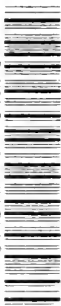


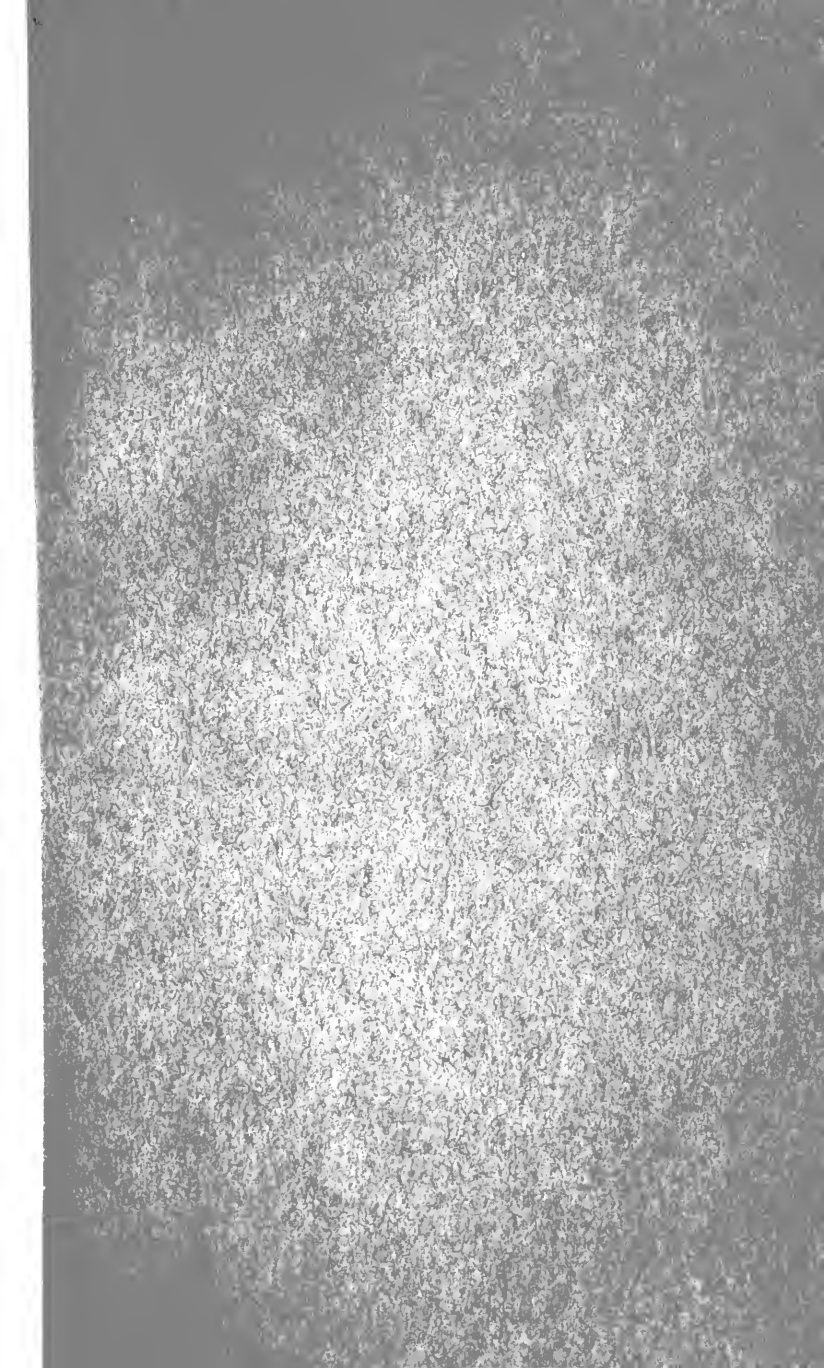
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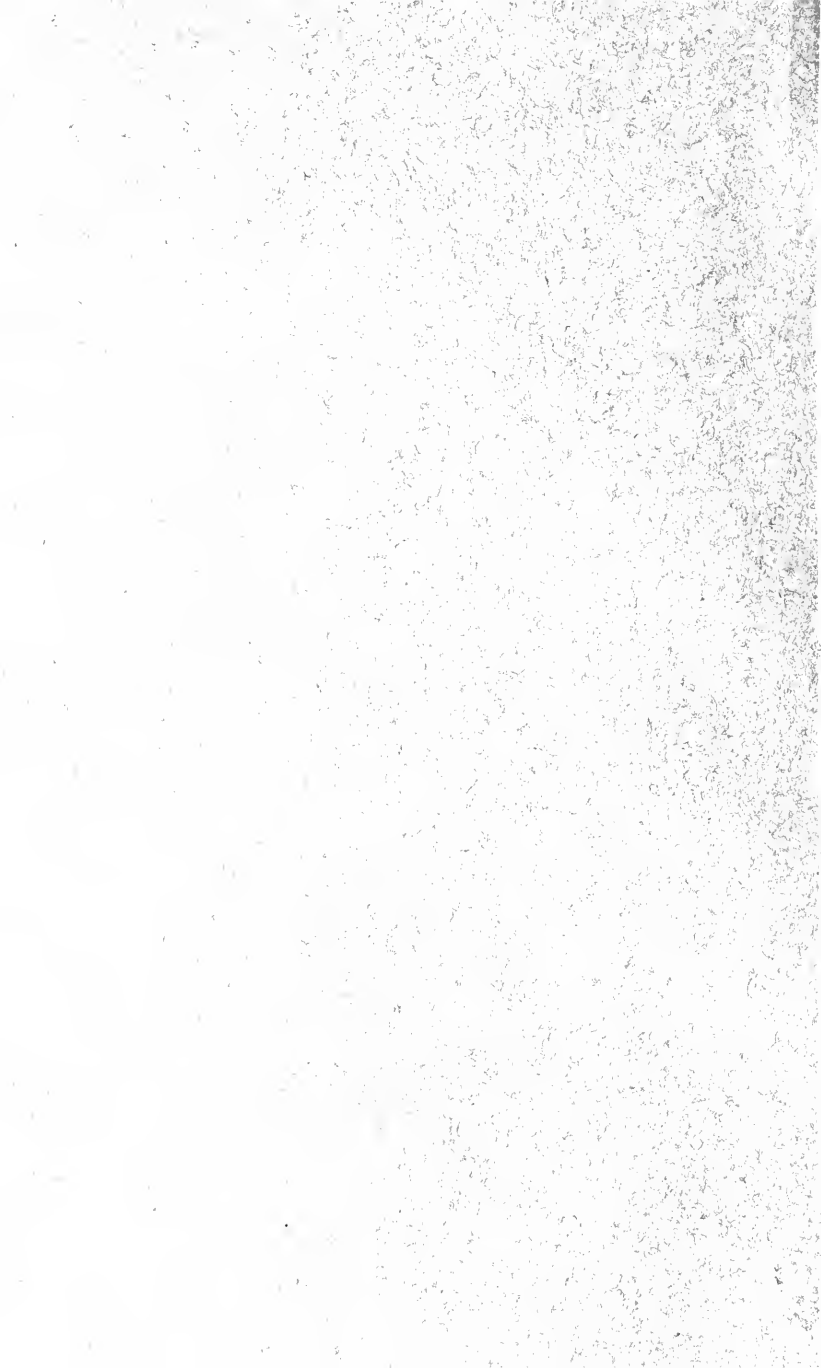


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A
DISSERTATION,

MORAL AND POLITICAL.

ON THE

INFLUENCE OF LUXURY AND REFINEMENT

ON

NATIONS,

WITH

REFLECTIONS ON THE MANNERS OF THE AGE

AT THE CLOSE OF THE 18TH CENTURY.

BY ADAM SIBBIT, A. B.

RECTOR OF CLARENDON, IN THE ISLAND OF JAMAICA.

Il y a de mauvais exemples qui font pires que les crimes ; & plus d'états on peri parce qu'on violè les meurs, que parce qu'on a violè les loix.

MONTESQUIEU, GRANDEUR ET
DECADENCE DES ROMAINES.

Quid leges sine moribus
Vanæ proficiunt.

MOR.

LONDON:

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1800.

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IN TESTIMONY

OF A HIGH AND UNFEIGNED VENERATION,

FOR DISTINGUISHED TALENTS,

AND

FOR GREAT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VIRTUE,

THIS DISSERTATION

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

TO

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN LORD ELDON,

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE OF HIS MAJESTY'S COURT OF COMMON PLEAS,

Ec. Ec. Ec.

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

VERY OBEDIENT AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



A

DISSERTATION, &c.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN we contemplate the extent and populoufness of ancient nations, as they are described to us by the most celebrated historians, and at the same time reflect, that so few monuments of their former greatness are now remaining, we cannot refrain from being considerably affected at the transient and fleeting nature of the noblest works and possessions of man. Every object by

B which

which we are surrounded, the events of the day, when duly considered, are sufficient to admonish us of the uncertainty of human affairs, and of the frailty of our condition; but there is something so uncommonly awful in the revolutions and vicissitudes of great and powerful nations, that it comes home to every breast, and strikes with peculiar force. The history of the mighty empires of antiquity is also extremely interesting to posterity, as well by the vast importance of the subject, as the superior talents of the writers who have recorded, with so much dignity and elegance of composition, the grand series of their achievements; we peruse their instructive and polished pages with peculiar delight, and we are endeared, by our classical studies, from an early period of our life, to every
every

every scene which has been so strongly and happily painted by the great masters of eloquence and poetry. Yet, while the mind is informed, and the imagination is enriched and enlarged, by the noble view of sublime objects and great events, which ancient history so abundantly presents to our attention, we are, at the same time, filled with solicitude and regret, as often as we call to our remembrance, that so many countries, which were once so populous and so magnificent, have long been divested of all their splendour and their beauty, and now only exhibit to the pensive moralist the gloomy picture of ruins and decay. We then contemplate with painful sensations, and with reflections tinged with gloom, the cruel vicissitudes of fortune, and the heavy devastations of all-consuming time.

But while we moralize with an amiable sympathy upon the fate of fallen greatness, and are touched with generous pity at the wretched state of those illustrious countries, which were formerly the dignified and auspicious seats of heroic action and elegant literature, we naturally derive a considerable portion of useful and important information. For the historic page * is a faithful mirror, which holds up to our view a large circle of human manners and actions; it represents vice and folly in a prominent point of view; it teaches by the united force of precept and example, and powerfully demonstrates the fragility of worldly grandeur, and the vanity of ambition. If, then, we

* *Historia, testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis—*

fix our serious attention upon those great nations which made so distinguished a figure in the world in former ages, and which are now sunk into obscurity and contempt, we will be led into a train of serious and wholesome reflections, and our curiosity will be naturally excited to enquire into the destructive causes which have produced such fatal vicissitudes.

Few men, indeed, can meditate upon the destiny of ancient nations, or calmly trace the wonderful and eventful series of the changes and revolutions to which they have been exposed, without being strongly impressed with solemn and serious reflections; as their former greatness and renown, and their present weakness and degeneracy, exhibit to us one of those affecting and

awful transitions of fortune, which the most volatile of mortals can hardly behold without being feelingly convinced of the frail and imperfect nature of all worldly power and human acquisitions,

To take a contemplative view, therefore, of the fluctuating nature of human institutions, to study the rise and progress of empires, to observe the periods of their grandeur and decline, and to search into the leading causes which produced their prosperity or degeneracy, appear to be a useful employment of our intellectual faculties, and a wholesome discipline to the mind; as it tends to enlarge and to illustrate our knowledge of civil society, to make us sage by the lessons of experience, and to prevent us from fixing our attachments too deeply upon objects instable

stable and perishable, and to place them upon things immortal and divine. If we dedicate, indeed, our speculations and enquiries to investigate the genius and spirit of nations, and survey mankind with a philosophic eye, in the various situations of ever-changeful life, we must enrich our minds with a considerable fund of religious, as well as of moral and political information. For, it is in considering and comparing the manners and actions of mortals, both individually and collectively, and by examining faithfully our own breast, that we obtain the greatest variety of true and useful knowledge. The former instructs us, by striking examples of folly and wickedness, by the fall of greatness and the confusion of guilt, how vain it is to place too much reliance upon worldly honours and posses-

sions; and the latter, to be clothed with humility, and, from an ingenuous consciousness of our own imperfections, to be candid and charitable to the faults and foibles of others.

Since, then, the history of nations and individuals afford us ample testimonies of the uncertainty and mutability of human affairs, and that the annals of every civil society are uniformly such as to discover to us the rise of an infant state, its youth, its manhood, and old age, namely, its origin, its progress, and decline; that the body politic, like the natural body, carries the seeds of corruption within itself, it may not be altogether useless or unprofitable for us to endeavour to point out those public and private virtues, whose genial influence produce health and longevity.

to

to a state; and those baleful vices, which bring on, with rapid steps, debility and corruption, which shall be the business of the following Dissertation.

If we cast our eyes over the pages of history, and endeavour to draw conclusions from the various examples which the chronicles of human affairs present to our view, we may perceive that luxury has been the bane of every nation, and the efficient cause of its destruction. Most of the celebrated nations of antiquity, which formerly commanded the homage and admiration of the world, by the extent of their conquests, by the greatness of their riches, or by the elegance of their arts, have become victims to this insidious corrupter of mankind, and bear ample testimony

testimony to its ravages and devastations. And the venerable ruins of powerful empires and magnificent cities, which are yet preserved from the wreck of time, are the awful monuments of the defolating and destructive effects of luxury.

Babylon, the superb residence of the powerful monarchs of Assyria, whose gorgeous buildings were numbered among the wonders of the world, has long been prostrate with the ground.

Sidon, and Tyre, those opulent and commercial cities, whose merchants were like the princes of the earth; aspiring Carthage, so famed in story and in song, are hardly visible upon the face of the globe; and venerable Egypt, with all her stupendous greatness,

ness,

ness, where the rays of science first dawned upon mortals, now only exhibits to the solitary traveller, a wide and dreary waste of misery and desolation.

If we pass from those very ancient nations, and go further to the west, and turn our eyes to that distinguished country which may be considered as the native seat of genius and of taste, illustrious Greece, we are equally struck with the same humiliating picture of impotence and degeneracy; and even Rome, the mistress of the world, only presents, to the contemplative observer, a few faint traces of her former greatness. The downfall and decline of all those mighty kingdoms have been produced by the vices incident to luxury and refinement. But as the history of one nation may serve, in a moral and political

political point of view, for the history of civil society, we need only direct our attention to the progress of manners of a single people to be convinced of this indisputable truth, and see it illustrated in its full extent. I shall, therefore, in the first place, direct my enquiries to ancient Rome, in order to demonstrate how this great scourge of mankind, *Luxury*, corrupted and debased one of the greatest nations of antiquity.

