual night;
A night which struck a damp, a deadlier damp
Than that which smote me from PHILANDER's tomb.
NARCISSA follows, ere his tomb is closed.
Woes cluster: rare are solitary woes:
They love a train, they tread each other's heel:
Her death invades his mournful right, and claims
The grief that started from my lids for him;
Seizes the faithless, alienated tear,
Or shares it ere it falls. So frequent death,
Sorrow he more than causes, he confounds;
For human sighs his rival strokes contend,
And make distress, distraction. Oh PHILANDER!
What was thy fate? a double fate to me;
Portent and pain! a menace and a blow!
Like the black raven hovering o'er my peace,
Not less a bird of omen than of prey:
It call'd NARCISSA long before her hour;

It call'd her tender soul by break of bliss,
From the first blossom, from the buds of joy—
Those few our noxious fate unblasted leaves
In this inclement clime of human life.
Sweet harmonist! and beautiful as sweet—
And young as beautiful—and soft as young—
And gay as soft—and innocent as gay—
And happy, if aught happy here, as good!
For fortune fond had built her nest on high.
Like birds quite exquisite of note and plume,
Transfix'd by fate who loves a lofty mark,
How from the summit of the grove she fell
And left it inharmonious! all its charm
Extinguish'd in the wonders of her song!
Her song still vibrates in my ravish'd ear
Still melting there, and with voluptuous pain
O to forget her! thrilling through my heart!
Song, beauty, youth, love, virtue, joy! this group
Of bright ideas, flowers of paradise
As yet unforfeit! in one blaze we bind,
Kneel, and present it to the skies as all
We guess of heaven: and these were all her own,
And she was mine; and I was—was!—most blest—
Gay title of the deepest misery!
As bodies grow more pond'rous robb'd of life;
Good lost weighs more in grief, than gain'd in joy:
Like blossom'd trees o'erturn'd by vernal storm,
Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay:
And if in death still lovely, lovelier there
Far lovelier! pity swells the tide of love.

And will not the severe excuse a sigh?
Scorn the proud man that is ashamed to weep;
Our tears indulged indeed deserve our shame:
Ye that e'er lost an angel! pity me.
Soon as the lustre languish'd in her eye,
Dawning a dimmer day on human sight;
And on her cheek, the residence of spring,
Pale omen sat, and scatter'd fears around
On all that saw, and who would cease to gaze
That once had seen? with haste, parental haste
I flew, I snatch'd her from the rigid north,
Her native bed, on which bleak boreas blew,
And bore her nearer to the sun; the sun,
As if the sun could envy, check'd his beam,
Denied his wonted succour, nor with more
Regret beheld her drooping, than the bells
Of lilies! fairest lilies not so fair.
Queen lilies! and ye painted populace!
Who dwell in fields, and lead ambrosial lives;
In morn and evening dew your beauties bathe,
And drink the sun, which gives your cheeks to glow,
And out-blush, mine excepted, every fair;
You gladlier grew, ambitious of her hand
Which often cropp'd your odours, incense meet
To thought so pure: ye lovely fugitives!
Coeval race with man, for man you smile;
Why not smile at him too? you share indeed
His sudden pass, but not his constant pain.
So man is made, nought ministers delight
But what his glowing passions can engage;



And glowing passions bent on aught below
Must, soon or late, with anguish turn the scale;
And anguish after rapture how severe!
Rapture? bold man! who tempts the wrath divine
By plucking fruit denied to mortal taste;
Whilst here presuming on the rights of heaven,
For transport dost thou call on every hour,
Lorenzo? at thy friend's expense be wise;
Lean not on earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear;
On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.
Turn, hopeless thought! turn from her: thought repell'd
Resenting rallies, and wakes every woe.
Snatch'd ere thy prime! and in thy bridal hour!
And when kind fortune with thy lover smiled!
And when high-flavour'd thy fresh opening joys!
And when blind man pronounced thy bliss complete!
And on a foreign shore, where strangers wept!
Strangers to thee: and, more surprising still,
Strangers to kindness wept; their eyes let fall
Inhuman tears, strange tears that trickled down
From marble hearts! obdurate tenderness!
A tenderness that call'd them more severe;
In spite of nature's soft persuasion, steel'd:
While nature melted, superstition raved;
That mourn'd the dead,—and this denied a grave.
Their sighs incensed, sighs foreign to the will!
Their will the tiger suck'd, out-raged the storm:
For, oh the cursed ungodliness of zeal!
While sinful flesh relented, spirit nursed

In blind infallibility's embrace,
The sainted spirit petrified the breast,
Denied the charity of dust to spread
O'er dust!—a charity their dogs enjoy.
What could I do? what succour? what resource?
With pious sacrilege a grave I stole:
With impious piety that grave I wrong'd:
Short in my duty, coward in my grief,
More like her murderer than friend, I crept
With soft-suspended step; and, muffled deep
In midnight darkness, whisper'd my last sigh:
I whisper'd what should echo through their realms:
Nor writ her name, whose tomb should pierce the skies.
Presumptuous fear! how durst I dread her foes,
While nature's loudest dictates I obey'd?
Pardon necessity, blest shade! of grief!
And indignation rival bursts I pour'd:
Half-execration mingled with my prayer,
Kindled at man, while I his GOD adored:
Sore grudged the savage land her sacred dust;
Stamped the cursed soil; and, with humanity,
Denied Narcissa, wish'd them all a grave.
Glows my resentment into guilt? what guilt
Can equal violations of the dead?
The dead how sacred! sacred is the dust
Of this heaven-labour'd form, erect, divine!
This heaven-assumed majestic robe of earth
He deign'd to wear, who hung the vast expanse
With azure bright, and clothed the sun in gold,
When every passion sleeps that can offend:

When strikes us every motive that can melt;
When man can wreak his rancour uncontroll'd,
That strongest curb on insult and ill-will;
Then, spleen to dust! the dust of innocence!
An angel's dust!—this Lucifer transcends;
When he contended for the patriarch's bones,
'Twas not the strife of malice, but of pride;
The strife of pontiff pride, not pontiff gall.
    Far less than this is shocking in a race
Most wretched, but from streams of mutual love;
And uncreated, but for love divine;
And, but for love divine, this moment lost,
By fate resorb'd, and sunk in endless night.
Man hard of heart to man! of horrid things
Most horrid! 'mid stupendous highly strange!
Yet oft his courtesies are smoother wrongs;
Pride brandishes the favours he confers,
And contumelious his humanity:
What then his vengeance? hear it not, ye stars!
And thou, pale moon! turn paler at the sound;
Man is to man the sorest, surest ill.
A previous blast foretels the rising storm;
O'erwhelming turrets threaten ere they fall;
Volcanos bellow ere they disembogue:
Earth trembles ere her yawning jaws devour;
And smoke betrays the wide-consuming fire:
Ruin from man is most conceal'd when near,
And sends the dreadful tidings in the blow.
Is this the flight of fancy? would it were!

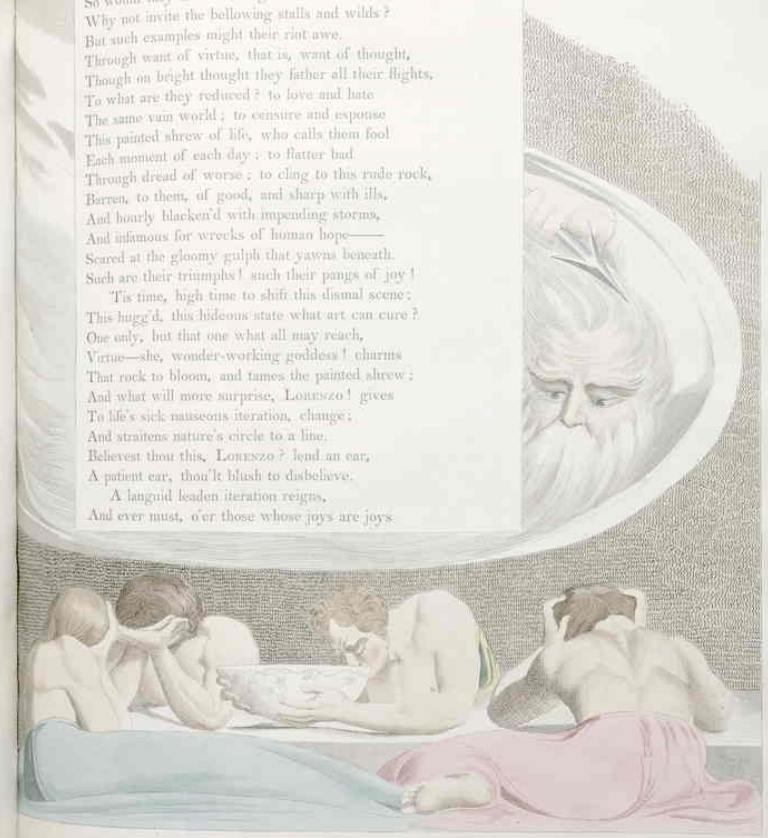
Heaven's SOVEREIGN saves all beings but himself
That hideous sight, a naked human heart.
    Fired is the muse? and let the muse be fired:
Who not inflamed, when what he speaks he feels,
And in the nerve most tender, in his friends?
Shame to mankind! PHILANDER had his foes:
He felt the truths I sing, and I in him.
But he, nor I feel more: past ills, NARCISSA!
Are sunk in thee, thou recent wound of heart
Which bleeds with other cares! with other pangs;
Pangs numerous, as the numerous ills that swarm'd
O'er thy distinguish'd fate, and, clustering there
Thick as the locust on the land of Nile,
Made death more deadly, and more dark the grave.
Reflect, if not forgot my touching tale,
How was each circumstance with aspicks arm'd!
An aspick each, and all an hydra woe.
What strong herculean virtue could sufflice?—
Or is it virtue to be conquer'd here?
This hoary cheek a train of tears bedews;
And each tear mourns its own distinct distress;
And each distress, distinctly mourn'd, demands
Of grief still more, as heighten'd by the whole.
A grief like this proprietors exchides:
Not friends alone such obsequies deplore;
They make mankind the mourner, carry sighs
Far as the fatal fame can wing her way,
And turn the gayest thought of gayest age
Down the right channel through the vale of death—
* The vale of death! that hush'd cimmerian vale,

