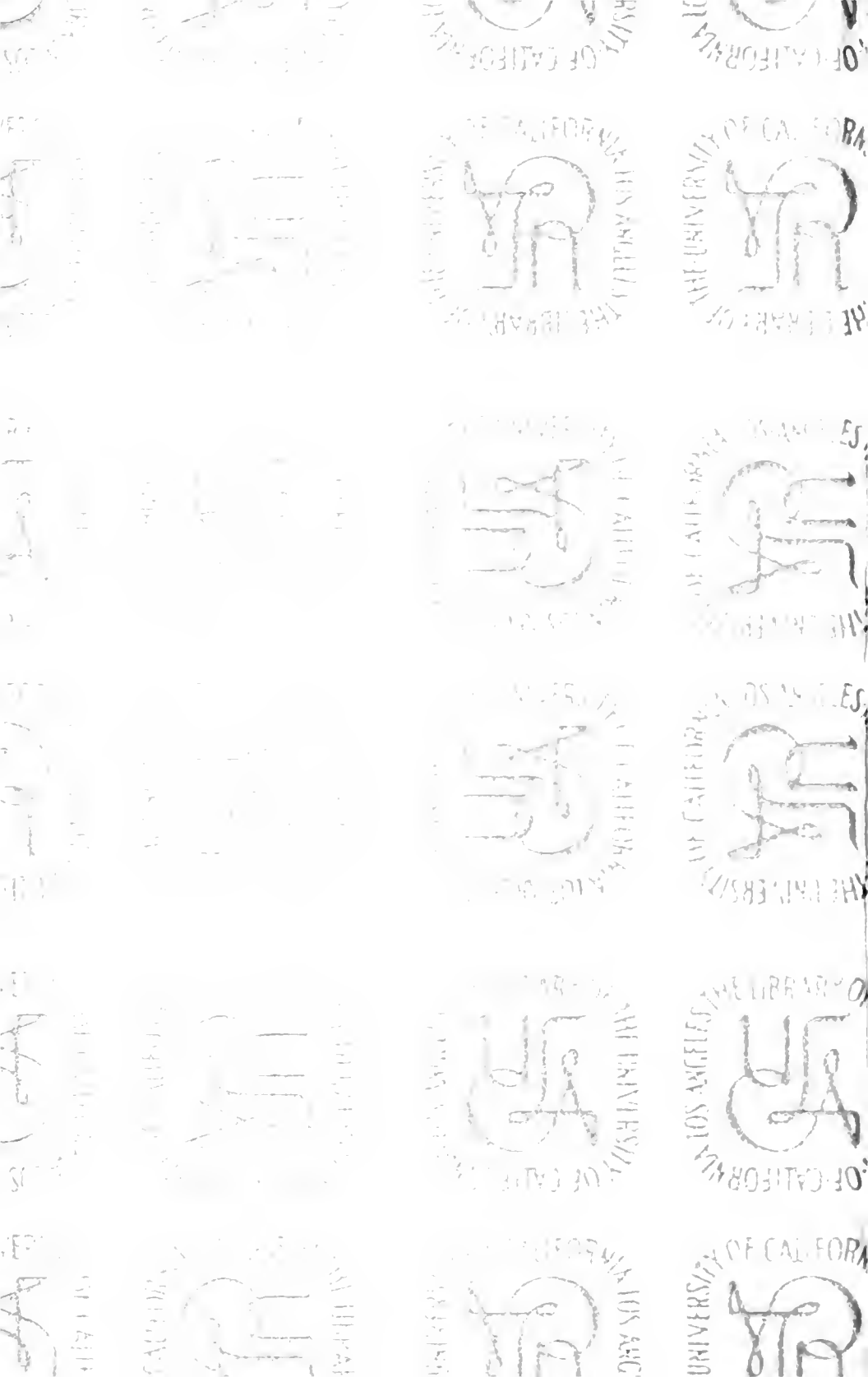


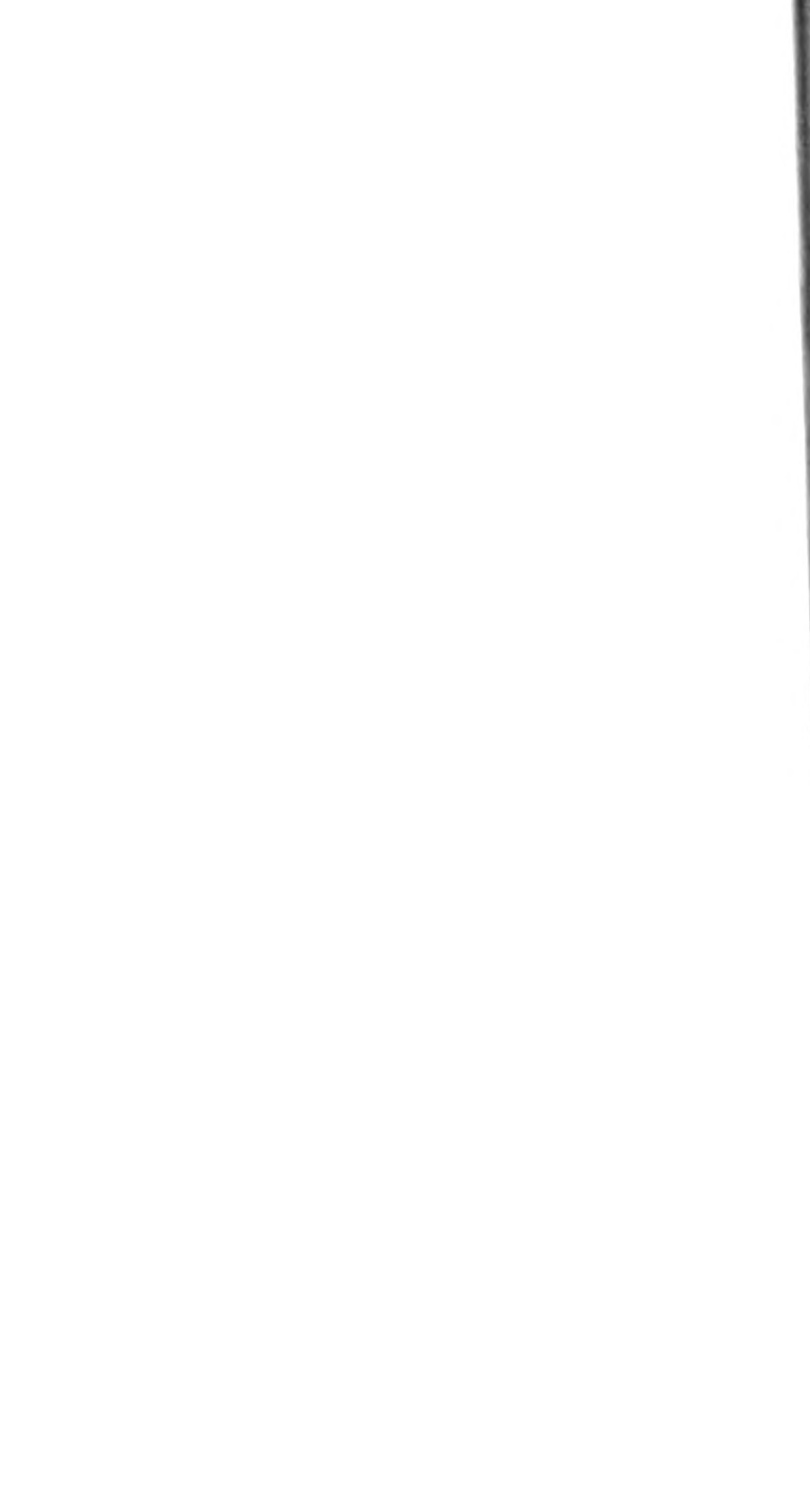
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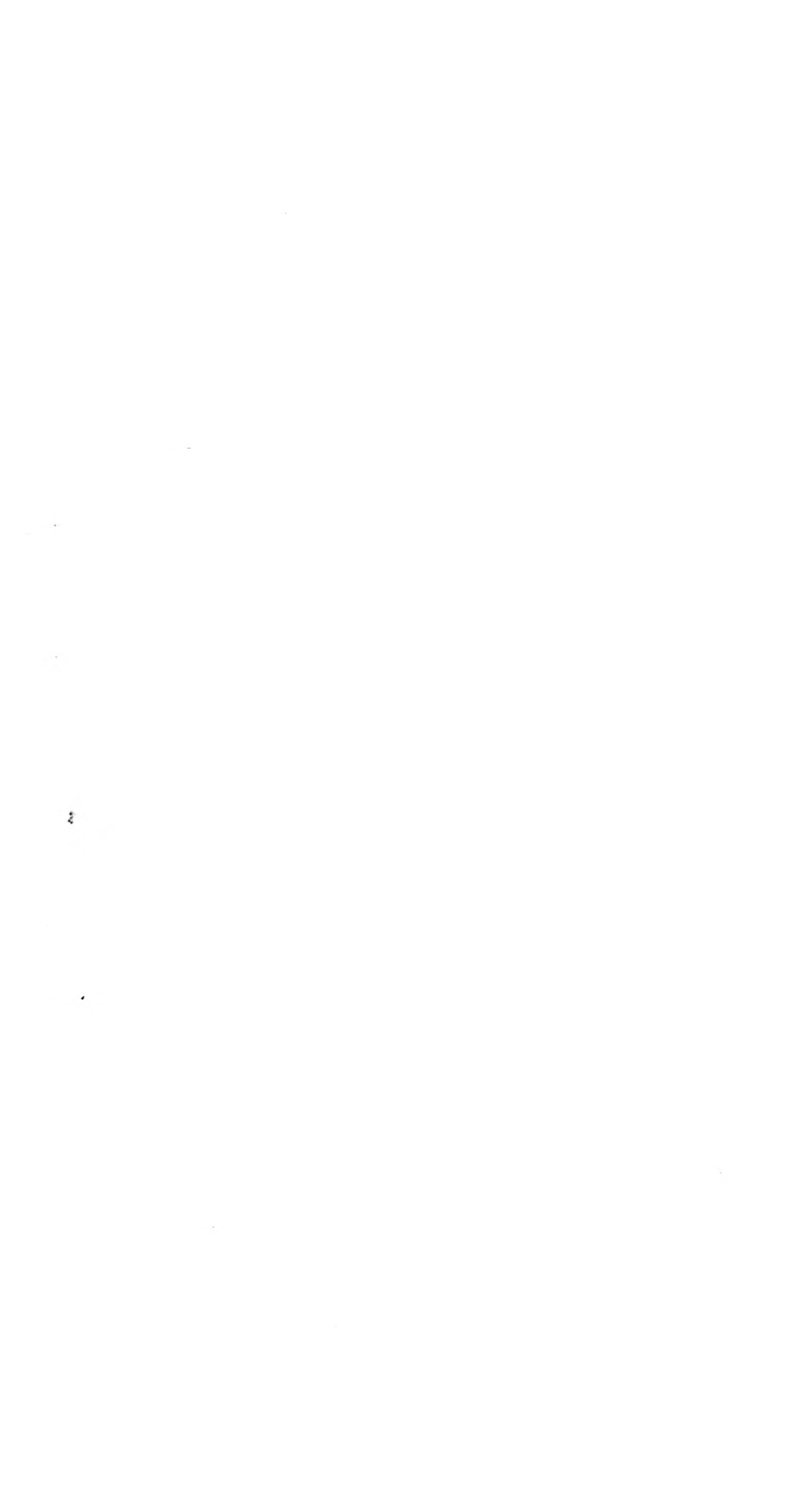
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AN
ESSAY
ON
M A N.



