





A N
E S S A Y
O N
M A N,

IN FOUR EPISTLES,

B Y

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E D I N B U R G H,

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The DESIGN.

HAVING proposed to write some pieces on human life and manners, such as (to use my lord BACON's expression) 'come home to men's business and bosoms,' I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering man in the abstract, his nature and his state: Since to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of human nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points: There are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind, as in that of the body, more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels as will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last, and I will venture to say they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice, more than advanced the theory of morality. If I could flatter myself that this essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming out of all, the temperate, yet not inconsistent, and a short, yet not imperfect system of ethics.

THIS

iv The DESIGN.

THIS I might have done in prose; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards. The other may seem odd, but is true; I found I could express them more shortly this way than in prose itself; and nothing is truer than, that much of the force, as well as grace of arguments or instructions, depends on their conciseness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in detail, without becoming dry and tedious: Or more poetically, without sacrificing perspicuity to ornament, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these without diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

WHAT is now published is only to be considered as a general map of man, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extents, their limits, and their connection, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow. Consequently these epistles, in their progress, (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will become less dry, and more susceptible of ornament. I am here only opening the fountains and clearing the passage: To deduce the rivers, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, would be a task more agreeable.

T H E

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A N

A N
E S S A Y
O N
M A N.

E P I S T L E. I.

A WAKE, my ST. JOHN! leave all meaner things
To low ambition and the pride of kings.
Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man;
A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promisc'ous shoot,
Or garden tempting with forbidden fruit.
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;
The latent tracts, the giddy heights explore
Of all who blindly creep, or flightless soar;
Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;

A

15 Laugh

Laugh where we must, be candid where we can, 15
But vindicate the ways of GOD to man.

SAY first, of GOD above, or man below,
What can we reason but from what we know?
Of man what see we, but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer? 20
Thro' worlds unnumber'd, tho' the GOD be known,
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.

He, who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs, 25
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied being peoples ev'ry star,
May tell why heaven has made us as we are:
But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Look'd thro'? Or can a part contain the whole?

Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by GOD, or thee?
Presumpt'ous man! the reason wouldst thou find, 35
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind!
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less!
Ask of thy mother earth, why oakes are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade? 40
Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove?

OF

EPISTLE I. 3

OF systems possible, if 'tis confess'd,
That wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must full, or not coherent be, 45
And all that rises, rise in due degree ;
Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as man :
And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
Is only this, ' If GOD has plac'd him wrong ! ' 50

RESPECTING man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.
In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain ;
In GOD's one single can its end produce, 55
Yet serves to second too some other use.
So man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some spheres unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal ;
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

WHEN the proud steed shall know why man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains ;
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now ÆGYPT's god :
Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend 65
His actions', passions', being's use and end ;
Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd ; and why
This hour a slave, the next a deity.

THEN say not, Man's imperfect, heav'n in fault ;
Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought ; 70
His

4 E P I S T L E I,

His knowledge measur'd to his state and place,
His time a moment, and a point his space.

If to be perfect in a certain sphere,

What matter soon or late, or here or there ?

The blest'd to-day is as completely so,

75

As who began a thousand years ago.

HEAV'N from all creatates hides the book of fate,

All but the page prescrib'd, their present state,

From brutes what men, from men what spirits know,

Or who could suffer being here below ?

80

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,

Had he thy reason would he skip and play ?

Pleas'd to the last he crops the flow'ry food,

And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.

Oh blindness to the future ! kindly giv'n,

85

That each may fill the circle mark'd by heav'n.

Who sees, with equal eye, as GOD of all,

A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,

Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,

And now a bubble burst, and now a world ?

90

HOPE humbly then ; with trembling pinions soar ;

Wait the great teacher death, and GOD adore !

What future bliss he gives not thee to know,

But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast :

95

Man never is, but always to be blest'd ;

The soul uneasy, and confin'd from home,

Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo !

EPISTLE I.

3

Lo! the poor INDIAN, whose untutor'd mind
Sees GOD in clouds, or hears him in the wind; 100
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-top'd hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd, 105
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no christians thirst for gold!
To be contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire; 110
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense
Weigh thy opinion against providence;
Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such, 115
Say, here he gives too little, there too much;
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If man alone engrosses not heaven's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there, 120
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the god of God!

In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, 125
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.

Aspiring

Aspiring to be gods if angels fell,
 Aspiring to be angels men rebel;
 And who but wishes to invert the laws
 Of order, sins against th' eternal cause. 130

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
 Earth for whose use. Pride answers, 'Tis for mine:
 ' For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,
 ' Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
 ' Annual, for me, the grape, the rose renew 135
 ' The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;
 ' For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
 ' For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
 ' Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
 ' My footstool earth, my canopy the skies.' 140

BUT errs not nature from this gracious end,
 From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
 When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
 Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
 ' No ('tis reply'd) the first almighty cause 145
 ' Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;
 ' Th' exceptions few, some change, since all began,
 ' And what created perfect?'---Why then man?
 If the great end be human happiness,
 Then nature deviates; and can man do less? 150
 As much that end a constant course requires
 Of show'rs and sun-shine, as of man's desires;
 As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
 As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise,

E P I S T L E I.

7

If plagues or earthquakes break not heav'n's design,
 Why then a BORGIA, or a CATALINE ? 156
 Who knows but he, whose hand the light'ning forms,
 Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms,
 Pours fierce ambition in a CÆSAR's mind,
 Or turns young AMMON loose to scourge mankind ? 160
 From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs ;
 Account for moral, as for nat'ral things ;
 Why charge we heav'n in those, in these acquit ?
 In both to reason right is to submit.

BETTER for us, perhaps, it might appear, 165
 Were there all harmony, all virtue here ;
 That never air or ocean felt the wind,
 That never passion discompos'd the mind ;
 But all subsists by elemental strife ;
 And passions are the elements of life. 170
 The gen'ral order, since the whole began,
 Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.

WHAT would this man ? Now upward will he soar,
 And, little less than angel, would be more ;
 Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears 175
 To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
 Made for his use all creatures if he call,
 Say, what their use had he the pow'rs of all ?
 Nature to these, without profusion kind,
 The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd ; 180
 Each seeming want compensated of course,
 Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force ;

All

All in exact proportion to the state ;
 Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
 Each beast, each insect, happy in its own ; 185
 Is heav'n unkind to man, and man alone ?
 Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
 Be pleas'd with nothing, if not bless'd with all ?

THE bliss of man, (could pride that blessing find)
 Is not to act or think beyond mankind ; 190

No pow'rs of body or of souls to share,
 But what his nature and his state can bear.
 Why has not man a microscop'ic eye ?