The origin of this great empire was humble and obscure; a hord of wandering shepherds laid the first foundation of Rome; a small community, which was destined to give laws to the world. The career of glory which afterwards distinguished this extraordinary people, and the pinnacle of greatness to which they attained, afford a
contrast

contrast singularly interesting, when compared with the humble commencement of their infant state. It is no less pleasing, indeed, than instructive, to contemplate their slender beginnings, their various struggles, their salutary poverty, their gradual advancement from rudeness and simplicity, to elegance and refinement, to splendor and to power.

The first ages of this illustrious republic were distinguished by a degree of rustic simplicity, peculiarly striking. Agriculture and war were the only employments of the ancient Romans*.

They

* Nunquam puto potuisse dubitari aptiorem armis rusticam plebem quæ sub dio & in labore nutritur; solis patiens; umbræ negligens; balnearum nescia; deliciarum ignara; simplicis animi; parvo contenta; duratis ad omnem laborum tolerantiam membris; cui

gestare

They lived in rural retirement, and when they enjoyed the blessings of peace, they were solely occupied in the honest labours of husbandry. But the sobriety and self-denial, the firm integrity, and proud honour of those rustic heroes, were truly sublime. Pious to the gods, ardent lovers of their country, modest, frugal, and sincere, they performed all the great duties of public and private life with uncommon fidelity and zeal. There was something of grandeur in their character, a species of magnanimity peculiar to themselves. Like the sublime sculpture of Phidias and Michael Angelo, there was

gestare ferrum, fossam ducere, onus ferre, consuetudo de rure est.—Idem bellator, idem agricola, generatantum mutabit armorum.

in them an air of greatness which nowhere else could be found. I wish that we could dwell a little longer on this respectable period of the Roman state, when honour and purity of manners were the leading features which marked the character of her citizens, and made them stand nobly pre-eminent in the moral map of the world: but history and truth prevent us from enjoying long this honourable picture of mankind. Many years rolled on, indeed, when the Romans were only distinguished by the superiority of their virtues; and they held this glorious pre-eminence while justice swayed their councils, and influenced all their actions and decrees. Rome then held up to the admiring world the greatest examples of virtue, and her august Senate seemed to be the sacred seat of wisdom

and equity. There was then public opulence, and private poverty; no fordid avarice, no rapacious amassing of domestic wealth, prevailed in this virtuous commonwealth; the public coffers were filled to answer the exigences of the state; but the humble roof of a Roman Consul was only distinguished by its noble simplicity*.

But

* The elegant historian seems to describe, with peculiar satisfaction, the amiable simplicity of the ancient Romans. It was a relief to his virtuous and manly mind to turn away from the degenerate wretches of his own age, to contemplate the pure and beautiful characters of antiquity.

“ Operæ pretium est audire, qui omnia præ divitiis humana spernunt, neque honori magno locum, neque virtuti putant esse, nisi ubi effuse affluent opes. Spes unica imperii populi Romani L. Quintius,

But soon after the destruction of the celebrated republic of Africa*, we begin

Quintius, trans Tiberim, contra eum ipsum locum, ubi nunc navalia sunt, quatuor jugerum colebat agrum, quæ prata Quintia vocantur. Ibi ab legatis, seu fossam fodiens palæ innixus, seu quum araret, operi certe, id quod constat, agresti intentus, salute data invicem redditaque rogatus ut quod *beneficeret ipsi rei que publicæ, rogatus mandata senatûs audiret; admiratus, rogitanisque, satim salva essent omnia*: togam pro peregrino turgio proferre uxorem Raciliam. Quâ simul, absterfo pulvere ac sudore, velatus processit, dictatorem eum legati gratulantes, consalutant; in urbem vocant; qui terror sit in exercitu, exponunt.”

T. LIVII, LIB. 3.

* Potentiæ Romanorum prior Scipio viam apererat, luxuriæ posterior aperuit, quippe remoto Carthaginis metu, sublataque imperii æmula, non gradu, sed præcipiti cursu, á virtute descitum ad vitia transcursum; vetus disciplina diferta, nova inducta,

gin to perceive a manifest alteration in the manners and sentiments of the Roman people. The pure simplicity of their primitive manners, the inflexible justice and stern integrity, which hitherto had been the great features that marked their national character, seemed gradually to relax and wear away. Instead of a noble firmness in a just cause, and of being the defenders of the oppressed, and the protectors and restorers of fallen kings, they assumed a domineering tone of insolence and fastidiousness.

A thirst of universal empire, a restless and vain ambition, took possession

inducta, in somnum a vigiliis, ab armis ad voluptates, a negotiis in otium converta civitas.

VELLEI PATERCULI, LIB. 2.

of

of their breasts, and aggrandizement of power became, at last, the only idol of their adoration. They conquered, indeed, the world, but they ultimately fell under the pressure of their own weight; and though victory generally attended them wherever they displayed their banners, they were ruined, at last, by the very causes which flattered their ambition and extended their power. The vices of the conquered nations*, and the luxuries which they introduced, acted as a kind of poisonous gas, or septic spirit, that broke down and dissolved every thing wholesome and vi-

* ————— Hinc fluxit ad istos

Sybaris colleis : hinc & Rhodos, & Miletos,

Atque coronatum, & petulans, madidumque Ta-
rentum.

JUVENALIS, SAT. 6, LIB. 2.

gorous in their constitution, which terminated in the ruin of this great people. But the transition from virtue to vice is never immediate, even in an individual; it comes on step by step, and often by slow approaches. In a nation the change is attended with more delay. Many years must elapse, many and powerful causes must co-operate, before the great mass of the people can be so corrupted as to renounce all their ancient habits and customs, and the whole circle of their moral, political, and religious duties, can be entirely abandoned. The alteration, therefore, of the Roman manners and principles, was not immediate or precipitate; it came on by slow gradations, and from manifest and evident causes, which we shall now endeavour to trace.

Among the leading causes which tended to corrupt the manners of the Romans, we may attribute extent of conquest, a long train of prosperity, and the introduction of the luxuries and refinements of foreign nations.

Their victories in the East*, however flattering they might be to the pride of military ambition, however they might cover the Consul with glory, and swell the pomp of a tri-

* *Postea paulatim frugales mores defluxere, paupertasque probro haberi cæpit: luxuriæ peregrinæ invictum malum ad effœminandos animos, ab asiatico in urbem primum invecæ, mores infecerunt: sicut aurum Persicum, fugato Mardonio, Atheniensium animos labefactavit, & dira tabe infecit. Inde illecebræ libidinum, et rerum secundarum luxus, in omnem licentiam grassati.*

ALEXANDRI AB ALEXANDRO, GENIALES DIES, LIB. 5.

umphal entry, conduced, in a high degree, to inspire a taste for voluptuousness and the passion of avarice; and, at last, destroyed all the energy of that manly virtue which had been so long the admiration of the world. The soft and relaxing climate of Asia has ever been fatal to the morals of Europeans, and to the amiable virtues of temperance and simplicity. The variety and the refinement of sensual pleasures so peculiar to that portion of the globe, where Luxury may be said to have erected her seductive standard, affected the Roman camp with their fascinating and enervating influence: the softness and effeminacy, and the exquisite delicacies of the East, with immense wealth, the great corrupter of individuals and nations, were imported to Rome; which, in the course of time, produced a moral

ral

ral revolution in the minds of men; namely, a disposition to receive with avidity every illicit indulgence which could gratify the appetites, or extend the circle of sensual enjoyments. At this critical period, when the Roman people were thus rapidly descending into an effeminate and voluptuous mode of life, and suffering the rigour and austerity of their ancient manners to be destroyed by the influence of luxury, their minds were assailed by the fashionable precepts of a new philosophy, that had a tendency to subvert every principle of religion and morality, upon which the pillars of society are founded. It was from Greece that this literary poison was conveyed.

But let us speak with reverence of a country which may be considered as

the illustrious parent of every thing delicate and exquisite, as well as grand and sublime, in intellectual exertions—a country peculiarly fertile in great and good men. It was here the first sages taught, with an ardour and an eloquence peculiar to themselves, the beauty of Virtue, and displayed her heavenly charms to the world, adorned in the most captivating attire. On the banks of the Iliffus the virtuous Socrates brought down Philosophy from Heaven (to use the language of the great master of eloquence), and taught her to dwell in cities and in towns*. He delivered her amiable precepts,

* Socrates primus philosophiam devocavit é cœlo, & in urbibus collocavit, & in domos etiam introduxit, & coegit de vita & in moribus, rebusque bonis & malis quærere.

CICERO TUSC. QUEST. I. 5.

stript

stript of the pompous garb of ostentation, with the air and the charms of truth. He fixed the attention of the Athenian youth by his engaging manners and gentle precepts, and drew them from the vain and fanciful researches of abstract and sterile speculations, to the pursuit and to the practice of the noblest virtues. The liberal leisure of polished society, therefore, can never be more beneficially and honourably employed than when it is devoted to useful and elegant literature; and to cultivate the sciences and the arts, modestly and humbly, and with a view to become, not only wiser, but better men, will ever conduce to exalt our piety, and to add ardour to virtue, to elevate the mind, and to meliorate the heart*.

* *Philosophia vero omnium mater artium quid est aliud, nisi ut Plato donum, ut ego inventum deorum?*

But it is only when mental productions are debased, and perverted from their true purposes, by the vain and conceited sophist, to deceive and to corrupt the world by impious systems of philosophy and licentious theories of ethics, that literary pursuits become the bane and pest of civil society, by diffusing sentiments inimical to religion and to morals. There unfortunately arose in Greece a set of men of this de-

deorum? Hæc nos primum ad illorum cultum; deinde ad jus hominum, quod situm est in generis humani societate; tum ad modestiam magnitudinemque animi erudit: eademque ab animo tanquam ab oculis caliginem dispulit, ut omnia supera, infera, prima, ultima, media, videremus. Prorsus hæc divina mihi videtur vis, quæ tot res efficiat et tantas.

TUSCUL. DISPUTATIONUM LIBER PRIMUS.

scription,

scription, who disseminated principles which were pernicious, in a high degree, to the welfare and peace of mankind.

The writings of these philosophers, if they deserve so respectable a name, were the offspring of vanity and presumption; they were actuated by motives very similar to those which influence the moderns of the same school. The fever of ambition, the desire of distinction, which sometimes inspires the literary hero, is often as fatal to the repose of mankind as the military ardour which impels the conqueror to carry devastation and terror over the world, in search of laurels and of triumphs. Every consideration is sacrificed to vanity and fame; and the praise of men, by people of this stamp, is preferred to the appro-
4 bation

bation of Heaven. The most effectual method, therefore, to gratify this restless passion, and to obtain the admiration of the crowd, is to attack every thing which the world had hitherto deemed sacred and venerable in religion and in morals. To endeavour to confound the distinctions of right and wrong, to mislead and to corrupt the giddy populace by the boldness and the novelty of their assertions, is a sure way to be conspicuous for a time, and to live in the mouths of men; and paradoxes, absurdities, cynic arrogance, and obscenity, will too often, in a vicious age, gain more applause than the sublime productions of Genius and Virtue. The epigrams of a buffoon, the whining elegy, and the flimsy novel, will be read with avidity in frivolous times, while Homer and Milton,

and Demosthenes and Burke, will be neglected: for luxury and vice have a tendency to corrupt and debilitate the mind, as well as the body; to contaminate our intellectual taste, as well as our moral perceptions; and, when we want energy and purity of soul to comprehend the vast and grand, or to be charmed with the delicate and elegant compositions of true genius, we, from the mere depravity of our faculties, delight to feed upon the disgusting garbage, or the impertinent conceits, of the literary profligates of the day, the immoral and puny writers of a degenerate age; and there is nothing, perhaps, so fatal to the morals of a nation as corrupt and vicious literary productions, as they diffuse their influence over a large space, and affect all ranks and descriptions of men.

Among

Among the first authors who thus disgraced the name of literature by an impious abuse of their talents, we may rank two philosophers of Greece, *Democritus* and *Aristippus*. The wild doctrine of the former, and the courtly precepts of the latter, who was celebrated for the politeness and urbanity of his manners, led the way to impiety and licentiousness. They were followed by the famous *Epicurus*, who may be justly considered as the grand corrupter of the doctrines and morals of antiquity. This eminent teacher of luxury used every art to seduce and to captivate the multitude; he laboured to spread blandishments and meretricious charms over vice, and to refine upon sensuality, by the elegance and delicacy of his voluptuousness. He lived in the soft bowers of retirement, in
gardens

gardens rendered delightful by cooling fountains and by fragrant flowers, and taught his disciples in this delicious retreat, where every thing conduced to charm the fancy and to fascinate the senses, a doctrine corresponding to his principles—that *pleasure* was the supreme good of man, and impiously denied the interference of a superintending Providence.

Whether he meant, by the word pleasure, a lawless indulgence of every sensual passion, or only the mental enjoyment of contemplation and ease, is not yet thoroughly agreed upon by the learned*. But it is of little consequence;

* Though Tully speaks very plainly upon the subject, and pronounces him to have been a mere gross sensualist:—“ Testificatur, ne intelligere quidem

quence; he was a speculative atheist; and, whatever might have been his mode of life, the spirit of his precepts had a direct tendency to destroy every religious and moral duty, and to cloud our best and brightest hopes; and the baleful influence of the Epicurean doctrine has been fatal to many nations. It has been, indeed, one of the principal causes of the ruin of every state where it has been introduced and practised. The doctrine of this extraordinary man was brought to Rome, and diffused among the people, by the celebrated Lucretius, embellished with all the

quidem se posse, ubi sit aut quid ullum bonum præter illud, quod cibo, aut potione, & aurium delectatione & obscena voluptate capiatur."

DE FINIBUS BONORUM ET MALORUM, LIB. 2.

graces of eloquence and poetry*. Though nothing can exceed the monstrous absurdities,

* De rerum natura. It is much to be lamented, that most of the poets (who, when their morals are pure and sentiments just, are the sweetest instructors of wisdom) contributed greatly to diffuse among the people principles of impiety and licentiousness. The majority of the followers of the Muses, in Rome, were of the Epicurean sect. The prince of Latin lyric poets, whose elegance of fancy and felicity of diction must delight every man of taste, jocularly calls himself *Epicuri de grege porcum*; he seems, indeed, in a soberer hour, to become a convert to a wiser system of philosophy, and to be sorry for his former levity and impiety.