FRONTISPIECE.



Drawn by T. Stothard R.S.A.

Engraved by T. Parker

*But thanks, admitted to that equal Sky,
His faithful Dog shall bear him Company.
Ep. l. Lines III, 112.*

Published March 1. 1797, by Cadell and Davies Strand.

AN
2 E S S A Y
ON
M A N.

BY
ALEXANDER POPE, Esq.

A NEW EDITION.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
A CRITICAL ESSAY,
BY J. AIKIN, M. D.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, JUN. AND W. DAVIES,
(SUCCESSORS TO MR. CADELL), STRAND.

1796.



OBSERVATIONS

ON

P O P E ' s

E S S A Y O N M A N.

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1796

OF the poems of POPE, none perhaps is more celebrated in popular fame, none has afforded more passages for storing in the memory, and applying on common occasions, than the *ESSAY ON MAN*. It cannot, therefore, be an uninteresting topic, to enquire what has given it such a share of the public approbation; and how its author has contrived to render it at the same time the favourite of the graver part, and the admiration of the more polished, of his readers.

This work is by the writer himself represented as a *short system of ethics*, which he might as well have composed in prose as in verse, had he not preferred the latter for two reasons ;—one, that principles and maxims when verified are more impressivè, and adhere more firmly in the memory ; the other, that he was able to express himself with more brevity in verse than in prose. With respect, then, to the subject itself, it appears that he did not select it on account of any peculiar fitness he discerned in it to become the ground-work of a poem ; but that, having chosen it for another reason, he gave it the cloathing of verse, as in his opinion the most advantageous. And this representation nearly coincides with the received fact, that the work was suggested to him by his friend, Lord BOLINGBROKE,

who sketched out the plan, and furnished most of the materials, with the intention of ushering into the world a system of his own, decorated with the poetry of POPE. BOLINGBROKE had himself sufficient vigour of imagination and brilliancy of style to have written a prose essay which might engage the attention of persons fond of moral and philosophical speculation; but by judiciously borrowing the Muse of POPE, he has diffused his sentiments on these topics through all classes and ages of English literature; has made them familiar to our early and our mature conceptions; and stamped them in indelible characters on the language of the country. This conversion of a dry and argumentative subject into a splendid and popular one, is a miracle of the poetic art; and an enquiry

into the means by which it has been effected will probably go far into the elucidation of that *essential character* of poetical composition which distinguishes it from prose.

On taking a survey of the *ESSAY ON MAN* for the purpose of marking and arranging its most striking passages, it will probably be found that they are reducible to three principal heads. 1st. A maxim, proposition, or sentence often occurs, presented in the naked simplicity of philosophical language, but so centered by nervous brevity, and rounded by the harmonious structure of the verse, that it sinks into the mind with the same kind of force that a weighty and polished ball penetrates solid matter. It would be easy from every epistle to adduce examples of this excellence. Thus, speaking of the Deity, he says,

To him no high, no low, no great, no small ;

He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all :

Of Man ;

The glory, jest, and riddle of the world :

Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err :

Of Providence ;

All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee ;

All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see ;

All Discord, Harmony not understood ;

All partial Evil, universal Good.

In this style most of the purely argumentative parts are written ; and so superior was POPE to all other authors, whether in verse or prose, in this respect, that his sincere friend and admirer, SWIFT, selects this faculty as his distinguishing excellence :

When POPE can in one couplet fix

More sense than I can do in six ;

yet SWIFT himself was by no means a feeble or prolix writer. Now, as nothing comes more home to the minds of men in general, or is more universally congenial to the taste of readers, than a moral sentiment or religious truth forcibly and clearly expressed, it is probably to the copious admixture of passages of this kind that the *ESSAY ON MAN* is indebted for the greatest part of its popularity. These are the clauses of sterling weight and effect, which impress those who are little disposed to enter into a train of argumentation, or who have little sensibility to poetic beauties.

But the mere faculty of compressing sense into a small compass and putting it into harmonious measure, admirable as it is for the moral writer, goes but a short way in forming the poet. For this last character POPE is greatly indebted, 2dly, to

that splendor of diction, which illuminates an intellectual truth by associating it with some kindred sensible object of the sublime or beautiful class. It is this which gives life and motion to language; and superadds to its simple purpose of conveying the requisite ideas, that of gratifying the imagination with a rapid succession of striking figures. Scarcely any writer has surpassed POPE in this quality, which is indeed of the very essence of poetry. He studied it with all the assiduity of a professor of his art; and his critics and annotators have brought to light wonderful proofs of his attention to enrich his language with the spoils of all ages and countries. It is not easy to open this work at a single page which will not furnish examples of just and noble expressions of the figurative kind, serving to impart that vivid colouring to his diction which renders it so

enchancing to the lover of poetry. Two or three examples will serve to illustrate my meaning.

Who knows but he, whose *hand* the lightning forms,
Who *heaves* old Ocean, and who *wings* the storms,
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or *turns* young Ammon *loose* to *scourge* mankind.

Let Earth *unbalanc'd* from her orbit *fly*,
Planets and suns *run lawless* thro' the sky,
Let ruling angels from their spheres be *hurl'd*,
Being on being *wreck'd*, and world on world.

For him alone Hope leads from goal to goal,
And *opens* still, and *opens* on his soul ;
Till *lengthen'd on* to Faith, and unconfin'd,
It *pours* the bliss that fills up all the mind.

Oh while along the *stream* of Time thy name
Expanded flies, and *gathers* all its fame,
Say, shall my *little bark* attendant fail,
Pursue the *triumph*, and *partake* the *gale* ?

It may be presumed unnecessary to point out more particularly the force of these *verba ardentia*, these “thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,” to any one capable of relishing true poetry.

A third expedient employed by POPE to diversify and enliven his subject, is the introduction of little pictures and incidents by way of illustration, which are generally conceived with great happiness, and wrought with peculiar care. Of this kind is, the sportive lamb unconscious of his approaching fate ; the Indian savage indulging his humble expectations

of future existence; the enumeration by pride of the benefits of nature designed for Man; the progress of superstition; and the historical allusions to the vanity of human grandeur. These form an agreeable relief to the train of precept or argument, and essentially add to the *poetical* character of the work.

It is in this manner that an ethical treatise, in its transmission from the mind of a philosopher to that of a poet, has assumed a new dress, and has accommodated itself to a new set of readers; nor, perhaps, does the history of the art of poetry afford a clearer example of its powers and limits. Its *powers* have been, to render a subject, involved in system and argument, not only popular and familiar, but prolific of sublime and beautiful passages which are

become interwoven into the very body of national literature, and have given a tinge to national opinion; and after such a proof of ability, if POPE'S title to the honours of a poet of the very first order be disputed, it can only be by those who have framed an artificial classification of poetic merits, in which they have placed at the head of the scale those efforts of pure imagination which are scarcely compatible with the noblest exertions of the understanding. The *limits* of the art, however, are almost as strongly marked in this performance, as its powers; for it is to a too pertinacious attempt of arguing in verse, and displaying all the acuteness of a philosophical disputant, that may be attributed the many prosaic lines, mean expressions, inaccuracies of construction, and defects in the mechanism of verifica-

tion, which render this piece but an unfavourable specimen of that high polish and correctness which are supposed peculiarly to characterise the author, and which in some of his poems he has almost uniformly exhibited. Indeed, there are sufficient tokens that the work was undertaken as a task—that the writer was occasionally tired or bewildered in following his argument—and that the poet and system-builder did not always happily draw together; but these remarks lead to the consideration of another topic, the proper subject or matter of this Essay.