For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
 Say what the use, were finer opticks giv'n, 195

T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n ?
 Or touch, if, tremblingly alive all o'er,
 To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore ?
 Or quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
 Die of a rose in aromattick pain ? 200

If nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
 And stunn'd him with the musick of the spheres,
 How would he wish that heav'n had left him still
 The whisp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill ?
 Who finds not providence all good and wise, 205
 Alike in what it gives, and what denies ?

FAR as creation's ample range extends,
 The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends :
 Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,
 From the green myriads in the peopled grass : 210

What

E P I S T L E I. 9

What modes of fight betwixt each wide extreme,
 The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam ;
 Of smell the headlong lions between,
 And hound sagacious on the tainted green :
 Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood, 215
 To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood :
 The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
 Feels at each thread, and lives along the line :
 In the nice bee what sense so subtly true,
 From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew ; 220
 How instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,
 Compar'd, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine !
 'Twixt that and reason what a nice barrier ;
 For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near !
 Remembrance and reflection how ally'd ; 225
 What thin partitions sense from thought divide ;
 And middle natures how they long to join,
 Yet never pass th' insuperable line !
 Without this just gradation, could they be
 Subjected these to those, or all to thee ? 230
 The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
 Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one ?
 SEE thro' the air, this ocean, and this earth,
 All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
 Above, how high progressive life may go ! 235
 Around, how wide ! how deep extend below !
 Vast chain of being, which from God began,
 Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,

B

Beast,

Beast, bird, fish, insect! what no Eye can see,
 No glass can reach! from infinite to thee, 240
 From thee to nothing----On superior pow'rs
 Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
 Or in the full creation leave a void,
 Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:
 From nature's chain whatever link you strike, 245
 Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

AND if each system in gradation roll,
 Alike essential to th' amazing whole;
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the whole must fall. 250
 Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
 Planets and suns run lawless thro' the sky,
 Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
 Being on being wreck'd, and world on world,
 Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod, 255
 And nature tremble to the throne of GOD:
 All this dread order break----For whom? for thee?
 Vile worm!-----oh madness! pride! impiety!

WHAT if the foot, ordain'd the dust tread,
 Or hand to toil, aspir'd to be the head? 260
 What if the head, the eye or ear repin'd
 To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
 Just as absurd for any part to claim
 To be another in this general frame:
 Just as absurd to mourn the tasks or pains, 265
 The great directing mind of all ordains.

All

E P I S T L E I. 11

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
 Whose body nature is and GOD the soul ;
 That chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same,
 Great in the earth as in the ethereal frame, 270
 Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
 Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part, 275
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 As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
 As the rapt seraph that adores and burns ;
 To him no high, no low, no great, no small ;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all. 280

Cease then, nor order imperfection name ;
 Our proper blifs depends on what we blame.
 Know thy own point ; this kind, this due degree
 Of blindness, weakness, heav'n bestows on thee.
 Submit. ——— In this, or any other sphere, 285
 Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear :
 Safe in the hand of one disposing pow'r,
 Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
 All nature is but art unknown to thee ;
 All chance direction, which thou canst not see ; 290
 All discord harmony not understood ;
 All partial evil universal good ;
 And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
 One truth is clear, ' Whatever is, is right.'

E P I S T L E

EPISTLE II.

K NOW then thyself, presume not GOD to scan;
 The proper study of mankind is man.
 Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
 A being darkly wise, and rudely great :
 With too much knowledge for the sceptic side, 5
 With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,
 He hangs between ; in doubt to act, or rest,
 In doubt to deem himself a GOD, or beast ;
 In doubt his mind or body to prefer,
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err ; 10
 Alike his ignorance, his reason such,
 Whether he thinks too little, or too much :
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd ;
 Still by himself abus'd or disabus'd :
 Created half to rise, and half to fall ; 15
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all ;
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd ;
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world !
 Go, wond'rous creature! mount where science guides,
 Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides : 20
 Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
 Correct old time, and regulate the sun ;
 Go, soar with PLATO to th' empyreal sphere,
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair ;

Or

E P I S T L E II.

13

Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod, 25

And quitting sense call imitating God ;

As eastern priests in giddy circles run,

And turn their heads to imitate the sun.

Go, teach eternal wisdom how to rule——

Then drop into thyself, and be a fool ! 30

 SUPERIOR beings, when of late they saw

A mortal man unfold all nature's law,

Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,

And shew'd a NEWTON as we shew an ape.

 COULD he, whose rules the rapid comet bind, 35

Describe or fix one movement of his mind !

Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,

Explain his own beginning, or his end ?

Alas, what wonder ! man's superior part

Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art : 40

But when his own great work is but begun,

What reason weaves, by passion is undone.

 TRACE science, then, with modesty thy guide ;

First strip off all her equipage of pride,

Deduct what is but vanity, or dress, 45

Or learning's luxury, or idleness ;

Or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain,

Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain :

Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts

Of all our vices have created arts : 50

Then see how little the remaining sum,

Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come ?

Two

Two principles in human nature reign ;
 Self-love to urge, and reason to restrain ;
 Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call, 55
 Each works its end to move or govern all :
 And to their proper operation still
 Ascribe all good ; to their improper, ill.

SELF-LOVE, the spring of motion, acts the soul ;
 Reason's comparing balance rules the whole. 60
 Man, but for that, no action could attend,
 And, but for this, were active to no end ;
 Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,
 To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot ;
 Or, meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void, 65
 Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.

MOST strength the moving principle requires ;
 Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires.
 Sedate and quiet the comparing lies,
 Form'd but to check, delib'rate, and advise. 70
 Self-love still stronger, as its object's nigh ;
 Reason's at distance, and in prospect ly :
 That sees immediate good by present sense ;
 Reason the future and the consequence.
 Thicker than arguments, temptations throng, 75
 At best more watchful this, but that more strong.
 The action of the stronger to suspend
 Reason still use, to reason still attend ;
 Attention habit and experience gains,
 Each strengthens reason, and self-love restrains. 80

LET

EPISTLE II. 15

LET subtle school-men teach these friends to fight,
More studious to divide than to unite,
And grace and virtue, sense and reason split,
With all the rash dexterity of wit :
Wits, just like fools, at war about a name, 85
Have full as oft no meaning, or the same.
Self-love and reason to one end aspire,
Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire :
But greedy that its object would devour,
Thus taste the honey, and not wound the flow'r : 90
Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,
Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.

MODES of self-love the passions we may call ;
'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all ;
But since not ev'ry good we can divide, 95
And reason bids us for our own provide ;
Passions, tho' selfish, if their means be fair,
Lift under reason, and deserve her care ;
Those that imparted court a nobler aim,
Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name, 100

IN lazy apathy let stoics boast
Their virtue fix'd ; 'tis fix'd as in a frost,
Contracted all, retiring to the breast ;
But strength of mind is exercise, not rest :
The rising tempest puts in act the soul, 105
Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.
On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,
Reason the card, but passion is the gale ;

Nor

16 E P I S T L E II.

Nor God alone in the still calm we find,
 He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind. 110

PASSIONS, like elements, tho' born to fight,
 Yet, mix'd and soften'd, in his work unite :
 These 'tis enough to temper and employ ;
 But what composes man, can man destroy ?
 Suffice that reason keep to nature's road, 115
 Subject, compound them, follow her and God.
 Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train,
 Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain ;
 These mix'd with art, and to due bounds confin'd,
 Make and maintain the balance of the mind : 120
 The lights and shades, whose well-accorded strife
 Gives all the strength and colour of our life.

