Thelwall John
Selections; and original articles
SELECTIONS,
AND
ORIGINAL ARTICLES,
READ AND RECITED
IN ILLUSTRATION OF
Mr. THELWALL's
LECTURES
ON THE
SCIENCE AND PRACTICE
OF,
ELOCUTION.

Printed, under the superintendence of the Lecturer, with particular regard to punctuation, and such distributions, of pause and paragraph, as are calculated to assist the student, and facilitate the just delivery of the respective passages.

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THE Outlines of the respective Courses, and of individual Lectures (some of which are always bound up with the Selections, when collected into the form of a volume) will give the casual reader some idea of the general plan of the undertaking for the illustration of which the ensuing articles have been selected. By these it will appear, that, in the present arrangement, each Lecture, generally speaking, consists of three distinct parts—The Preliminary Oration, or specimen of spontaneous Elocution—usually devoted to such topics as are calculated to rouse attention to the general subject—The Didactic Discourse, or Treatise on some given portion of the Rules of Art—and The Illustrations; consisting of Readings and Recitals,—principally from the most approved Authors; but interspersed with original articles, and accompanied with Strictures, literary and critical, on the various styles of composition, and comparative excellences of the respective writers.

With respect to the Orations—permanent outlines are scarcely desirable: for altho, in point of miscellaneous entertainment, these exordiums have been generally regarded as the most interesting portions of the Lectures, the subject matter can scarcely be considered as an essential part of the regular plan of instruction: and, their principal merit consisting in their spontaneity, absolute permanence, even of arrangement and distribution, would be, in some degree, inconsistent with the very object they have in view.

Not so with the Didactic Portions. As a detached publication, the object of the Volume would be considerably promoted, could it be accompanied with a complete and well-methodised outline of the whole of the Scientific matter. But the plan is yet in its infancy. The experiment has, hitherto, been tried upon too contracted a scale; and neither time nor space have been permitted for its due expansion. In short the Lectures may be yet considered as only in rehearsal. The full exhibition of the plan must necessarily be reserved for neighbourhoods of more extensive population than the generality of those to which the earlier attempts have been confined.
To speak more correctly, this first excursion of the Lecturer, is to be considered as a mere progress of itinerant study; during which, while he has aspired to little more than to dispense rational amusement, and awaken attention to the subject of his inquiries, his ideas have been gradually expanding, information has been accumulating, speculation has been corrected by practice, and the first rapid conceptions of the mind have, in some degree, been matured and digested. Still, however, the project is in a state of progression: fresh criticisms from intelligent characters, to whose acquaintance these Lectures are, occasionally, an introduction, are perpetually producing new lights: and new arrangements, in the distribution of the original matter, are the inevitable consequences of encreased experience and solicitous reflection.

All therefore that can, at present, be done, is to announce, in general terms, the object of these Lectures; which is—the cultivation, in its most extensive sense, of the Oral Language of our Country; and of every grace and every accomplishment by which the energy and harmony of that language can be improved, or its impressions can be heightened and enforced—whether in Reading, or in Recital;—in the more sprightly, but important, display of Conversational Accomplishment,—or in the public exertions of Forensic and Senatorial Oratory. For further information, the reader must be referred to those imperfect and hasty sketches—the outline advertisements of the respective Lectures.

The Lectures have been delivered at the following places, in the order in which they are set down, in shorter or longer courses, according to the respective population; or as the nature of other engagements might permit—Sheffield—Leeds—York—Hull—Barton upon Humber—Beverly—Howden—Ripon—Darlington—Stockton upon Tees—Sunderland—Newcastle upon Tyne—S. Shields—N. Shields—Alnwick—Knaresborough—Harrogate—Wakefield—Sheffield (a second time)—Rotherham.

What impressions they have left behind them, it is trusted to the Tongue of common Rumour to report—the more especially, as, the Envy and Malice will occasionally mingle their gratuitous clamour with the hard-earned plaudit of every useful effort,—with respect to the Lecturer's present object of pursuit, there can be no set of persons who have the least shadow of Interest in precipitating to general misrepresentation.

ROtherham: September 5, 1802.
GENERAL PLAN AND OUTLINE
OF
MR. THELWALL's
Course of Lectures,
ON THE
SCIENCE AND PRACTICE
OF
ELOCUTION.
Delivered, and about to be delivered, in the principal Cities and Towns of England, Scotland, &c.

The nature and object of the present undertaking is, by this time, pretty generally understood; or if, in some neighbourhoods, it should still require explanation, it is presumed that the present outline will speak sufficiently for itself: that it will be scarcely necessary to observe that, in the course of these lectures, no topic is ever permitted to intrude that, in the smallest degree, can either flatter, or offend, the prejudices, or the opinions, of any description of persons whatever. The object is ENGLISH ELOCUTION—and that alone.