“ *Parcus deorum cultor & infrequens,
Infanientis dum sapientiæ
Consultus erro; nunc retrorsum
Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
Cogor relictos.*

HORACE, OD. 34. LIB. I.

furdities, the shocking blasphemy and licentioufness, which abound in this profane

The grave and solemn Virgil was also an admirer of this insane philosophy. I forbear to mention many of the other Roman poets, most of whom wrote and lived like epicures and libertines. I have often deplored, that the lustre of their elegant pages is so frequently stained with indelicacies. Persius, indeed, is an exception, who wrote in an age abandoned to every vice, and still retained great elevation and purity of character: he was a rigid Stoic, both in precept and in practice; and every thing about him was hard and austere. His rage against vice was noble and manly; and it is a pity he was obliged to veil his sentiments in so much obscurity. Juvenal also abounds with excellent precepts of virtue: his beautiful reflections and noble indignation against the shocking depravity of the times in which he lived cannot be too much admired; but, I am afraid, his broad and disgusting descriptions of the most indelicate vices, his continual violations of modesty, will rather

tend

profane poem, that promulgated among the Romans the sentiments of Epicurus, it contained, at the same time, many seductive charms and libertine principles, which the inherent depravity of man is too prone to embrace, not to gain many converts and proselytes. It flattered the prevailing vices and passions of the times, and tended to overturn every wholesome restraint which religion and virtue held sacred.

tend to irritate and inflame than to correct and subdue the irregular desires and passions of mortals. Notwithstanding the vigour and animation of his mind, and the energy of his diction, no man can peruse his minute and detailed picture of the grossest vices without turning away from the disgusting tablet as from something loathsome and foul. The prose-writers among the Romans are the pure and copious streams, from which we cannot drink too deeply.

The religious fear of Heaven, Piety, that vital spark, which purifies the breast with a holy flame, and animates all the virtues, was ridiculed and traduced. The consolatory and animating truth of the immortality of the soul, which spreads so much serenity and comfort in every situation of life, and which is so deeply implanted in every breast, is attempted to be extinguished; all the horizon of futurity is darkened with gloom, and an unbounded indulgence of every low animal gratification, the natural consequence of such a doctrine, is earnestly recommended as the great art of enjoying life. The deadly poison which issues from Afric's sickly climes, and spreads contagion and pestilence over a devoted world, is not more fatal to the animal part of our existence, than the epicurean principles
are

are to the intellectual and immortal part of man. The precepts of atheism and licentiousness were soon felt in the Roman world; they carried every thing headlong down the stream of vice, and totally ruined the morals of the people. They affected the stamina and vital part of the state; all the nerves of government, all energy and force of character, and dignity of sentiment, were dissolved by voluptuousness. The grand and sublime features of the Roman citizen, which so long awed the world, were at last so entirely defaced, and worn away, by dissipation and wickedness, as to be no more discernible. A degeneracy of sentiment and manners universally prevailed. Avarice and profligacy, and extravagance, took place of the noble virtues of self-denial

and simplicity; and Rome, once the honourable habitation of temperance and virtue, became the seat of every vice * which can disgrace and vilify human

* It is melancholy to observe the fatal effects of luxury upon the manners of the Roman women. In the first ages of the republic, nothing could exceed the purity of their morals. The sincere vow which they made at the altar of Hymen, was never violated by the base arts of intrigue. All the amiable female duties were faithfully performed. And, in the manners and conduct of the Roman women, at the period to which I allude, we have every thing that is respectable and venerable in the character of the matron; all the charms of modesty adorned the daughter, and fidelity and affection the wife. In the latter periods of the empire, when dissipation had destroyed every idea of decency, the lives of the women became abandoned almost beyond belief. The description which the Satyrists has given us of them,

is

human nature; and thus fell, by the extreme degeneracy of its inhabitants,

is a picture of fiends rather than of human beings; and even the more dignified pen of the sober historian exhibits a painful view of monsters of licentiousness, cruelty, profligacy, and caprice. The same nation, among the men, as well as among the women, produced every thing that we admire in sublime virtue, and every thing that we detest in odious vice. We adore Lucretia and Virginia; we respect Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi; and who does not admire the wife of Brutus, the magnanimous Portia, who "towered above her sex?" But the Fulvias, the Agrippinas, the Messalinas, and Poppeas, are so fiend-like, and so hideous, that we turn away from the disgusting detail of their monstrous vices and enormities with horror and contempt. The influence of luxury and dissipation is, perhaps, more striking in women than in men, as it entirely destroys that *grace*, whose magic power gives such irresistible charms and lovely virtues to the female character, and leaves behind nothing but deformity.

an easy prey to the barbarians of the north, who subdued by their victorious arms the unworthy descendants of the conquerors of the world.

- - - - - Sævior armis

Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciscitur orbem.

JUVENAL, SAT. 6, LIB. 2.

CHAPTER II.

I HAVE taken a survey, in the preceding chapter, of the principles and manners of the Roman people, in their progress from rudeness and simplicity to that degree of false refinement and depravity which ended in the dissolution of the empire; and I have endeavoured to trace some of the leading causes which finally produced that event. And, surely, no nation can give a more striking or a more instructive lesson to posterity than the history of this celebrated people. It exhibits a view of human nature in every

every condition. It comprehends the whole career of civil society; and all its various and interesting stages are marked with the strongest features. The feeble and imperfect beginnings of an infant state, the gradual and almost insensible steps of its advancement, the rudeness of the half-savage, the engaging charms of simplicity, the unaffected dignity of more improved and virtuous manners, the insolence of power, and the licentiousness of luxury, are all held out in the annals of this great nation for our contemplation and instruction*.

There

* Ad illa mihi pro se quisque acriter intendat animum, quæ vitæ, qui mores fuerint: per quos viros, quibusque artibus, domi militiæque & partum & auctum imperium sit. Labente deinde paulatim disciplinâ, velut defidentes primo mores sequatur animo;

There is no history, therefore, which affords so much moral and political information as the Roman, as it gives us one unbroken view of the progress of human society: for to be acquainted, in any degree, with the nature of civil communities, or to study philosophically and politically the progress of nations, it is not sufficient to limit our attention to detached parts of their history; we must take in the whole view, we must consider the various moral and mental

animo; deinde ut magis magisque lapsi sint; tum ire cœperint præcipites: donec ad hæc tempora, quibus nec vitia nostra, nec remedia pati possumus, perventum est. Hoc illud est præcipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum omnis te exempli documenta in illustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuæque reipublicæ quod imitere, capias; inde fœdum, inceptu, fœdum exitu, quod vitas.

T. LIVII PRÆFATIO.

features

features which appear in the different periods of society, and follow the wide-extended chain which leads from rude simplicity to extreme refinement. It is, therefore, necessary to contemplate the savage and social state of man, a virtuous and flourishing community, and one vitiated by luxury and dissipation. I shall then consider human nature in these distinct situations, and endeavour to mark the virtues and vices incident to each. In the first and last of these situations the human race appear in a very humiliating point of view. Here the extremes meet, and the middle point is the seat of virtue and happiness.

Some authors, particularly of the French school, have been induced to recommend the condition of savages as being

being the state of felicity and freedom, and preferable to a state of civilization. Rousseau has drawn a very fine picture of the pleasures of the man of nature, as he terms him, and seems to envy his situation. Spleen and misanthropy instigated him to exalt the savage, in order to depreciate the social state, against which he had commenced eternal war. The theme was suited to his genius: he possessed a fervid imagination, and eloquence of the most brilliant hue; but he was extremely vain, and, like a desperate empiric, he endeavoured to draw the attention of mankind upon him by his extravagancies and eccentricities, by the wildness of his paradoxes, and the splendour of his sophistry. The Abbé Raynal also, who fascinated his age by the freedom and boldness of his sentiments, and by the charms

charms of style, and covered the poison of his dangerous precepts by delightful imagery and beautiful flowers, has given a decided preference to the happiness of the savage over the peasant and mechanic in civil governments*. But the fact is, that the descriptions and assertions of such writers on this subject, who have never been

* *L'Histoire Philosophique et Politique des deux Indes*, is a great performance, and executed by a man of first-rate talents; but it is much to be lamented, that the Abbé has inserted in his book so many licentious and irreligious sentiments. His illiberal and frequent attacks upon Christianity, and his indiscriminate abuse of ecclesiastics, are audacious and disgusting; his morals, too, are often loose, and his ideas of civil liberty bordering upon licentiousness. But the Abbé lived long enough to see and to be convinced of the evil tendency of his speculative principles.

out of Europe, are equally vague and erroneous; they are only to be considered as the vain declamations of sophists, inculcating new doctrines merely for the sake of singularity, or to answer a particular purpose. For let any man have an opportunity of seeing the actual state of savages, before they have made any progress in those useful arts which soften the asperities of life, and before they have acquired any of the sentiments which add to its dignity, and he will soon be convinced that their condition is by no means an enviable one. Man, in the simple state of nature, roaming about the woods by day, and sleeping in the caverns of rocks, or in miserable hovels, by night, exhibits the human species in a very unfavourable point of view. The mere animal then only appears; the gratification

cation of his appetites is his sole pursuit, and the virtues of the heart and the powers of the mind lye equally dormant. All the ferocious passions reign without controul in his breast; subject to many physical calamities and cruel vicissitudes; thoughtless and improvident, selfish, fickle and cruel; alternately an insolent tyrant, or an abject slave; either pining in the miseries of want, or gormandizing in the excesses of gluttony. Instead of this boasted liberty, which is supposed to be enjoyed by this man of nature in gloomy woods and dismal solitudes, there are, perhaps, few situations where violence, and rapine, and murder, are perpetrated with such merciless cruelty. Every thing gives way to force; animal strength comprehends every virtue; little regard is paid to the weakness of infancy, no
pity

pity for the pains of disease; and when the aged become infirm by debility and years, they are frequently arrested in their course by the parricide hand of the unfeeling savage.

In fine, all the generous virtues of public, and all the tender charities and social ties of domestic life, are utterly unknown among barbarians. If, then, we turn our eyes from this unamiable picture of our species, and consider the various comforts and advantages of an enlightened society, with all its delightful and refined enjoyments spreading their wide blessings over a land, we must gratefully acknowledge the superior value and happiness of social life, exalted by true religion, and protected by just laws. The poor tenant of the humblest cottage, who, under

the mild influence of a virtuous government, possesses in peaceful security the well-earned fruits of his industry, enjoys a degree of pure satisfaction to which the barbarian is a stranger. Soothed by the dear delights of domestic life, cheered by the consolations of religion, and defended from the attacks of violence, he passes his blameless days with tranquillity and contentment, and looks forward to a future state for the final completion of his happiness. The superiority of the civilized to the savage state of man cannot, I think, be doubted by any one, whose intellectual powers are not perverted by prejudice, or chagrined by discontent. As in the former state the human character, sublimed by religion and virtue, is only "a little lower than the angels," and in the latter the mind divine, and all
our

our noblest faculties; are overwhelmed by barbarism, and man appears in a wretched condition of ignorance and darkness, a desolate being, almost upon a level with the brute creation.

But though the human race, in this rude state, appear almost below the standard of rational beings, and as mere animals, destitute of all dignity and beauty; yet, like the rough diamond in the mine, they are capable of receiving the finest polish, and they only want to be instructed in the ennobling principles of religion and morality for their better nature to be displayed. The germ of all the great qualities and virtues of the human mind lies dormant in the savage; and it only wants time, and a fortunate concurrence of circumstances, to developé itself, and to be

brought into action. Men, in the rude state of nature, are first hunters, pursuing their prey; they next become shepherds, which has a tendency to soften the fierceness of their minds, and to allay their thirst of blood. Agriculture at last succeeds, which soon introduces ideas of property, and fixes the wandering hord. Thus a social compact is formed for mutual protection and security*; and the dignity of society is established, with all its auspicious train of blessings and comforts. Thus nations commence, and their du-

* — Stanchi di vivere in un continuo stato di guerra, e di godere una libertà resa inutile dalle incertezza di conservarla: esse ne sacrificarono una parte per goderne il restante con sicurezza e tranquillita.

ration and prosperity depend upon the purity of their morals, the wisdom of their government, and the excellence of their laws.

There are two conditions in which the human race are placed, as I have already observed, which afford us a very disadvantageous picture of our species. The one is the state of man, previous to the introduction of the arts and improvements of civil life; and the other, when from luxury and refinement he has so far corrupted his improved nature as to be reverging into his primitive situation, and sinking again into the savage. But though the noble powers of man are equally obscured and debased in either situation, they differ materially in the consequences attending them.

However unamiable our species may appear, and terrible to contemplate, in the wild state of nature, ferocious and merciless, and only gratifying sensual appetites, they are still capable of being humanized and enlightened. They have the seeds of virtue in their breasts; they will listen to the soft voice of religion and of law. Though rude and gross, they are not enervated by voluptuousness, they are not transformed by monstrous vices, nor subtilized by false refinements. They possess stamina of mind and vigour of body; simplicity and energy accompany their rudeness, which may soon be cultivated so as to produce the noblest fruits of virtue. But a people that have gone through all the stages of society, and attained their summit of greatness, but from luxury and opulence have

have become wicked and corrupt, it is impossible to save from falling.

A nation of this description is like a body effete and exhausted by intemperance and excess; it has lost its tone of vigour and energy, the absorbent powers can no longer perform their grand and mysterious office in the animal œconomy; or, like the wretch dying in an atrophy, while you feed him with the most nutritious food, and ransack earth, air, and sea, to procure him delicacies, he still exhibits the meagre and squalid spectre of famine, and dies from debility. Thus it is with communities as with individuals, you may easily polish the roughness of simplicity, or reduce athletic strength; but there is no cure for a worn-out debauchee, or a dissipated nation.

But a short view of the principles and sentiments which actuate mankind in vitious ages, will further illustrate this subject, and clearly shew, that the manners of such times must inevitably lead to the destruction of the community in which they prevail.

When a nation has arrived at so high a degree of refinement, that Luxury has extended her reign so universally and diffusively, as to affect all ranks and degrees of people, we perceive the moral obligations gradually to lose their influence over the mind, and to be every where more frequently violated and neglected. The honest simplicity of venerable ancestors, and their pure and blameless manners, daily decline and are despised. Fashion and caprice then govern the majority of men, instead

stead of reason and religion. Man in his unvitiated state has few wants and moderate desires. Benevolent Nature is tender and bountiful in all her works. We only pervert and corrupt her wise laws, by our vain subtilties and false refinements. Instead of being contented to enjoy the blessings which Heaven has destined to us to make us happy, from the constitution of our frame, we depart too often from the path of rectitude, and presumptuously endeavour to increase the number of our pleasures and indulgencies. But we deceive ourselves; for the more we forsake the charming simplicity of nature in hunting after felicity, the more we become the victims of disappointment and chagrin. It is from this false idea of searching after happiness, which prompts us to extend the circle of our pleasures

pleasures and amusements, and to gratify inordinate passions, that all the evils and vices incident to luxury are introduced among men. In ages of temperance and simplicity, when society is still in a progressive state, and has not reached its fatal acmè of refinement and vicious delicacy, the moral virtues are faithfully observed, and religion governs the minds of men. In this happy state of a community, the majority of the people are generous, disinterested, contented, and humane. They are not yet engrossed by vicious pleasures, they do not pine after imaginary wants, they have not forged to themselves those ignominious fetters, which are the consequence of the tyranny of the passions, and of a depraved mind. But when Voluptuousness has introduced her insatiable and com-

plicated desires among men, and inspired them with a taste for her artificial pleasures, nothing can gratify the craving and inordinate appetites of her deluded and miserable votaries. Man then becomes a wretched slave to a variety of wants and propensities, which are merely factitious and ideal. The smallest village could satisfy with its simple productions the Athenian sage*, while all the poignant luxuries and studied pleasures which the world could give, were too few for a Nero, or a Heliogabulus. Every passion becomes more craving and immoderate by indulgence, and more tyrannical in its demands; the sensualist may, therefore, be truly called the most abject of slaves, ever subject to the cruel despotism of

* Xenophon's Memorabilia.

low desires and low pursuits, and equally incapable of public and private virtue. But there are two opposite vices which prevail in a very high degree, and ever distinguish a luxurious and dissipated age. *Avarice* and *prodigality* are then carried to the utmost excess*.