Where darkness, brooding o'er unfinish'd fates
With raven wing incumbent, waits the day,
Dread day! that interdicts all future change!
That subterranean world, that land of ruin!
Fit walk, Lorenzo, for proud human thought!
There let my thought expatiate; and explore
Balsamic truths, and healing sentiments
Of all most wanted, and most welcome here.
For gay Lorenzo's sake, and for thy own
My soul! "The fruits of dying friends survey;
"Expose the vain of life; weigh life and death;
"Give death his eulogy; thy fear subdue;
"And labour that first palm of noble minds—
"A manly scorn of terror from the tomb:"
This harvest reap from thy Narcissa's grave.
As poets feign'd, from Ajax' streaming blood
Arose, with grief inscribed, a mournful flower;
Let wisdom blossom from my mortal wound.
And first, of dying friends; what fruit from these?
It brings us more than triple aid; an aid
To chase our thoughtlessness, fear, pride, and guilt.
Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,
To damp our brainless ardours, and abate
That glare of life which often blinds the wise:
Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth
Our rugged pass to death; to break those bars
Of terror and abhorrence nature throws
Cross our obstructed way; and thus to make
Welcome as safe our port from every storm:
Each friend by fate snatch'd from us, is a plume

Pluck'd from the wing of human vanity,
Which makes us stoop from our aerial heights,
And, damp'd with omen of our own decease,
On drooping pinions of ambition lower'd,
Just skim earth's surface, ere we break it up,
O'er putrid earth to scratch a little dust,
And save the world a nuisance; smitten friends
Are angels sent on errands full of love:
For us they languish, and for us they die:
And shall they languish, shall they die in vain?
Ungrateful, shall we grieve their hovering shades
Which wait the revolution in our hearts?
Shall we disdain their silent soft address,
Their posthumous advice, and pious prayer?
Senseless as herds that graze their hallow'd graves,
Tread under foot their agonies and groans,
Frustrate their anguish, and destroy their deaths?
Lorenzo! no; the thought of death indulge;
Give it its wholesome empire—let it reign,
That kind chastiser of thy soul in joy:
Its reign will spread thy glorious conquests far,
And still the tumults of thy ruffled breast:
Auspicious æra! golden days, begin!
The thought of death shall, like a god, inspire.
And why not think on death? is life the theme
Of every thought? and wish of every hour?
And song of every joy? Surprising truth!
The beaten spaniel's fondness not so strange.
To wave the numerous ills that seize on life
As their own property, their lawful prey;

Ere man has measured half his weary stage,
His luxuries have left him no reserve,
No maiden relishes, unbroach'd delights;
On cold-served repetitions he subsists,
And in the tasteless present chews the past;
Disgusted chews, and scarce can swallow down:
Like lavish ancestors, his earlier years
Have disinherited his future hours,
Which starve on orts, and glean their former field.
Live ever here, Lorenzo!—Shocking thought!
So shocking, they who wish, disown it too;
Disown from shame, what they from folly crave.
Live ever in the womb, nor see the light!
For what live ever here?—With labouring step
To tread our former footsteps? pace the round
Eternal? to climb life's worn, heavy wheel,
Which draws up nothing new? to beat and beat
The beaten track? to bid each wretched day
The former mock? to surfeit on the same,
And yawn our joys? or thank a misery
For change, though sad? to see what we have seen?
Hear, till unheard, the same old slabber'd tale?
To taste the tasted, and at each return
Less tasteful? o'er our palates to decant
Another vintage? strain a flatter year,
Through loaded vessels, and a laxer tone?
Crazy machines to grind earth's wasted fruits!
Ill-ground, and worse concocted! load, not life!
The rational foul kennels of excess!

Still-streaming thoroughfares of dull debauch!
*Trembling each gulp, lest death should snatch the bowl.
Such of our fine ones is the wish refined—
So would they have it: elegant desire!
Why not invite the bellowing stalls and wilds?
But such examples might their riot awe.
Through want of virtue, that is, want of thought,
Though on bright thought they father all their flights,
To what are they reduced? to love and hate
The same vain world; to censure and espouse
This painted shrew of life, who calls them fool
Each moment of each day: to flatter bad
Through dread of worse; to cling to this rude rock,
Barren, to them, of good, and sharp with ills,
And hourly blacken'd with impending storms,
And infamous for wrecks of human hope——
Scared at the gloomy gulph that yawns beneath.
Such are their triumphs! such their pangs of joy!
'Tis time, high time to shift this dismal scene;
This hugg'd, this hideous state what art can cure?
One only, but that one what all may reach,
Virtue—she, wonder-working goddess! charms
That rock to bloom, and tames the painted shrew;
And what will more surprise, Lorenzo! gives
To life's sick nauseous iteration, change;
And straitens nature's circle to a line.
Believest thou this, Lorenzo? lend an ear,
A patient ear, thou'lt blush to disbelieve.
A languid leaden iteration reigns,
And ever must, o'er those whose joys are joys



Of sight, smell, taste: the cuckow-seasons sing
The same dull note to such as nothing prize
But what those seasons from the teeming earth
To doating sense indulge: but nobler minds,
Which relish fruits unripen'd by the sun,
Make their days various; various as the dyes
On the dove's neck, which wanton in his rays:
On minds of dove-like innocence possess'd,
On lighten'd minds that bask in virtue's beams,
Nothing hangs tedious, nothing old revolves
In that for which they long, for which they live:
Their glorious efforts wing'd with heavenly hope,
Each rising morning sees still higher rise;
Each bounteous dawn its novelty presents
To worth maturing, new strength, lustre, fame;
While nature's circle, like a chariot-wheel
Rolling beneath their elevated aims,
Makes their fair prospect fairer every hour,
Advancing virtue in a line to bliss:
Virtue—which christian motives best inspire!
And bliss—which christian schemes alone ensure!
And shall we then, for virtue's sake, commence
Apostates? and turn infidels for joy?
A truth it is few doubt, but fewer trust,
"He sins against this life who slights the next."
What is this life? how few their favourite know!
Fond in the dark, and blind in our embrace,
By passionately loving life, we make
Loved life unlovely; hugging her to death:
We give to time eternity's regard;

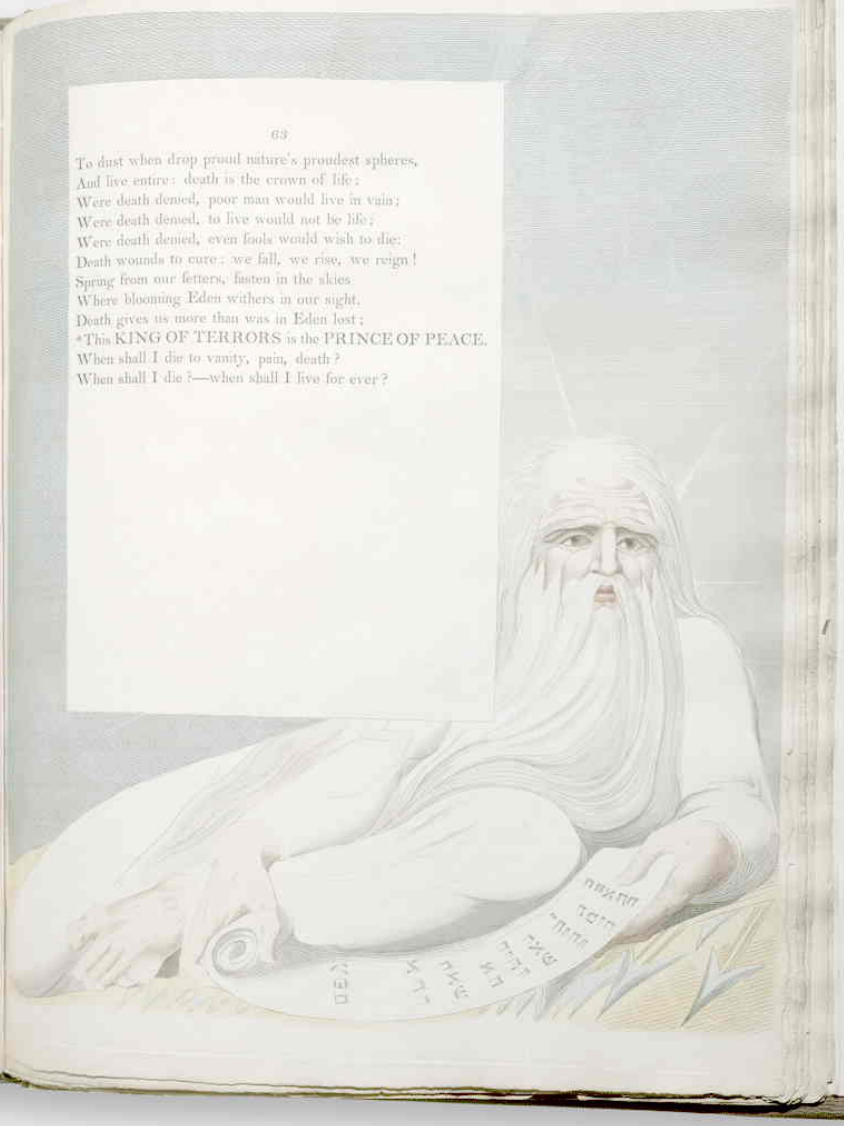
And, dreaming, take our passage for our port:
Life has no value as an end, but means:
An end deplorable! a means divine!
When 'tis our all, 'tis nothing; worse than nought—
A nest of pains; when held as nothing, much:
Like some fair humourists, life is most enjoy'd
When courted least; most worth, when disesteem'd;
Then 'tis the seat of comfort; rich in peace,
In prospect richer far; important! awful!
Not to be mention'd, but with shouts of praise!
Not to be thought on, but with tides of joy!—
The mighty basis of eternal bliss!
Where now the barren rock, the painted shrew?
Where now, Lorenzo! life's eternal round?
Have I not made my triple promise good?
Vain is the world; but only to the vain.
To what compare we then this varying scene,
Whose worth ambiguous rises and declines,
Waxes and wanes? In all propitious night
Assists me here: compare it to the moon
Dark in herself, and indigent; but rich
In borrow'd lustre from a higher sphere:
When gross guilt interposes, labouring earth
O'ershadow'd mourns a deep eclipse of joy:
Her joys, at brightest pallid to that font
Of full effulgent glory, whence they flow.
Nor is that glory distant: oh Lorenzo!
A good man and an angel, these between
How thin the barrier! what divides their fate?
Perhaps a moment, or perhaps a year;