The subject, therefore, to be illustrated, being of equal importance to ALL PERSONS in the more educated circles of society, the lecturer throws himself, without other pretensions, upon the discernment and liberality of an enlightened public. Exclusively devoted, during the last six years, to the cultivation of polite literature, and to the improvement of his native language, in particular, he solicits approbation upon no other basis than the utility of the science he professes—and, while endeavouring to awaken attention to an essential, tho neglected accomplishment (to which the nations of antiquity were indebted for so large a portion of their intellectual glory) he relies, with confidence, on the growing attachment of the community to the cultivation of every useful science, for that candid and impartial patronage, without which, science can never be expanded, or the arts of civilization improved. Such, alone, are his views and his pretensions, and upon these he has not, hitherto, relied in vain. The success with which his efforts have been fostered in all the principal neighbourhoods of an extensive tract of country, from Worcester and Birmingham to the Tweed, emboldens him to give more general circulation to the extended outline of his plan; and to announce his intention of visiting, in his present character, all the more populous towns of the nation.

December 1802.

J. Belcher, Printer, Bull Ring, Birmingham.
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PART II. ILLUSTRATIONS. Readings and Recitals, exhibiting the application of the expressive powers of the Voice to various species of Elocution; with criticisms, &c.


LECTURE II.

PART I. DIDACTIC DISCOURSE. On the Structure and Offices of the Enunciative Organs. Of the Tongue—Structure—offices—imputed defects. Back part of the Roof, or Palate—functions—Rough part of the Gums—Teeth—importance—Lips—the principal anatomical advantage to which man is indebted for the power of enunciative sound—universality of their use—demonstrations—importance of their due management—to taste and expressive distinctness—to exterior beauty—All habits that degrade the Elocution deform the Features also. Illustration of the philosophical principle of the identity of fitness and beauty. Elocution of the Fair Sex.

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LECTURE V.


PART II. ILLUSTRATIONS of various species of Elocution, and the importance of Enunciative execution in all; with criticisms on the respective Authors.


LECTURE VI.


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playing various characteristics of preceptive, and moral elocution—
with criticisms, &c.

LECTURE VII.


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LECTURE VIII.


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LECTURE XII.

On the finishing Graces, and higher Accomplishments of Elocution.

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J. Belcher, Printer, Bull Ring, Birmingham.
ADELFRID, king of Bernicia, having married Acca, the daughter of Ælla, king of Deiri, and expell'd her infant brother Edwin, had united all the counties north of Humber into one monarchy, and acquir'd a great ascendant in the heptarchy. He, also, spread the terror of the Saxon arms to the neighbouring people; and, by his victories over the Scots and Picts, as well as Welsh, extend'd, on all sides, the bounds of his dominions. "Having laid siege to Chester, the Britons march'd out, with all their forces, to engage him; and they were attended by a body of 1250 monks, from the monastery of Bangor, who stood at a small distance from the field of battle, in order to encourage the combatants, by their presence and exhortations. Adelfrid, enquiring the purpose of this unusual appearance, was told, that these priests had come to pray against him: 'Then are they as much our enemies, said he, as those who intend to fight against us': And he immediately sent a detachment, who fell upon them, and did such execution, that only fifty escap'd with their lives. The Britons, astonish'd at this event, receiv'd a total defeat: Chester was oblig'd to surrender: And Adelfrid, pursuing his victory, made himself master of Bangor, and entirely demolish'd the monastery; a building so extensive, that there was a mile's distance from one gate of it to another; and it contain'd two thousand one hundred monks, who are said to have been there maintain'd by their own labour."

Notwithstanding Adelfrid's success in war, he liv'd in inquietude on account of young Edwin, whom he had unjustly dispossess'd of the crown of Deiri. This prince, now grown to man's estate, wander'd from place to place, in continual danger from the attempts of Adelfrid; and receiv'd, at last, protection in the court of Redwald, king of the East-Angles; where his engaging and gallant deportment procur'd him general esteem and affection. Redwald, however, was strongly solicited by the king of Northumberland to kill or deliver up his guest: Rich presents
were promis'd him, if he would comply; and war denounc'd against him, in case of his refusal. After rejecting several messages of this kind, his generosity began to yield to motives of interest: and he retain'd the last ambassador, till he should come to a resolution, in a case of such importance. Edwin inform'd of his friend's perplexity, was yet determin'd, at all hazards, to remain in East Anglia; and thought, if the protection of that court fail'd him, it was* better to die than prolong a life so much expos'd to the persecutions of his powerful rival. This confidence in Redwald's honour and friendship, with his other accomplishments, engag'd the Queen on his side; and she effectually represented to her husband the infamy of delivering up to certain destruction their royal guest, who had fled to them for protection against his cruel and jealous enemies. Redwald, embracing more generous resolutions, thought it safest to prevent Adelfrid, before that prince was aware of his intention; and to attack him, while he was yet unprepar'd for defence. He march'd suddenly, with an army, into the kingdom of Northumberland, and fought a battle with Adelfrid; in which that monarch was defeated and kill'd, after revenging himself by the death of Regner, son of Redwald. His own sons, Fanfrid, Oswald, and Osway, yet infants, were carried into Scotland; and Edwin obtain'd possession of the crown of Northumberland.