Every one in these disgraceful times is solely occupied with his own pleasures, he *concentrates every thing within himself*, and is totally insensible to the wants and calamities of others. All

* The great historian Sallust has painted, in his usual energetic manner, the union of these odious vices. Vide *Catiline's Conspiracy*. The younger Pliny has also observed it. *Memento nihil magis esse vitandam, quam istam luxuriæ & fordium novam societatem; quæ, cum sint turpissima discreta ac separata, turpius junguntur.*

FLIN. EP. 6, LIB. 2.

these

those beautiful sentiments and generous feelings, all that warm philanthropy and expansion of benevolence, which delight to shed the balm of sacred pity into the breast of the afflicted, to relieve misery, and to confer happiness, are rarely to be found in a land devoted to dissipation.

A cold apathy then freezes every breast, blunts our sensibility, and hardens the heart. Luxury is a monster as terrible as Medusa's head, and converts every thing into stone. And no being is more completely selfish and callous, than a supine voluptuous epicure; obdurate and rapacious, eager to amass, and prodigal to spend his ill-gotten wealth, in order to gratify a clamorous and lawless train of passions, and wishes, and desires, and caprice, which

which are only engendered by vanity and sensuality. And, in this vitiated state of society, nothing is more fatal to the majority of the community than excessive vanity—the incurable foible of weak and frivolous minds. Every man is endeavouring to eclipse his neighbour, in ostentation and parade. Emulation and rivalship in works of utility and goodness are worthy of the greatest minds, and highly beneficial to society; but here is generally a destructive contest in the splendour of equipage, in the fripperies of fashion, or in the excesses of intemperance. This vain competition is always ruinous to the middle class of mankind, as it robs them of their independence and real respectability, and leads to bankruptcy and to penury. The natural consequence of such manners and actions is obvious.

All the sources of benevolence and disinterestedness are exhausted by the exorbitant claims of vanity and extravagance, and the majority of men in such times, notwithstanding their apparent ample fortunes and large estates, are poor and embarrassed; a baneful luxury, which comprehends every vice, destroys all honour of character, and beneficence of principle. And when a man is bereft of his virtuous independence*, he is
very

* Among the evils of luxury we may also enumerate *celibacy*. When pride and ostentation are the principal features in a character, they are great impediments to wedlock. The pure pleasures of domestic life, the delightful union of minds, in the conjugal state, have no charms in the eye of a mercenary, callous fortune-hunter, or a modern fine lady. They only adopt this honourable state, provided they can improve their finances, and gain an equipage and tinsel. The noble institution of
matrimony

very apt to lose his integrity. He becomes obsequious, abject, and mean;

matrimony is therefore frequently reduced to a mere matter of bargain and sale, or a business of calculation. Beauty, elegance, and virtue, are seen with jaundiced eyes by the rapacious votaries of wealth, or the contemptible slaves of ostentation. And thus their lives are often wasted away in the vain arts of gallantry and intrigue, in deceiving and in being deceived, without forming any honourable connection, or leaving behind them a respectable or virtuous family. When a considerable portion of the community is of this way of thinking, it must consequently prevent the general prevalence of matrimony. And when the conjugal state is neglected, which is the great support of virtue and sacred bond, which binds all the links of society in closer ties, the population, strength, and welfare of the state must be materially impaired. And this will always be the case, when vanity and show have a greater influence upon the weak minds of degenerate mortals, than the divine institutions of religion, and the wise laws of nature and of nations.

and

and when he ruins himself and his family by folly and extravagance, he becomes desperate and abandoned, and equally worthless as a man and a citizen. For the public and private virtues are inseparably connected; they go hand and hand together, and are the auspicious offspring of religion and morality. The followers of Catiline were an infamous group of blasphemers, profligates, and debauchees, steeped in every crime. Bankrupts alike in character and in fortune, without reverence for Heaven or love for men, they raised their parricide hands against the state; impelled by the furies of ambition and avarice, they resolved to alter their situation, or bury their infamy in the ruins of their country. With such men all things are venal, and they are always ready for rebellion and plunder; and the convulsions of every state are

brought on by people of this description, rendered desperate and rapacious by their debts, their extravagancies, and their vices*.

* Dans tous les états l'espèce la plus dangereuse est celle des dissipateurs et des prodigues ; leurs profusions épuisent en peu de temps leurs ressources ; ce qui les réduit à des extrémités fâcheuses, qui les forcent ensuite à recourir aux expédiens les plus bas, les plus odieux, les plus infâmes. La troupe de Catalina, les adhérens des Jules César, les frondeurs que le Cardinal de Retz avait ameutés, ceux qui s'attachèrent à la fortune de Cromwell, était tous gens de cette espèce, qui ne pouvaient s'acquitter de leurs dettes, ni réparer leurs fortune délabrée qu'en bouleversant l'état dont ils étaient citoyens. Dans les premières familles d'un état les prodigues friponnent et cabalent, chez le peuple, les dissipateurs et les paresseux finissent par devenir brigands, et par commettre les attentats les plus énormes contre la sûreté publique.

The age of luxury and venality, in fine, is the period in which the greatest and the meanest vices appear, in all their hideous deformity. It is not only marked and appalled by the deep and bloody plots of the ferocious conspirator, the impious dogmas of the atheist, and the licentious precepts of the libertine, but it is also infested by a swarm of gamblers, parasites, fortune-hunters, and swindlers—the despicable progeny of an idle and dissipated age. They are too often the successful candidates of the day, and riot in the spoils and wages of iniquity ; while men of genius and virtue are thrown aside with cold neglect, and stand aloof, pensively meditating upon the gloomy picture of the times*.

In

* The description which Tacitus has given us of the insensibility and levity of the populace,

In whatever point of view, therefore, we contemplate luxury, we must perceive

during the conflict in the Roman capital, between the parties of Vespasian and Vitellius, is deplorable to contemplate, but it is an exact picture of that hardness of heart, and insolent caprice, which always distinguish the lower orders of the people in a profligate age. I will give the words of this eloquent writer and profound observer of mankind, as the scene is painted with an uncommon degree of strength and brilliancy of colouring. *Aderat pugnantibus spectator populus, atque in ludicro certamine, hos, rursus illos clamore et plausu fovebat : quotiens pars altera inclinasset, abditos in tabernis, aut, si quam in dominum perfugerant, erui jugularique, expostulantes, parte majore prædæ potiebantur. Nam milite ad sanguinem et cædes observo, spolia in vulgus cedebant. Sæva ac deformis urbe tota facies, alibi prælia et vulnera; alibi balnea propinæque. Simul cruor et strues corporum: juxta scorta, et scortis similes: quantum in luxurioso otio libidinem; quicquid in acerbissima captivitate scelerum: prorsus et eandem civitatem et furere crederes,*

ceive that its effects on nations are, in the highest degree, fatal and pernicious, and

et lascivire, conflixerant ante armati exercitus in urbe, bis L. Sulla, semel Cinna victoribus. Nec tunc minus crudelitatis: nunc inhumana securitas, et ne minimo quidem temporis voluptates intermissæ, velut festis diebus (id quoque gaudium accederet exultabant, fruebantur; nulla partium cura malis publicis læti.

C. CORNELII TACITI HIST. LIB. 3. C. 83.

Here are the true, yet terrible manners of the ferocious and fickle mob of a luxurious age. A monstrous assemblage of the most opposite qualities and vices are blended together; relentless cruelty, buffoon merriment, riot, and debauchery, are all united in this deformed and frightful moral tablet. The same spirit lately appeared in the dregs and scum of a nation, which had fallen by its vices and iniquities. The mobs of Paris and Marseilles were equal to the Romans, in their worst times, in their atrocities and cruelties. They exhibited also (as being in the same state of society, degraded

and have a direct tendency to corrupt and degrade human nature.

That the malignant influence of this bane of civil society is equally hostile to domestic happiness, and to public prosperity and strength; that it inspires a spirit of profligacy and vanity, which

and rotten to the core, and, morally and politically considered, one mass of corruption) the same kind of temper and disposition, and something even more infernal and implacable. However, in their sanguinary deeds and horrid orgies, there is a striking resemblance. In one street, they appeared like tigers reeking with blood; in another, with the grimace of baboons. The manners of men, therefore, in corrupt ages, are in all nations much the same. They become almost divested of humanity. They are savages of the worst kind, for they possess some of the dexterity and acuteness of civilized man, joined to the merciless disposition of the barbarian.

consumes

consumes the fortunes of individuals, in a way disgraceful to themselves, ruinous to their families, and hurtful to their country; that it naturally renders men discontented, wicked, and turbulent members of society; and, finally, leads to irreligion, immorality, and sedition; and consequently to the destruction of a state.

CHAPTER III.

IT is a painful and an ungrateful task to fix our attention too long upon human nature in a point of view in which it exhibits the extremes of wretchedness and depravity. The manners of savages as described by Lafiteau*, and the vices of the degenerate Romans as painted by Tacitus and Herodian are equally disgusting; and they present a tablet so fordid and so deep with shade, that it will be an agreeable relief to turn away from the gloomy view, and to contemplate man exalted and po-

* Des Meurs Sauvages.

lished by religion and by laws, and living in obedience to their divine precepts and commandments.

There is a golden period in human affairs, in which the great and amiable qualities of our nature appear in their native lustre, and mark with an honourable distinction the peculiar felicity of the times. This delightful period arrives, when a nation, in its progressive course, has attained that happy state of civilization and just refinement which polishes, adorns, and enlightens mankind, without corrupting their nature, perverting their judgment, or vitiating their morals: and this is the illustrious æra of national glory and prosperity.

The human character then displays its noblest features, the amiable qualities
of

of the heart, and the sublime powers of the mind are eminently conspicuous, and burst forth into action. The religious, moral, and political duties, are faithfully performed, and shed their invigorating influence over the state, to promote the general welfare of the community. Here is a developement of all the great qualities of man; all his powers and energies are directed to their proper objects, and all harmoniously tending to one point, the promotion of public and private happiness. The *beautiful* in morals is also accompanied with the *beautiful* in literature and works of genius. Strength of judgement, dignity of sentiment, delicacy of taste, and a noble simplicity, distinguish the compositions of a sound and virtuous society. Science then makes her most sublime and useful discoveries;

and the elegant arts, which in vitious and profligate ages are so often debased by their unworthy votaries as to become a curse to their country, are now only cultivated for the noblest purposes, to adorn truth, and to celebrate virtue.

The Muses then only raise their harmonious voice to teach the great precepts of religion and morality; and, when they descend to humbler themes, elegance and delicacy prevail, without being contaminated by want of decency or want of taste. This, therefore, is that respectable period of civil society, in which the great duties of public and private life are well understood and conscientiously practised, and virtue and magnanimity mark the genius of the age. To prolong this happy state of society should be the chief end of all govern-

governments, and the principal study of every legislature; and this can only be effected by preserving the purity of the morals of the people. As much as temperance and exercise are conducive to the health of man, so are religion and morality to the prosperity and happiness of nations. Let us, then, listen to the warning voice of History, that faithful instructress; and endeavour to avoid some of the rocks and shoals which have been so fatal to mankind in former ages.

Now the annals of every country and of every government, the whole volume of human nature, inform us of this sad truth, that there is a period of greatness in nations, after which they decline; and, from their vices and their follies, bring on their own destruction; and

and that their duration and prosperity entirely depend upon the wisdom and virtue of their inhabitants. The human race emerge from barbarism and ignorance by very slow steps: many centuries must elapse in their advances from rudeness to refinement; but when they have reached their summit of greatness and opulence, and obtained their highest polish, the transition downward to moral corruption, and consequent political debility, is headlong and rapid. The most rigid and austere nations of antiquity, when elated by prosperity and wealth, have not been able to withstand the blandishments of pleasure, or to resist the seductive cup of luxury.

They did not only, indeed, taste of this fatal cup; but they drank deep,
they

they drenched it to the dregs, and were transformed into monsters.

The wise and severe laws of Minos could not save the Cretans from falling into degeneracy. Sparta and Rome, those illustrious communities, where honour and virtue held so long a sway, fell at last from their glorious height, and sunk into infamy and impotence. Nations, therefore, carry the seeds of corruption in their bosoms, the poison of which can only be counteracted by the salutary and vital influence of those great principles of religion and virtue which infuse health and vigour into a state.

All the great nations of antiquity, we may perceive, have been ruined by the influence of luxury, and the depravation
tion

tion of morals which inseparably attends it.

And if we cast our eyes over the different kingdoms of Europe, we have every reason to dread the pernicious effects of this great corrupter of nations in modern times.

We do not view the manners of the present age through the gloomy medium of a misanthrope, or with the malignity of a satirist, who distorts every object into deformity in order gratify the rancour of his spleen. We rather delight to dwell upon the grand and beautiful moral pictures of humanity drawn by Richardson*, than the sordid and frightful caricaturas of Swift. But

* Author of Sir Charles Grandison, &c. &c.

we cannot behold but with honest solicitude, the alarming progress which infidelity and licentiousness are everywhere making, and their impious and desperate efforts to destroy every institution which has been hitherto held sacred in religion, in morals, and in laws. A considerable portion of the eighteenth century has been honourably distinguished by sublime examples of virtue, and by happy and splendid exertions in science and in art. Every improvement which the vast and unbounded mind of the illustrious Bacon had prophetically portrayed as necessary to the perfection of useful science, has almost been effected in this enlightened age. True philosophy has been cultivated to a degree of excellence unknown in former times, and the fine arts have approached to Grecian elegance.

gance. But, amidst this blaze of light and truth, where mental vigour and brilliancy and fertility of fancy have been equally displayed, the close of this memorable æra has been clouded and deformed by a set of men whose opinions and actions have a tendency to darken all the splendour which surrounds us; to bring back the gloomy-reign of ignorance and barbarism, and to destroy every vestige of beauty and grace.

A new hord of savages, far more to be dreaded than the Vandal or the Hun, atheists in speculation, and barbarians in practice, have appeared to affright and to disturb the earth, and to involve the civilized world in all the horrors of anarchy and misery.