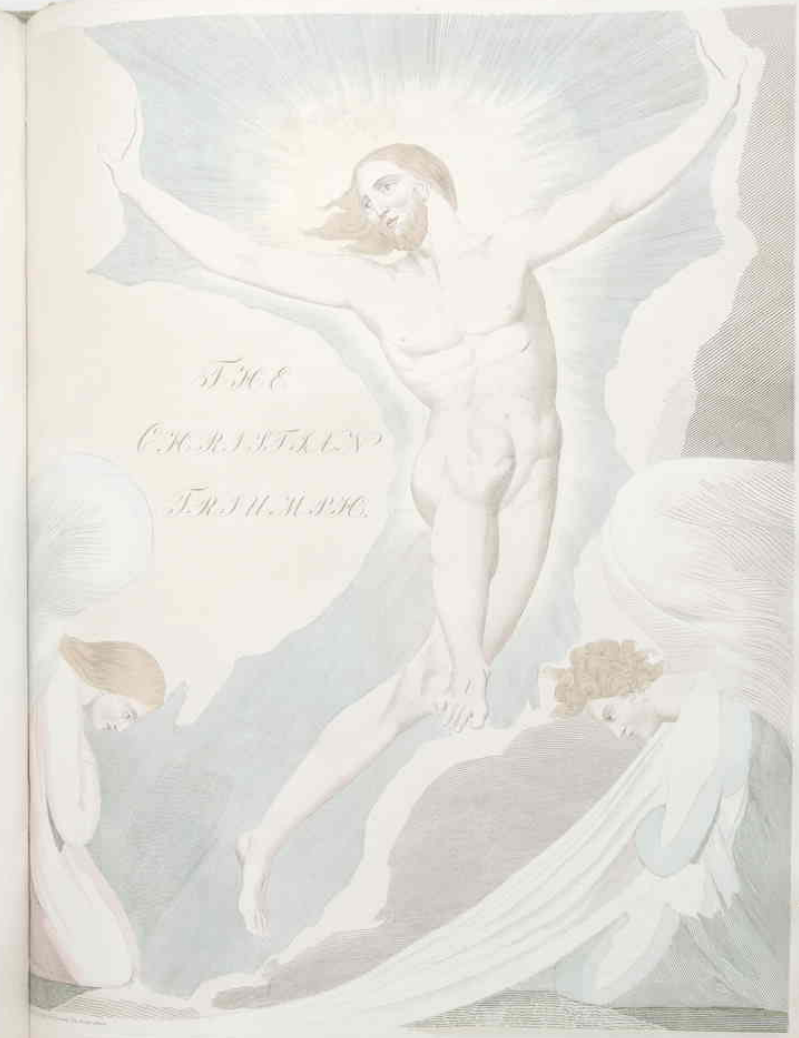
Or, if an age, it is a moment still;
A moment, or eternity 's forgot.
Then be, what once they were who now are gods;
Be what Philander was, and claim the skies.
Starts timid nature at the gloomy pass?
The soft transition call it, and be cheer'd:
Such it is often, and why not to thee?
To hope the best is pious, brave, and wise;
And may itself procure what it presumes:
Life is much flatter'd, death is much traduced;
Compare the rivals, and the kinder crown.
"Strange competition!"—True, Lorenzo! strange!
So little life can cast into the scale.
Life makes the soul dependent on the dust:
Death gives her wings to mount above the spheres;
Through chinks stiled organs, dim life peeps at light;
Death bursts the involving cloud, and all is day;
All eye, all ear the disembodied power.
Death has feign'd evils nature shall not feel;
Life, ills substantial wisdom cannot shun.
Is not the mighty mind, that son of heaven!
By tyrant life dethroned, imprison'd, pain'd?
By death enlarged, ennobled, deified?
Death but entombs the body;—life the soul.
"Is death then guiltless? how he marks his way
"With dreadful waste of what deserves to shine!
"Art, genius, fortune, elevated power!
"With various lustres these light up the world,
"Which death puts out, and darkens human race."
I grant, Lorenzo! this indictment just:

The sage, peer, potentate, king, conqueror!
Death humbles these; more barb'rous life, the man:
Life is the triumph of our mould'ring clay;
Death of the spirit infinite—divine!
Death has no dread, but what frail life imparts;
Nor life true joy, but what kind death improves;
No bliss has life to boast, till death can give
Far greater; life 's a debtor to the grave,
Dark lattice! letting in eternal day.
Lorenzo! blush at fondness for a life
Which sends celestial souls on errands vile,
To cater for the sense; and serve at boards
Where every ranger of the wilds, perhaps
Each reptile justly claims our upper hand:
Luxurious feast! a soul—a soul immortal
In all the dainties of a brute bemired!
Lorenzo! blush at terror for a death
Which gives thee to repose in festive bowers,
Where nectars sparkle, angels minister,
And more than angels share, and raise, and crown,
And eternize the birth, bloom, bursts of bliss.
What need I more? O death, the palm is thine.
Then welcome, death! thy dreaded harbingers
Age and disease; disease, though long my guest
That plucks my nerves, those tender strings of life,
Which, pluck'd a little more, will toll the bell
That calls my few friends to my funeral;
Where feeble nature drops, perhaps, a tear:
While reason and religion, better taught,
Congratulate the dead, and crown his tomb

With wreath triumphant: death is victory:
It binds in chains the raging ills of life:
Lust and ambition, wrath and avarice,
Dragg'd at his chariot-wheel, applaud his power.
That ills corrosive, cares importunate
Are not immortal too, O death! is thine.
Our day of dissolution!—name it right
'Tis our great pay-day, 'tis our harvest rich
And ripe: what though the sickle, sometimes keen,
Just scars us as we reap the golden grain;
More than thy balm, O Gilead! heals the wound.
Birth's feeble cry, and death's deep dismal groan
Are slender tributes low-tax'd nature pays
For mighty gain: the gain of each, a life!
But O! the last the former so transcends,
Life dies compared! life lives beyond the grave.
And feel I, death! no joy from thought of thee?
Death, the great counsellor, who man inspires
With nobler thought, and fairer deed!
Death, the deliverer, who rescues man!
Death, the rewarder, who the rescued crowns!
Death, that absolves my birth, a curse without it!
Rich death, that realizes all my cares,
Toils, virtues, hopes;—without it a chimera!
Death, of all pain the period, not of joy:
Joy's source and subject still subsist unhurt,
One in my soul, and one in her great sire;
Though the four winds were warring for my dust:
Yes, and from winds, and waves, and central night,
Though prison'd there, my dust too I reclaim.

To dust when drop proud nature's proudest spheres,
And live entire: death is the crown of life:
Were death denied, poor man would live in vain;
Were death denied, to live would not be life;
Were death denied, even fools would wish to die:
Death wounds to cure: we fall, we rise, we reign!
Spring from our fetters, fasten in the skies
Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.
Death gives us more than was in Eden lost;
*This KING OF TERRORS is the PRINCE OF PEACE.
When shall I die to vanity, pain, death?
When shall I die?—when shall I live for ever?



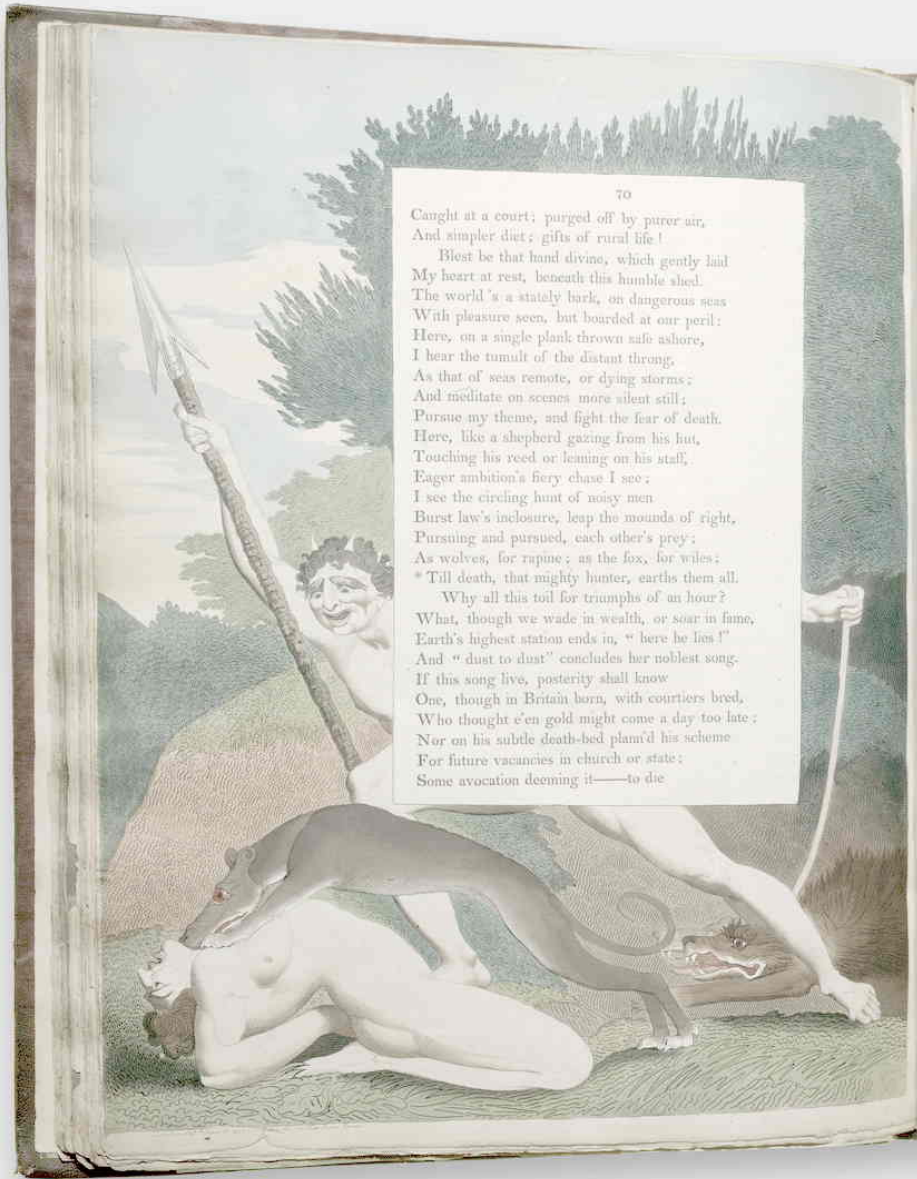

THE
CRUCIFIXION

NIGHT THE FOURTH.