Edwin was the greatest prince of the Heptarchy, in that age; and distinguish'd himself, both by his influence over the kingdoms, and by the strict execution of justice in his own dominions. He reclaim'd his subjects from the licentious life to which they had been accustom'd; and it was a common saying, that, during his reign, a woman or child might openly carry, every where, a purse of gold, without any danger of violence or robbery.

* Suppositional case "were" or "would be:"—was belongs only to the past. Instances of such inaccuracy, are not uncommon in this unrival'd, but careless writer.

§§§ In this specimen the mute e is supplied by the apostrophe; and it is submitted to public consideration, whether such accommodation of the typography to the pronunciation might not be worthy of general adoption.
ORATORICAL NARRATION.

THE MASSACRE OF BANGOR:

FROM THE HOPE OF ALBION:

(See Poems in Retirement—Thelwall.)

'Mid these cabals not idle are the twain,
Or of their charge unheedful. Thro' the night,
While, with the social chiefs, wassail and meed
They quaff, in gay carousals, Hermanric
Probes every heart: as pride or interest sways;
Mirth, or the genial rite, or thirst of fame,
Or enmity and deep corroding hate
Against the race of Cambria, he enflames
Their several passions: here the costly gift
Timely presents; some martial trophy there;
And there the spacious bowl. Less sordid, these
Are won by shews of friendship—cordial words,
The statesman's cheapest bribes. Some well-tim'd praise;
Quaint tales or jests convivial some allure—
A jocund band; while to another group
Of martial deeds he vaunts,

"Of Bangor's fight,
"Where Adelfrid o'er slaughter'd thousands strode,
"Humbling the Cambrian crest; while, cowering, fled
"Brochmael, thy prince, O, Powys! to their fate
"Leaving the tonsur'd crew; twelve hundred priests,
"Crosier'd and cowl'd; who, with their impious rites
"And haunted incantations, hope to fray
"The sons of Woden. To the insulted god,
"An acceptable offering, these our king
"Bravely devotes; then, on the buckler'd host
"Springs, like the brindled wolf, who, having flesh'd
"His warrior tusks with blood, and thinn'd the fold,
"Next on the herdsmen turns, that round him throng,
"Intent with missile weapons to repel
"The bold invader: these, with conquering rage,
"Fiercely he tears; their sylvan war defies,
"And chaces to their huts; well pleas'd to find
"Inglorious safety. So the hero rag'd:
"So to their woods and mountains chac'd the tribes
"Of Cambria's boastful warriors. Dee's broad waves
"Ran purple to the sea; proud Bangor flam'd;
"And Legan-Cester, trembling to its base,
"Confess'd the Saxon power. Nor scap'd the chiefs;
"But, by the outstretch'd sax mow'd down, or crush'd
"Beneath the pond'rous mace, groaning they fell,—
"In conflict and in flight, a royal carnage!
"First bled Gwendellau; fierce Caradoc next,
"Madoc and Modred, strong Derwyddon, Ludd,
"Merion and Mathraval: Rhiwallon next,
"Renown'd for brutal rage; and Howel's son,
"Proud Cunvan; swift Ardidd then we slew,
"O'erta'en in flight; and, making fruitless stand,
"Cadwallader, and Rhun, and Ruthfedel;
"And stern Cadoffin, tall Usgathrog, Mawr,
"Enion and Cadiffor—Arglooddi all,
"Fam'd in their clans, and Bards, whose epic songs
"Inflame the martial ardour. Cadvan's self—
"(Your Edwin's patron!) who, with all his hosts,
"Flush'd with predicted conquest, from the north
"Came foaming, (like the torrents from their heights,
"Swoln by autumnal rains—an upland sea!)
"Stood all aghast; and, doubting Merlin's faith,
"For his own Snowdon trembled, and retir'd."