PLEASURES are ever in our hands or eyes,
 And when in act they cease, in prospect rise :
 Present to grasp, and future still to find, 125
 The whole employ of body and of mind.
 All spread their charms, but charm not all alike ;
 On diff'rent senses diff'rent objects strike ;
 Hence diff'rent passions more or less inflame,
 As strong or weak the organs or the frame ; 130
 And hence one master-passion in the breast,
 Like AARON'S serpent, swallows up the rest.

As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
 Receives the lurking principle of death ;
 The young disease, that must subdue at length, 135
 Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his
 strength :

So

So cast, and mingled with his very frame,
 The mind's disease, its ruling passion came ;
 Each vital humour, which should feed the whole,
 Soon flows to this in body and in soul. 140

Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,
 As the mind opens, and its functions spread,
 Imagination plies her dang'rous art,
 And pours it all upon the peccant part.

NATURE its mother, habit is its nurse ; 145
 Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse ;
 Reason itself but gives it edge and pow'r ;
 As heaven's blest'd beam turns vinegar more sowre ;
 We, wretched subjects tho' to lawful sway,
 In this weak queen some fav'rite still obey. 150

Ah ! if she lend not arms, as well as rules,
 What can she more than tell us we are fools ?
 Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend ;
 A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend !
 Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade 155
 The choice we make, or justify it made ;
 Proud of an easy conquest all along,
 She but removes weak passions for the strong.
 So, when small humours gather to a gout,
 The doctor fancies he has driv'n them out. 160

YES, nature's road must ever be preferr'd ;
 Reason is here no guide, but still a guard :
 'Tis her's to rectify, not overthrow,
 And treat this passion more as friend than foe :

C

A

A mightier pow'r the strong direction sends, 165
 And sev'ral men impels to sev'ral ends.
 Like varying winds, by other passions tost,
 This drives them constant to a certain coast.
 Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory, please,
 Or oft (more strong than all) the love of ease; 170
 Thro' life 'tis followed, ev'n at life's expence;
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride,
 All, all alike, find reason on their side.
 Th' eternal art educing good from ill, 175
 Grafts on this passion our best principle:
 'Tis thus the mercury of man is fix'd,
 Strong grows the virtue with his nature mix'd;
 The dross cements what else were too refin'd,
 And in one int'rest body acts with mind. 180
 As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,
 On savage stocks inserted learn to bear,
 The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,
 Wild nature's vigour working at the root.
 What crops of wit and honesty appear 185
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear!
 See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;
 Ev'n av'rice, prudence, sloth, philosophy;
 Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd,
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind: 190
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a slave,
 Is emulation in the learn'd or brave:

Nor

E P I S T L E II. 19

Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,
But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.

THUS nature gives us (let it check our pride) 195
The virtue nearest to our vice ally'd;
Reason the bias turns to good from ill,
And NERO reigns a TITUS, if he will.
The fiery soul abhor'd in CATALINE,
In DECIUS charms, in CURTIUS is divine. 200
The same ambition can destroy or save,
And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.

THIS light and darkness in our chaos join'd,
What shall divide? the GOD within the mind.

EXTREMES in nature equal ends produce, 205
In man they join to some mysterious use;
Tho' each by turns the other's bounds invade,
As, in some well-wrought picture, light and shade,
And oft so mix, the diff'rence is too nice,
Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice. 210

FOOLS! who from hence into the notion fall,
That vice or virtue there is none at all.
If white and black blend, soften, or unite
A thousand ways, is there no black or white?
Ask your own heart, and nothing is so plain; 215
'Tis to mistake them costs the time and pain.

VICE is a monster of so frightful mein,
As, to be hated, needs but to seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace. 220
But

But where th' extreme of vice, was ne'er agreed :
 Ask where's the NORTH! at YORK, 'tis on the TWEED;
 In SCOTLAND at the ORCADES; and there
 At GREENLAND, ZEMBLA, or the LORD knows where:
 No creature owns it in the first degree, 225
 But thinks his neighbour farther gone than he,
 Ev'n those who dwell beneath its very zone,
 Or never feel the rage, or never own,
 What happier natures shrink at with affright,
 The hard inhabitant contends is right. 230

VIRTUOUS and vitious every man must be,
 Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree;
 The rogue and fool by fits are fair and wise,
 And ev'n the best, by fits, what they despise.
 'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill, 235
 For, vice or virtue, self directs it still;
 Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal;
 But heav'n's great view is one, and that the whole:
 That counter-works each folly and caprice;
 That disappoints th' effect of ev'ry vice: 240
 That happy frailties to all ranks apply'd,
 Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,
 Fear to the statesman, rashness to the chief,
 To kings presumption, and to crowds belief:
 That virtue's ends from vanity can raise, 245
 Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise;
 And build on wants, and on defects of mind,
 The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.

Heav'n

E P I S T L E II. 21

Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
 A master, or a servant, or a friend, 250
 Bids each on other for assistance call,
 'Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.
 Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
 The common int'rest, or endear the tie :
 To these we owe such friendship, love sincere, 255
 Each home-felt joy that life inherits here :
 Yet from the same we learn, in its decline,
 Those joys, those loves, those int'rests to resign :
 Taught half by reason, half by mere decay,
 To welcome death, and calmly pass away. 260

WHAT'ER the passion, knowledge, fame, or pelf,
 Not one will change his neighbour with himself.
 The learn'd is happy nature to explore,
 The fool is happy that he knows no more ;
 The rich is happy in the plenty giv'n, 265
 The poor contents him with the care of heav'n.
 See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
 The sot a hero, lunatick a king ;
 The starving chymist in his golden views
 Supremely blest, the poet in his muse. 270

SEE some strange comfort every state attend,
 And pride bestow'd on all, a common friend ;
 See some fit passion every age supply,
 Hope travels thro', nor quits us when we die.

BEHOLD the child, by nature's kindly law, 275
 Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw :

Some

Some livelier play-thing gives his youth delight,
 A little louder, but as empty quite :
 Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage ;
 And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age : 280
 Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before,
 'Till tir'd he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er !