A Much-indebted muse, O Yorke! intrudes:
Amid the smiles of fortune, and of youth,
Thine ear is patient of a serious song.
How deep implanted in the breast of man
The dread of death! I sing its sovereign cure.
Why start at death? Where is he? death arrived
Is past: not come, or gone, he's never here.
Ere hope, sensation fails; black-boding man
Receives, not suffers death's tremendous blow:
The knell, the shroud, the mattock and the grave;
The deep dump vault, the darkness and the worm:
These are the bugbears of a winter's eve,
The terrors of the living, not the dead.
Imagination's fool, and error's wretch
Man makes a death, which nature never made;
Then on the point of his own fancy falls,
And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one.

But were death frightful, what has age to fear?
If prudent, age should meet the friendly foe,
And shelter in his hospitable gloom.
I scarce can meet a monument but holds
My younger; every date cries—"come away;"
And what recalls me? look the world around
And tell me what: the wisest cannot tell.
Should any born of woman give his thought
Full range on just dislike's unbounded field;
"Of things—the vanity; of men—the flaws;"
Flaws in the best, the many flaw all o'er;
As leopards, spotted, or, as Æthiops, dark;
Vivacious, ill; good, dying immature;
How immature Narcissa's marble tells,
And at its death bequeathing endless pain;
His heart, though bold, would sicken at the sight,
And spend itself in sighs for future scenes.
But grant to life, and just it is to grant
To lucky life, some perquisites of joy;
A time there is, when, like a thrice-told tale,
Long-rifled life of sweet can yield no more,
But from our comment on the comedy,
Pleasing reflections on parts well-sustain'd;
Or purposed emendations where we fail'd,
Or hopes of plaudits from our candid judge;
When, on their exit, souls are bid unrobe,
Toss fortune back her tinsel, and her plume,
And drop this mask of flesh behind the scene:
With me that time is come; my world is dead;
A new world rises, and new manners reign:

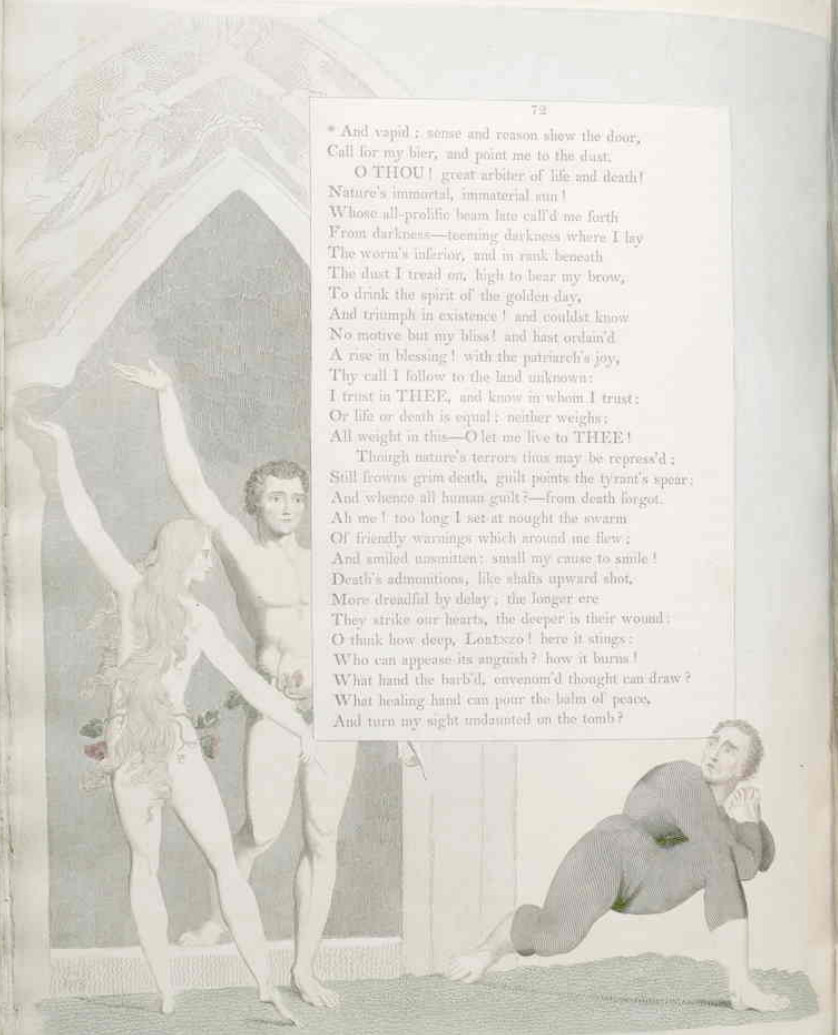
Foreign comedians, a spruce band, arrive,
To push me from the scene, or hiss me there:
What a pert race starts up! the strangers gaze,
And I at them; my neighbour is unknown;
Nor that the worst: ah me! the dire effect
Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
Of old so gracious, and let that suffice,
My very master knows me not.——
Shall I dare say, peculiar is the fate?
I've been so long remember'd, I'm forgot.
An object ever pressing dims the sight,
And hides behind its ardor to be seen:
When in his courtiers' ears I pour my plaint,
They drink it as the nectar of the great,
And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow;
Refusal! canst thou wear a smoother form?
Indulge me, nor conceive I drop my theme:
Who cheapens life, abates the fear of death:
Twice-told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
Court-favour, yet untaken, I besiege;
Ambition's ill-judged effort to be rich:
Alas! ambition makes my little less,
Embittering the possess'd: why wish for more?
Wishing, of all employments is the worst;
Philosophy's reverse, and health's decay!
Were I as plump as stall'd theology,
Wishing would waste me to this shade again:
Were I as wealthy as a south-sea dream,
Wishing is an expedient to be poor:
Wishing, that constant hectic of a fool



Caught at a court; purged off by purer air,
And simpler diet; gifts of rural life!
Blest be that hand divine, which gently laid
My heart at rest, beneath this humble shed.
The world 's a stately bark, on dangerous seas
With pleasure seen, but boarded at our peril:
Here, on a single plank thrown safe ashore,
I hear the tumult of the distant throng,
As that of seas remote, or dying storms;
And meditate on scenes more silent still;
Pursue my theme, and fight the fear of death.
Here, like a shepherd gazing from his hut,
Touching his reed or leaning on his staff,
Eager ambition's fiery chase I see;
I see the circling hunt of noisy men
Burst law's inclosure, leap the mounds of right,
Pursuing and pursued, each other's prey;
As wolves, for rapine; as the fox, for wiles;
* Till death, that mighty hunter, earths them all.
Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour?
What, though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame,
Earth's highest station ends in, "here he lies!"
And "dust to dust" concludes her noblest song.
If this song live, posterity shall know
One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
Who thought e'en gold might come a day too late;
Nor on his subtle death-bed plann'd his scheme
For future vacancies in church or state;
Some avocation deeming it——to die

Unbit by rage canine of dying rich;
Guilt's blunder! and the loudest laugh of hell!
O my coevals! remnants of yourselves
Poor human ruins, tottering o'er the grave!
Shall we, shall aged men, like aged trees,
Strike deeper their vile root, and closer cling,
Still more enamour'd of this wretched soil?
Shall our pale wither'd hands be still stretch'd out,
Trembling at once with eagerness and age?
With avarice and convulsions grasping hard—
Grasping at air! for what has earth beside?
Man wants but little, nor that little long;
How soon must he resign his very dust
Which frugal nature lent him for an hour!
Years inexperienced rush on numerous ills;
And soon as man, expert from time, has found
The key of life, it opes the gates of death.
When in this vale of years I backward look,
And miss such numbers, numbers too of such
Firmer in health, and greener in their age,
And stricter on their guard, and fitter far
To play life's subtle game; I scarce believe
I still survive: and am I fond of life,
Who scarce can think it possible I live?
Alive by miracle! or, what is next,
Alive by Mead! if I am still alive
Who long have buried what gives life to live,
Firmness of nerve, and energy of thought,
Life's lee is not more shallow than impure

* And vapid; sense and reason shew the door,
Call for my bier, and point me to the dust.
O THOU! great arbiter of life and death!
Nature's immortal, immaterial sun!
Whose all-prolific beam late call'd me forth
From darkness—teeming darkness where I lay
The worm's inferior, and in rank beneath
The dust I tread on, high to bear my brow,
To drink the spirit of the golden day,
And triumph in existence! and couldst know
No motive but my bliss! and hast ordain'd
A rise in blessing! with the patriarch's joy,
Thy call I follow to the land unknown:
I trust in THEE, and know in whom I trust:
Or life or death is equal; neither weighs:
All weight in this—O let me live to THEE!
Though nature's terrors thus may be repress'd;
Still frowns grim death, guilt points the tyrant's spear;
And whence all human guilt?—from death forgot.
Ah me! too long I set at nought the swarm
Of friendly warnings which around me flew;
And smiled unsmitten: small my cause to smile!
Death's admonitions, like shafts upward shot,
More dreadful by delay; the longer ere
They strike our hearts, the deeper is their wound:
O think how deep, Lorenzo! here it stings:
Who can appease its anguish? how it burns!
What hand the barb'd, envenom'd thought can draw?
What healing hand can pour the balm of peace,
And turn my sight undaunted on the tomb?