J. Montgomery, Printer, Sheffield.
THE PASSIONS, AN ODE.

FEW productions of Genius are to be found, in the English Language, the recital of which is better calculated for that exercise and preparation of the Organs indispens able to the higher graces of Oratorical expression, than the following ODE of COLLINS.

In poetical description, it is what "ALEXANDER'S FEAST" is in point of poetical sentiment; and the two productions stand each unequalled in its respective excellences:—and each of them will be found to afford ample field for the powers of expressive pathos, and diversified intonation. In a literary point of view, perhaps, an interesting parallel might be drawn between them; and, if impartial criticism must award the palm of superior excellence to the muse of Dryden—yet ( tho the subject of composition be the same, and the high ground of acknowledged excellence was already attained, by the preceding writer, when Collins commenced his career) the comparison would demonstrate the indisputable claim of the bard of Aurn, to the reputation, not of an imitator, but of a powerful rival.

In an Elocutionary point of view, the Passions of Collins will, perhaps, be admitted to be even more difficult of delivery than the Alexander's Feast;—to demand an equal facility of discriminative perception, and a superior range of expressive power: and it must be acknowledged that the difficulty is, in some measure, increased by the comparative inanity of the concluding stanza. Both, however, are replete with those transitions, and characteristics of energetic passion, with which the higher species of Oratory delights to deal: and both ought, therefore, to be diligently studied, and frequently recited, by the young pupil who is preparing himself for the bolder career of Oratorical Fame.

WHEN Music, heavenly Maid! was young,
While yet, in early Greece, she sung,
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
Throng'd around her magic cell;
Exulting—trembling—raging—fainting,—
Possess'd beyond the Muse's painting:
By turns, they felt the glowing mind
Disturb'd—delighted—rais'd—refin'd;
Till once, 'tis said, (when all were fir'd,
Fill'd with fury—rapt—inspir'd):
From the supporting myrtles round,
They snatch'd her instruments of sound;
And (as they oft had heard, apart,
Sweet lessons of her forceful art)
Each, for Madnefs rul'd the hour,
Would prove his own expressive pow'r.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewilder'd laid,
And back recoil'd—he knew not why—
Even at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rush'd, his eyes on fire,
In lightnings, own'd his secret stings;
In one rude clash, he struck the lyre,
And swept, with hurried hand, the strings.

With woeful measures, wan Despair—
Low, full'en sounds his grief beguil'd;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air!
'Twas sad by fits—by starts, 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope! with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure?
Still it whisper'd promis'd pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong;
And, from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She call'd on Echo, still, thro' all the song;
And where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft, responsive voice was heard at every close;
And Hope enchanted finil'd, and waw'd her golden hair.

And longer had she sung—but, with a frown,
Revenge impatient rofe:
He threw his blood-stain'd sword, in thunder, down,
And, with a withering look,
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread—
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe!
And, ever and anon, he beat
The doubling drum, with furious heat; —
—And tho', sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity, at his side,
Her soul subduing voice apply'd,
Yet still he kept his wild, unalter'd mein,
While each strain'd ball of light seem'd bursting from
his head.

Thy numbers, Jealousy! to nought were fix'd;
Sad proof of thy distressful state! —
Of differing themes the veering song was mix'd; —
And now it courted Love; — now, raving, call'd on Hate.

With eyes up-rais'd, as one inspir'd,
Pale Melancholy sat retir'd,
And, from her wild sequester'd feat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,
Pour'd thro' the mellow horn her pensive soul;
And, dashing, soft, from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels join'd the sound.
Thro' glades and glooms the mingled measure stole;
Or o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay,
(Round a holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace, and lonely musing,) In hollow murmurs dy'd away.

But O! how alter'd was its sprightlier tone!
When Chearfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
(Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew,) Blew an inspiriting air, that dale and thicket rung —
The hunter's call, to Faun and Dryad known:
The oak-crown'd sisters, and their chast-e-ey'd queen,
Satyrs, and Sylvan boys were seen
Peeping from forth their alleys green;
Brown Exercife rejoic'd to hear,
And Sport leapt up, and seiz'd his beechen spear.

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial;
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand address'd;
But soon he faw the brisk-awakening viol,
Whose sweet, entrancing voice he lov'd the best.
They would have thought who heard the strain,
They saw, in Tempe’s vale, her native maids,
Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unweary’d minstrel dancing:
While, as his flying fingers kiss’d the strings,
Love fram’d with Mirth a gay fantastic round;
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound;
And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings.