Some years ago there arose upon the Continent, as we are informed by a late elegant writer*, a set of professed atheists, who were uncommonly industrious in making converts, and in propagating their fatanical principles over the world. Their destructive opinions have made considerable progress in most of the nations of Europe, and are daily gaining ground, and diffused in the most audacious manner. The monster Atheism does not now skulk in the dismal cells of a gloomy desperate few, degraded by crimes and darkened by vice, but he comes into the open haunts of men “like a lion, seeking whom he may devour.” But look at the effects of impiety wherever it has prevailed; they are uniform in their de-

* The amiable Zimmerman.

fructivè consequences, and produce the same fruits in the ancient Epicurean and the modern Gaul. They annihilate every generous and valuable quality of our nature, and only leave a grovelling animal, selfish, cruel, and base. And what can we expect from him who becomes the enemy of the benevolent and merciful Lord of heaven and earth, the bountiful Donor of every good and perfect gift, "*from whom we live, and move, and have our being,*" but infamy and wickedness? But, for a complete example of the temper and spirit of the atheist, we have only to look at the French Revolution. Most of the actors of that dreadful tragedy were of this school of infidelity, particularly those who, above all others, have marked their reign by deeds of atrocity; by "*deeds without a name,*" at which

our nature recoils as at something beyond the reach of human powers to perpetrate or to conceive.

The gloomy and implacable Tiberius, blood-thirsty Nero, terrible Domitian, or any monster which fabling poets have brought into the tragic scene, in order to paint the enormities of tyrants, have not surpassed the terrorists of France in cruelty*; in cruelty at once relentless and suspicious, cold, systematic, studied, and universal, striking at virtue wherever it could be found.—This, then, is the temper of the infidel; like the arch fiend, as soon as he became the enemy of God, he became the

* Πᾶσά τε ἰδέα κατεση θανάτου, καὶ οἶον φιλεῖ ἐν τῷ τοιοῦτω γίνεσθαι, ἐδίει, τιὸ ξυμῖση, καὶ ἔτι περαιτέρω.

hater and persecutor of man; so is the atheist of the day, destitute of every social tie and generous sentiment, *he lives only for himself*, a wretch of appetite and a beast of prey.

Our duty to God is, therefore, the great and leading principle from which all others are derived; it sublimates the mind and rectifies the heart; and its blessed fruits are order, harmony, beauty, and subordination, in the moral and political world. Religion is to morals, what the sweet *oxygen*, or vital air, is to the atmosphere; its benign spirit purifies and invigorates all the intellectual powers of man; its influence is divine, and alone preserves us from sinking into depravity and corruption.—When the virtuous Fabricius was supping with King Pyrrhus and his courtiers,

courtiers, and heard the sophist Carneades discoursing upon the excellence of the Epicurean philosophy, he calmly replied, that he wished the enemies of Rome might always practise the precepts of that doctrine. This is sufficient to shew us the opinion of that great man, of the evil tendency of a system which has ruined every state where it has been received. And I consider the impious opinions of this revived sect, which have lately been so industriously diffeminated, as one of the awful prognostics of the downfall of modern empires; and they require to be assiduously and vigorously opposed by every lover of virtue, and of his country.

This fertile and beautiful island has arrived at a very high degree of perfection in every art, by which civil society

is enriched and adorned. Our resources are immense, and our glory in arms and in literature is spread over the world. Agriculture, that useful and virtuous employment, from whose pure source all the comforts of life do gently flow, has attained to a wonderful degree of excellence. Our manufactures flourish, and send their ingenious and elegant productions to the most distant climes; and the sea is covered with our triumphant navy; a navy which may be considered as the benefactor and protector of the civilized world, and has preserved us from the savage attacks of the ferocious and implacable enemies of every religious, moral, and political institution. In a commercial, political, and literary point of view, therefore, we stand very high in the

scale of Europe; and the scene is flattering and magnificent*.

Yet if our morals are tainted, the whole is only a delusive and transient gleam of splendour, which passeth as the morning cloud, and like “the baseless fabrick of a vision leaves not a rack behind.” And it must be confessed, that from the complexion of the times, we have too many reasons to fear, that this country has passed its meridian of energy and virtue—I mean in its aggregate capacity.

* *Secundæ res acrioribus stimulis animos explorare; quæ miseræ tolerantur, felicitate corrumpuntur.*

G. TACITI HIST. LIB. I.

MORAL AND POLITICAL.

As for the talents and virtues of individuals, no age perhaps ever produced more honourable instances than the present, and to whom we look up with reverence and respect. But when we direct our attention towards the community at large, and consider the general aspect of society, we cannot but perceive the visible progress which luxury has made among us. The amiable simplicity of our native manners is hardly discernible. High refinement, a delicacy bordering upon effeminacy, a rage after wealth, extreme ostentation, are the leading and prominent features of the times. And a taste for extravagance and shew is not confined to the great; it has affected, in a certain degree, all ranks and conditions of men; it has even pervaded the mechanic

chanic in towns, and the rustic in the country*.

A cold indifference in the important duties of religion is also beginning to manifest itself—a most alarming symptom of profligacy in a nation, as it tends to destroy the foundation of all morality, and to give to every vice an easy entrance to the heart.

Infidelity and licentiousness always accompany each other, and may be considered as cause and effect. A na-

* “The toe of the peasant now treads hard upon the heel of the courtier,” to use Shakespeare’s phrase; and every one is endeavouring to live in the rank next to him, rather than in his own, which Montefquieu observes, is always the case in luxurious ages.

tion,

tion, therefore, in this situation will be too apt to lend a ready ear to the teachers of impiety, whose doctrines give full toleration to the indulgence of the passions. And here our danger appears. But let us not despair; let the friends of religion and virtue rather redouble their exertions to stem the torrent of impiety, which is every where pouring in upon us, and endeavour to impress their sublime precepts upon the minds of the British youth, and save them from the debasing doctrine of the *soi disant* philosophers of the times. For this is not a season to be luke-warm and remiss, when our temporal and spiritual enemies are assailing us in every quarter*.

* Γνωστές τῆτον εκείνῶν εἶναι τόν καιρόν ἐν ᾧ ὅτε υπεργῶν, φίλος μάλα, και ὁ ἀντιγάς, εχθρός.

The force of example has a wonderful influence upon the minds and imaginations of mortals. Virtue is then seen in action, and strikes with peculiar force.

The morals and conduct, therefore, of men of distinguished talents and high rank have always a great effect upon the manners and opinions of the age.

One of the most enlightened writers of antiquity * has gone so far as to say, that the genius and spirit of a nation, almost depend upon a few illustrious and powerful characters; and happily for us, we do not want, even in the present day, numerous examples of the fairest and most magnanimous virtues

* Cicero.

among the most dignified part of the community.

Piety and benevolence beam from the throne, “shedding sweet influence” over the land.

Every man must allow, that the two greatest personages in the kingdom are models of every amiable virtue. Many characters we also have both in church and state, whose talents and whose virtues were never surpassed in the purest and brightest times. The noble exertions, and the intrepid and manly perseverance of those enlightened and virtuous statesmen, who now guide the helm of state at this awful and eventful period, and have so successfully protected our glorious constitution from the machinations and attacks of our foreign
and

and domestic foes, cannot be too much admired, or gratefully acknowledged, by every lover of his country. The grand cause which those illustrious men are defending comes home to every breast; it is the sacred cause of religion and virtue, and wisdom, against impiety and vice, brutal ignorance, savage cruelty, anarchy, and horror. May their noble efforts be crowned with success! They deserve, at least, the thanks of their country, and that their names should descend with glory to the latest posterity. A generous few have also come forward, from motives which do honour to their character, to endeavour to call the thoughtless votaries of pleasure and dissipation from their vain pursuits, to a more solemn and decent observance of the Sabbath; an object of vast importance to our present
and

and everlasting happiness. For, piously to observe this sacred day, which was commanded by our Creator to be kept for ever holy, is to preserve the very being and essence of religion among us. Let, then, the sons of riot and of care pause upon this hallowed day; let them awfully pause upon the grand concerns of eternity, and withdraw for a while from their worldly pursuits and vicious habits, and devote a proper portion of their time to the service of their Maker. We have, therefore, every reason to suppose, that the commanding example of characters, so good and great, will have a happy effect upon the general manners of the nation.

It is also expedient in ages of great refinement, to endeavour to revive a taste for ancient manners and simplicity.

The

The President Montesquieu, whose writings have so much enlarged and adorned the science of legislation, has observed, that as much as we bring back a people, vitiated by luxury, to ancient manners, we so much the more lead them to virtue. Cato the elder used frequently to retire to contemplate the dwellings of the heroes of former times. He fondly viewed the thatched roof, and the humble farm of the intrepid Curius, who, after three triumphs, withdrew from the glare and pomp of a city-life, to rustic labours and rural obscurity. The venerable ruins of the residence of such a man, were sufficient to inspire his mind with the love of temperance and virtue. It would be also extremely conducive to the welfare of this country, in the present state of things, when our morals are daily relaxing, and the

manly simplicity of our national character is almost destroyed by false refinements and capricious institutions, to endeavour to revive a taste for plainer manners and fewer luxuries.

To live in the style in which our country gentlemen* were wont to do, rather than in the mode of a modern Nabob. There are a class of men pouring in upon us from foreign climes, a vulgar, and an upstart race, loaded with wealth, and tumid with ridiculous

* A most respectable part of the community, who I esteem and respect, and consider as the nerves of the state, among whom honour, integrity, and truth, ever loved to dwell. I hope they still abound in our island. I should be sorry to see their manly simplicity frittered away, by imitating the silly pride and contemptible ostentation of the *novi homines* of the day.

pride, who may be considered as a formidable phalanx enlisted under the banners of Luxury. They are her faithful votaries in all her profane and sensual rites of riot, licentiousness, and excess. This description of men may be considered as the principal corrupters of our pure national manners and mode of living; and, instead of old English hospitality, they introduce costly delicacies, exotic refinements, new luxuries, and new vices. The genial roof of our respectable ancestors was ever cheered by a hearty welcome to the coming guest, by generous friendship, by free conversation, and by social mirth.

But the banquet of a modern epicure is nothing more than a proud display of vain profusion, disgusting luxury, and stiff parade. Here oriental gloom and Bœotian dulness

dulness prevail, and sit in fastidious state, and banish far true British freedom and Attic wit. He entertains rather from ostentation than benevolence, and practises the sensuality of the *Sybarites* without their elegance and their taste. I dread the prevalence of such modes and habits of living; though, to men of sound information, the manners of the rich upstart race should rather inspire contempt than envy or imitation.

But the majority of mankind are captivated by gaudy and imposing externals; and the manners of voluptuous and degenerate nations are always too apt to be admitted.

Let us, then, invoke the Genius of Simplicity, with Innocence and Virtue in his train, to grace our seats and in-

fluence our manners, which alone can save us from our impending danger, and preserve the native energy of our national character. Something of the hardihood of antiquity should be revived to resist the Asiatic *Moleſſe*, and the destructive refinements which the modern Epicureans are endeavouring to introduce among us: and as the great Cenſor was accuſtomed to contemplate the heroes of elder times in order to emulate the modeſt ſimplicity and the unaffected greatneſs of their lives, ſo let us look back to former ages for proper models of imitation, and riſe above modern degeneracy*.

Our

* The preſent age is deeply tainted with diſſipation; but, as it has been obſerved, there are a few beautiful exceptions, yet the majority of the
people

Our history is by no means barren of great and virtuous examples to shew us
the

people exhibit evident marks of a luxurious nation. The nations on the continent afford still more decided proofs of the effects of luxury, as many of them are sinking into insignificance and contempt from their malignant influence. Spain, which formerly took the lead in Europe, and whose inhabitants were eminently distinguished for honour and magnanimity, has become, from indolence and licentiousness, a miserable example of fallen greatness. The national character of the nobly proud Castilian is entirely broken down by the vices of luxury; and the gold of Mexico and Peru, and the poisoned bowl of voluptuousness, have transformed the heroes of the sixteenth century into abject cowards:

“ And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds,
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.”

SHAKESPEARE.

the path of rectitude. Without searching into the remote periods of our annals,

For could any thing but the most despicable timidity, could any thing but dire necessity, arising from conscious impotence, make a nation crouch and cringe to the murderers of Lewis the Sixteenth, the virtuous head of the House of Bourbon, so nearly allied to its monarch, but a total want of all energy of character and dignity of sentiment? Where, then, is that proud honour that was once dearer to the generous Spaniard than life? It is gone for ever: true courage and greatness of mind can never be joined to sloth and sensuality. The same remarks may be applied to modern Italy. This celebrated country was long renowned for being the birth-place of the greatest of mortals, whose virtues and whose actions awed and astonished the world: it is now inhabited by a set of beings, who have so much degenerated from their ancestors as to be utterly incapable of making any exertion which demands either courage or dignity of soul. Nothing can rouse this effeminate race from the bosom of indolence and voluptuousness:

nals, to the rough and stormy ages of our Henrys and Edwards, I shall keep
to

ness: they tremble at the very “din of war’s alarms;” they shrink from noble danger, even when they are called to defend the great cause of religion and virtue, and only live to practise unworthy pleasures, and wallow in the herd of Circe. And this illustrious country, instead of being the happy parent of heroes, philosophers, and poets, is now the ignoble seat of “pimps, parasites, fidlers, and buffoons;” and, instead of illuminating the world by the rays of science, or polishing it by elegant learning, it now only vomits its scum over the other parts of Europe, to corrupt, by its Capuan arts, the hardy progeny of northern climes. Such are the effects of vice upon the human character!

The dissolute morals of the French we have already noticed. How vain and chimerical, then, is it to suppose that a people in this state of society can form a Republic! It is impossible; it is a solecism in politics to imagine that a nation, as pro-

to more modern times, and select a few illustrious characters, who are now no more,

fligate and abandoned as the Romans were in the times of Tiberius or Caligula, can possess that kind of government, the essence of which is temperance and virtue. The disinterestedness and purity of morals necessary to constitute and preserve a Republic, cannot exist among a people whose insatiable desires and libertine principles are only fit for the court of Sardanapalus. Public virtue, therefore, can hardly be expected in a nation where every individual is entirely devoted to his self-interest and his pleasures. It is the nature of vice to make a man a slave; and it is as impossible, in my opinion, to form a Republic out of the present French as to build a ship capable to brave the dangers of the sea, out of the most contaminated materials; and the government of their country, in the state of society to which they are advanced, notwithstanding their disgusting declamations and hypocritical assertions, will, most probably, end in a military despotism. The countries which I have just enumerated are the places, in modern times, where
Luxury

more, in whom purity of morals and greatness of talents were happily united. I am unacquainted with the language of adulation; but here I may freely praise departed merit, for I admire genius, and adore virtue. We need only, then, mention the great names of *Chatham (a)*, *Lyttelton (b)*, *Saville (c)*, and *Burke (d)*, to hold up to our contemplation

Luxury has made the greatest ravages; and I am sorry to add, that there are few states in Europe where her baleful effects are not severely felt: and whoever wishes to contemplate a nation in its progressive or youthful state, must direct his view to North America, as most of the countries on this side of the Atlantic begin to put on the broken appearance of age.