With joy—with grief, that healing hand I see:
Ah! too conspicuous! it is fix'd on high!
On high?—what means my phrensy? I blaspheme;
Alas! how low! how far beneath the skies—
The skies it form'd! and now it bleeds for me:
But bleeds the balm I want?—yet still it bleeds.
* Draw the dire steel?—ah no!—the dreadful blessing
What heart or can sustain, or dares forego?
There hangs all human hope!!! that nail supports
The falling universe!!! that gone, we drop!
Horror receives us, and the dismal wish
Creation had been smother'd in her birth:
Darkness his curtain! and his bed the dust!
When stars and sun are dust beneath his throne:
In heaven itself can such indulgence dwell?
O what a groan was there! a groan not his,
HE seized our dreadful right; the load sustain'd;
And heaved the mountain from a guilty world:
A thousand worlds so bought were bought too dear.
Sensations new, in angels bosoms rise;
Suspend their song, and make a pause in bliss.
O for their song to reach my lofty theme!
Inspire me, night! with all thy tuneful spheres inspire,
Whilst I with seraphs share seraphic themes,
And shew to men the dignity of man:
Lest I blaspheme my subject with my song,
Shall pagan pages glow celestial flame,
And christian languish? on our hearts, not heads,
Falls the foul infamy: my heart! awake:
What can awake thee, unawaked by this?—

" Expended DEITY on human weal."
Feel the great truths, which burst the tenfold night
Of heathen error with a golden flood
Of endless day: to feel is to be fired;
And to believe, LORENZO! is to feel.
Thou most indulgent, most tremendous power!
Still more tremendous for thy wondrous love!
That, arms with awe more aweful thy commands;
And foul transgression dips in sevenfold night:
How our hearts tremble at thy love immense!
In love immense, inviolably just!
THOU, rather than thy justice should be stain'd,
Didst stain the cross; and, work of wonders far
The greatest—that thy dearest far might bleed!
Bold thought! shall I dare speak it, or repress?
Should man more execrate, or boast the guilt
Which roused such vengeance? which such love inflamed?
O'er guilt, how mountainous, with out-stretch'd arms
Stern justice, and soft-smiling love embrace:
Supporting in full majesty thy throne,
When seem'd its majesty to need support,
Or that, or man inevitably lost.
What, but the fathomless of thought divine,
Could labour such expedient from despair,
And rescue both? both rescue—both exalt!
O how are both exalted by the deed—
The wondrous deed! or shall I call it more?
A wonder in OMNIPOTENCE itself!
A mystery, no less to gods than men!

Not thus, our infidels th' ETERNAL draw,
" A GOD all o'er, consummate, absolute,
" Full orb'd, in his whole round of rays complete;"
They set at odds heaven's jarring attributes,
And with one excellence another wound:
Maim heaven's perfection, break its equal beams,
Bid mercy triumph over—GOD himself,
Undeified by their opprobrious praise:
A GOD all mercy is a GOD unjust.
Ye brainless wits! ye baptized infidels!
Ye worse for mending! wash'd to fouler stains!
The ransom was paid down: the fund of heaven,
Heaven's inexhaustible exhausted fund,
Amazing and amazed, pour'd forth the price
All price beyond; though curious to compute
Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum:
Its value vast ungrasp'd by minds create,
For ever hides and glows in the SUPREME.
And was the ransom paid? it was: and paid—
What can exalt the bounty more? for you:
The sun beheld it—no, the shocking scene
Drove back his chariot: midnight veil'd his face,
Not such as this, not such as nature makes;
A midnight nature shudder'd to behold;
A midnight new! a dread eclipse, without
Opposing spheres, from her CREATOR's frown!
Sun! didst thou fly thy MAKER's pain? or start
At that enormous load of human guilt,
Which bow'd his blessed head: o'erwhelm'd his cross;
Made groan the centre; burst earth's marble womb

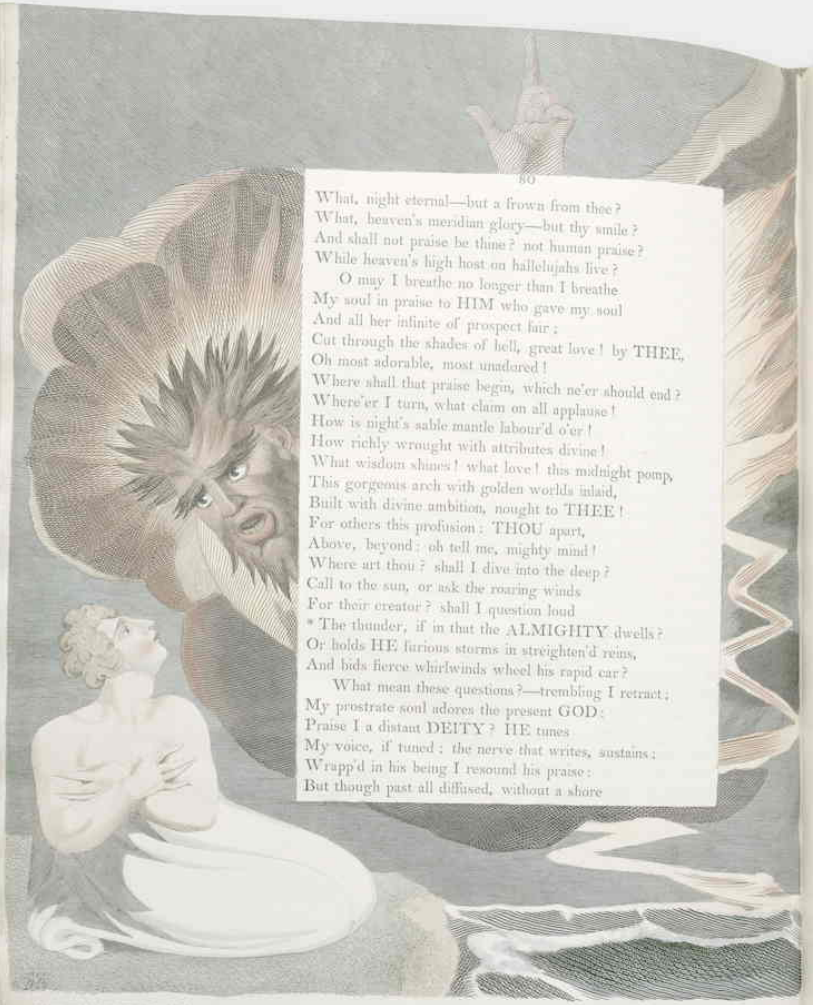
With pangs—strange pangs! deliver'd of her dead?
Hell howl'd, and heaven that hour let fall a tear:
Heaven wept, that man might smile! heaven bled, that man
Might never die!——

And is devotion virtue? 'tis compell'd:
What heart of stone but glows at thoughts like these!
Such contemplations mount us; and should mount
The mind still higher; nor ever glance on man,
Unraptured, uninflamed.—Where roll my thoughts
To rest from wonders? other wonders rise,
And strike where'er they roll; my soul is caught:
Heaven's sovereign blessings, clust'ring from the cross,
Rush on her in a throng, and close her round
The prisoner of amaze!——In his blest life
I see the path, and in his death the price,
And in his great ascent the proof supreme
Of immortality:——and did HE rise?
Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!
He rose! he rose! he burst the bars of death:
Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the KING OF GLORY to come in:
Who is the king of glory? HE who left
His throne of glory for the pang of death:
Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the KING OF GLORY to come in:
Who is the king of glory? HE who slew
The ravenous foe that gorged all human race!
The KING OF GLORY HE, whose glory fill'd
Heaven with amazement at his love to man;

And with divine complacency beheld
Powers most illumined, wilder'd in the theme.
The theme, the joy how then shall man sustain?
Oh the burst gates! crush'd sting! demolish'd throne!
Last gasp of vanquish'd death! shout earth and heaven!
This sum of good to man, whose nature then
Took wing, and mounted with HIM from the tomb!
Then, then I rose; then first humanity
Triumphant past the crystal ports of light,
Stupendous guest! and seized eternal youth;
Seized in our name: e'er since, 'tis blasphemous
To call man mortal: man's mortality
Was then transferr'd to death; and heaven's duration
Unalienably seal'd to this frail frame,
This child of dust:—man all-immortal, hail!
Hail, heaven! all-lavish of strange gifts to man!
Thine all the glory; man's the boundless bliss.
Where am I rapt by this triumphant theme,
On christian joy's exulting wing above
Th' Aonian mount?—alas, small cause for joy!
What if to pain immortal? if extent
Of being, to preclude a close of woe—
Where then my boast of immortality?
I boast it still, though cover'd o'er with guilt:
For guilt, not innocence his life he pour'd!
'Tis guilt alone can justify his death;
Nor that, unless his death can justify
Relenting guilt in heaven's indulgent sight.
If, sick of folly, I relent; he writes
My name in heaven with that inverted spear,

A spear deep-dipt in blood! which pierced his side,
And open'd there a font for all mankind
Who strive, who combat crimes; to drink and live:
This, only this subdues the fear of death.
And what is this?—survey the wondrous cure;
And at each step let higher wonder rise:
"Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
"Through means that speak its value infinite!
"A pardon bought with blood! with blood divine!
"With blood divine of HIM I made my foe!
"Persisted to provoke! though woo'd and awed,
"Blest and chastised, a flagrant rebel still!
"A rebel, 'midst the thunders of his throne!
"Nor I alone, a rebel universe!
"My species up in arms! not one exempt!
"Yet for the foulest of the foul HE dies;
"Most joy'd for the redeem'd from deepest guilt!
"As if our race were held of highest rank;
"And godhead dearer, as more kind to man!"
Bound every heart! and every bosom burn!
Oh what a scale of miracles is here!
Its lowest round high planted on the skies;
Its towering summit lost beyond the thought
Of man or angel! oh that I could climb
The wonderful ascent with equal praise!
Praise! flow for ever; if astonishment
Will give thee leave, my praise! for ever flow;
Praise ardent, cordial, constant, to high heaven
More fragrant than Arabia sacrificed;
And all her spicy mountains in a flame.