O Music! sphere-descended maid!
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom’s aid,
Why, Goddess! why, to us deny’d,
Lay it thou thy ancient lyre aside?
As, in that lov’d Athenian bower,
You learn’d an all-commanding power,
Thy mimic soul, O Nymph endear’d!
Can well recall what then it heard.
Where is thy native, simple heart,
Devote to virtue, fancy, art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that god-like age,
Fill thy recording sister’s page.
’Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all that charms this laggard age;
Even all at once together found—
Cæcilia’s mingled world of sound.
O bid our vain endeavours cease;
Revive the just designs of Greece;
Return, in all thy simple state;
Confirm the tales her son’s relate!
John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown;
A train-band captain, eke, was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear—
   "Tho' wedded we have been
   "These twice ten tedious years, yet we
   "No holiday have seen.
   "To-morrow is our wedding-day;
   "And we will then repair
   "Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
   "All in a chaise and pair.
   "My sister, and my sister's child,
   "Myself and children three
   "Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
   "On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
   "Of woman-kind but one,—
   "And you are she, my dearest dear!
   "Therefore it shall be done.
   "I am a linen-draper bold,
   "As all the world doth know;
   "And my good friend the callender
   "Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mistrefs Gilpin, "That's well said;
   "And, for that wine is dear,
   "We will be furnish'd with our own—
   "Which is both bright and clear."
John Gilpin kis'd his loving wife;
O'erjoy'd was he to find
That, tho' on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came—the chaise was brought;
But, yet, was not allow'd
To drive up to the door; left all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls—and, all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip! round went the wheels!
Were never folk so glad;
The stones did rattle, underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin, at his horse's side,
Seiz'd fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,—
But soon came down again.

For saddle-tree scarce reached he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Altho' it griev'd him sore,
Yet loss of pence full well he knew
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty, screaming, came down stairs,—
"The wine is left behind!"
"Good lack!" quoth he—"yet bring it me,—
"My leathern belt likewise,
"In which I bear my trusty sword
"When I do exercise."

Now Mistref Gilpin, careful soul!
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she lov'd,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true;

Then over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted, once again,
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot—
Which gall'd him in his seat.

"So, fair and softly!" John he cried—
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands
And, eke, with all his might.
His horse, who never in that sort
    Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
    Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought,
    Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
    Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
    Like streamer long and gay,
Till loop and button failing both,
    At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
    The bottles he had slung;—
A bottle swinging at each side,
    As hath been said, or sung.

The dogs did bark—the children scream'd—
    Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
    As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
    His fame soon spread around—
"He carries weight!"—"He rides a race!"
    "Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near,
    'Twas wonderful to view
How, in a trice, the turnpike men
    Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
    His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
    Were shatter'd at a blow.
Down ran the wine into the road,
(Most piteous to be seen!)
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But, still, he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle brac'd;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
And till he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay.

And, there, he threw the wash about,
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife,
From balcony, espied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin! here's the house"—
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits; and we are tir'd!"
Said Gilpin—"So am I."

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclin'd to tarry there;—
For why? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So, like an arrow, swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.
Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend's, the callender's
His horse at last stood still.

The callender, amaz'd to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

"What news? what news? your tidings tell;
"Tell me you must and shall—
"Say why bare-headed you are come,—
"Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And lov'd a timely joke;
And thus, unto the callender,
In merry guise he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come;
"And, if I well forebode,
"My hat and wig will soon be here,—
"They are upon the road."

The callender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence strait he came with hat and wig;—
A wig that flow'd behind,—
A hat not much the worse for wear;—
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn,
Thus show'd his ready wit,
"My head is twice as big as your's,
"They, therefore, needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
"That hangs upon your face;
"And stop and eat, for well you may
"Be in a hungry case."
Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
  "And all the world would stare,
  "If wife should dine at Edmonton,
  "And I should dine at Ware."

So, turning to his horse, he said,
  "I am in haste to dine:
  "'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
  "You shall go back for mine."

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
  Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off, with all his might,
  As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went Gilpin's hat and wig!
He lost them sooner than at first,
  For why?—they were too big.

Now Mistrefs Gilpin, when she saw
  Her husband posting down
Into the country, far away,
  She pull'd out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
  That drove them to the Bell,
  "This shall be your's when you bring back
  "My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
  John coming back amain;
Whom, in a trice, he tried to stop,
  By catching at his rein;
But not performing what he meant,
   And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
   And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
   Went post-boy at his heels;—
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
   The lumb'ring of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road
   Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scamp'ring in the rear,
   They rais'd the hue and cry:

"Stop thief! Stop thief!—A highwayman!"
   Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that pass'd that way
   Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike-gates again
   Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
   That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too!
   For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd, till where he first got up
   He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,
   And Gilpin, long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
   May I be there to see!