MEAN-WHILE opinion gilds with varying rays
 Those painted clouds that beautify our days ;
 Each want of happiness by hope supply'd, 285
 And each vacuity of sense by pride :
 These build as fast as knowledge can destroy ;
 In folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy ;
 One prospect lost, another still we gain ;
 And not a vanity is giv'n in vain ; 290
 Ev'n mean self-love becomes, by force divine,
 The scale to measure other's wants by thine.
 See ! and confess, one comfort still must rise,
 'Tis this, tho' man's a fool, yet GOD is wise.

E P I S T L E

E P I S T L E III.

HERE then we rest : ' The universal cause
 ' Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.'
 In all the madneſs of ſuperſtious health,
 The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,
 Let this great truth be preſent night and day, 5
 But moſt be preſent, if we preach or pray.

LOOK round our world ; behold the chain of love
 Combining all below and all above.

See plactic nature working to this end,
 The ſingle atoms each to other tend, 10
 Attract, attracted to, the next in place
 Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.
 See matter next, with various life endu'd,
 Preſs to one centre ſtill, the gen'ral good.

See dying vegetables life ſuſtain, 15
 See life diſſolving vegetate again :

All forms that periſh other forms ſupply,
 (By turns we catch the vital breath, and die)
 Like bubbles on the ſea of matter born,
 They riſe, they break, and to that ſea return. 20

Nothing is foreign : Parts relate to whole ;
 One all-extending, all-preſerving ſoul
 Connects each being, greateſt with the leaſt ;
 Made beaſt in aid of man, and man of beaſt ;

All

All serv'd, all serving ! nothing stands alone ; 25
 The chain holds on, and where it ends unknown.

HAS God, thou fool ! work'd solely for thy good,
 Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food ?

Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
 For him as kindly spread the flow'ry lawn. 30

Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings ?
 Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings :

Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat ?
 Loves of his own and raptures swell the note : 35

The bounding steed you pompously bestride,
 Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride :

Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain ?
 The birds of heav'n shall vindicate their grain :

Thine the full harvest of the golden year ?
 Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer : 40

The hog, that plows not, nor obeys thy call,
 Lives on the labours of this lord of all.

KNOW nature's children all divide her care,
 The fur that warms a monarch, warm'd a bear.

While man exclaims, ' See all things for my use ! 45
 ' See man for mine ! ' replies a pamper'd goose ;

And just as short of reason he must fall,
 Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

GRANT that the pow'rful still the weak control,
 Be man the wit and tyrant of the whole, 50

Nature that tyrant checks ; he only knows
 And helps another creature's wants and woes.

Say,

E P I S T L E III. 25

Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,
 Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove ?
 Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings ? 55
 Or hears the hawk when PHILOMELA sings ?
 Man cares for all : To birds he gives his woods,
 To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods ;
 For some his int'rest prompts him to provide,
 For more his pleasure, yet for more his pride : 60
 All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy
 Th' extensive blessing of his luxury.

That very life his learned hunger craves,
 He saves from famine, from the savage saves :
 Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast : 65
 And, till he ends the being, makes it blest ;
 Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,
 Than favour'd man by touch ethereal slain.
 The creature had his feast of life before ;
 Thou too must perish, when thy feast is o'er ! 70

To each unthinking being, heav'n, a friend,
 Gives not the useless knowledge of its end ;
 To man imparts it ; but with such a view,
 As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too :
 The hour conceal'd, and so remote the fear, 75
 Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.
 Great standing miracle ! that heav'n assign'd
 Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

WHETHER with reason, or with instinct blest'd,
 Know all enjoy that pow'r that suits them best ; 80

D To

E P I S T L E III. 27

GOD, in the nature of each being founds
 Its proper blifs, and sets its proper bounds : 110
 But as he fram'd a whole, the whole to blefs,
 On mutual wants built mutual happinefs :
 So from the first eternal order ran,
 And creature link'd to creature, man to man.
 Whate'er of life all-quick'ning æther keeps, 115
 Or breathes thro' air, or shoots beneath the deeps,
 Or pours profuse on earth ; on nature feeds
 The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds.
 Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,
 Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood, 120
 Each loves itself, but not itself alone,
 Each sex desires alike, till two are one.
 Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace ;
 They love themselves, a third time, in their race.
 Thus beast and bird their common charge attend, 125
 The mothers nurse it, and the fires defend ;
 The young dismiss'd to wander earth or air,
 There stops the instinct, and there ends the care ;
 The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,
 Another love succeeds another race. 130
 A longer care man's helpless kind demands ;
 That longer care contracts more lasting bands :
 Reflection, reason, still the tyes improve,
 At once extend the int'rest and the love ;
 With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn ; 135
 Each virtue in each passion takes its turn ;
And

28 E P I S T L E I I I .

And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,
 That graft benevolence on charities.
 Still as one brood, and as another rose,
 These nat'ral love maintain'd, habitual those : 140
 The last, scarce ripen'd into perfect man,
 Saw helpless him from whom their life began :
 Mem'ry and forecast just returns engage,
 That pointed back to youth, this one to age ;
 While pleasure, gratitude, and hope combin'd, 145
 Still spread the int'rest, and preserv'd the kind.

NOR think in nature's state they blindly trod ;
 The state of nature was the reign of GOD :
 Self-love and social at her birth began,
 Union the bond of all things, and of man. 150
 Pride then was not, nor arts that pride to aid ;
 Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade ;
 The same his table, and the same his bed ;
 No murder cloth'd him, and no murder fed.
 In the same temple, the refounding wood, 155
 All vocal beings hymn'd their equal GOD :
 The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undress'd,
 Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest.
 Heaven's attribute was universal care,
 And man's prerogative to rule, but spare. 160
 Ah ! how unlike the man of times to come !
 Of half that live the butcher and the tomb ;
 Who, foe to nature, hears the gen'ral groan,
 Murders their species, and betrays his own.

But

E P I S T L E III. 29

But just disease to luxury succeeds, 165

And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds ;

The fury passions from that blood began,

And turn'd on man a fiercer savage, man.

See him from nature rising flow to art !

To copy instinct then was reason's part ; 170

Thus then to man the voice of Nature spake——

' Go, from the creatures thy instructions take ;

' Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield ;

' Learn from the beasts the physic of the field ;

' Thy arts of building from the bee receive ; 175

' Learn of the mole to plow, the worm to weave ;

' Learn of the little nautilus to sail,

' Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.

' Here too all forms of social union find,

' And hence let reason, late, instruct mankind : 180

' Here subterranean works and cities see ;

' There towns aerial on the waving tree.

' Learn each small people's genius, policies,

' The ant's republic, and the realm of bees ;

' How those in common all their wealth bestow, 185

' And anarchy without confusion know ;

' And these for ever, tho' a monarch reign,

' Their sep'rate cells and properties maintain.

' Mark what unvary'd laws preserve each state,

' Laws wise as nature, and as fix'd as fate. 190

' In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw,

' Entangle justice in her net of law,

' And

' And right, too rigid, harden into wrong ;
 ' Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.
 ' Yet, go ! and thus o'er all the creatures sway, 195
 ' Thus let the wiser make the rest obey,
 ' And, for those arts mere instinct could afford,
 ' Be crown'd as monarchs, or as gods ador'd.'