(a) The late Lord Chatham, one of the greatest men that this country has produced—*magnum et venerabile nomen!*—He was a splendid orb in the political world, and diffused strength and energy into

templation human nature in the most sublime point of view. These illustrious
men,

into every department of the state. He united every mental and moral quality which captivate and astonish mankind: courage, eloquence, genius, and virtue. All his views were grand and sublime; noble in his designs, and prompt and bold in the execution of them beyond most other mortals—*λεγειν και πρασειν δυνατωτατος*. In the majesty of his diction, gracefulness of action, and warmth of imagination, as well as in the purity and disinterestedness of his principles, he resembled Pericles, to whom the Athenian audience listened with so much rapture and delight.

(b) The first Lord Lyttelton.—Piety in him had one of her greatest supports, Virtue a firm friend, and Literature a munificent patron.

The genuine glow of patriotism warmed the breast of this amiable man. Our constitution, all venerable and hoary, and enriched with the wisdom of ages, was as dear to him as his life; he

men, whom the British senate and the British nation long considered as their glory

loved his country, and was profoundly acquainted with her wise laws and liberal establishments, which he strenuously supported by his parliamentary conduct, which was ever open, manly, candid, and independent. The private character of this accomplished nobleman was also most amiable.

He was generous, courteous, and humane: he was peculiarly dear to the Muses; and some of their most elegant votaries were among the number of his most intimate friends, and frequently graced his delightful rural retreat by their all-cheering presence.

Who has not heard of the bowers, and groves, and sylvan beauties, of charming Hagley? equal in fame to Arpinum and Tusculum, by

“ God-like poets venerable made.”

POPE.

(c) Sir George Saville, whose memory must still live in the breast of every lover of his country.

He

glory and their pride, whose eloquence equalled the greatest orators of antiquity,

He was endowed with every amiable virtue and elegant accomplishment which can adorn the Christian and the philosopher. His political integrity and wisdom were held in so high an estimation, that his very name almost gave a sanction to every measure which he proposed in Parliament. Aristides and Phocion were not more inflexibly just, nor more upright in their wishes for the common weal. No man had ever more personal influence in the British Senate, nor more the love of the people, than this most singular and amiable man, merely from the known worth and excellence of his character. The private virtues of this Christian hero are also most lovely to contemplate.

His fortune, though it exceeded twenty thousand pounds a-year, and, as one of his illustrious friends has observed, “without any tax from luxury or vanity, was too scanty for the bounty and beneficence of his mind.” No man, perhaps, in any age or nation, ever gave away more money
in

quity, and whose virtues the most amiable sage, were withal of manners simple and

in acts of charity than Sir George Saville. The genius and spirit of Christianity were illustrated, in all their force, in the amiable tenor of his life. The miserable and the afflicted were sure to find in him a comforter and a friend. How often were the tears of the widow and the orphan solaced and relieved by his compassionate condolence and generous bounty! But the private and silent acts of his delicate benevolence can only be known by the objects which he raised from penury, and that Great Being whom he so faithfully served and adored. Ye in whom the gripe of avarice has almost extinguished every generous feeling, and ye who idly squander away your wealth in the giddy ring of pleasure, or in the orgies of debauch, look here, and behold the beauty of virtue, and blush at the unworthiness of your own vicious and despicable lives!

(d) The Right Honourable Edmund Burke.—
No nation, perhaps, was ever under greater obligations

and plain. When the honourable duty of serving their country in the senate
was

gations to any individual than this country is to this illustrious man. He, with the eagle eyes of genius, foresaw, at an early period, the calamities which threatened the civilized world; and he endeavoured to rouse Europe to a proper sense of the impending dangers to which she was exposed. He, in particular, awakened England from her dangerous dream of security when Treason was brooding over her bloody plots, and assassins ready to turn their parricide hands upon their country.

The intellectual powers of Edmund Burke were, indeed, so singular and so superior, they stand so proudly alone, and tower so high above any other character, either in ancient or modern times, that they can hardly be compared or contrasted with those of any other person. I have always considered him as a phenomenon in the intellectual world. The extent and vigour of his capacious mind seemed to embrace the whole circle of human knowledge. All that variety of learning, strength
of

was over, they never joined the dissipated herd; but, like the great fages
of

of judgment, and felicity of fancy, which Tully requires in the perfect orator, were in him completely united.

Nature endowed him with most of her dearest and most precious gifts, and they were enriched and polished by all the refinements of science and of art. Though Genius, with all her luxuriant graces, generally predominated, and beamed resplendent in his divine compositions, his mind was also profound, logical, and acute, as well as vast and expansive. The powers of Burke had the magic force to exalt our minds to grand objects, to make us nobly indignant against vice, to be in love with virtue, and to adore our wise Constitution, and her humane and benevolent laws. His oratory was of every kind, equally excellent in the sublime and in the pathetic.

It sometimes resembled the impetuous torrent, which rushes headlong from the mountain's brow, carrying every thing before it with irresistible force;

of ancient Rome, they withdrew to rural retirement, to practise generous

force; at others, it was a rich and golden stream, rolling soft persuasion, charming the ear, and moving the heart. He, above all orators, was the man to rouse, to animate, to delight, to instruct, to captivate, and to persuade; and the various species and characters of eloquence enumerated by Quintilian, and which are only found scattered over society in different individuals, were all united in Mr. Burke, and formed one grand and brilliant assemblage.—Such were the admirable talents of this great benefactor of mankind; and, what was of more importance to himself and to his country, the religious and moral character of this accomplished man was as pure and sincere as his talents were great and sublime.

Let, then, the young academic, let the rising hopes of the nation, give days and nights to the pages of Burke, and endeavour to imbibe a portion of the sacred fire, and the pure virtues which animated the breast of this distinguished senator, the delight and glory of our age.

hospitallity, and to diffuse happiness around their neighbourhood. Amiable; yet dignified simplicity presided at their board; and their retreats were the seats of virtue, adorned by elegant literature and true philosophy. Here, then, are glorious models for imitation! and as the young artist with enthusiasm studies the precious remains of Grecian sculpture, the glorious antique, to fill his mind with sublime ideas of physical greatness, and with the harmony of proportion; so let the young statesman contemplate the lives and actions of those great ornaments of mankind, and imbibe a true taste for moral beauty and moral grace. For, when the mind of man is truly inspired with the love of noble objects and great pursuits, it rises superior to low sentiments and vicious

pleasures; and, like the famed Alcides, only keeps the path of virtue*. And though Britannia should have even passed her meridian of glory, and were verging to her wane; yet, if we can inspire the rising generation with a sense of real magnanimity, and with an abhorrence of the impious opinions and false principles of atheists jacobins and democrats, so destructive and hostile to our public and private happiness, we shall, at least, have the soothing consolation of retarding her fall, and of prolonging the mild and genial reign of religion and virtue. This is the great business of education;

Et potiores

Herculis ærumnas credat, sævosque labores,
Et Venere, & cenis & pluma Sardanapali.

D. J. JUV. SAT. IO, LIB. 14.

I shall,

I shall, therefore, in the ensuing chapter, make a few observations upon that important subject, with which I shall conclude this Dissertation.

CHAPTER IV.

IT has been often observed by philosophers and moralists, and by every one who has devoted any attention to the study of human nature, that the impressions and sentiments which we imbibe in early youth are of the greatest importance to ourselves and to society, as it is from them alone that our subsequent conduct is in a great measure regulated and directed.—We come into the world helpless, ignorant, and weak; but we are endowed by our benevolent Creator with a capability of improvement, with the seeds of talents and of virtues ready to blossom, and to produce
delight-

delightful fruit, if they are fostered and cherished by a good education. We have no innate ideas, as that great philosopher* has observed who threw so much light over the intellectual world when every thing was overshadowed with thick darkness.

Our mind is, therefore, like a *carte-blanche*, ever ready to receive impressions and characters of every kind; it may be deformed and darkened by the shades of vice, or adorned and embellished by the beautiful illuminations of virtue. But there are, it may be said, some few of a happier mould, of a more delicate organization, who antecedently, and independent of all instruction, are more disposed to virtue

* Locke.

than others; that, previous to education, “ they are more feelingly alive to each fine impulse;” that they cannot see distress without “ wiping away the tear which sacred pity had engendered;” and that Genius, with all her inspiration, glows in their breasts.

In some rare instances, perhaps, we may be led to believe that there are a few favourites of Nature, who are born to be good and great, paramount to common aids; but, in general, the principles and manners of the *man* almost wholly depend upon the education of the *boy*. Our moral and intellectual *diathesis*, or habit, is entirely formed from what we hear, and see, and read*.

The

* The ancient Romans were very attentive to the manners of their youth; and they took particular

The inexperience of youth, therefore, the peculiar flexibility of the tender

ticular care to prevent them from seeing or hearing any thing which might, in the smallest degree, affect their *modesty*: they seemed, indeed, uncommonly solicitous to preserve this beautiful virtue in all its purity and delicacy.—“*Maximaque dabitur opera, ne quid insolens aut perniciosum, neve quicquam quod minus esset decorum, coram infante pater faceret aut diceret: neve vir mali exempli qui fervilibus vitiis imbueret animos, in convictu esset: magni enim interest, quos quisque audiat domi, quibuscum loquatur puer.*”

ALEX. AB ALEXANDRO, LIB. 2.

If we admire this excellent precaution of the Romans in guarding their children from the bad effects of low and vicious society, we must perceive the evil tendency of trusting our children so much to the care and management of servants, which is now so prevalent in this country. Meanness and depravity of morals are frequently the consequence of it. How often lying, scandal, and

der mind, naturally open to every impression, can only be preserved from
vice

low intrigue, are learned by our ingenuous youth from their being suffered to remain too long in nurseries and in servants' halls, is well known, and has been frequently complained of. But it is a most pernicious custom: every word and action, uttered or committed before a child, should be as decorous and pure as if we were in the presence of the vestal virgins. The great satyrift, whose writings so often abound with noble sentiments, has strongly recommended to us the necessity of protecting our youth from the taint of vitious society in these solemn and animated lines :

“ Nil dictu fœdum, visuque hæc liminia tangat,
Intra quæ puer est. Procul hinc, procul inde puellæ
Leonum, et cantus pernoctantis parasiti.

Maxima debetur puero reverentia. Si quid
Turpe paras, nec tu pueri contemferis annos :
Sed peccaturo obstat tibi filius infans.”

D. JUNII JUVENALIS, SAT. 14, LIB. 5.

The elegant author of the Dialogue on the Corruption of Eloquence attributes the prevailing
custom

vice by being imbued and strengthened with sound principles of virtue and holiness. And this great work is to be commenced at a very early period of life; for the principles which we embrace, and the habits we contract, even in childhood, are difficult to be eradicated; but as we advance a little further in our course, and as our observations enlarge, and our mental faculties begin more and more to expand, the sentiments that we then adopt, and the attachments that we make, have such a degree of influence upon us, that our

custom of committing children to the care of menial and profligate servants, to be one of the causes of the depravity of the taste, as well as of the morals, of the Roman youth. The sublime Longinus was of the same opinion.—See the conclusion of his noble Treatise.

character

character is almost entirely formed upon them. The impression, at least, which is now given, whether on the side of virtue or of vice, is often decisive, and generally predominates during the remaining part of our life; and, when the mind has once got its bias, it is a most arduous task to draw it to a contrary direction. The vast importance, therefore, of attending diligently to the formation of the mind and principles of the juvenile part of the nation, is highly expedient in all places and in all times, but particularly in the present, in order to resist that spirit of scepticism and levity which so universally prevails. And while the fashionable philosophers of the day, the *illuminated* and *illuminating* societies, are so industrious in spreading their presumptuous dogmas and fatal errors to deceive and to corrupt

rupt

rupt the world, it is particularly incumbent upon every one within his sphere of action, and so far as he has influence or power, to watch over the morals of the rising generation with extreme solicitude, and endeavour to defend them from the dangerous opinions of the enemies of our faith. Let us, then, exert ourselves to direct them to true wisdom; to “*the wisdom which is from above.*”

Now, in order to lay a proper foundation for all good qualities and virtues, whether moral, social, or political, the first step is, to be impressed with a due sense of religion, to be thoroughly acquainted with our duty to God, which is the root from which all the other duties are derived. This amiable and most bounden duty, which we owe to the bene-

benevolent and mighty Lord of heaven and earth, is the sacred source from which all the virtues flow. It is the basis upon which all the massy pillars of civil society are securely founded. “Remember now thy Creator,” says a sacred writer, “in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them,” Ecclesiastes xii. 1.

The wisdom and expediency of this admonition are so evident, that every man, in his serious moments of reflection, must accede to it: for, to remember our Creator in the days of our youth, is to secure ourselves from the seduction of sin and vice, and to lay a foundation for future rectitude of character. In youth, the age of levity and thoughtlessness, when the human breast

is liable to be assailed by every passion, when Reason's tranquil dictates are seldom heard amidst the various claims which then disturb the mind, what kind of conduct can be expected without the sacred aid and influence of religion? When weak mortals, in any period of life, are left to themselves, unsupported and undirected by those pure and holy precepts which our merciful Creator has given us out of pity to our frailty as laws and rules of conduct, they often degenerate into a state of wickedness, and sink into misery. But in the spring of life, when destitute of all experience, and peculiarly liable to be seduced by the pomps and vanities of the world, we are doubly exposed to danger, if we are not armed with the sacred and invulnerable shield of religion, which
alone

alone can protect us from the various perils to which we are then obnoxious. And when the human mind is elevated and purified by true religion, it naturally soars to worthy pursuits, and fixes its attention upon noble objects. It attains a degree of dignity and strength which renders it superior to the vulgar and profligate courses of the sensualist, and impervious to the blandishments and seductions which vice is ever throwing in the way to allure the young from the rigid and honourable path of virtue.