Concerning the *system of ethics* contained in the ESSAY ON MAN, much has been written; and in particular, the learned Prelate who undertook the office of Editor to POPE'S miscellaneous works has

bestowed much pains upon it in the elaborate notes and commentary accompanying the text. But erudition and acuteness are not the only requisites of a good commentator. That conformity of sentiment which enables him fully to enter into the intention of his author, and that fairness of disposition which places him above every wish of disguising or misrepresenting it, are qualifications not less essential. In these points it is no breach of candour to affirm (since the public voice has awarded the sentence) that Dr. WARBURTON has in various of his critical labours shewn himself extremely defective; and perhaps in none more than in those he has expended upon this performance; his manifest purposes in which have been, to give it a systematic perfection that it does not possess, to conceal as much as possi-

ble the suspicious source whence the author derived his leading ideas, and to reduce the whole to the standard of moral orthodoxy. So much is the sense of the poet strained and warped by these processes of his commentator, that it is scarcely possible in many places to enter into his real meaning, without laying aside the commentary, and letting the text speak for itself.

Somewhat, however, of an analytical view of the subject and reasoning, connected by such a chain of method as is clearly deducible from the work itself, cannot but be useful by way of preparing the reader, who perhaps may be little conversant with argumentative topics, for comprehending it as a whole. And as it is not intended that this edition should be accompanied with the usual illuf-

trative appendages, I shall endeavour to supply their place by a prefatory sketch of the contents, drawn up with as much brevity as is consistent with the purpose in view.

The ESSAY ON MAN is divided into four epistles. Of these, the first peculiarly treats of Man with respect to the place he holds in the universe; and the principal topic is the refutation of all objections against the wisdom and benevolence of that providence which placed him here, derived from the weakness and imperfection of his nature. After a dignified exordium, in which the poet invites his friend to accompany him in a survey of the whole "scene of Man," with the final intention of justifying the ways of God towards him, (which is to be regarded as the general subject of the entire

Effay)—he proceeds to some remarks on the impossibility of comprehending, with the limited faculties of the human mind, the plan of Deity in framing the system of the universe; and he sets in strong contrast the omniscience of the Creator against the ignorance of the creature. Yet, in laying it down as a principle, that “we can reason only “from what we know,” he seems to invalidate some of his own conjectural arguments concerning ~~that order of the universe which is to account for apparent partial defects.~~ The leading idea running through this book, is that of a *scale of beings*, rising in due gradation one above another, all bearing a relation to the great whole, and each endowed with the faculties proper for its station. In such a scale, there must be such

a being as Man ; and there is, therefore, no more reason to wonder that he is not elevated higher, than that he is raised so high. That he is best fitted for the place he occupies, is attempted to be shewn by various striking observations ; and much lively correction is bestowed upon that pride which inclines us to believe the whole creation made for our use alone, and leads us rather to form vain wishes for unattainable perfections, than to accommodate ourselves to our present lot. After a very noble description of the divine attributes, and an exhortation to pious trust in an over-ruling Providence, the book concludes with asserting as a clear deduction from the whole, the great axiom that *whatever is, is right.* That this conclusion is strictly warranted by the premises, and that the mode of proof is the

best that could be devised in point of cogency and arrangement, will probably be called in question by logical reasoners; but the wonderful energy of some of the passages, and the poetical splendor of others, are so calculated for effect on the mind of the reader, that he must be cold indeed who does not rise from the perusal impressed and animated. Perhaps, if a person were called upon to exhibit an example of the utmost power of the English language in fulness, strength, and dignity of expression, he could not choose more happily than those lines near the close of this epistle in which the Deity is represented as the *soul of the universe*.

The second epistle begins with pointing out “the proper study of mankind,” namely, themselves; yet it cannot be said that the bold contrast drawn

between the powers of the human mind, on the one part, and its weakness, on the other, is highly encouraging. If NEWTON, with the wonderful reach of his intellectual faculties, were unable to “describe or fix one movement of his mind,” what other man may hope for success in an investigation of his own nature? Notwithstanding, however, these sarcasms against human wisdom, apparently drawn from the school of CHARRON, the poet proceeds seriously to the subject of his epistle; and having stated the *two principles* which rule over Man, *self-love* and *reason*, he goes on to shew the character and office of each, and their opposition or concurrence in influencing human conduct. Self-love he calls the *moving principle* which excites to action, on which account it is made the strongest; reason is

the *comparing* and *restraining* principle : the objects of the former are some immediate good ; of the latter, some remote or consequential good. Both have the same general ends of attaining pleasure and avoiding pain. But surely this representation is inaccurate ; for self-love and reason stand in no sort of opposition to each other ; and the second is rather an instrument employed by the first, the better to effectuate its ends, than a distinct principle of action. Reason is more properly opposed to the *passions* ; which POPE justly terms *modes of self-love*, all having for their object some real or supposed good. These, he says, duly tempered and blended, give “ all the strength and colour of our life.” Adopting, however, the theory which he has more particularly opened in one of his moral epistles, he

asserts the existence of a *master passion*, which swallows up the rest, and may be regarded as the innate disease of the mind, from every faculty of which it derives fresh nourishment. Yet instead of attempting to eradicate this leading propensity, he advises to follow "nature's road," and content ourselves with keeping it in proper bounds; for our passions, and even vices, by means of due culture, are convertible into our surest virtues. The poet here admits that notion of the ancient moralists, which supposes the limits of virtue and vice to be blended in such a manner, as to render it impossible to say where one ends and the other begins; or rather which makes every vice only the extreme of some virtue. Thus, that ruling passion which is in some instances our leading vice, is in others our leading

virtue ; and every Man is both virtuous and vicious in degree. He concludes with shewing how, in the scheme of Providence, the different passions, propensities, follies and defects of Men, are all made to conspire to the general good—how the ties of mutual aid and interest are by their means drawn more closely—and how at length they reconcile Man to the loss of a being so full of imperfection. Finally, he enumerates the various kinds of happiness arising from the variety of Men's tempers and pursuits, and from the changes of object that accompany the different stages of life in each individual ; and his inference from the whole matter is that “ though Man is a fool, God is wise.” This book is not remarkable for its poetical beauties. Its language is mostly that of argument and simple il-

lustration, and the subject is pursued with scarcely any digression. Some of the concluding lines, however, are eminently beautiful ; yet it is not easy to say what moral effect the author meant to produce by them. If Man's folly is equally conspicuous in all he does ; if his weaknesses are made the instruments of his happiness ; if " in folly's cup still laughs the bubble joy," and " not a vanity was given in vain," it would seem very fruitless to attempt by artificial wisdom to correct the designed and inherent defects of our nature.

The third epistle begins by assuming, as the result of what has preceded, " that the Deity acts to one end, though by various laws;" in other words his aim is the production of general good, but by different, and sometimes apparently opposite means ;

of which, instances have been given in the various passions and propensities of Mankind. The author next, in a superior strain of poetry, resumes a former topic, and shews how all the parts of nature, by an universal chain of connection, contribute to the advantage of each other, and of the whole. He again, likewise, by various striking examples, aims at mortifying that pride of Man which induces him to regard the whole creation as made for his sake alone ; and he exhibits the benefits which even the animals subjected to human dominion are made to derive from it. These reflections lead him to mark the limits between reason and instinct ; and in various beautiful instances he exemplifies the operation of the latter principle, always exactly adapted to its purpose, and to nothing further. In Man, as in other

animals, self-love, modified by instinct, is the origin of the conjugal and the parental connexion; but in the human creature, reason takes up, improves, and prolongs the union thus formed, and carries it on to be the foundation of all the charities of life. Hence the poet takes occasion to fall into a description of the earliest ages of Man, when he was yet in the *state of nature*, which he paints in all the pleasing colours usually appropriated to the golden age, and especially characterises by that kind of fellowship with the beasts which made them "joint tenants of the shade," and forbid the slaughtering of animals for food or sacrifice. The next stage was that in which *art* gradually arose, the first efforts of which are attributed to imitation of the instinctive manners and actions of brutes. These ideas of the

author will probably appear rather poetical than philosophical, and confirmed neither by history nor analogy. He speculates with more probability when he proceeds to the rise of societies and governments; when he describes the progress from patriarchs to kings, and displays the origin of a pure and simple theism, deduced either from reason or tradition, and which represented the Deity as an object of love, not of fear. This happy state of things was at length subverted by force, which introduced the law of tyrants, and supported itself by a league formed with that superstition which now began to take place of primitive religion. The origin and effects of this debasing principle are described by POPE with all the poetic fire of LUCRETIVS, directed and concentrated by his own nervous sense.

He then shews, how the same self-love which nourishes the inordinate lust of power in an individual, operates on the general body, to check and control it. Thus are formed those generous spirits who employ themselves in endeavours to instruct and enlighten Mankind ; and in this manner the jarring interests of individuals unite to produce the harmony of the whole. The conclusion is, that in the comprehensive scheme of Providence, self-love and the social principle are the same. This book is highly poetical. Dwelling more upon illustration than reasoning, it has drawn from a variety of sources pictures of beauty and sublimity, coloured with all the splendor of language proper to the author. Its sentiments, too, are elevated and generous ; and though the accuracy of some may be disputed,

the effect of the whole is in unison with the best feelings of the heart.