GREAT Nature spoke ; observant men obey'd ;
 Cities were built, societies were made : 200
 Here rose one little state ; another near
 Grew by like means, and join'd thro' love or fear.
 Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,
 And there the streams in purer rills descend ?
 What war could ravish, commerce could bestow, 205
 And he return'd a friend, who came a foe.
 Converse and love mankind might strongly draw,
 When love was liberty, and nature law.
 Thus states were form'd ; the name of king unknown,
 'Till common int'rest plac'd the sway in one. 210
 'Twas virtue only (or in arts or arms,
 Diffusing blessings, or averting harms)
 The same which in a fire the sons obey'd,
 A prince the father of a people made. 214

'TILL then, by nature crown'd, each patriarch sat,
 King, priest, and parent of his growing state ;
 On him, their second providence, they hung,
 Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.
 He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,
 Taught to command the fire, control the flood, 220

Draw

E P I S T L E III. 31

Draw forth the monsters of th' abyfs profound,
 Or fetch th' aerial eagle to the ground.
 'Till drooping, sick'ning, dying, they began
 Whom they rever'd as GOD to mourn as man :
 Then, looking up from fire to fire, explor'd 225
 One great first Father, and that first ador'd.
 Or plain tradition that this All begun,
 Convey'd unbroken faith from fire to son,
 The worker from the work distinct was known,
 And simple reason never sought but one : 230
 E'er wit oblique had broke that stedy light,
 Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right,
 To virtue in the paths of pleasure trod,
 And own'd a father when he own'd a GOD.
 Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then ; 235
 For nature knew no right divine in men,
 No ill could fear in GOD ; and understood
 A sov'reign being, but a sov'reign good.
 True faith, true policy, united ran,
 That was but love of GOD, and this of man. 240
 WHO first taught souls enslav'd, and realms undone,
 Th' enormous faith of many made for one ;
 That proud exception to all nature's laws,
 T' invert the world, and counter-work its cause ?
 Force first made conquest, and that conquest law ; 245
 'Till superstition taught the tyrant awe,
 Then shar'd the tyranny, then lent it aid,
 And gods of conqu'rors, slaves of subjects made :
She,

She, 'midst the light'ning's blaze, and thunder's sound,
 When rock'd the mountains, and when groan'd the
 She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray, [ground,
 To pow'r unseen, and mightier far than they : 252
 She, from the rending earth and bursting skies,
 Saw gods descend, and fiends infernal rise :
 Here fix'd the dreadful, there the blest'd abodes ; 255
 Fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods ;
 Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
 Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust ;
 Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,
 And, form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe. 260
 Zeal then, not charity, became the guide,
 And hell was built on spite, and heav'n on pride.
 Then sacred seem'd th' etherial vault no more ;
 Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore ;
 Then first the flamen tasted living food, 265
 Next his grim idol smear'd with human blood ;
 With heav'n's own thunder shook the world below,
 And play'd the god an engine on his foe.

So drives self-love, thro' just and thro' unjust,
 To one man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, lust : 270
 The same self-love, in all, becomes the cause
 Of what restrains him, government and laws.
 For, what one likes, if others like as well,
 What serves one will, when many wills rebel ?
 How shall we keep, what, sleeping or awake, 275
 A weaker may surprize, a stronger take ?

His

E P I S T L E III. 33

His safety must his liberty restrain :
 All join to guard what each desires to gain.
 Forc'd into virtue thus, by self-defence,
 Ev'n kings learn'd justice and benevolence : 280
 Self-love forsook the path it first pursu'd,
 And found the private in the public good.

'Twas then the studious head, or gen'rous mind,
 Follow'r of GOD, or friend of human kind,
 Poet or patriot, rose but to restore 285

The faith and moral nature gave before ;
 Re-lum'd her ancient light, not kindled new ;
 If not GOD's image, yet his shadow drew :
 Taught pow'r's due use to people and to kings,
 Taught nor to slack, nor strain its tender strings, 290

The less, or greater, set so justly true,
 That touching one must strike the other too ;

'Till jarring int'rests of themselves create
 Th' according musick of a well mix'd state.

Such is the world's great harmony, that springs 295
 From order, union, full consent of things!

Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made
 To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade,

More pow'rful each, as needful to the rest,
 And, in proportion as it blesses, blest'd, 300

Draw to one point, and to one centre bring
 Beast, man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.

FOR forms of government let fools contest ;
 Whate'er is best administer'd is best :

E

For

34 E P I S T L E III.

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ; 305
 His can't be wrong whose life is in the right :
 In faith and hope the world will disagree,
 But all mankind's concern is charity :
 All must be false that thwart this one great end,
 And all of GOD that blefs mankind or mend. 310
 MAN, like the gen'rous vine, supported lives ;
 The strength he gains is from th' embrace he gives ;
 On their own axis as the planets run,
 Yet make at once their circle round the sun ;
 So two consistent motions act the soul ; 315
 And one regards itself, and one the whole.

THUS GOD and nature link'd the gen'ral frame,
 And bade self-love and social be the same.

E P I S T L E

EPISTLE IV.

OH happiness ! our being's end and aim ;
 Good, pleasure, ease, content ! whate'er thy name ;
 That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
 For which we bear to live, or dare to die,
 Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies, 5
 O'er-look'd, seen double, by the fool, and wise.
 Plant of celestial seed ! if dropt below,
 Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow ?
 Fair op'ning to some court's propitious shine,
 Or deep with di'monds in the flaming mine ? 10
 Twin'd with the wreaths PARNASSIAN laurels yield,
 Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field ?
 Where grows ?--Where grows it not ?--If vain our toil,
 We ought to blame the culture, not the soil :
 Fix'd to no spot is happiness sincere, 15
 'Tis no where to be found, or ev'ry where ;
 'Tis never to be bought, but always free,
 And, fled from monarchs, ST. JOHN ! dwells with thee.
 Ask of the learn'd the way, the learn'd are blind,
 This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind ; 20
 Some place the blifs in action, some in ease,
 Those call it pleasure, and contentment these ;
 Some, sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain ;
 Some, swell'd to gods, confess ev'n virtue vain ;
 Or,

E P I S T L E IV. 37

Heav'n to mankind impartial we confess,
 If all are equal in their happiness :
 But mutual wants this happiness increase, 55
 All nature's diff'rence keeps all nature's peace.
 Condition, circumstance is not the thing ;
 Bliss is the same in subject or in king,
 In who obtain defence, or who defend,
 In him who is, or him who finds a friend : 60
 Heav'n breathes thro' ev'ry member of the whole
 One common blessing, as one common soul.
 But fortune's gifts if each alike possess'd,
 And each were equal, must not all contest ?
 If then to all men happiness was meant, 65
 GOD in externals could not place content.