The amiable and noble duties, indeed, of our heavenly Religion, all her pure and divine precepts, have a direct tendency to produce elevation of character, greatness of mind, and sensibility of heart. These are the blessed fruits

and glorious characteristics of true Christianity. When, therefore, the young and the inexperienced are happily inspired with the love of piety and virtue, when the whole tenor of their actions and conduct is actuated by the unerring laws of God, their character attains a degree of strength beyond their years; their principles become fixed and certain, and they are then enabled to resist all the sophistry of scepticism, and the temptations of vice. But if, instead of becoming early acquainted with those rules of right conduct which are only derived from religion, and from the serious study of the Holy Scriptures, which were given to us for our information and instruction, a man should neglect them, and spend his youth in gross religious ignorance, and rush into active life without

one pious or virtuous precept to fix his principles and influence his actions, what can be expected from such a being but folly and profligacy*? If he is destined

* In ages of great refinement, the young are generally introduced into the world at too early a period of life, as every thing then is forced, unnatural, and premature. That amiable diffidence and modesty, which always prevail in virtuous societies, and which spread so many charms over that interesting time of our existence, and are generally considered as the most attractive graces of youth, are seldom to be seen in luxurious ages. The *sera juvenum venus, eoque inexhausta pubertas*, which the philosophical historian observed and admired among the ancient Germans, is not to be found in a voluptuous nation. The youth of a dissipated age are forward, flippant, and assuming, and early initiated into all the habits of luxury and indulgence. He *creeps in purple*, says the sage Quintillian; what, therefore, can we expect in manhood? The self-sufficient school-boy and the pert miss are now introduced into the *beau monde* so early, that they become

destined to move in the higher spheres of life, and wild ambition takes possession

become old in the ring of pleasure before they are five and twenty. But, perhaps, there is nothing more injurious to physical strength and moral purity than this pernicious practice; for the constitution is broken and debilitated by the vigils of dissipation before it is properly established; and habits of levity and debauchery are contracted at a time of life when the mind should be accustomed to self-denial and temperance, and strengthened by the precepts and practice of virtue. But a licentious boy, indulged and pampered by luxury, flattered by obsequiousness, elated by wealth, and corrupted and rendered insolent by sycophants and panders, would be a Nero or a Caligula, if he had power; but if that power is fortunately circumscribed within a narrower sphere, he will, in whatever station he is placed, degrade his rank, and become a worthless member of society. You, then, "who bear a father's sacred name," or are the guardians of youth, engrave upon their breasts;

tion of his breast, he will not scruple to commit any act, however criminal,
pro-

at the very dawn of reason, the great principles of religion and virtue, teach them the soft lessons of humanity, awaken their sensibility, let them know what it is “to pity and be pitied,” and save them from the fatal effects of *early dissipation*.

The young men of the present age, though extremely effeminate in many instances, affect in their manner and appearance an uncommon degree of rusticity and carelessness. The bland and amiable manners, and the decorous dress, of the English gentleman, are greatly neglected by the junior part of the community. The *ton* is now to be arrayed like a groom or a huntsman, and to despise most of the precepts of the dancing-master; and the flowing affability and the polite attention, which were formerly the marks of good breeding, are now little cultivated by a certain portion of the fashionable world. Frigid indifference, and a studied and brutal neglect, are now substituted for
those

provided it be conducive to the attainment of his object. He will adopt any means,

those pleasing and social qualities. Whether this is in imitation of the savages of France, who have trampled upon every thing that is dignified and beautiful, as well as upon every religious and moral principle, or whether it may be one of the alarming symptoms of relapsing barbarism, we shall not determine. We shall only observe, that a total inattention to the decencies of external appearance in polished life carries more bad consequences with it than is generally imagined; and this levelling garb and plebeian manners should by no means be adopted by the genteel part of the nation. Dignity of appearance is necessary in the upper ranks of society; it commands respect, and is conducive to proper subordination. The dress of the Roman women was of so much consequence as to call forth the eloquence of Marcus Porcius Cato, that vigilant guardian and intrepid defender of pure manners. Livy has preserved his speech on that occasion. It was pronounced when they demanded the abrogation of the Oppian Law.—

means, however iniquitous and unjust, in order to gain his end, because he is
under

Livy, lib. 34. This great man opposed, with his usual energy, the innovations which they were then about to introduce, as he justly conceived that the consequences flowing from them would be extremely prejudicial to his country. The women at this period became clamorous advocates of luxury, and loudly and importunately demanded the repeal of the sumptuary laws, which had hitherto limited their personal decorations within the bounds of frugality and simplicity. As beauty seldom pleads in vain, their request was granted. The major part of the senate voted in favour of those viragos, who were beginning to commence war against decency, though great Cato thundered in the cause of virtue. The consequences produced by this indulgence were great and important. Valerius Maximus places the æra of luxury with the Romans at the revocation of this law. The modest attire of the Roman matron was then thrown aside for foreign levity and capricious fashions. In-
stead

under no restraint of religion, without which there can be no fixed principle of real honour or true morality.

stead of the coy reserve, and the distant dignity, which were so peculiar to the women of this Republic, they became extravagant and dissipated, fantastic in their dress, and loose in their morals, which contributed in a great degree to corrupt the nation, and to establish the empire of luxury. Let us then, at present, beware of the *Parisian* fashions, for they are the disgusting emblems of a people lost to virtue, and to all the finer sensations of delicacy. The Grecian *Lais*, who threw away the veil of modesty with insolent disdain, is even now exceeded by the impudence and madness of the women of France. But let us guard our *isle* with paternal care from the noxious principles, and manners and modes, of this *Punic race*, which spreads contagion wheresoever it comes, and impoisons every region with its impiety and licentiousness.

How important and necessary it is, therefore, to ourselves, to our connections, and to society at large, to become truly acquainted with our religious duties, and to act under the influence of their divine spirit, must appear sufficiently evident to every one, as the happiness of the individual, and the strength and harmony of civil governments, chiefly depend upon their general prevalence. But it is not a nominal or a superficial degree of Christian knowledge which will form that strength and elevation of character, so as to enable the volatile and the young to resist the various dangers and the splendid seductions of the world.

The great principles of our religion must be engraved upon their minds with infinite care, the charms of virtue are
to

to be held up to their lively imaginations at this age of sensibility, when every thing strikes with peculiar force, and leaves a deep impression, in order to inspire their admiration and their love; they will then form right rules of conduct, and proper sentiments, and consequently be actuated by their influence when they come to act upon the great theatre of the world. A pious education is, therefore, the great point to be attended to in the bringing up of youth, as it is the foundation of every good quality and fixed principle*.

The

* From the complexion of the times, we cannot too strongly inculcate the necessity of a *religious education*; and the parent and the guardian, independent of schools and academies, should pay a particular attention to this great object in *domestic retirement*. The useful sciences and the elegant

The observations which I have just made respecting education are general, and applicable to both sexes; but there

arts, which polish and enlarge the mind, are by no means to be neglected; we rather wish to see them cultivated with success, but still as a secondary concern, and under the guidance of religion. The foundation of a religious and moral education is to be laid *at home*; and, at a proper time, our two illustrious Universities, under whose benign auspices and fostering arms men of genius of every description have arisen, whose writings have instructed and delighted the world, are the proper places for the British youth to complete their studies.

Here the regular attendance of prayers, and the whole spirit of their discipline, conspire to initiate the mind into early habits of piety and devotion; and here, a true knowledge of our constitution, both in church and state, can be best learned, as well as every noble science, and liberal and elegant art.

are a few particulars relative to the education of women, which, from the manners of the age, it may be necessary to notice.

The institutions and usages of modern nations have given a degree of influence to the fair sex, which enable them to make a distinguished figure in society. In the ancient states of Greece and Rome, the women led a very reclusive life; it was mostly spent in domestic retirement, and attending to the duties of a family. But the spirit of gallantry, which the feudal system and chivalry introduced, had a happy tendency to exalt the female character to a proper rank in the scale of society. The ladies were introduced to public assemblies, and mixed in general company, which contributed, in an eminent degree,

gree,

gree, to polish the rudeness of our ancestors, to hasten the return of refinement of manners and liberal politeness.

Nothing, indeed, has so great an influence to inspire delicacy of sentiment, and elegance of manners, as the company and conversation of amiable women.

The society of the two sexes mutually polish and improve each other, and while the women are adorned with modesty, the most enchanting of graces, they will always inspire the men with purity of morals and nobleness of sentiment. And as the *fair* are endowed with every charm to captivate and to persuade, it is of the greatest consequence to the happiness of a nation; that they exert their powerful influence

in

in the cause of virtue. The illustrious Montesquieu, whom I have often quoted, has said in his immortal work, the Spirit of Laws, that when the women become corrupt, the manners of a nation are lost*. It is certain, that they hold a despotic empire over the fashionable world, and give the *ton* to the times. And when they deviate from the natural dignity of their character, from the native dignity of modesty, so commanding yet so amiable, and exhibit to the world nothing but scenes of

* Il y a tant d'imperfections attachées a la perte de la vertu dans les femmes, toute leur ame en est si fort dégradée, ce point principal ôte en fait tomber tant d'autres que l'on peut regarder dans un état populaire l'incontinence publique comme le dernier des malheurs, & la certitude d'un changement dans la constitution.

levity and dissipation, they may be considered as principal instruments in corrupting and ruining a nation. A profligate woman affects the amiable and reflecting moralist with more disgust than a profligate man, as it is more repugnant to that purity and delicacy which is naturally to be expected in the softer sex. Nothing to him is so angelic and lovely as female beauty and virtue, and nothing so hideous and deformed as female depravity and vice. When, therefore, the majority of the women of any country become dissipated, faithless to the marriage vow, rapacious, and vain, we may justly consider the morals of the people to be corrupted in the highest degree. Banish *modesty*, that queen of the virtues, from the earth, and you destroy every sentiment that is noble and pure; without
her

her generous influence and magic refinements, mankind sink into brutes.

The morals and principles of women are, consequently, of the greatest importance to the well-being of a state, as they affect in so great a degree the general manners of the people. And here we must beg leave to observe, that a private education for women is certainly preferable to a public one. They can be better instructed in the great principles of religion and morality, and equally embellished with elegant accomplishments, under the well-regulated roof of an amiable mother, than in the most fashionable boarding-school.

The emulation and energy which a public education inspires, are necessary for the boy, to give him a sufficient
degree

degree of firmness of character, in order to enable him to act his part with courage and manliness on the great stage of the world. But the softer sex, in whom reserve and timidity are virtues, is better educated in the recesses of retirement, surrounded by affectionate parents, ever ready "to teach the young idea how to shoot," and to impress upon the tender breast the purest and most virtuous precepts. Here, female delicacy and native modesty are faithfully preserved; in the public seminary, they are often destroyed by the free-thinking essay, and the licentious novel*.

The

* That class of books, which finds so ready an admittance into the toilet of the ladies, is by no means calculated to give them any useful information. The subject-matter of novels, independent of

The education, therefore, of the two sexes, agreeably to their respective characters, is of equal moment, and too much attention cannot be paid to so great an object of national importance. It is a business of the utmost

of its flimsy texture, and many other exceptions, has a tendency to make women unfit for the duties of real, by holding up to their imaginations visionary and romantic pictures of fictitious life.

The history of the distresses and solitudes of lovers, the caprice of coquettes, and the impudence of fortune-hunters and adventurers, contain few lessons to instruct the mother or the wife. But the modern novel is by no means confined to precepts of gallantry, or apologies for licentiousness; it frequently teems with scepticism and sedition, and may be numbered among the vehicles which are used to convey the sentiments of the enemies of our religion and government, in order to corrupt the manners of the age.

confe-

consequence, indeed, in all times and in all places, but it is particularly incumbent upon us in a back-sliding age, to arm our youth with sound and virtuous principles, in order to counteract the predominant vices of the day, which are of the most fatal and deadly class, and equally hostile to our religion and our morals.

The great legislators and philosophers of antiquity, from whom we may still take some useful lessons, were very attentive to this grand point. They shew us in a striking manner its wonderful effects. The sage Lycurgus formed a nation of heroes from the wholesome severity of his laws, the spirit of which entirely turned upon education. It was the first object of the state. There was, indeed, a degree of austerity and rigour
in

in some of his institutions, very repugnant to many of our most amiable feelings; yet they shew us, at the same time, how much may be done in forming the minds of youth by great attention to early habits. And, notwithstanding the terrific traits which mark the Lacedemonian code of laws, there are many parts of their manners and customs which we cannot but admire. Piety to the gods, reverence for age, contempt of wealth, a decent reserve, obedience, subordination, and temperance, were no where better observed than at Sparta.

And while they practised the excellent precepts of their wise laws, they continued powerful and independent. The Cretans also, from whom Lycurgus borrowed many of his institutions, were

particularly careful in the education of their youth, and solicitous to fill their minds with pious and honourable sentiments.

They taught the young, as *Ælian** informs us, to sing hymns in praise of the gods and of heroes.

The Persians, too, while they continued virtuous, made education one of their principal national concerns.

And the system which they adopted, has been commended by some of the elegant writers of antiquity †.

The great and leading principles of all these institutions and laws, seem to

* *Varia Historiæ*, lib. 2. ch. 35.

† Herodotus and Xenophon.

have been directed to regulate the irregular passions of youth, and to initiate them into early habits of temperance and moderation.

Every wholesome restraint was used to curb the vehemence of desire, and to prevent the practice of licentious indulgencies and effeminate sloth*.

And

* The public amusements of a nation have a considerable influence upon the general manners and taste of the people. But their effects upon the juvenile part of the community are so very important, that they require to be regulated with the greatest circumspection. Dramatic exhibitions are certainly the most noble and rational of our entertainments, and may be productive of the best consequences, and become a school of virtue and sentiment, provided the tragic and comic muse preserve their true dignity. But what can be said in defence of the Opera-house, that *colluvies omnium*

And they endeavoured to represent self-denial, and self-government, as the foundation of heroic virtue.

Honour

gentium et nationum, where scenes are nightly exhibited, which it is impossible for the eye of modesty to behold without a blush. I am a lover of music; I admire that charming art, which if properly cultivated raises the mind to virtue, and melts the heart into benevolence. But why may not an audience be delighted by the sublime and pure pleasures which sweet harmony affords, without being disgusted at the same time by sights of levity and indecency. The performers of the *ballet* have now so far “overstept modesty,” that a gentleman can hardly carry his family to see them, without being often hurt by the extreme indelicacy of their manner. However the fashionable world may commend their elegance, and their grace, they should also consider, that the licentiousness of their attitudes and actions is often such as greatly to affect decency, and, consequently, an offence of a very capital

Honour and distinction, and fame, were the rewards of great and generous actions;

capital kind against our public manners. The voluptuous dances of India, as described by Raynal, and the profane rites of pagan antiquity, where modesty was often so audaciously violated, could not far surpass the indelicate gestures, the studied levity, and the wanton airs of the modern dancers of the Opera-house. Are not such exhibitions hostile, in the highest degree, to that delicacy which is so friendly to every virtue? Are not they calculated to irritate, to inflame, and to corrupt; to taint our British youth, "yet rosed over with the virgin crimson of modesty," and to destroy that immaculate purity of soul, which should be equally unfulfilled by the utterance of obscene words, and the view of unbecoming actions? If we had a magistrate endowed with the authority and powers of a Roman censor, he would certainly prevent the public display of any amusement which had a tendency to vitiate the morals of the nation. This abuse has already attracted the attention of a great

actions; infamy and contempt, of the selfish and the base. They were, consequently, ever soaring to lofty pursuits and great achievements, and their minds were too much exalted to stoop to low passions and vulgar attachments. For there is a degree of greatness and generosity of sentiment, constantly annexed to the practice of temperance and virtue; and selfishness and meanness always haunt the breast of the sensualist.

The former is an intellectual being, whose thoughts ascend upon the wings of contemplation to heaven, and to

and venerable prelate, and the very notice of such a personage, clearly points out the necessity of the managers of this fashionable resort, to attend a little more in their exhibitions to decency and decorum.

heavenly

heavenly objects; the latter, is that carnal man of the earth, that "Passion's slave," abject and prone, who only lives to gratify brutal appetites, low desires, and vitious indulgences. Such were the principles with which the great sages of ancient times endeavoured to impress upon the minds of men, in order to promote private and public happiness. And they succeeded in a wonderful degree, and made a long and honourable stand against those great corrupters of nations and individuals — *wealth* and *luxury*.