So dear, so due to heaven, shall praise descend
With her soft plume, from plausive angels' wing
First pluck'd by man, to tickle mortal ears,
Thus diving in the pockets of the great?
Is praise the perquisite of every paw,
Though black as hell, that grapples well for gold?
Oh love of gold! thou meanest of amours!
Shall praise her odours waste on virtues dead?
Embalm the base, perfume the stench of guilt,
Earn dirty bread by washing Ethiops fair,
Removing filth or sinking it from sight,
A scavenger in scenes where vacant posts,
Like gibbets yet untenanted, expect
Their future ornaments?—from courts and thrones,
Return, apostate praise! thou vagabond!
Thou prostitute! to thy first love return,
Thy first, thy greatest, once unrivall'd theme.
There flow redundant—like Meander flow
Back to thy fountain, to that parent power
Who gives the tongue to sound, the thought to soar,
The soul to be: men homage pay to men,
Thoughtless beneath whose dreadful eye they bow,
In mutual awe profound of clay to clay,
Of guilt to guilt, and turn their backs on THEE
GREAT SIRE! whom thrones celestial ceaseless sing;
To prostrate angels an amazing scene!
O the presumption of man's awe for man!
Man's author, end, restorer, law, and judge!
Thine all! day thine, and thine this gloom of night
With all her wealth, with all her radiant worlds!

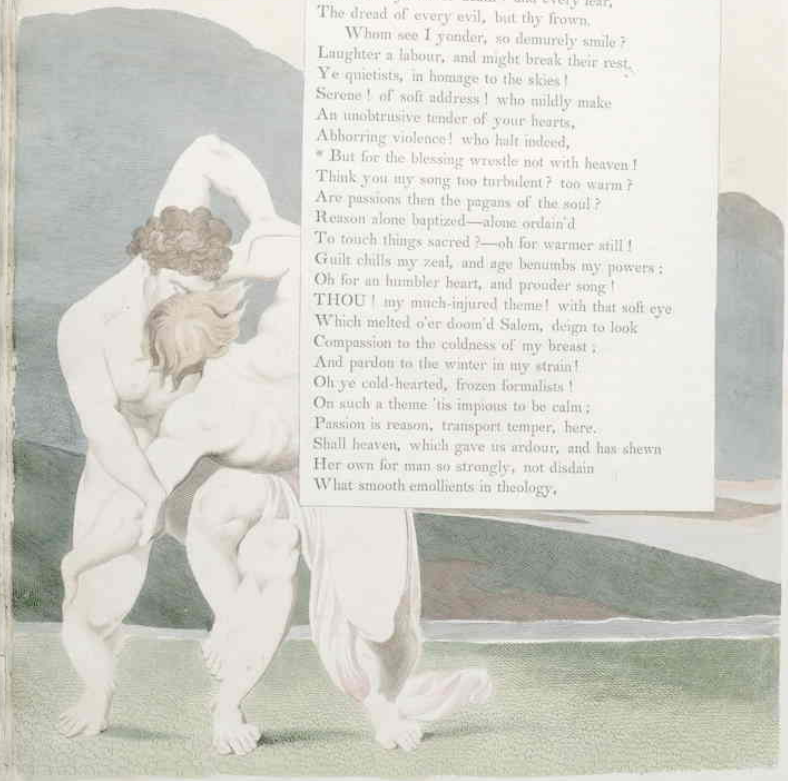


What, night eternal—but a frown from thee?
What, heaven's meridian glory—but thy smile?
And shall not praise be thine? not human praise?
While heaven's high host on hallelujahs live?
O may I breathe no longer than I breathe
My soul in praise to HIM who gave my soul
And all her infinite of prospect fair;
Cut through the shades of hell, great love! by THEE,
Oh most adorable, most unadored!
Where shall that praise begin, which ne'er should end?
Where'er I turn, what clam on all applause!
How is night's sable mantle labour'd o'er!
How richly wrought with attributes divine!
What wisdom shines! what love! this midnight pomp,
This gorgeous arch with golden worlds inlaid,
Built with divine ambition, nought to THEE!
For others this profusion: THOU apart,
Above, beyond: oh tell me, mighty mind!
Where art thou? shall I dive into the deep?
Call to the sun, or ask the roaring winds
For their creator? shall I question loud
* The thunder, if in that the ALMIGHTY dwells?
Or holds HE furious storms in streighten'd reins,
And bids fierce whirlwinds wheel his rapid car?
What mean these questions?—trembling I retract;
My prostrate soul adores the present GOD:
Praise I a distant DEITY? HE tunes
My voice, if tuned: the nerve that writes, sustains:
Wrapp'd in his being I resound his praise:
But though past all diffused, without a shore

His essence: local is his throne, as meet,
To gather the dispersed, as standards call
The listed from afar; to fix a point—
A central point, collective of his sons:
Since finite every nature but his own.
The nameless HE, whose nod is nature's birth;
And nature's shield the shadow of his hand;
Her dissolution his suspended smile;
The great FIRST LAST! pavilion'd high HE sits
In darkness, from excessive splendor; borne
By gods unseen, unless through lustre lost:
His glory, to created glory bright,
As that, to central horrors; HE looks down
On all that soars, and spans immensity.
Though night unnumber'd worlds unfold to view;
Boundless creation! what art thou? a beam,
A mere effluvium of his majesty:
And shall an atom of this atom world
Mutter in dust and sin the theme of heaven?
Down to the centre should I send my thought
Through beds of glittering ore, and glowing gems;
Their beggar'd blaze wants lustre for my lay,
Goes out in darkness: if on towering wing,
I send it through the boundless vault of stars;
The stars, though rich, what dross their gold to THEE!
Great—good—wise—wonderful—eternal KING!
If to those conscious stars thy throne around,
Praise ever-pouring, and imbibing bliss;
And ask their strain; they want it, more they want,
Poor their abundance, humble their sublime,

Supporter sole of man above himself;
Even in this night of frailty, change, and death,
She gives the soul a soul that acts a God.
Religion! providence! an after-state!
Here is firm footing—here is solid rock—
This can support us—all is sea besides—
Sinks under us—bestorms, and then devours.
* His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.
As when a wretch, from thick polluted air,
Darkness and stench, and suffocating damps,
And dungeon-horrors by kind fate discharged,
Climbs some fair eminence, where ether pure
Surrounds him, and elysian prospects rise;
His heart exults, his spirits cast their load;
As if new-born he triumphs in the change;
So joys the soul, when, from inglorious aims
And sordid sweets, from feculence and froth
Of ties terrestrial set at large, she mounts
To reason's region, her own element,
Breathes hopes immortal and affects the skies.
Religion! thou the soul of happiness;
And, groaning Calvary, of thee! there shine
The noblest truths; there strongest motives sting;
There sacred violence assaults the soul;
There nothing but compulsion is forborn.
Can love allure us? or can terror awe?
HE weeps!—the falling drop puts out the sun;
HE sighs!—the sigh earth's deep foundation shakes:
If in his love so terrible, what then

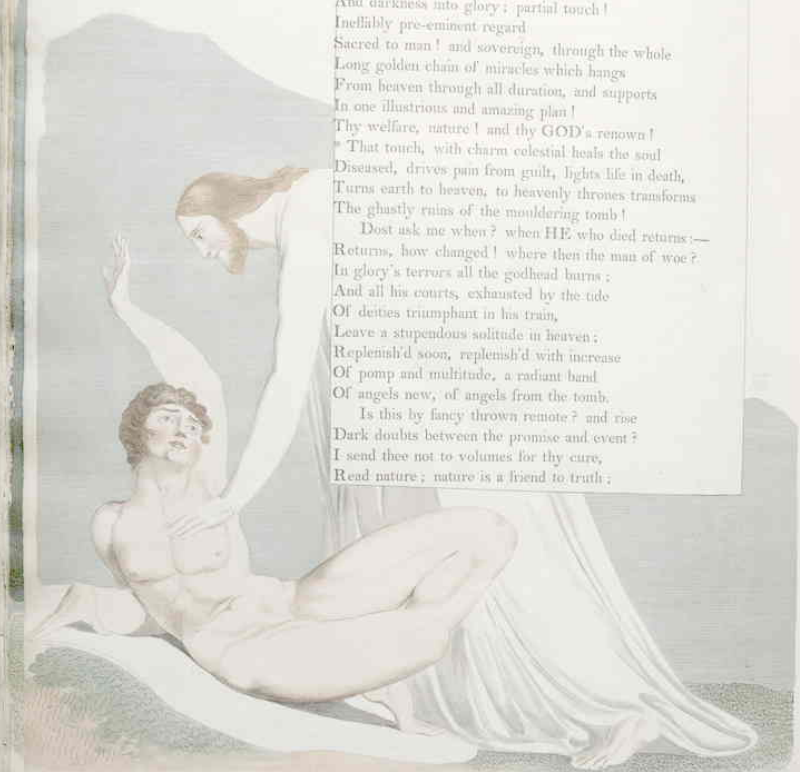
His wrath inflamed? his tenderness on fire;
Like soft, smooth oil, outblazing other fires?
Can prayer, can praise avert it?—THOU! my all,
My theme, my inspiration, and my crown!
My strength in age, my rise in low estate!
My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth!—my world!
My light in darkness, and my life in death!
My boast through time! bliss through eternity—
Eternity, too short to speak thy praise!
Or fathom thy profound of love to man—
To man of men the meanest, even to me!
My sacrifice! my GOD! what things are these!
What then art THOU? by what name shall I call THEE?
Knew I the name devout archangels use,
Devout archangels should the name enjoy
By me unrivall'd; thousands more sublime,
None half so dear as that, which, though unspoke
Still glows at heart: O how omnipotence
* Is lost in love! thou great PHILANTHROPIST!
Father of angels! but the friend of man!
Like Jacob, fondest of the younger born!
THOU! who didst save him, snatch the smoking brand
From out the flames, and quench it in thy blood;
How art thou pleased by bounty to distress!
To make us groan beneath our gratitude,
Too big for birth! to favour and confound;
To challenge, and to distance all return!
Lavish of love, stupendous heights to soar
And leave praise panting in the distant vale!
Thy right too great defrauds THEE of thy due;