The fourth epistle opens with an eloquent address to happiness, the search after which is its interesting subject. The poet, after finding that happiness is fixed to no one spot or condition of life, soon comes to the conclusion that it belongs equally to all. He finds, too, that a Man cannot be made happy without the participation of others; and therefore, "happiness subsists not in the good of one, but of all." Order, "Heaven's first law," has made differences of rank and endowments among Mankind necessary; but it does not thence follow that there must be the same inequality in point of happiness. The essential goods of life are all included in "health, peace, and competence," of which the two former

confist with virtue alone. The gifts of fortune belong equally to the good and bad, but the former are best qualified to enjoy them. These positions lead the author to a very feeling eulogy on virtue, the influence of which in bestowing bliss is such, that there was no necessity of exempting the good Man from the common ills of life, or of elevating him to a superiority of condition. This strain of reasoning is succeeded by a splendid amplification of the philosophical doctrine, that honour and shame arise from no particular station, but that all true glory proceeds from well filling the allotted part, whatever it may be. The poet pursues difference of fortune through all the circumstances of title, birth, rank, fame, and parts; and proves, by a variety of illustrious examples, how insufficient with-

out virtue are advantages in all these respects to secure felicity. Concluding these illustrations with the fundamental truth, that "virtue alone is happiness below," he recurs to his former doctrine of the conversion of self-love to social; and he deduces the principle of universal benevolence from the progress to be traced in the mind of the virtuous Man through the several stages and degrees of partial affection. With this, he unites the hope of renovated happiness in a future state; and thus completes the scale of Man's supreme felicity, as connected with the greatest elevation of virtue. A most finished and beautiful apostrophe to his "guide, philosopher, and friend," with a brief summary of the topics of the several epistles, terminate the poem.

From the preceding analysis of the *ESSAY ON MAN*, the reader will probably find himself at a loss to deduce that exquisite chain of argumentation, that lucid method, which are with so much evident labour attempted to be traced out by the Right Reverend Commentator. He will rather discern a writer, made a system-builder by accident, but a poet by nature, taking up a grand and copious topic, well adapted in parts for the display of his genius, but as a whole belonging to a very different class of composers. He will see him exhibiting a great variety of powers according to the exigencies of his subject; sometimes close, concise, nervous, and sententious; sometimes copious, expansive and brilliant;—now enchanting by elegance and beauty, now commanding by dignity and sublimity. The work itself he will probably esteem as

one of the noblest productions, not only of its author, but of English poetry; and amidst all its defects, he will rejoice that the writer was induced to exercise his talents in a walk so new, and in many respects so well suited to them. In fine, if he does not choose to derive his *ethical system* from the ESSAY ON MAN, he will again and again have recourse to it as a storehouse of great and generous sentiments; and he will never rise from its perusal without feeling his mind animated with the love of virtue, and improved in benevolence towards his fellow creatures, and piety towards his Creator.



THE
DESIGN.

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


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

and in forming a temperate, yet not inconsistent ;
and a short, yet not imperfect system of Ethics.]

This I might have done in prose ; but I chose
verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons : the one
will appear obvious ; that principles, maxims, or
precepts so written, both strike the reader more
strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him
afterwards. The other may seem odd, but it is
true ; I found I could express them more shortly
this way than in prose itself, and nothing is truer
than that much of the force, as well as grace, of
arguments or instructions depends on their concise-
ness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject
more in detail, without becoming dry and tedious ;
or more poetically, without sacrificing perspicuity
to ornament, without wandering from the precision,

or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these, without diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

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



E P I S T L E I.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH
RESPECT TO THE UNIVERSE.

C O N T E N T S.

OF Man in the abstract—That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things. That Man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of Man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice of his dispensations. The absurdity of conceiving himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while, on the one hand, he demands the perfections of the angels; and on the other, the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree, would render him miserable. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to Man. The gradation of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason; that reason alone countervails all the other faculties. How much farther this order and subordination of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state.

AN
ESSAY ON MAN.

EPISTLE I.

AWAKE, my ST. JOHN! leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of kings.
Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of Man ; 5
A mighty maze ! but not without a plan ;
A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot ;
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.

Together let us beat this ample field,
 Try what the open, what the covert yield ; 10
 The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
 Of all who blindly creep, or fightless soar ;
 Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
 And catch the manners living as they rise ;
 Laugh where we must, be candid where we can ;
 But vindicate the ways of God to Man. 16

I. Say first, of God above or Man below,
 What can we reason, but from what we know ?
 Of Man, what see we but his station here,
 From which to reason, or to which refer ? 20
 Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,
 'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
 He, who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
 See worlds on worlds compose one universe,

Observe how system into system runs, 25

What other planets circle other suns,

What vary'd being peoples ev'ry star,

May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.

But of this frame, the bearings, and the ties,

The strong connexions, nice dependencies, 30

Gradations just, has thy pervading soul

Look'd thro' ? or can a part contain the whole ?

Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,

And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee ?

II. Presumptuous Man! the reason wouldst thou find,

Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind ? 36

First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,

Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less.

Ask of thy mother Earth, why oaks are made

Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade ? 40

Or ask of yonder argent fields above,

Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove ?

Of systems possible, if 'tis confess'd

That Wisdom infinite must form the best,

Where all must full or not coherent be, 45

And all that rises, rise in due degree ;

Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,

There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man :

And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)

Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong ? 50

Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,

May, must be right, as relative to all.

In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain.

A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain ;

In God's, one single can its end produce ; 55

Yet serves to second too some other use.

So Man, who here seems principal alone,
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
 Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal ;
 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why Man restrains
 His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains ;
 When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
 Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god :
 Then shall Man's pride and dulness comprehend
 His action's, passion's, being's use and end ; 66
 Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd ; and why
 This hour a slave, the next a deity.

Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault ;
 Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought : 70
 His knowledge measur'd to his state and place,
 His time a moment, and a point his space.

If to be perfect in a certain sphere,

What matter, soon or late, or here or there?

The blest to-day is as completely so,

75

As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,

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

From brutes what men, from men what spirits know :

Or who could suffer being here below ?

80

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,

Had he thy reason would he skip and play ?

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

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

Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,

85

That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n :

Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,

A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,

Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
 And now a bubble burst, and now a world. 90

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
 Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore.
 What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
 But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast; 95

Man never Is, but always To be blest:
 The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,
 Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
 Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
 His soul, proud science never taught to stray 101
 Far as the solar walk or milky way;
 Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n
 Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;

Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
 Some happier island in the wat'ry waste, 106
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,
 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
 To Be, contents his natural desire,
 He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire : 110
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou ! and, in thy scale of sense,
 Weigh thy opinion against Providence ;
 Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such, 115
 Say, Here he gives too little, there too much ;
 Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
 Yet cry, If Man's unhappy, God's unjust ;
 If Man alone ingross not Heav'n's high care,
 Alone made perfect here, immortal there : 120

Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,

Re-judge his justice, be the god of God.

In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies ;

All quit their sphere and rush into the skies.

Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, 125

Men would be angels, angels would be gods.

Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,

Aspiring to be angels, men rebel :

And who but wishes to invert the laws

Of ORDER, sins against th' Eternal Cause. 130

V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,

Earth for whose use ? Pride answers, " 'Tis for mine.

" For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,

" Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r ;

" Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew 135

" The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew ;

“ For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings ;

“ For me, health gushes from a thousand springs ;

“ Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise ;

“ My footstool earth, my canopy the skies.” 140

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,

From burning suns when livid deaths descend,

When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep

Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep ?

“ No ('tis reply'd), the first Almighty Cause 145

“ Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws ;

“ Th' exceptions few ; some change since all began,

“ And what created perfect ?”—Why then Man ?

If the great end be human happiness,

Then Nature deviates ; and can Man do less ! 150

As much that end a constant course requires

Of show'rs and sunshine, as of Man's desires :

As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,

As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.

If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,

Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline ? 156

Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,

Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms ;

Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind, 159

Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind ?

From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs ;

Account for moral, as for nat'ral things :

Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit ?

In both, to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear, 165

Were there all harmony, all virtue here ;

That never air or ocean felt the wind ;

That never passion discompos'd the mind.

But ALL subsists by elemental strife ;

And passions are the elements of life. 170

The gen'ral ORDER, since the whole began,

Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

VI. What would this Man? now upward will he

soar,

And little less than angel, would be more ! 174

Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears

To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.

Made for his use, all creatures if he call,

Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all :

Nature to these without profusion kind,

The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd ; 180

Each seeming want compensated of course,

Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force :

All in exact proportion to the state ;

Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.

Each beast, each insect, happy in its own : 185

Is Heav'n unkind to Man, and Man alone ?

Shall he alone, whom rational we call,

Be pleas'd with nothing if not blest'd with all ?

The bliss of Man (could pride that blessing find)

Is not to act or think beyond mankind ; 190

No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,

But what his nature and his state can bear.

Why has not Man a microscopic eye ?

For this plain reason, Man is not a fly.

Say what the use were finer optics giv'n, 195

T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n ?

Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,

To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore ?

Or quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
 Die of a rose in aromatic pain? 200

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

VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,
 The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends :
 Mark how it mounts to Man's imperial race,
 From the green myriads in the peopled grass : 210
 What modes of fight betwixt each wide extreme,
 The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam :
 Of smell, the headlong lions between,
 And hound sagacious on the tainted green :

Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood, 215
 To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood!
 The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
 Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
 In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
 From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew?
 How instinct varies in the grov'ling swine, 221
 Compar'd, half reas'ning elephant, with thine!
 'Twixt that and reason, what a nice barrier!
 For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near!
 Remembrance and reflection how ally'd; 225
 What thin partitions sense from thought divide?
 And middle natures, how they long to join,
 Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
 Without this just gradation could there be
 Subjected, these to those, or all to thee? 230

The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one ?