FORTUNE her gifts may variously dispose,
 And these be happy call'd, unhappy those ;
 But heav'n's just balance equal will appear,
 While those are plac'd in hope, and these in fear : 70
 Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,
 But future views of better, or of worse.

OH sons of earth ! attempt ye still to rise,
 By mountains pil'd on mountains, to the skies ?
 Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys, 75
 And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

KNOW, all the good that individuals find,
 Or GOD and nature meant to mere mankind ;
 Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,
 Ly in three words, health, peace, and competence. 80
But

But health consists with temperance alone,
 And peace, oh virtue! peace is all thy own.
 The good or bad the gifts of fortune gain,
 But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.
 Say, in pursuit of profit or delight, 85
 Who risk the most, that take wrong means or right?
 Of vice, or virtue, whether blest'd, or curs'd,
 Which meets contempt, or which compassion first?
 Count all th' advantage prosp'rous vice attains,
 'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains: 90
 And grant the bad what happiness they wou'd,
 One they must want, which is, to pass for good.

OH blind to truth, and GOD'S whole scheme below,
 Who fancy blis to vice, to virtue woe!
 Who sees and follows that great scheme the best, 95
 Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest'd.
 But fools the good alone unhappy call,
 For ills or accidents that chance to all.
 See FALKLAND dies, the virtuous and the just!
 See god-like TURRENNE prostrate on the dust! 100
 See SIDNEY bleeds amid the martial strife!
 Was this their virtue, or contempt of life?
 Say, was it virtue, more tho' heav'n ne'er gave,
 Lamented DIGBY! sunk thee to the grave?
 Tell me, if virtue made the son expire, 105
 Why, full of days and honour, lives the sire?
 Why drew MARSEILLES' good bishop purer breath,
 When nature sicken'd, and each gale was death?

Or

E P I S T L E IV. 39

Or why so long (in life if long can be)
Lent heav'n a parent to the poor and me? 110

WHAT makes all physical or moral ill?
There deviates nature, and here wanders will.

GOD sends not ill; if rightly understood,
Or partial ill is universal good,

Or change admits, or nature lets it fall, 115
Short, and but rare, till man improv'd it all.

We just as wisely might of heav'n complain,
That righteous ABEL was destroy'd by CAIN;

As that the virt'ous son is ill at ease,
When his lewd father gave the dire disease. 120

Think we, like some weak prince, th' eternal cause
Prone for his fav'rites to reverse his laws?

SHALL burning ÆTNA, if a sage requires,
Forget to thunder, and recal her fires?

On air or sea new motions be impress'd, 125
Oh blameless BETHEL! to relieve thy breast?

When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?

Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,
For CHART'RIS' head reserve the hanging wall? 130

BUT still this world (so fitted for the knave)
Contents us not. A better shall we have?

A kingdom of the just then let it be:
But first consider how those just agree.

The good must merit GOD'S peculiar care; 135
But who, but GOD, can tell us who they are?

One

One thinks on CALVIN heav'n's own spirit fell,
 Another deems him instrument of hell ;
 If CALVIN feel heav'n's blessing or its rod,
 This cries, There is, and that, There is no GOD. 140
 What shocks one part, will edify the rest,
 Nor with one system can they all be blest'd.
 The very best will variously incline,
 And what rewards your virtue, punish mine.
 ' Whatever is, is right.'----This world, 'tis true, 145
 Was made for CÆSAR----but for TITUS too :
 And which more blest'd? who chain'd his country, say,
 Or he whose virtue figh'd to lose a day ?

' BUT sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed.'
 What then ? Is the reward of virtue bread ? 150
 That vice may merit ; 'tis the price of toil ;
 The knave deserves it when he tills the soil ;
 The knave deserves it when he tempts the main,
 Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.
 The good man may be weak, be indolent, 155
 Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.
 But grant him riches, your demand is o'er.
 ' No--shall the good want health, the good want pow'r ?'
 Add health, and pow'r, and ev'ry earthly thing ;
 ' Why bounded pow'r ? why private ? why no king ?'
 Nay, why external for internal giv'n ? 161
 Why is not man a god, and earth a heav'n ?
 Who ask and reason thus will scarce conceive
 GOD gives enough, while he has more to give :

Immense

E P I S T L E IV. 41

Immense the pow'r, immense were the demand, 165
 Say, At what part of nature will they stand ?

WHAT nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
 The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,
 Is virtue's prize: A better would you fix ?
 Then give humility a coach and six, 170

Justice a conq'rour's sword, or truth a gown,
 Or public spirit, its great cure, a crown.

Weak, foolish man ! will heav'n reward us there
 With the same trash mad mortals wish for here ?
 The boy and man an individual makes, 175

Yet sigh'st thou now for apples and for cakes ?
 Go, like the INDIAN, in another life

Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife,
 As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,
 As toys and empires, for a god-like mind. 180

Rewards, that either would to virtue bring
 No joy, or be destructive of the thing:
 How oft by these at sixty are undone
 The virtues of a saint at twenty one !

To whom can riches give repute or trust, 185
 Content or pleasure, but the good and just ?
 Judges and senates have been bought for gold,
 Esteem and love were never to be sold.

Oh fool ! to think GOD hates the worthy mind,
 The lover and the love of human-kind, 190
 Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,
 Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.

F HONOUR

HONOUR and shame from no condition rise ;
 Act well your part, there all the honour lies.
 Fortune in men has some small diff'rence made, 195
 One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade,
 The cobbler apron'd, and the parson gown'd,
 The frier hooded, and the monarch crown'd.
 'What differ more (you cry) the crown and cowl ?'
 I'll tell you, friend ! a wise man and a fool. 200
 You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
 Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,
 Worth makes the man, the want of it the fellow,
 The rest is all but leather or prunella. 204
 STRUCK o'er with titles and hung round with strings,
 That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings.
 Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,
 In quiet flow from LUCRECE to LUCRECE ;
 But by your fathers' worth if your's you rate,
 Count me those only who were good and great. 210
 Go ! if your ancient, but ignoble blood
 Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood,
 Go ! and pretend your family is young,
 Nor own your fathers have been fools so long.
 What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards ? 215
 Alas ! not all the blood of all the HOWARDS.
 LOOK next on greatness ; say where greatness lies.
 'Where, but among the heroes and the wife ?'
 Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,
 From MACEDONIA's madman to the SWEDE ; 220
 The

E P I S T L E IV. 43

The whole strange purpose of their lives to find,
 Or make an enemy of all mankind !
 Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,
 Yet ne'er looks forward farther than his nose.
 No less alike the politic and wise, 225
 All fly slow things, with circumspective eyes :
 Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,
 Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.
 But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat,
 'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great : 230
 Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,
 Is but the more a fool, the more a knave,
 Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
 Or falling smiles in exile or in chains,
 Like good AURELIUS let him reign, or bleed 235
 Like SOCRATES, that man is great indeed,
 What's fame? A fancy'd life in others' breath,
 A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death,
 Just what you hear, you have, and what's unknown
 The same (my lord) if TULLY's, or your own. 240
 All that we feel of it begins and ends
 In the small circle of our foes or friends ;
 To all beside as much an empty shade,
 An EUGENE living, as a CESAR dead,
 Alike or when or where they shone or shine, 245
 Or on the RUBICON, or on the RHINE.
 A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod ;
 An honest man's the noblest work of God,

Fame

44 E P I S T L E I V .

Fame but from death a villain's name can save,
 As justice tears his body from the grave, 250
 When what t'oblivion better were resign'd,
 Is hung on high to poison half mankind.