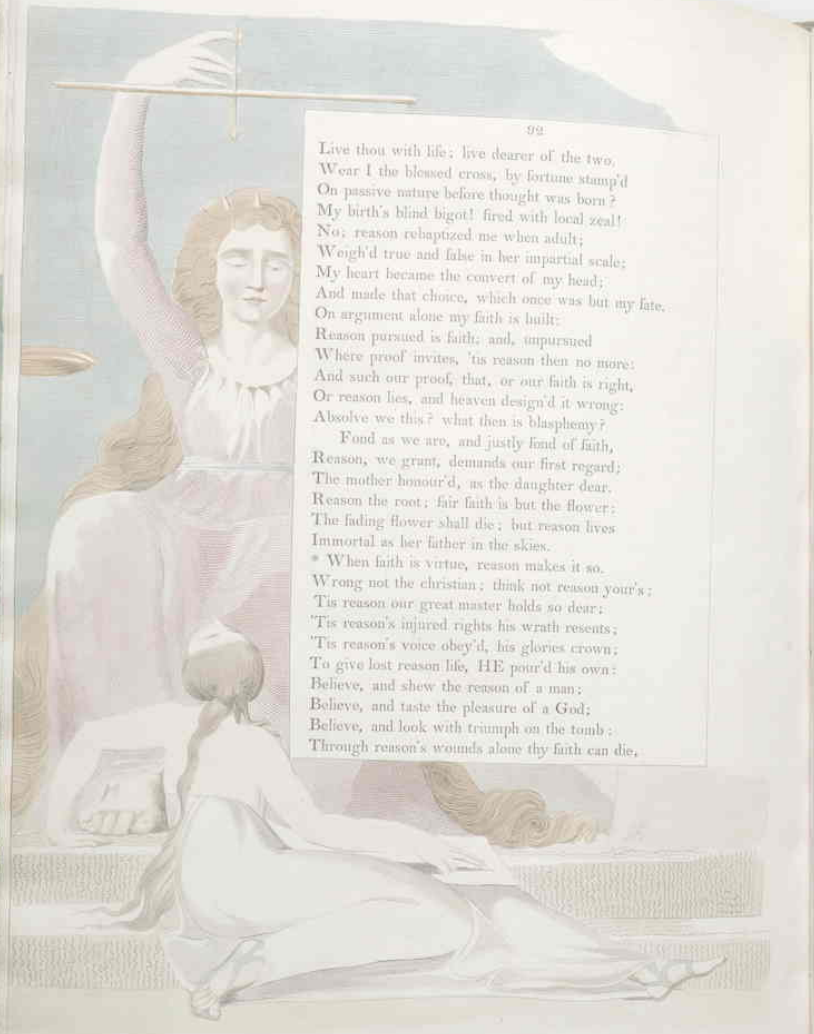
And sacrilegious our sublimest song:
But since the naked will obtains thy smile,
Beneath this monument of praise impaid,
And future life symphonious to my strain,
That noblest hymn to heaven! for ever lie
Intomb'd my fear of death! and every fear,
The dread of every evil, but thy frown.
Whom see I yonder, so demurely smile?
Laughter a labour, and might break their rest,
Ye quietists, in homage to the skies!
Serene! of soft address! who mildly make
An unobtrusive tender of your hearts,
Abhorring violence! who halt indeed,
* But for the blessing wrestle not with heaven!
Think you my song too turbulent? too warm?
Are passions then the pagans of the soul?
Reason alone baptized—alone ordain'd
To touch things sacred?—oh for warmer still!
Guilt chills my zeal, and age benumbs my powers:
Oh for an humbler heart, and prouder song!
THOU! my much-injured theme! with that soft eye
Which melted o'er doom'd Salom, deign to look
Compassion to the coldness of my breast;
And pardon to the winter in my strain!
Oh ye cold-hearted, frozen formalists!
On such a theme 'tis impious to be calm;
Passion is reason, transport temper, here.
Shall heaven, which gave us ardour, and has shewn
Her own for man so strongly, not disdain
What smooth emollients in theology,

Recumbent virtue's downy doctors preach,
That prose of piety, a lukewarm praise?
Rise odours sweet from incense uninflamed?
Devotion, when lukewarm, is mulevent;
But when it glows, its heat is struck to heaven;
To human hearts her golden harps are strung;
High heaven's orchestra chaunts amen to man.
Hear I, or dream I hear their distant strain,
Sweet to the soul and lasting strong of heaven,
Soft-wafted on celestial pity's plume
Through the vast spaces of the universe,
To cheer me in this melancholy gloom?
Oh when will death, now stingless, like a friend
Admit me of their choir? oh when will death
This mouldering old partition-wall throw down—
Give beings, one in nature, one abode?
Oh death divine! that givest us to the skies!
Great future! glorious patron of the past
And present! when shall I thy shrine adore?
From nature's continent immensely wide,
Immensely blest; this little isle of life,
This dark incarcerating colony
Divides us: happy day! that breaks our chain;
That manumits, that calls from exile home;
That leads to nature's great metropolis,
And re-admits us, through the guardian hand
Of elder brothers to our father's throne:
Who hears our advocate, and, through his wounds
Beholding man, allows that tender name!
'Tis this makes christian triumph a command:

'Tis this makes joy a duty to the wise;
'Tis impious in a good man to be sad.
Seest thou, LORENZO! where hangs all our hope?
Touch'd by the cross we live;—or more than die:
That touch, which touch'd not angels; more divine
Than that which touch'd confusion into form
And darkness into glory: partial touch!
Ineffably pre-eminent regard
Sacred to man! and sovereign, through the whole
Long golden chain of miracles which hangs
From heaven through all duration, and supports
In one illustrious and amazing plan!
Thy welfare, nature! and thy GOD's renown!
That touch, with charm celestial heals the soul
Diseased, drives pain from guilt, lights life in death,
Turns earth to heaven, to heavenly thrones transforms
The ghastly ruins of the mouldering tomb!
Dost ask me when? when HE who died returns:—
Returns, how changed! where then the man of woe?
In glory's terrors all the godhead burns;
And all his courts, exhausted by the tide
Of deities triumphant in his train,
Leave a stupendous solitude in heaven;
Replenish'd soon, replenish'd with increase
Of pomp and multitude, a radiant band
Of angels new, of angels from the tomb.
Is this by fancy thrown remote? and rise
Dark doubts between the promise and event?
I send thee not to volumes for thy cure,
Read nature; nature is a friend to truth;



Nature is christian: preaches to mankind,
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed.
Hast thou ne'er seen the comet's flaming flight?
The illustrious stranger, passing, terror sheds
On gazing nations from his fiery train
Of length enormous, takes his ample round
Through depths of ether; coasts unnumber'd worlds
Of more than solar glory; doubles wide
Heaven's mighty cape, and then revisits earth
From the long travel of a thousand years.
Thus at the destined period shall return
HE, once on earth, who bids the comet blaze;
And, with HIM, all our triumph o'er the tomb.
Nature is dumb on this important point;
Or hope precarious in low whisper breathes:
Faith speaks aloud, distinct: even adders hear,
But turn, and dart into the dark again.
Faith builds a bridge across the gulph of death
To break the shock blind nature cannot shun,
And lands thought smoothly on the farther shore.
Death's terror is the mountain faith removes:
That mountain-barrier between man and peace:
'Tis faith disarms destruction, and absolves
From every clamorous charge the guiltless tomb.
Why disbelieve—LORENZO?—"Reason bids,
"All-sacred reason"—hold her sacred still;
Nor shalt thou want a rival in thy flame:
All-sacred reason, source and soul of all
Demanding praise on earth, or earth above!
My heart is thine: deep in its inmost folds,

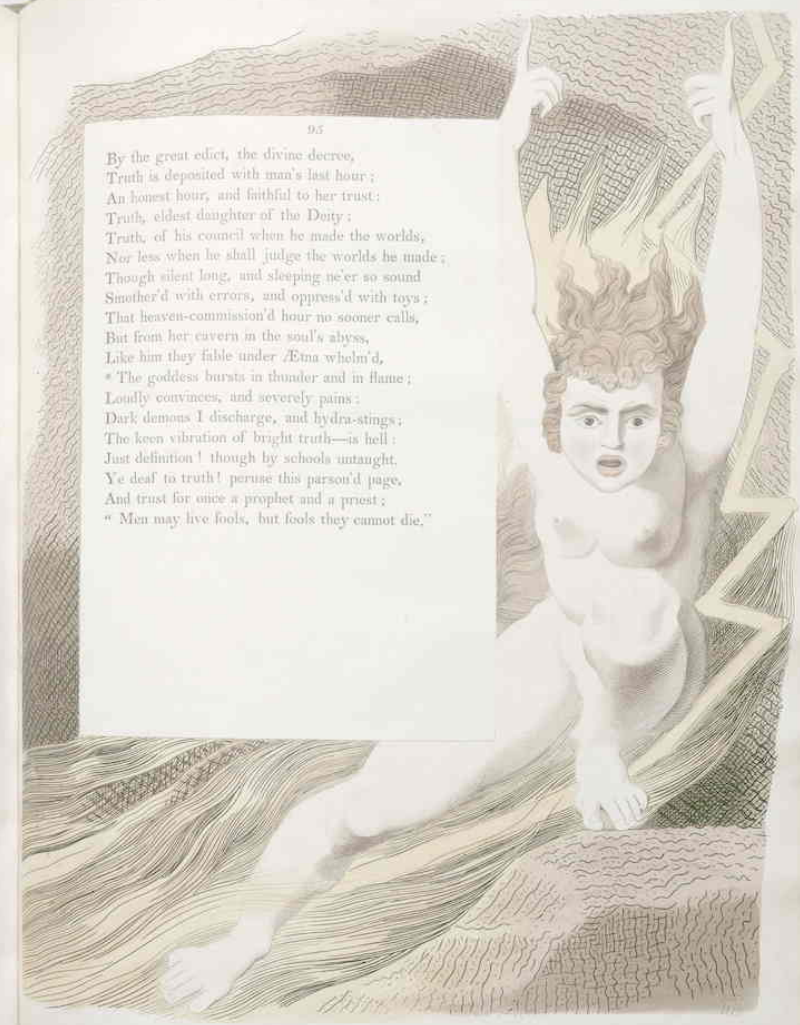


Live thou with life; live dearer of the two.
Wear I the blessed cross, by fortune stamp'd
On passive nature before thought was born?
My birth's blind bigot! fired with local zeal!
No; reason rebaptized me when adult;
Weigh'd true and false in her impartial scale:
My heart became the convert of my head;
And made that choice, which once was but my fate.
On argument alone my faith is built:
Reason pursued is faith; and, unpursued
Where proof invites, 'tis reason then no more:
And such our proof, that, or our faith is right,
Or reason lies, and heaven design'd it wrong:
Absolve we this? what then is blasphemy?
Fond as we are, and justly fond of faith,
Reason, we grant, demands our first regard;
The mother honour'd, as the daughter dear.
Reason the root; fair faith is but the flower:
The fading flower shall die; but reason lives
Immortal as her father in the skies.
* When faith is virtue, reason makes it so.
Wrong not the christian; think not reason your's;
'Tis reason our great master holds so dear;
'Tis reason's injured rights his wrath resents;
'Tis reason's voice obey'd, his glories crown;
To give lost reason life, HE pour'd his own:
Believe, and shew the reason of a man;
Believe, and taste the pleasure of a God;
Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb:
Through reason's wounds alone thy faith can die.