VIII. See, thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high, progressive life may go ! 235
Around, how wide ! how deep extend below !
Vast chain of being ! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, Man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach ; from Infinite to thee, 240
From thee to nothing.—On superior pow'rs
Were we to press, inferior might on ours :
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd :
From Nature's chain whatever link you strike, 245
'Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

And, if each system in gradation roll
 Alike essential to th' amazing whole,
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the whole must fall. 250
 Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
 Planets and suns run lawless thro' the sky ;
 Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
 Being on being wreck'd, and world on world ;
 Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
 And Nature trembles to the throne of God. 256
All this dread ORDER break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—oh madness! pride! impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
 Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head? 260
 What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
 To serve mere engines to the ruling mind ;

Just as absurd for any part to claim

To be another, in this gen'ral frame :

Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains 265

The great directing MIND of ALL ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,

Whose body Nature is, and God the soul ;

That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same ;

Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame ; 270

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,

Glow's in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,

Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,

Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;

Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part, 275

As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart ;

As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,

As the rapt seraph that adores and burns :

To him no high, no low, no great, no small ;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all. 280

X. Cease then, nor ORDER imperfection name :
 Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
 Know thy own point : this kind, this due degree
 Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
 Submit.—In this, or any other sphere, 285
 Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear :
 Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r,
 Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
 All Nature is but art unknown to thee,
 All chance, direction which thou canst not see ;
 All discord, harmony not understood ; 291
 All partial evil, universal good :
 And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
 One truth is clear, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.



E P I S T L E II.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH
RESPECT TO HIMSELF, AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

C O N T E N T S.

THE business of Man not to pry into God, but to study himself. His middle nature ; his powers and frailties. The limits of his capacity. The two principles of man, self-love and reason, both necessary. Self-love the stronger, and why. Their end the same. The passions, and their use. The predominant passion, and its force. Its necessity, in directing men to different purposes. Its providential use, in fixing our principle, and ascertaining our virtue. Virtue and vice joined in our mixed nature ; the limits near, yet the things separate and evident : what is the office of reason. How odious vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it. That, however, the ends of Providence and general good are answered in our passions and imperfections. How usefully these are distributed to all orders of men. How useful they are to society, and to individuals, in every state, and every stage of life.

AN

ESSAY ON MAN.

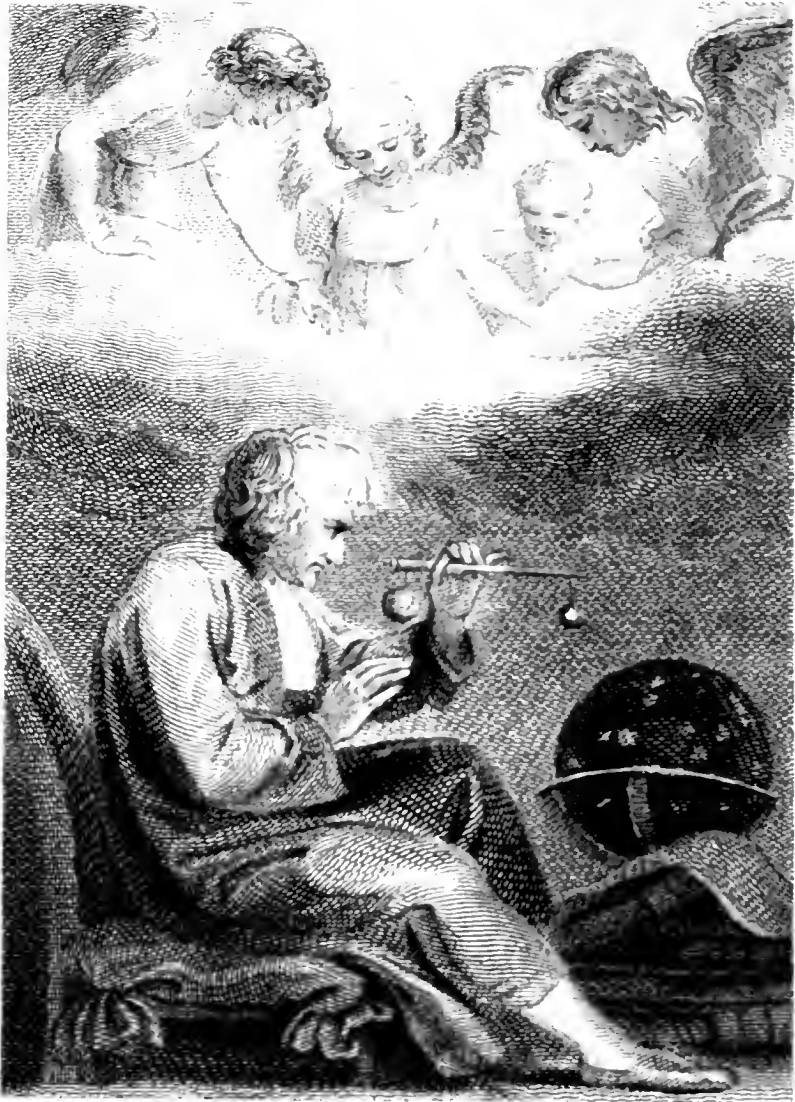
EPISTLE II.

I. **K**NOW then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is Man.
Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great :
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side, 5
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between ; in doubt to act, or rest ;
In doubt to deem himself a God or beast ;

In doubt his mind or body to prefer ;
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err ; 10
 Alike in ignorance his reason such,
 Whether he thinks too little, or too much ;
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd ;
 Still by himself abus'd, or difabus'd ;
 Created half to rise, and half to fall ; 15
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all ;
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd :
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world !

Go, wond'rous creature ! mount where science guides,
 Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides ; 20
 Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
 Correct old Time, and regulate the sun ;
 Go, soar with Plato, to th' empyreal sphere,
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair ;





Drawn by T. Stothard R. A.

R. H. Cromack sculp.

Admire such Wisdom in an earthly Shape,
And show us Virtues as we shew an Age.

Published March 1797 by Cadell and Davies Strand.

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

And quitting sense call imitating God ;

As eastern priests in giddy circles run,

And turn their heads to imitate the sun.

Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule——

Then drop into thyself, and be a fool ! 30

Superior beings, when of late they saw

A mortal Man unfold all Nature's law,

Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,

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

Could he, whose rules the rapid comet bind,

Describe or fix one movement of his mind ? 36

Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,

Explain his own beginning, or his end ?

Alas, what wonder ! Man's superior part

Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art ;

But when his own great work is but begun, 41
 What reason weaves, by passion is undone.

Trace science then, with modesty thy guide ;
 First strip off all her equipage of pride ;
 Deduct what is but vanity, or dress, 45
 Or learning's luxury, or idleness ;
 Or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain,
 Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain ;
 Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts
 Of all our vices have created arts ; 50
 Then see how little the remaining sum,
 Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come !

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

And to their proper operation still,
 Ascribe all good, to their improper, ill.

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

Most strength the moving principle requires ;
 Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires :
 Sedate and quiet, the comparing lies,
 Form'd but to check, delib'rate, and advise. 70
Self-love still stronger, as its objects nigh :
 Reason's at distance, and in prospect lie :

That sees immediate good by present sense ;

Reason, the future and the consequence.

Thicker than arguments, temptations throng, 75

At best more watchful this, but that more strong.

The action of the stronger to suspend,

Reason still use, to reason still attend.

Attention, habit and experience gains ;

Each strengthens reason, and self-love restrains. 80

Let subtle schoolmen teach these friends to fight,

More studious to divide than to unite ;

And grace and virtue. sense and reason split,

With all the rash dexterity of wit.

Wits, just like fools. at war about a name, 85

Have full as oft no meaning, or the fame.

Self-love and reason to one end aspire,

Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire ;

But greedy that, its object would devour, 89

This taste the honey, and not wound the flow'r :

Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,

Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.

III. Modes of self-love the passions we may call :

'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all :

But since not every good we can divide, 95

And reason bids us for our own provide ;

Passions, tho' selfish, if their means be fair,

Lift under reason, and deserve her care ;

Those, that imparted, court a nobler aim,

Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name. 100

In lazy apathy let Stoics boast

Their virtue fix'd ; 'tis fix'd as in a frost ;

Contracted all, retiring to the breast ;

But strength of mind is exercise, not rest :

The rising tempest puts in act the soul, 105

Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.

On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,

Reason the card, but passion is the gale ;

Nor God alone in the still calm we find, 109

He mounts the storms, and walks upon the wind.

Passions, like elements, tho' born to fight,

Yet, mix'd and soften'd, in his work unite :

These, 'tis enough to temper and employ ;

But what composes Man, can Man destroy ?

Suffice that reason keep to Nature's road, 115

Subject, compound them, follow her and God.

Love, Hope, and Joy, fair Pleasure's smiling train,

Hate, Fear, and Grief, the family of Pain,

These mix'd with art, and to due bounds confin'd,

Make and maintain the balance of the mind : 120

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

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

Nature its mother, Habit is its nurse ; 145
 Wit, spirit, faculties but make it worse ;
 Reason itself but gives it edge and pow'r ;
 As heav'n's blest beam turns vinegar more sour.

We, wretched subjects tho' to lawful sway,
 In this weak queen some fav'rite still obey ; 150
 Ah ! if she lend not arms, as well as rules,
 What can she more than tell us we are fools ?

Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend,
 A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend !
 Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade 155
 The choice we make, or justify it made ;
 Proud of an easy conquest all along,
 She but removes weak passions for the strong.
 So, when small humours gather to a gout,
 The doctor fancies he has driv'n them out. 160
 Yes, Nature's road must ever be preferr'd ;
 Reason is here no guide, but still a guard ;
 'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow,
 And treat this passion more as friend than foe :
 A mightier pow'r the strong direction sends, 165
 And sev'ral Men impels to sev'ral ends :
 Like varying winds, by other passions tost,
 This drives them constant to a certain coast.

Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory, please,
 Or (oft more strong than all) the love of ease; 170
 Thro' life 'tis follow'd, ev'n at life's expence;
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride,
 All, all alike, find reason on their side.