All fame is foreign but of true desert,
 Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart :
 One self-approving hour whole years out-weighs 255
 Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas ;
 And more true joy MARCELLUS exil'd feels,
 Than CESAR with a senate at his heels.

IN parts superior what advantage lyes ?
 Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise ? 260
 'Tis but to know how little can be known ;
 To see all others faults, and feel our own ;
 Condemn'd in bus'ness, or in arts to drudge,
 Without a second or without a judge :
 Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land ? 265
 All fear, none aid you, and few understand.
 Painful pre-eminence ! yourself to view
 Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

BRING then these blessings to a strict account,
 Make fair deductions, see to what they mount : 270
 How much of other each is sure to cost ;
 How each for other oft is wholly lost ;
 How inconsistent greater goods with these ;
 How sometimes life is risk'd, and always ease :
 Think, and if still the things thy envy call, 275
 Say, Would'st thou be the man to whom they fall ?

To

E P I S T L E IV. 45

To sigh for ribbands if thou art so silly,
 Mark how they grace Lord UMBRA, or Sir BILLY :
 Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life ?
 Look but on GRIPUS, or on GRIPUS' wife : 280
 If parts allure thee, think how BACON shin'd,
 The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind :
 Or, ravish'd with the whistling of a name,
 See CROMWELL damn'd to everlasting fame !
 If all, united, thy ambition call, 285
 From ancient story learn to scorn them all.
 There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
 See the false scale of happiness complete !
 In hearts of kings, or arms of queens who lay,
 How happy ! those to ruin, these betray, 290
 Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,
 From dirt and sea-weed as proud VENICE rose ;
 In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,
 And all that rais'd the hero, sunk the man.
 Now EUROPE's laurels on their brows behold, 295
 But stain'd with blood, or ill exchange'd for gold,
 Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,
 Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.
 Oh wealth ill-fated ! which no act of fame
 E'er taught to shine, or sanctify'd from shame ! 300
 What greater bliss attends their close of life ?
 Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,
 The trophy'd arches, story'd halls invade,
 And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.

Alas !

46 E P I S T L E I V .

Alas ! not dazzl'd with their noon-tide ray, 305
 Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day ;
 The whole amount to that enormous fame,
 A tale that blends their glory with their shame !

 KNOW then this truth, (enough for man to know)
 ' Virtue alone is happiness below.' 310

The only point where human bliss stands still,
 And tastes the good without the fall to ill ;
 Where only merit constant pay receives,
 Is bless'd in what it takes, and what it gives ;
 The joy unequal'd, if its end it gain ; 315

And if it lose, attended with no pain ;
 Without satiety, tho' e'er so bless'd,
 And but more relish'd as the more distress'd :
 The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears,
 Less pleasing far than virtue's very tears. 320

Good from each object, from each place acquir'd,
 For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd ;
 Never elated while one man's oppress'd ;
 Never dejected while another's bless'd ;
 And where no wants, no wishes can remain, 325
 Since but to wish more virtue, is to gain.

 SEE ! the sole bliss heav'n could on all bestow ;
 Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know ;
 Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
 The bad must miss ; the good, untaught, will find :
 Slave to no sect, who takes no private road, 331
 But looks thro' nature up to nature's GOD ;

Pursues

E P I S T L E IV. 47

Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,
 Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine;
 Sees that no being any blifs can know, 335
 But touches some above, and some below;
 Learns, from this union of the rising whole,
 The first, last purpose of the human soul;
 And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
 All end, in love of GOD, and love of man. 340

FOR him alone hope leads from goal to goal,
 And opens still, and opens on his soul,
 'Till lengthen'd on to faith, and unconfin'd,
 It pours the blifs that fills up all the mind.
 He sees why nature plants in man alone 345
 Hope of known blifs, and faith in blifs unknown:
 (Nature, whose dictates to no other kind
 Are given in vain, but what they seek they find)
 Wife is her present; she connects in this
 His greatest virtue with his greatest blifs, 350
 At once his own bright prospect to be blest'd,
 And strongest motive to assist the rest.

SELF-LOVE thus push'd to social, to divine,
 Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.
 Is this too little for the boundless heart? 355
 Extend it, let thy enemies have part:
 Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,
 In one close system of benevolence:
 Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
 And height of blifs but height of charity. 360
GOD

48 E P I S T L E I V .

God loves from whole to parts; but human soul
 Must rise from individual to the whole.
 Self-love but serves the virt'ous mind to wake,
 As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake ;
 The centre mov'd a circle strait succeeds, 365
 Another still, and still another spreads,
 Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
 His country next, and next all human race,
 Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
 Take ev'ry creature in of ev'ry kind ; 370
 Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest'd,
 And heav'n beholds its image in his breast.

COME then, my friend, my genius, come along,
 Oh master of the poet, and the song !
 And while the muse now stoops, or now ascends, 375
 To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
 Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
 To fall with dignity, with temper rise ;
 Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
 From grave to gay, from lively to severe ; 380
 Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
 Intent to reason, or polite to please.
 Oh ! while along the stream of time thy name
 Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
 Say, Shall my little bark attendant sail, 385
 Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale ?
 When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
 Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
 Shall

IV. EPISTLE IV. 49

Shall then this verse to future age pretend
 Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend? 380
 That, urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
 From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
 For wit's false mirror held up nature's light;
 Shew'd erring pride, whatever is, is right;
 That reason, passion, answer one great aim; 385
 That true self-love and social are the same;
 That virtue only makes our blifs below;
 And all our knowledge is, ourselves to know.

G T H E

[50]

T H E
U N I V E R S A L
P R A Y E R.

D E O O P T I M O M A X I M O.