Which, dying, tenfold terror gives to death,
And dips in venom his twice-mortal sting.
Learn hence what honours, what loud pæans due
To those, who push our antidote aside;
Those boasted friends to reason and to man,
Whose fatal love stabs every joy, and leaves
Death's terror heighten'd gnawing on his heart:
These pompous sons of reason idolized
And vilified at once; of reason dead,
Then deified, as monarchs were of old;
What conduct plants proud laurels on their brow?
While love of truth through all their camp resounds,
They draw pride's curtain o'er the noon-tide ray,
Spike up their inch of reason on the point
Of philosophick wit, call'd argument;
And then, exulting in their taper, cry,
"Behold the sun;" and, Indian-like, adore.
Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding love!
Thou maker of new morals to mankind!
The grand morality is love of THEE.
As wise as Socrates, if such they were,
Nor will they hate of that sublime renown,
As wise as Socrates might justly stand
The definition of a modern fool.
A christian is the highest stile of man:
And is there who the blessed cross wipes off,
As a foul blot, from his dishonour'd brow?
"If angels tremble, 'tis at such a sight;
The wretch they quit, desponding of their charge,
More struck with grief or wonder, who can tell?

Ye sold to sense! ye citizens of earth!
For such alone the christian banner fly,
Know ye how wise your choice—how great your gain?
Behold the picture of earth's happiest man;
"He calls his wish, it comes; he sends it back
"And says he call'd another; that arrives,
"Meets the same welcome; yet he still calls on;
"Till one calls him, who varies not his call,
"But holds him fast, in chains of darkness bound,
"Till nature dies, and judgment sets him free;
"A freedom far less welcome than his chain."
But grant man happy; grant him happy long;
Add to life's highest prize her latest hour;
That hour so late is nimble in approach;
That, like a post, comes on in full career:
How swift the shuttle flies that weaves thy shroud!
Where is the fable of thy former years?
Thrown down the gulph of time, as far from thee
As they had ne'er been thine; the day in hand,
Like a bird struggling to get loose, is going;
Scarce now possess'd, so suddenly 'tis gone;
And each swift moment fled is death advanced
By strides as swift: eternity is all;
And whose eternity? who triumphs there,
Bathing for ever in the font of bliss,
For ever basking in the Deity?
Lorenzo! who?—thy conscience shall reply:
O give it leave to speak: 'twill speak ere long,
Thy leave unask'd: Lorenzo! hear it now,
While useful its advice, its accent mild.

By the great edict, the divine decree,
Truth is deposited with man's last hour;
An honest hour, and faithful to her trust:
Truth, eldest daughter of the Deity;
Truth, of his council when he made the worlds,
Nor less when he shall judge the worlds he made;
Though silent long, and sleeping ne'er so sound
Smother'd with errors, and oppress'd with toys;
That heaven-commission'd hour no sooner calls,
But from her cavern in the soul's abyss,
Like him they fable under Ætna whelm'd,
The goddess bursts in thunder and in flame;
Loudly convinces, and severely pains;
Dark demons I discharge, and hydra-stings;
The keen vibration of bright truth—is hell:
Just definition! though by schools untaught.
Ye deaf to truth! peruse this parson'd page,
And trust for once a prophet and a priest;
"Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die."



EXPLANATION of the ENGRAVINGS.

FRONTISPIECE to NIGHT the FIRST.

DEATH, in the character of an old man, having swept away with one hand part of the family seen in this print, is presenting with the other their spirits to immortality.

Page 1. Sleep breaking the couch of care, sheds his influence, by the touch of his magic wand, on the shepherd's flock.

Page 4. The imagery of dreaming variously delineated according to the poet's description in the passage referred to by the *.

Page 7. Death, tolling a bell, summons a person from sleep to his kingdom the grave.

Page 8. The universal empire of Death characterized by his plucking the sun from his sphere.

Page 10. An evil genius holding two phials, from one pours disease into the ear of a shepherd, and from the other scatters a blight among his flock; intimating that no condition is exempt from affliction.

Page 12. The frailty of the blessings of this life demonstrated, by a representation in which the happiness of a little family is suddenly destroyed by the accident of the husband's death from the bite of a serpent.

Page 13. The insecurity of life exemplified by the figure of Death menacing with his dart, and doubtful which he shall strike; the mother, or the infant at her breast.

Page 15. The author encircled by thorns, emblematical of grief, lamenting the loss of his friend to the midnight hours.

Page 16. The struggling of the soul for immortality, represented by a figure holding a lyre and springing into the air, but confined by a chain to the earth.

FRONTISPIECE to NIGHT the SECOND.

Time endeavouring to avert the arrow of Death from two friends.

Page 19. A skeleton discovering the first symptoms of re-animation on the sounding of the archangel's trump.

Page 23. A man measuring an infant with his span, in allusion to the shortness of life.

Page 24. Our inattention to the progress of Time illustrated by a figure of that god, (as he is called by the poet) creeping towards us with stealthy pace, and carefully concealing his wings from our view.

Page 25. Time having passed us, is seen displaying his "broad pinions," and treading nearly on the summit of the globe, eager "to join anew Eternity his sire."

Page 26. The same power in his character of destroyer, mowing down indiscriminately the frail inhabitants of this world.

Page 27. Conscience represented as a recording angel: who is veiled, and in the act of noting down the sin of intemperance in a bacchanalian.

Page 31. A good man conversing with his past hours, and examining their report. The hours are drawn as aerial and shadowy beings, some of whom are bringing their scrolls to the inquirer, while others are carrying their record to heaven.

Page 33. Belshazzar terrified in the midst of his impious debauch by the hand-writing on the wall. The passage marked out by the asterisk, sufficiently explains the propriety with which the story is alluded to by the poet, and delineated by the artist.

Page 35. A parent communicating instruction to his family.

Page 37. The story of the good Samaritan, introduced by the artist as an illustration of the poet's sentiment, that love alone and kind offices can purchase love.

Page 40. Angels attending the death-bed of the righteous, and administering consolation to his last moments.

Page 41. Angels conveying the spirit of the good man to heaven.

FRONTISPIECE to NIGHT the THIRD.

A female figure, who appears from the crescent beneath her feet to have surmounted the trials of this world, is admitted to an eternity of glory: eternity is represented by its usual emblem—a serpent with its extremities united.

Page 46. The folly and danger of pursuing the pleasures of sense as the chief objects of life illustrated by the figure of Death just ready to throw his pall over a young and wanton female.

Page 49. The author supporting a female figure, and presenting her to the sun; whose aid he seems to solicit, and whose chariot is seen above, surrounded and in some measure obscured by clouds. The artist refers to the circumstance alluded to in the poem, of the author's having attended his step-daughter (Narcissa) who was languishing in a decline, to a more southern climate.

Page 54. The vale of death, where the Power of darkness broods over his victims, as they are borne down to the grave by the torrent of a sinful life.

Page 55. His guardian angel sent to reprove a mourner for his improper indulgence of sorrow on the tomb of his friend: with one hand the angel touches the object of his errand, and with the other points to those realms of light in which the deceased was at rest from his labours.

Page 57. Death with his uplifted dart just disclosing himself to a party of bacchanals; one of whom still continues his intoxicating draught, while his comrades discover symptoms of extreme alarm on the unexpected intrusion of so unwelcome a guest.

Page 69. To the eye of the righteous the countenance of the King of Terrors is changed into that of the Prince of Peace.

FRONTISPIECE to NIGHT the FOURTH.

The resurrection of our Saviour, typical of the resurrection of all his servants from the grave.

Page 70. Death, as a huntsman, pursuing with ferocious pleasure his human game.

Page 72. Two figures, intended to represent Sense and Reason, pointing to another scene of things, and admonishing the author that it is time for him to depart from the present.

Page 73. The Saviour represented in the furnace of affliction, and agonized with torture for the sins of the human race.

Page 75. The sun as described by the poet, averting his face (which he hides with his hands) from the shocking spectacle of our Lord's sufferings.

Page 80. A personification of Thunder directing the adoration of the poet to the Almighty in heaven.

Page 86. The exalted views of a good man beyond the pleasures of this life, allegorically described by a figure in the clouds, with one hand fixed in the sky, and with the other pointing to the earth beneath him.

Page 87. Christ represented as the great philanthropist, receiving and instructing all ages and sexes.

Page 89. Earnest prayer and intercourse with Heaven compared to the wrestling of Jacob with the angel for a blessing.

Page 90. The Saviour healing Affliction by a touch with his hand.

Page 92. The harmony between Faith and Reason, illustrated by Faith writing down the dictates of Reason.

Page 93. Angels retiring in grief and wonder from their charge of a determined infidel.

Page 95. A personification of Truth, as she is represented by the poet, bursting on the last moments of the sinner "in thunder and in flame."

YOUNGS NIGHT THOUGHTS-BLAKE 1797