Th' Eternal Art educing good from ill, 175
 Grafts on this passion our best principle:
 'Tis thus the mercury of Man is fix'd,
 Strong grows the virtue with his nature mix'd;
 The dross cements what else were too refin'd,
 And in one int'rest body acts with mind. 180

As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,
 On savage stocks inserted learn to bear;
 The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,
 Wild Nature's vigor working at the root.

What crops of wit and honesty appear 185
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear !
 See anger, zeal and fortitude supply ;
 Ev'n av'rice, prudence ; sloth, philosophy ;
 Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd,
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind ; 190
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a slave,
 Is emulation in the learn'd or brave ;
 Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,
 But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.

Thus Nature gives us (let it check our pride) 195
 The virtue nearest to our vice ally'd :
 Reason the bias turns to good from ill,
 And Nero reigns a Titus if he will.
 The fiery soul abhorr'd in Catiline,
 In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine : 200

The same ambition can destroy or save,
And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.

This light and darkness in our chaos join'd,
What shall divide? The God within the mind.

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

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

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
 As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;
 Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace. 220
 But where th' extreme of vice, was ne'er agreed :
 Ask where's the North ? at York, 'tis on the Tweed ;
 In Scotland, at the Orcades ; and there,
 At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.
 No creature owns it in the first degree, 225
 But thinks his neighbour farther gone than he ;
 Ev'n those who dwell beneath its very zone,
 Or never feel the rage, or never own ;
 What happier natures shrink at with affright,
 The hard inhabitant contends is right. 230
 Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man must be,
 Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree :

The rogue and fool, by fits, is fair and wife ;
 And ev'n the best, by fits, what they despise.
 'Till but by parts we follow good or ill ; 235
 For, vice or virtue, self directs it still ;
 Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal ;
 But HEAV'N'S great view is one, and that the whole.
 That counterworks each folly and caprice ;
 That disappoints th' effects of ev'ry vice ; 240
 That, happy frailties to all ranks apply'd ;
 Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,
 Fear to the statesman, rashness to the chief,
 To kings presumption, and to crowds belief :
 That virtue's ends from vanity can raise, 245
 Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise ;
 And build on wants, and on defects of mind,
 The joy, the peace, the glory of Mankind.

Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
 A master, or a fervant, or a friend, 250
 Bids each on other for assistance call,
 'Till one Man's weaknefs grows the ftrength of all.
 Wants, frailties, paffions, clofer ftill ally
 The common int'reft, or endear the tie.
 To thefe we owe true friendship, love fincere, 255
 Each home-felt joy that life inherits here ;
 Yet from the fame we learn, in its decline,
 Thofe joys, thofe loves, thofe int'refts to refign ;
 Taught half by reason, half by mere decay,
 To welcome death, and calmly pafs away. 260

Whate'er the paffion, knowledge, fame, or pelf,
 Not one will change his neighbour with himfelf.
 The learn'd is happy Nature to explore,
 The fool is happy that he knows no more ;

The rich is happy in the plenty giv'n, 265

The poor contents him with the care of Heav'n.

See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,

The sot a hero, lunatic a king ;

The starving chemist in his golden views

Supremely blest, the poet in his Muse. 270

See some strange comfort ev'ry state attend,

And pride bestow'd on all, a common friend :

See some fit passion ev'ry age supply,

Hope travels thro', nor quits us when we die.

Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law, 275

Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw :

Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,

A little louder, but as empty quite :

Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,

And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age : 280

Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before ;
 'Till tir'd he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.
 Mean while opinion gilds with varying rays
 Those painted clouds that beautify our days ;
 Each want of happiness by hope supply'd, 285
 And each vacuity of sense by pride :
 These build as fast as knowledge can destroy ;
 In folly's cup still laughs the bubble joy ;
One prospect lost, another still we gain ;
And not a vanity is given in vain : 290
 Ev'n mean self-love becomes, by force divine,
 The scale to measure others wants by thine.
 See ! and confess, one comfort still must rise ;
 'Tis this, tho' Man's a fool, yet GOD IS WISE.

E P I S T L E III.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH
RESPECT TO SOCIETY.

C O N T E N T S.

THE whole universe one system of society. Nothing made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another. The happiness of animals mutual. Reason or instinct operate alike to the good of each individual. Reason or instinct operate also to society in all animals. How far society carried by instinct. How much farther by reason. Of that which is called the state of Nature. Reason instructed by instinct in the invention of arts. And in the forms of society. Origin of political societies. Origin of monarchy. Patriarchal government. Origin of true religion and government, from the same principle of love. Origin of superstition and tyranny from the same principle of fear. The influence of self-love operating to the social and public good. Restoration of true religion and government on their first principle. Mixt government. Various forms of each, and the true end of all.

AN

ESSAY ON MAN.

EPISTLE III.

I. **H**ERE then we rest : “ The Universal Cause
“ Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.”

In all the madness of superfluous health,
The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,
Let this great truth be present night and day : 5
But most be present if we preach or pray.

Look round our world, behold the chain of love
Combining all below and all above.

See plastic Nature working to this end,
 The single atoms each to other tend, 10
 Attract, attracted to, the next in place
 Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.
 See matter next, with various life endu'd,
 Press to one centre still, the gen'ral good.
 See dying vegetables life sustain, 15
 See life dissolving vegetate again :
 All forms that perish other forms supply,
 (By turns we catch the vital breath and die)
 Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne,
 They rise, they break, and to that sea return. 20
 Nothing is foreign ; parts relate to whole ;
 One all-extending, all-preserving soul
 Connects each being, greatest with the least ;
 Made beast in aid of Man, and Man of beast ;

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

Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good,
 Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food ?
Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
 For him as kindly spreads the flow'ry lawn : 30
 Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings ?
 Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
 Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat ?
 Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.
 The bounding steed you pompously bestride, 35
 Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.
 Is thine alone the feed that strews the plain ?
 The birds of heav'n shall vindicate their grain.
 Thine the full harvest of the golden year ?
 Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer ; 40

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

Know, Nature's children all divide her care ;

The fur that warms a monarch warm'd a bear. 44

While Man exclaims, " See all things for my use !"

" See man for mine !" replies a pamper'd goose :

And just as short of reason he must fall,

Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

Grant that the pow'rful still the weak control ;

Be Man the wit, and tyrant of the whole : 50

Nature that tyrant checks ; he only knows,

And helps, another creature's wants and woes.

Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,

Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove ?

Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings ? 55

Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings ?

Man cares for all : to birds he gives his woods,
 To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods.
 For some his int'rest prompts him to provide,
 For more his pleasure, yet for more his pride : 60
 All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy
 Th' extensive blessing of his luxury,
 That very life his learned hunger craves,
 He saves from famine, and the savage saves ;
 Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast, 65
 And, 'till he ends the being, makes it blest ;
 Which sees no more the stroke, nor feels the pain,
 Than favour'd Man by touch ethereal slain.
 The creature had his feast of life before ;
 Thou too must perish, when thy feast is o'er ! 70
 To each unthinking being, Heav'n a friend,
 Gives not the useless knowledge of its end :

To man imparts it ; but with such a view
 As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too ;
 The hour conceal'd and so remote the fear, 75
 Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.
 Great standing miracle ! that Heav'n assign'd
 Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

II. Whether with reason, or with instinct blest,
 Know, all enjoy that pow'r which suits them best :
 To bliss alike by that direction tend, 81
 And find the means proportion'd to their end.
 Say, where full instinct is th' unerring guide,
 What pope or council can they need beside ?
 Reason, however able, cool at best, 85
 Cares not for service, or but serves when prest,
 Stays till we call, and then not often near ;
 But honest instinct comes a volunteer,

Sure never to o'ershoot, but just to hit ;
 While still too wide or short is human wit ; 90
 Sure by quick Nature happiness to gain,
 Which heavier reason labours at in vain.
 This too serves always, reason never long ;
One must go right, the other may go wrong.
 See then the acting and comparing pow'rs 95
 One in their nature, which are two in ours ;
 And reason raise o'er instinct as you can,
 In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis Man.

Who taught the nations of the field and wood
 To shun their poison, and to choose their food ?
 Prescient, the tides or tempests to withstand, 101
 Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand ?
 Who made the spider parallels design,
 Sure as DEMOIVRE, without rule or line ?

Who bid the stork, Columbus-like, explore 105

Heav'ns not his own, and worlds unknown before?

Who calls the council, states the certain day,

Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?

III. God, in the nature of each being, finds

Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds: 110

But as he fram'd a whole, the whole to bless,

On mutual wants built mutual happiness:

So from the first, eternal ORDER ran,

And creature link'd to creature, Man to Man.

Whate'er of life all quick'ning ether keeps, 115

Or breathes thro' air, or shoots beneath the deeps,

Or pours profuse on earth, one nature feeds

The vital flame, and swells the genial feeds.

Not Man alone, but all that roam the wood,

Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood, 120

Each loves itself, but not itself alone,
 Each sex desires alike, 'till two are one.
 Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace ;
 They love themselves a third time in their race.
 Thus beast and bird their common charge attend,
 The mothers nurse it, and the fires defend ; 126
 The young dismiss'd to wander earth or air,
 There stops the instinct, and there ends the care :
 The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,
 Another love succeeds, another race. 130
 A longer care Man's helpless kind demands ;
 That longer care contracts more lasting bands :
 Reflection, reason, still the ties improve,
 At once extend the interest, and the love ;
 With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn ;
 Each virtue in each passion takes its turn ; 136

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

IV. Nor think, in Nature's state they blindly trod;
 The state of Nature was the reign of God:
 Self-love and social at her birth began,
 Union the bond of all things, and of Man. 150
 Pride then was not; nor arts, that pride to aid;
 Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade;

The same his table, and the same his bed ;
 No murder cloath'd him, and no murder fed.
 In the same temple, the resounding wood, 155
 All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God :
 The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,
 Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest :
 Heav'n's attribute was Universal Care,
 And Man's prerogative to rule, but spare. 160
 Ah ! how unlike the Man of times to come !
 Of half that live the butcher and the tomb ;
 Who, foe to Nature, hears the gen'ral groan,
 Murders their species, and betrays his own.
 But just disease to luxury succeeds, 165
 And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds ;
 The Fury-passions from that blood began,
 And turn'd on Man a fiercer savage, Man.

