

**A TRIBUTE TO THE
MEMORY OF
WILLIAM COWPER**

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A Tribute to the Memory of William Cowper by J. T. S.

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MEMORY OF
WILLIAM COWPER**

A
T R I B U T E
TO THE MEMORY OF
WILLIAM COWPER,
AUTHOR OF THE TASK AND OTHER POEMS,

OCCASIONED BY THE PERUSAL OF HIS WORKS, AND HAYLEY'S
MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE.

By I. T. S.

John Edwin Sewell

Attachment strong
Springs from delight bestow'd. To me delight
Long hast thou giv'n; and I have giv'n thee praise.
Scott's Amwell.

But if unhappily deceiv'd, I dream,
And prove too weak for so sublime a theme;
Let Charity forgive me a mistake,
That zeal, not vanity, has chanc'd to make,
And spare the Poet, for his subjects sake.
Cowper's Charity.

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AND HARVEY, AND I. AND A. ARCH, LONDON.

1808.

OCCASIONAL STANZAS.

A Muse, unskill'd to touch th' harmonious string,
To virtuous COWPER, her just *tribute* pays.
At Friendship's call, she plumes her tender wing;
To Friendship, consecrates her artless lays.

And ye, who well the happier secret know,
At once t' instruct, to soothe and charm mankind,
Forgive, if here, no polish'd numbers flow;
If here, no cultivated flowers ye find.

But, if her desultory strain convey
One just, one genuine lesson to the heart;
If Truth and Virtue own her rude essay;
She asks no higher praise: for these impart
To her more pure delight, than wreaths supplied
From fam'd Castalia's spring, or Pindus' flowery side.

A

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY

OF

COWPER.

GENIUS of COWPER, oft, in pensive mood,
I pore delighted o'er thy varied page,
And trace the pure effusions of thy wit,
Flowing in numbers musically sweet,
Easy and smooth as thy own winding Guse,
And fraught with sentiments sublimer still.
'Twas thine to soothe with mild persuasive art,
With manly nervous eloquence to please,
Or temper with a just severity
Thy moral strain ;—not proudly “ conjur'd up
“ To serve occasions of poetic pomp,”
But ever to thy Maker's glorious cause
Devoted ;—nor less studious of the high
Immortal interests of thy fellow men ;
When, thus, with thee, in converse sweet, awhile
Set free from life's entanglements, from all
Those busy cares ; which oft, alas, impede

The better purposes of Christian grace,
 And wean the soul from happiness and heav'n;—
 My heart acknowledges th' inspiring theme;
 And meditates thy praise.—Not cold the strain,
 Nor vain the task, if, hap'ly, in th' essay,
 I catch one pure, one genuine spark from thee.

Where are the Sons of Song, the rev'rend train,
 Who once in Selma's sacred halls attun'd,
 To deeds of virtuous praise, their trembling strings?
 And where the pensive band, who o'er the urn
 Of meaner genius and inferior fame,
 Pour the soft stream of tributary tears,
 Elegiac stanza and funereal hymn?
 While Cowper's memory asks the plausive strain,
 Why lie their lyres neglected and unstrung,
 Unwept the bard of nature and of truth?
 And all unconscious of their loss, supine
 Sleep his lov'd Muses on th' Aonian hill?

O form'd by nature, as by virtue form'd
 To polish, to instruct, improve thy age:
 To give to poetry a sacred charm
 Unfelt before,—and in one hallow'd theme,
 To blend the Seraph's with the Poet's fire!

Permit a youth from letter'd fame remote,
 And skill scholastic,—simple as sincere ;
 Whose sober footsteps strive not to attain
 Parnassian heights ;—who seeks no laurel there ;
 But, by fair Orwell's shores, with beauty crown'd,
 And busy commerce, tho' by bard, as yet
 Unsung their praise pre- eminent, devotes
 To different labours his assiduous hours ; *
 Not prompt to flatter with unmeaning praise,
 Tho' proud t' appreciate thy just desert ;
 One who unknown, yet lov'd thee, and who still
 Esteems thy memory precious ;—O permit
 The luxury to sympathize with thee,
 Afflicted mourner in a vale of tears !
 To pay his humble tribute to thy worth,
 And well directed talents ;—since no voice
 Of praise or censure can affect thee now.
 And oh ! how'er for poesy unfit,
 Unskill'd in language courtly or refin'd,
 To soothe the nicer ear of classic taste ;

* In offering to his friends and the public, a second edition of the *Tribute to Cowper*, the author takes this opportunity gratefully to acknowledge the indulgence they have bestowed on the first. He has corrected some inaccuracies, and made some additions to the original poem ; but he is sensible, that there is still ample room to deprecate the severity of criticism.

Still let me strive, with humbler aim to win
 Affections' partial eye, unapt to frown
 On ev'n a muse like mine, that seeks to dress
 Thy laurell'd portrait with wild "flow'rs of verse."
 And, sure, the meed, that grateful truth bestows,
 On virtue, ev'n in humbler sphere than thine ;
 In silent conflicts, steadily engag'd
 With selfish passions, (no inglorious aim,)
 And nobly consecrating all her pow'rs,
 To works of pure beneficence and love,
 Transcends th' applause, admiring nations pay
 To warriors and to statesmen, oft acquir'd
 By motives less refin'd, when scann'd by Him,
 Whose wisdom penetrates the brilliant mask,
 By interest or ambition oft assum'd ;
 Divests vain glory of her dazzling plumes,
 And not the action values, but the heart.—
 While wond'ring Senates their high names enroll,
 Her's in a sweet memorial speeds to Heav'n :
 And while their trophies grace th' historic page,
 Her's shall endure, tho' suns and stars decay.

Hail, gentle bard, whose honour'd page combines
 The various pow'rs of verse—The march sublime
 Of MILTON's song, majestic as his theme ;

And his, the pride of Avon's tuneful stream,
 Whose sprightly fancy to fair Albion's shores
 Woo'd the coy Muses from their secret cell,
 And led them wond'ring at his magic skill,
 From their lov'd Latium and the Mantuan plain.
 ADDISON, rousing a degen'rate age,
 In language chaste as his own virtuous mind,
 From the low maze of error and of ill ;
 Who taught mankind, and trod himself the way,
 Thro' Wisdom's paths, to Truth's divine abode.
 Th' harmonious strain of him *, who erst beguil'd,
 With the rich treasures of his classic store,
 Mid Twick'nam's bow'rs, the list'ning sons of Thame.
 THOMSON, melodious as his vocal groves,
 Smooth as his Summer's chrystal rills, and soft
 As vernal airs ; sweet Nature's artless child ;
 And pious YOUNG, whose sober voice prolongs,
 In plaintive warblings thro' night's silent reign,
 Important topics ;—*Friendship, Time and Death,*
The Christian Triumph, th' Infidel Reclaim'd,
 " To Vice, confusion, and to Virtue, peace,"
 All seem to breathe their spirit thro' thy strains,
 In one harmonious concert, well refin'd

* Pope.