

INLAND NAVIGATION: AN ODE.

FOR ancient deeds let History unfold
The page where wonders are entoll'dt,
And tell how JASON, from the Colchian shore,
The golden fleece in triumph bore,
A nobler theme the Mind inspires,
And every skilful Artist fires
With heart-felt joy a work to see
Cut out for grand utility;
A project form'd, by which, 'tis plain,
That thousands must advantage gain;
And sure that plan must be of noble use,
Which tends in price provision to reduce.
Blest Navigation! source of golden days
Which commerce finds, and brightens all its ways.

Sons of Commerce haste to pleasure,
For the joy belongs to you;
May you live to reap the treasure
That must happily ensue.
Treasure, from Stafforaian plains,
Richer than Peruvian mines,
And by what the Artist gain;
All his principal designs.

CHORUS.

Not a Son of limping VULCAN
But must truly joyous be;
ENVY from the banquet skulking,
'Tis the Artist's Jubilee.*

* The first Boat load of Coals was brought to Town November the 6th, 1769, the Year of the Stratford Jubilee.

So quick in performing this weighty affair,
So great was the industry, prudence, and care,
Eighteen months have scarce run,
Since the work was begun:

How pleasing the sight!
What a scene of delight!
As the barges come floating along;
Then cease from your toil,
Nor hammer nor file
Be handled to-day,
All care shall away,
Whilst bonfires are blazing,
(What can be more pleasing?)
All free cost, to gladden the throng.

Could our Forefathers from the shades but trae
The noble plan.
Their Sons began,
To what amazement would the work appear!
A train of Vessels floating by the place,
Where sprightly Steeds, at trumpet sound,
In contest wing'd along the ground,
And thousands to the pleasures would repair.

But, what were those days,
Compered to these?
Each day at the Heath is a Fair,
To see Bridges and Locks,
And Boats on the Stocks,
Are numbers continually there.

Every breast, elate with joy,
Gladly views the happy day;
Cease dissension,
Lamp contention,
From these regions haste away.
We alone on Trade depend;
Be in that our emulation,
'Twill support our Navigation,
And the liquid tract extend.

But for this good care and trouble,
Which has nobly been display'd,
For our Coals, this instant, double

What we give, we must have paid.

Gripping souls, that live by fleecing,
And upon their teams depend,
To all ranks of life how pleasing,
That their day is at an end.

Long their tricks were overbearing,
Now the vile oppressors may
Sell their nags and burn their geering,
For the roads 'twill better be.

CHORUS

Not a Son of limping VULCAN
But shall joyous be to-day;
ENVY from the banquet skulking,
'Tis the Artist's Jubilee.

Blest Genius of this fruitful Land,
Whose deep sagacious mind,
To benefit mankind,
The glorious undertaking plann'd;
Whose living fame the wonders tell,
Of thy far more, than common skill,
Whole matchless art all doubts dispel,
And kingdoms with amazement fill.
When that fam'd Peer*, to patronize his art,
Had set the laudable design on foot,
Which brought his measures into grand repute,
Astonish'd mortals, from each distant part,
The model view'd,
And wond'ring stood;
But how much more when brought to bear,
And Vessels under Vessels sleer!

* The Duke of Bridgewater.

The neighbouring Counties saw the good effect,
And now behold the vast increase

Of Tracts, fair Commerce to protect,
Which fills the bright Mechanic with delight;
Nor will the undertakings cease,
'Till Trent and Severn with the Thames unite.

What mortals so happy as Birmingham Boys?
What people so flush'd with the sweetest of joys?
All hearts fraught with mirth at the Wharf shall appear,
Their aspects proclaim it the Jubilee year,
And be full as gay in their frolicksome pranks,
As they who were dancing on Avon's green banks.

There never in war was for victory won,
A cause that deserv'd such respect from the Town;
Then revel in gladness, let harmony flow,
From the districts of Bordsley to Paradise-Row;
For true feeling joy on each breast must be wrought,
When Coals under Five-pence per hundred are bought.

Rejoice then, ye Artists, drive sorrow away,
And over your cups social gladness display;
The Wealthy will chearfully cherish the cause,
The Poor give their honest and hearty applause;
Nor dread from the winter's approach any harm,
When blest with good fires, their bodies to warm.

But let not the joys be confined to the Town,
All over the Country shall gladness be shewn;
The Tradesman, Mechanic, and Cottager too,
Shall all share the bounty that soon must ensue,
And when o'er the houses SOL scarcely can peep,
Be better prepar'd a good Christmas to keep.

The Heavens are kind, and have plenty bestow'd,
Rich crops have been gather'd, and trade has been good;
And since food and fuel diminish in price,
Have not we much reason to sing and rejoice?
From Winter's approach then what harm can we fear,
When bounteously furnish'd with comforting cheer!

Birmingham, for arts renown'd,
O'er the globe shall foremost stand!
Nor its vast increase be found
To be equall'd in the land.
If the will of fancy ranges
From the Tagus to the Ganges,
Or from Lapland Ciffs extend
To the Patagonian Strand,
For mechanic skill and pow'r,
In what kingdom, on what shore,
Lies the place that can supply
The world with such variety?

What relief in the fare
Of all heavy ware,
When the whole undertaking is finish'd!
In affairs, what a turn,
When cattle and corn
In their rates shall be greatly diminish'd!

In war or in peace,
All commerce would cease,
Was it not for a free Navigation;
'Tis of riches the source,
When such plans we enforce,
And of freedom our dear preservation.

Arts, genius, and science,
On thee have reliance,
And reverence thy conquering pow'r,
Whose castles of wood,
Floating bulwarks have stood,
To the terror of Gallia's proud shore.

Still may our Vessels, o'er the briny deep,
To sundry ports their various courses deep;
May Navigation, Liberty's dear friend,
Her wonted fame to greater lengths extend;
Open her sluices and through mountains force,
To distant Lands an easy intercourse.

And Birmingham, for every curious art
Her Sons invent, be Europe's greatest mart;
In every Kingdom ever stand enroll'd,
The grand Mechanic Warehouse of the World!