See him from Nature rising flow to art !

To copy instinct then was reason's part; 170

Thus then to Man the voice of Nature spake—

“ Go, from the creatures thy instructions take :

“ Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield ;

“ Learn from the beasts the physic of the field ;

“ Thy arts of building from the bee receive ; 175

“ Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave ;

“ Learn of the little Nautilus to sail,

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

“ Here too all forms of social union find,

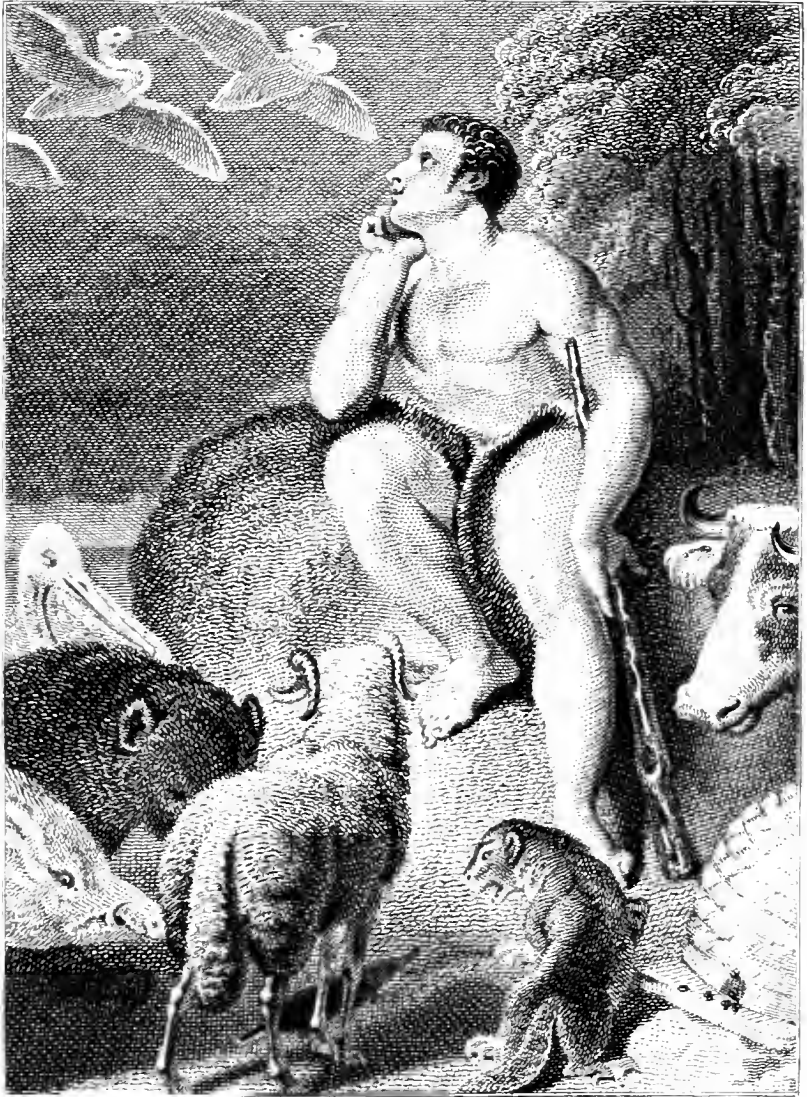
“ And hence let reason, late, instruct Mankind :

“ Here subterranean works and cities see ; 181

“ There towns aerial on the waving tree.

“ Learn each small people's genius, policies,

“ The ant's republic, and the realm of bees :



Drawn by T. Stothard R.A.

L. Naylor sc.

*Thus then to Man the Voice of Nature spoke,
"Go from the Creatures thy Instructions take:"*

Published March 12 1797, by Cadell and Davies, Strand.



- “ How those in common all their wealth bestow,
 “ And anarchy without confusion know ; 186
 “ And these for ever, tho’ a monarch reign,
 “ Their sep’rate cells and properties maintain.
 “ Mark what unvary’d laws preserve each state,
 “ Laws wise as Nature, and as fix’d as fate. 190
 “ In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw,
 “ Entangle justice in her net of law,
 “ And right, too rigid, harden into wrong ;
 “ Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.
 “ Yet go ! and thus o’er all the creatures sway,
 “ Thus let the wiser make the rest obey ; 196
 “ And for those arts mere instinct could afford,
 “ Be crown’d as monarchs, or as gods ador’d.”

V. Great Nature spoke ; observant Man obey’d ;
 Cities were built, societies were made : 200

Here rose one little state ; another near
 Grew by like means, and join'd, thro' love or fear.
 Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,
 And there the streams in purer rills descend ?
 What war could ravish, commerce could bestow,
 And he return'd a friend, who came a foe. 206
 Converse and love Mankind might strongly draw,
 When love was liberty and Nature law.
 Thus states were form'd ; the name of king unknown,
 Till common int'rest plac'd the fway in one. 210
 'Twas virtue only (or in arts or arms,
 Diffusing blessings, or averting harms),
 The same which in a fire the sons obey'd,
 A prince the father of a people made.

VI. Till then, by Nature crown'd, each patriarch
 fate, 215

King, priest, and parent of his growing state ;

On him, their second Providence, they hung,

Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.

He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,

Taught to command the fire, control the flood, 220

Draw forth the monsters of the abyſs profound,

Or fetch th' aërial eagle to the ground.

Till drooping, ſick'ning, dying they began

Whom they rever'd as God to mourn as Man :

Then, looking up from fire to fire, explor'd 225

One great firſt Father, and that firſt ador'd.

Or plain tradition, that this all begun,

Convey'd unbroken faith from fire to ſon ;

The Worker from the work diſtinct was known,

And ſimple reaſon never ſought but one : 230

Ere wit oblique had broke that ſteady light,

Man, like his Maker, ſaw that all was right ;

To virtue, in the paths of pleasure trod,
 And own'd a father when he own'd a God.
 Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then ; 235

For Nature knew no right divine in Men,
 No ill could fear in God ; and understood
 A sov'reign being but a sov'reign good.

(True faith, true policy, united ran,)

That was but love of God, and this of Man. 240

Who first taught souls enslav'd, and realms undone,
 Th' enormous faith of many made for one ;
 That proud exception to all Nature's laws,
 T' invert the world, and counterwork its cause ?
 Force first made conquest, and that conquest law ;
 Till superstition taught the tyrant awe, 246
 Then shar'd the tyranny, then lent it aid,
 And gods of conqu'rors, slaves of subjects made :

She 'midst the light'ning's blaze, and thunder's found,
 When rock'd the mountains, and when groan'd the
 ground, 250

She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray,
 To Pow'r unseen, and mightier far than they :
 She, from the rending earth and bursting skies,
 Saw gods descend, and fiends infernal rise :
 Here fix'd the dreadful, there the blest abodes ; 255
Fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods ;
Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
 Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust ;
 Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,
 And, form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe.
 Zeal then, not charity, became the guide ; 261
And hell was built on spite, and heav'n on pride.
 Then sacred seem'd th' ethereal vault no more ;
 Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore :

Then first the Flamen tasted living food; 265
 Next his grim idol smear'd with human blood;
 With Heav'n's own thunders shook the world below,
 And play'd the god an engine on his foe.

So drives self-love, thro' just, and thro' unjust,
 To one Man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, lust: 270
 The same self-love, in all, becomes the cause
 Of what restrains him, government and laws.
 For what one likes, if others like as well,
 What serves one will, when many wills rebel?
 How shall he keep, what, sleeping or awake, 275
 A weaker may surprize, a stronger take?
 His safety must his liberty restrain:
 All join to guard what each desires to gain.
 Forc'd into virtue thus by self-defence,
 Ev'n kings learnt justice and benevolence: 280

Self-love forsook the path it first purfu'd,
 And found the private in the public good.

'Twas then, the studious head or gen'rous mind,
 Follow'r of God or friend of human-kind,
 Poet or patriot, rose but to restore 285
 The faith and moral, Nature gave before ;
 Relum'd her ancient light, not kindled new ;
 If not God's image, yet his shadow drew :
 Taught pow'r's due use to people and to kings:
 Taught not to slack, nor strain its tender strings,
 The less, or greater, set so justly true, 291
 That touching one must strike the other too ;
 Till jarring int'rests of themselves create
 Th' according music of a well-mix'd state.
 Such is the world's great harmony, that springs
 From order, union, full consent of things : 296

Where small and great, where weak and mighty made
 To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade ;
 More pow'rful each as needful to the rest,
 And in proportion as it blesses, blest ; 300
 Draw to one point, and to one centre bring
 Beast, Man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.

For forms of government let fools contest ;
 Whate'er is best administer'd is best :
 For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ; 305
 His can't be wrong whose life is in the right :
 In faith and hope the world will disagree,
 But all Mankind's concern is charity :
 All must be false that thwart this one great end ;
 And, all of God, that bless Mankind or mend. 310

Man, like the gen'rous vine, supported lives ;
 The strength he gains is from th' embrace he gives.

On their own axis as the planets run,
Yet make at once their circle round the sun :
So two consistent motions act the soul ; 315
And one regards itself, and one the whole.

Thus God and Nature link'd the gen'ral frame,
And bade self-love and social be the same.

END OF EPISTLE III.