If, then, the philosophers and legislators of antiquity, though surrounded by the gloom of paganism, have left us so many beautiful monuments of their honest zeal in the cause of temperance and simplicity, and have so

nobly supported the dignity of virtue, against the encroachments and seductions of vice, shall we, who are illuminated by that divine religion which *brought life and immortality to light*, be indolent and remiss, when the atheists and libertines of the day are incessantly at work, and using every diabolical art, to darken and to deceive the world? No; let the amiable sages of the earth, let the true philosophers of every region, and of every clime, rather unite and consolidate their strength; and under the sacred banner of truth, let them, with firmness and magnanimity, oppose the audacious and malignant opinions of this impious sect, which has equally commenced war against heaven, and against men. Dreadful Pandora, in enmity to mankind, never scattered more dire contagion

gion and disease over the physical, than the French sophists, and their wretched and servile imitators, have lately thrown over the moral world.

“ The times are wild,” and they demand exertions of every kind. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every one who is interested for the dignity and happiness of mankind, to come boldly forth, at this momentous period, and to support the cause of religion and order, against the profane and illiberal attacks of a desperate and presumptuous set of men, alike insolent and vain, and rude despisers of the accumulated wisdom of ages*; who wish to destroy
every

* Most of the writers of the school of infidelity and scepticism, inculcate their dogmas with an air of insolence and authority peculiar to themselves.

From

every sacred and civil institution, to interrupt the progress of useful science
and

From d'Alembert, the once supercilious oracle of Paris, down to the solemn Rousseau, and the witty Voltaire, the same spirit of self-sufficiency and confidence prevails in their writings. But the moderns of the same way of thinking, have gone far beyond them in the impiety of their principles, and in the audacious and brutal manner in which they have advanced them. Though infinitely inferior to their precursors in powers of reasoning, in eloquence, and in wit, they greatly surpass them in profaneness and insolence. The writers of this last sect unite the blasphemy and licentiousness of the Epicurean, to the brutal arrogance of the followers of Diogenes.

Bacon and Boyle, Newton and Locke, those pure intelligences, to whose great names every lover of real science bows with veneration, were, notwithstanding the immensity of their minds, humble and modest; and they communicated their sublime discoveries to the world with extreme diffidence,

and elegant learning, and to embroil every government in all the miseries of anarchy and barbarism. But let us, above all things, labour to save the tender minds of youth from the deadly taint of scepticism and infidelity, and the libertine principles which are now so sedulously inculcated. Let them fly from the contagious breath and the destructive opinions of the modern Epicurean, and fill their breasts with the pure and saving precepts of religion and morality. Let us, then, turn our eyes from the debasing principles of those gloomy materialists, who, cold and insensible to all the delicate and

dence, and with an amiable timidity. But *the modern luminaries*, however flimsy and superficial, are not more intolerable by their impiety and sedition, than by their arrogance and impudence.

refined

refined powers of the mind, which so frequently afford such noble proofs of its celestial origin, are only desirous to *sink us into brutes*; and let us raise our views to heaven, and agreeably to the nature of rational and immortal beings, created after God's image, look forward to better and brighter prospects. Behold divine Christianity, with her soothing and gentle voice, points the way to happiness and immortality! Her all cheering beams, wherever they shed their blessed influence, produce sweet comfort and glorious hope, and elate the breast of man.

May the pure and sublime precepts of this divine religion, which came from heaven in pity to our infirmities, deeply penetrate our hearts, fix our principles, and regulate our conduct.

May

May her mild and gentle spirit inspire us with universal benevolence and love; and may we be admonished, by the history of ancient and modern times, of the fatal effects of impiety and immorality; and be thoroughly convinced, that the only true wisdom is *to fear God, and to keep his commandments*. Then shall Britannia, queen of isles, who now stands forward, erect and intrepid, in that great conflict, which involves in its consequences every thing that is dear to man, while she thus preserves the virtue of her inhabitants, loyal to their sovereign, and faithful to their religion, and to their laws, in spite of the daring and insolent denunciations of her inveterate and relentless foes, be crowned with the brightest success, and gain the grand object for which she so nobly struggles;
and

and thus entitle herself to a beautiful and inestimable triumph over the enemies of the human race.—Divine religion, laurelled science, and all the elegant arts, will bless her glorious efforts; the muses, in their sublimest strain, will immortalize her fame; and humanity, with the tearful eye of gratitude, will acknowledge that it is to her heroic and unparalleled exertions, that civilized and polished Europe, when adorned with every high improvement which can grace and ennoble society, was saved from the desolating arms and flagitious intentions of a perfidious and ferocious race—Of a people so degraded and darkened by vice, as to forsake their God, and to commence war against the universe; of a people who, with impious rage, hate order and beauty, and only study and labour to deform

deform

deform and to destroy, to fill the world with misery and devastation, and to bring back the hideous and gloomy “*reign of Chaos, and of Night.*”

Having omitted to insert the following Note in its proper place, the reader is requested to refer to the words “faithless to the marriage vow*,” in page 140.

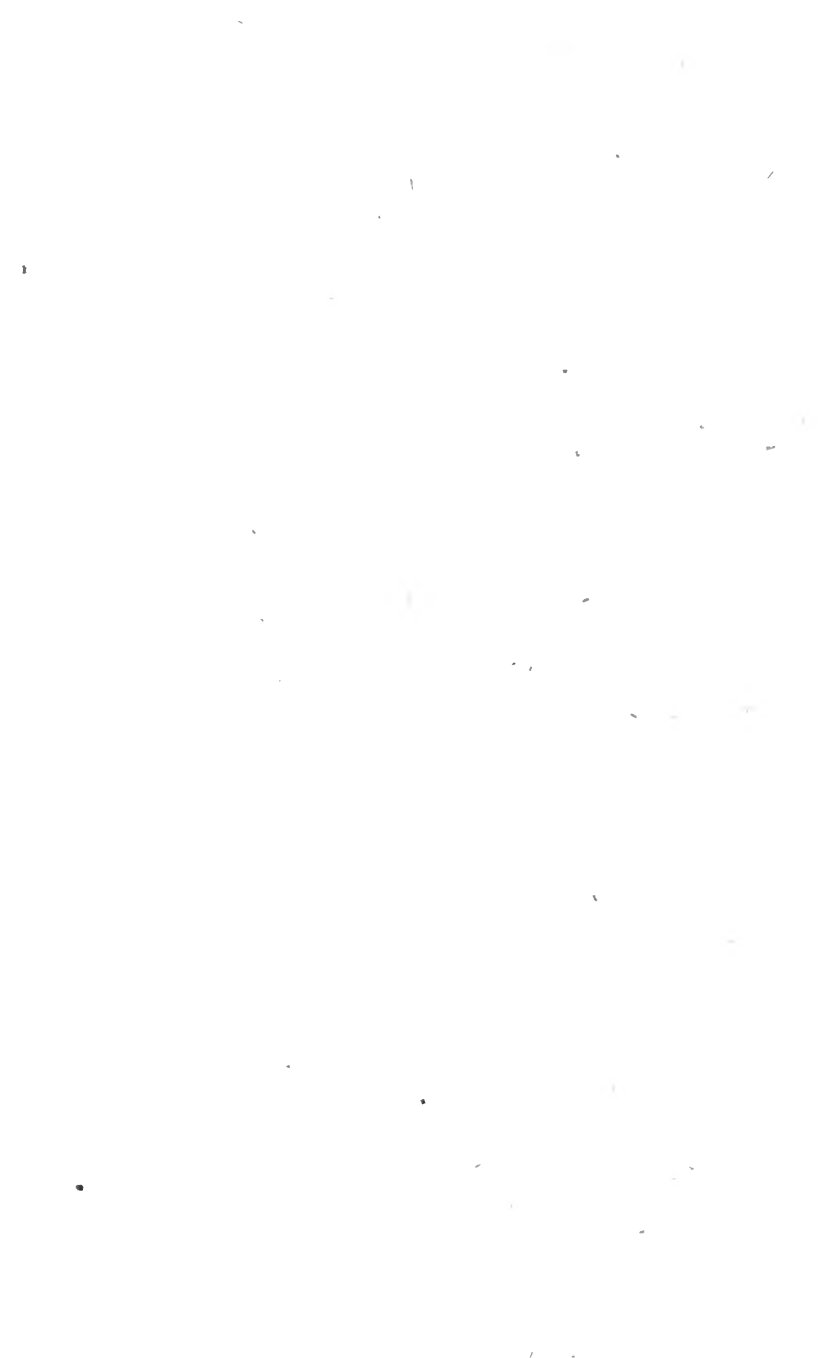
* The President Goguet, in his very learned and ingenious work, on the origin of laws, sciences, and arts, considers the union of one man with one woman as the foundation of society, and as tending, in a high degree, to introduce order, decorum, and civilization, among the human race. This is certainly the first step to soften the fierce and gross nature of unpolished mortals; for the more refined and delicate sensations are excited as soon as you inspire them with a taste for the pure joys of domestic life. From this divine institution, all the delightful and amiable ties of consanguinity and friendship,

friendship, all the relative and social duties, and all our noblest attachments, are derived. It exalts our nature, and honourably distinguishes man from the mere animal herd; it awakens all the finer sympathies of the soul, and is the happy cause of all the beautiful moral effects of love. This sacred rite, therefore, which is productive of so many advantages and blessings to mankind, cannot be too much protected and revered. The violators, then, of this most solemn of all contracts, are to be deemed the most flagitious members of a community; as the most daring offenders both against the laws of God and of man; and whose crimes go directly to the subversion of all morality, to blast the peace of families, and to destroy the very existence of society. All vice leads, in its consequences, to the destruction of nations. But to trample upon the sanctity of marriage, is to tear up every vestige of morals by the roots; it is to poison the purity of our domestic establishments, where Virtue should erect her throne; and it is to undermine that great and capital pillar, upon which all civil polities are principally supported. The base seducer, "*maculosus et fœdissimus*," and the shameless adulterers, dishonoured by illicit love, are, therefore, never

to be shielded from ignominy, contempt, and neglect; but to be considered as the most dangerous enemies to the morals, and, consequently, to the happiness and prosperity of their country.

Those venerable and illustrious characters who now preside over our two high courts of judicature with so much honour to themselves and benefit to their country, and whose virtues even adorn their exalted station, use every exertion in their power to discountenance connubial infidelity and seduction, and to prevent their fatal prevalence. And we ardently hope, that the sentiments and decisions of those faithful guardians of our morals and our laws, aided by the adoption of a measure, which is now under the consideration of the Legislature, for prohibiting the subsequent union of the offending parties in wedlock, will awe the audacious insulters of the most honourable and valuable of institutions, and bring them to a proper sense of the enormity of violating those great and important duties of society.

THE END.

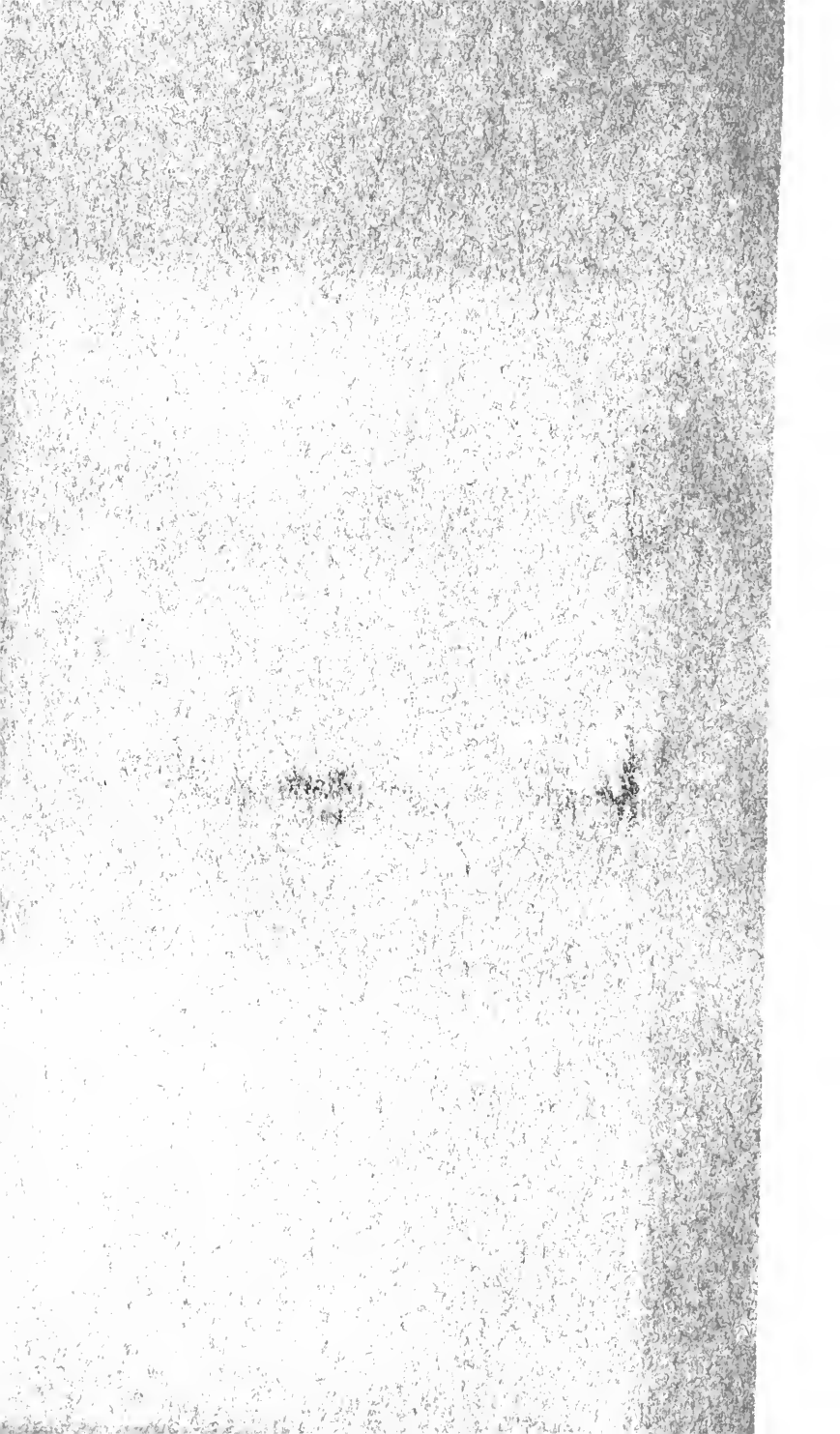


ERRATA.

- Page 5, line 13, for *wonderous*, read wondrous.
11, 16, for *downfall*, read downfal.
45, 16, for *excentricities*, read eccentricities.
88, 15, for *quæ*, read qua.
88, 15, for *cerrumpuntur*, read corrumpimur.







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