

The Tao-Aspiring Poet

Alas poor child of toil and poverty!
Amongst thy betters wouldn't thou fain be seen?
No; like the Hebrew, seized with leprosy,
Stand by thyself and cry "Unclean! Unclean!"

What though kind providence hath given thee sense,—
Wit, spirit, genius, loftiness of soul?
Yet thou art penniless, so get thee hence
And learn thy aspirations to control.

It ill befits thy station, thus to soar
Up to the heights where wealth and learning tread;
Dost thou ask why? I answer "thou art poor
"And humbly toil'ests for thy daily bread."

I know thou urge'st, Clifford did the same,
That Hogg was shepherd on his native braes,
That Burns the ploughman earned so bright a fame,
E'en learning's self draws lustre from its blaze.

A galaxy of names thou wouldst supply
Who, humbly born have scaled the moment of fame,
Yet on its barren height were left to die,
Their only recompense an empty name.

If thou hast wit like them, like them you may
Win for your dust perchance a marble tomb,
Yet all through life be jostled from the way
To give some wealthy ignoramus room.