FATHER of all ! in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime ador'd,
By faint, by savage, and by sage,
JEHOVAH, JOVE, or LORD !
Thou great first cause, least understood,
Who all my sense confin'd
To know but this, that thou art good,
And that myself am blind ;
Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill ;
And, binding nature fast in fate,
Let free the human will.
What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do.
This teach me more than hell to shun,
That more than heav'n pursue.
What blessings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away ;
For GOD is paid when man receives ;
T' enjoy is to obey.
Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round :

Let

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER. 51

Let not this weak unknowing hand
 Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
 On each I judge thy foe :
If I am right, oh teach my heart
 Still in the right to stay ;
If I am wrong, thy grace impart
 To find the better way ;
Save me alike from foolish pride,
 Or impious discontent,
At ought thy wisdom has deny'd,
 Or ought thy goodness lent.
Teach me to feel another's woe ;
 To hide the fault I see :
That mercy I to others shew,
 That mercy shew to me.
Mean tho' I am, not wholly so,
 Since quick'ned by thy breath ;
Oh lead me wheresoe'er I go,
 Thro' this day's life or death.
This day be bread and peace my lot ;
 All else beneath the sun
Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,
 And let thy will be done.
To thee, whose temple is all space,
 Whose altar, earth, sea, skies,
One chorus let all being raise !
 All nature's incense rise !

NOTES

NOTES

ON THE

ESSAY on MAN.

EPISTLE I.

OF the nature and state of man with respect to to the universe.

ver. 17, &c.] He can reason only from things known, and judge only with regard to his own system.

ver. 36, &c.] He is therefore not a judge of his own perfection or imperfection, but is certainly such a being as is suited to his place or rank in the creation.

ver. 73] His happiness depends on his ignorance to a certain degree.

ver. 75, &c.] See this pursued in epist. 3. *ver. 70, &c. 83, &c.*

ver. 87]----And on his hope of a relation to a future state.

ver. 90] Farther opened in epist. 2. *ver. 265.*—*epist. 3. ver. 78.*—*epist. 4. ver. 336, &c.*

ver. 109] The pride of aiming at more knowledge and perfection, and the impiety of pretending to judge of the dispensations of providence, the causes of his error and misery.

ver. 127] The absurdity of conceiting himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural.

ver. 162] See this subject extended in epist. 2. from *ver. 90 to 112, 155, &c.*

ver.

ver. 166] The unreasonableness of the complaints against providence, and that to possess more faculties would make us miserable.

ver. 174] *Here, with degrees of swiftness, there of force.*] It is a certain axiom in the anatomy of creatures, that, in proportion as they are formed for strength, their swiftness is lessened; or, as they are formed for swiftness, their strength is abated.

ver. 177] Vid. epist. 3. ver. 83, &c. and 110, &c.

ver. 200] There is an universal order and gradation thro' the whole visible world, of the sensible and mental faculties, which causes the subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man, whose reason alone countervails all the other faculties.

ver. 205] — *the headlong lions.* —] The manner of the lions hunting their prey in the deserts of AFRICA is this: At their first going out in the night-time they set up a loud roar, and then listen to the noise made by the beasts in their flight, pursuing them by the ear, and not by the nostril. It is probable the story of the jackall's hunting for the lion was occasioned by observing the defect of scent of that terrible animal.

ver. 225] How much farther this gradation and subordination may extend; were any part of which broken, the whole connected creation must be destroyed.

ver. 250] The extravagance, impiety, and pride of such a desire.

ver. 257] Vid. the prosecution and application of this in epist. 4. ver. 160.

ver. 273] The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to providence, both as to our present and future state.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE II.

Of the nature and state of man as an individual. The business of man is not to pry into GOD, but to study himself. His middle nature, his power, frailties, and the limits of his capacity.

ver. 43] The two principles of man, self-love and reason, both necessary, 49. Self-love the stronger, and why, 57. Their end the same, 71.

ver. 83] The passions, and their use.

ver. 122, &c.] The predominant passion, and its force.

The use of this doctrine, as applied to the knowledge of mankind, is one of the subjects of the second book,

ver. 155] Its necessity, in directing men to different purposes. The particular application of this to the several pursuits of men, and the general good resulting thence, falls also into the succeeding books.

ver. 165] Its providential use, in fixing our principle, and ascertaining our virtue.

ver. 185, &c.] Virtue and vice joined in our mixt nature; the limits near, yet the things separate, and evident. The office of reason.

ver. 207] Vice odious in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it.

ver. 221, &c.] The ends of providence and general good answered in our passions and perfections. How usefully these are distributed to all orders of men.

ver. 239] How useful these are to society in general, and to individuals in particular, in every state, 250, and every age of life, 260.

ver. 273] See farther of the use of this principle in man, *epist.* 3. *ver.* 121, 124, 135, 145, 200, &c., 270, &c. 316, &c. And *epist.* 4. *ver.* 348 and 358.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE III.

Of the nature and state of man with respect to society. The whole universe one system of society.

ver. 27] Nothing is made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another, but the happiness of all animals mutual.

ver. 72] Several of the ancients, and many of the orientals since, esteemed those who were struck by lightning as sacred persons, and the particular favorites of heaven.

ver. 83] Reason or instinct alike operate to the good of each individual, and they operate also to society in all animals.

ver. 115] How far society is carried by instinct.

ver. 132] How much farther society is carried by reason.

ver. 148] Of the state of nature; that it was social.

ver. 170] Reason instructed by instinct in the invention of arts, and in the forms of society.

ver. 178] Oppian. Halieut. lib. I. describes this fish in the following manner: 'They swim on the surface of the sea, on the back of their shells, which exactly resemble the bulk of a ship; they raise two feet like masts, and extend a membrane between, which serves as a sail; the other two feet they employ as oars at the side. They are usually seen in the Mediterranean.'

ver. 200] Origin of political societies.

ver. 211] Origin of monarchy.

ver. 216] Origin of patriarchal government.

ver. 236] Origin of true religion and government from the principle of love; and of superstition and tyranny from that of fear.

ver.

ver. 270] The influence of self-love operating to the social and publick good.

ver. 284] Restoration of true religion and government on their first principle. Mixt governments; with the various forms of each, and the true use of all.

E P I S T L E IV.

Of the nature and state of man with respect to happiness.

ver. 27] Happiness the end of all men, and attainable by all.

ver. 47] It is necessary, for order and the common peace, that external goods be unequal, therefore happiness is not constituted in these.

ver. 65] The balance of human happiness kept equal (notwithstanding externals) by hope and fear.

ver. 75] In what the happiness of individuals consists, and that the good man has the advantage, even in this world.

ver. 91] That no man is unhappy thro' virtue.

ver. 167] That external goods are not the proper rewards of virtue, often inconsistent with, or destructive of it; but that all these can make no man happy without virtue, instanced in each of them.

1 Riches. 2 Honours. 3 Titles. 4 Birth.

5 Greatness. 6 Fame. 7 Superior parts.

ver. 300] That virtue only constitutes a happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal.

ver. 318, &c.] That the perfection of happiness consists in a conformity to the order of providence here, and a resignation to it here and hereafter.

F I N I S.

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