E P I S T L E IV.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH
RESPECT TO HAPPINESS.

C O N T E N T S.

FALSE notions of happiness, philosophical and popular, answered. It is the end of all men, and attainable by all. God intends happiness to be equal; and to be so, it must be social, since all particular happiness depends on general, and since he governs by general, not particular laws. As it is necessary for order, and the peace and welfare of society, that external goods should be unequal, happiness is not made to consist in these. But, notwithstanding that inequality, the balance of happiness among Mankind is kept even by Providence, by the two passions of hope and fear. What the happiness of individuals is, as far as is consistent with the constitution of this world; and that the good Man has here the advantage. The error of imputing to virtue what are only the calamities of Nature, or of fortune. The folly of expecting that God should alter his general laws in favour of particulars. That we are not judges who are good; but that, whoever they are, they must be happiest. That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of virtue. That even these can make no man happy without virtue. Instanced in riches. In honours. Nobility. Greatness. Fame. Superior talents. With pictures of human infelicity in Men possess of them all. That virtue only constitutes a happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal. That the perfection of virtue and happiness consists in a conformity to the ORDER of PROVIDENCE here, and a resignation to it here and hereafter.

AN

ESSAY ON MAN.

EPISTLE IV.

OH Happiness! our being's end and aim,
Good, pleasure, ease, content! whate'er thy name:
That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live, or dare to die;
Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies, 5
O'erlook'd, seen double, by the fool, and wise:
Plant of celestial seed! if dropt below,
Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow?

Fair op'ning to some court's propitious shine,
 Or deep with di'monds in the flaming mine? 10
 Twin'd with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,
 Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field?
 Where grows?—where grows it not? If vain our toil,
 We ought to blame the culture, not the soil:
 Fix'd to no spot is happiness sincere, 15
 'Tis no where to be found, or ev'ry where:
 'Tis never to be bought, but always free,
 And fled from monarchs, St. John! dwells with thee.
 Ask of the learn'd the way? The learn'd are blind;
 This bids to serve, and that to shun Mankind; 20
 Some place the blifs in action, some in ease,
 Those call it pleasure, and contentment these;
 Some sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain;
 Some swell'd to gods, confess e'en virtue vain;

Or indolent, to each extreme they fall, 25

To trust in ev'ry thing, or doubt of all.

Who thus define it, say they more or less
Than this, that happiness is happiness?

Take Nature's path, and mad opinion's leave ;
All states can reach it, and all heads conceive ; 30
Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell ;
There needs but thinking right, and meaning well ;
And mourn our various portions as we please,
Equal is common sense, and common ease.

Remember, Man, " the Universal Cause 35
" Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws ;"
And makes what happiness we justly call,
Subsist, not in the good of one, but all.

There's not a blessing individuals find,
But some way leans and hearkens to the kind ; 40

No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,
 No cavern'd hermit refts self-fatisfy'd :
 Who moft to fhun or hate Mankind pretend,
 Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend :
 Abstract what others feel, what others think, 45
 All pleasures ficken, and all glories fink :
 Each has his fhare ; and who would more obtain,
 Shall find, the pleafure pays not half the pain.

ORDER is Heav'n's firft law ; and this confeft,
 Some are, and muft be, greater than the reft, 50
 More rich, more wife ; but who infers from hence
 That fuch are happier, fhocks all common fenfe.
 Heav'n to Mankind impartial we confeft,
 If all are equal in their happinefs :
 But mutual wants this happinefs increafe ; 55
 All Nature's diff'rence keeps all Nature's peace.

Condition, circumstance is not the thing;
 Bliss is the same in subject or in king,
 In who obtain defence, or who defend,
 In him who is, or him who finds a friend : 60
Heav'n breathes thro' ev'ry member of the whole
One common blessing, as one common soul.
But fortune's gifts if each alike possess,
 And each were equal, must not all contest?
 If then to all Men happiness was meant, 65
 God in externals could not place content.
 Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,
 And these be happy call'd, unhappy those ;
 But Heav'n's just balance equal will appear,
 While those are plac'd in hope, and these in fear :
 Not present good or ill, the joy or curse, 71
 But future views of better, or of worse.

Oh fons of earth ! attempt ye still to rise,
 By mountains pil'd on mountains, to the skies ?
 Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys,
 And buries madmen in the heaps they raise. 76

Know, all the good that individuals find,
 Or God and Nature meant to mere Mankind,
 Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,
 Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence.
 But health consists with temperance alone ; 81
 And peace, oh virtue ! peace is all thy own.
 The good or bad the gifts of Fortune gain ;
 But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.
 Say, in pursuit of profit or delight, 85
 Who risk the most, that take wrong means or right ?
 Of vice or virtue, whether blest or curst,
 Which meets contempt, or which compassion first ?

Count all th' advantage prosp'rous vice attains,
 'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains: 90
 And grant the bad what happiness they wou'd,
 One they must want, which is to pass for good.

Oh blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,
 Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe!
 Who sees and follows that great scheme the best, 95
 Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.
 But fools the good alone, unhappy call,
 For ills or accidents that chance to all.
 See Falkland dies, the virtuous and the just!
 See god-like Turenne prostrate on the dust! 100
 See Sidney bleeds amid the martial strife!
 Was this their virtue, or contempt of life?
 Say, was it virtue, more tho' Heav'n ne'er gave,
 Lamented Digby! sunk thee to the grave?

Tell me, if virtue made the son expire, 105
Why, full of days and honour, lives the fire ?
Why drew Marfeilles' good bishop purer breath,
When Nature sicken'd, and each gale was death ?
Or why so long (in life if long can be)
Lent Heav'n a parent to the poor and me ? 110
What makes all physical or moral ill ?
There deviates Nature, and here wanders will.
God sends not ill ; if rightly understood,
Or partial ill is universal good,
Or change admits, or Nature lets it fall ; 115
Short, and but rare, till Man improv'd it all.
We just as wisely might of Heav'n complain,
That righteous Abel was destroy'd by Cain,
As that the virtuous son is ill at ease
When his lewd father gave the dire disease. 120

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

Shall burning Ætna, if a sage requires,
 Forget to thunder, and recall her fires?

On air or sea new motions be imprest, 125

Oh blameless Bethel! to relieve thy breast?

When the loose mountain trembles from on high,

Shall gravitation cease if you go by?

Or some old temple, nodding to its fall, 129

For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall?

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

A kingdom of the just then let it be:

But first consider how those just agree.

The good must merit God's peculiar care; 135

But who, but God, can tell us who they are?

One thinks on Calvin Heav'n's own Spirit fell ;

Another deems him instrument of hell ;

If Calvin feel Heav'n's blessing, or its rod,

This cries there is, and that, there is no God.

What shocks one part will edify the rest, 141

Nor with one system can they all be blest.

The very best will variously incline,

And what rewards your virtue, punish mine.

WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.—This world, 'tis true,

Was made for Cæsar—but for Titus too : 146

And which more blest ? who chain'd his country, say,

Or he whose virtue figh'd to lose a day ?

“ But sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed.”

What then ? Is the reward of virtue bread ? 150

That, vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil ;

The knave deserves it, when he tills the soil,



Drawn by T. Stothard R.A.

R.H. Cromek sc

*What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The Soul's calm Sun-shine, and the heart-felt Joy,
Is Virtue's Prize.*

Published March 1, 1797, by Cadell and Davies Strand.

The knave deserves it, when he tempts the main,
Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.

The good man may be weak, be indolent ; 155

Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.

But grant him riches, your demand is o'er ?

“ No—shall the good want health, the good want
pow'r ?”

Add health, and power, and ev'ry earthly thing,

“ Why bounded pow'r ? why private ? why no king ?

“ Nay, why external for internal giv'n ? 161

“ Why is not man a god, and earth a heav'n ?”

Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive

God gives enough while he has more to give :

Immense the pow'r, immense were the demand ;

Say, at what part of Nature will they stand ? 166

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,

Is virtue's prize : a better would you fix,
Then give humility a coach and fix, 170
Justice a conq'ror's sword, or truth a gown,
Or public spirit its great cure, a crown.
Weak, foolish Man ! will Heav'n reward us there,
With the same trash mad mortals wish for here ?
The boy and Man an individual makes, 175
Yet fight thou now for apples and for cakes ?
Go, like the Indian, in another life
Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife :
As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,
As toys and empires, for a god-like mind. 180
Rewards, that either would to virtue bring
No joy, or be destructive of the thing :
How oft by these at sixty are undone
The virtues of a faint at twenty-one !

To whom can riches give repute or trust, 185

Content, or pleasure, but the good and just ?

Judges and senates have been bought for gold,

Esteem and love were never to be sold.

Oh fool ! to think God hates the worthy mind,

The lover and the love of human kind, 190

Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,

Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.

Honour and shame from no condition rise ;

Act well your part, there all the honour lies.

Fortune in Men has some small diff'rence made,

One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade ; 196

The cobbler apron'd, and the parson gown'd,

The friar hooded, and the monarch crown'd.

“ What differ more (you cry) than crown and cowl ?”

I'll tell you, friend ; a wife Man and a fool. 200

You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
 Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,
 Worth makes the Man, and want of it the fellow ;
 The rest is all but leather or prunello. 204

Stuck o'er with titles, and hung round with strings,
 That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings.
 Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,
 In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece :
 But by your father's worth if your's you rate,
 Count me those only who were good and great.
 Go ! if your ancient, but ignoble blood 211
 Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood,
 Go ! and pretend your family is young ;
 Nor own your fathers have been fools so long.
 What can ennoble fots, or slaves, or cowards ? 215
 Alas ! not all the blood of all the Howards.

Look next on greatness ; say where greatness lies.

“ Where, but among the heroes and the wife !”

Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,

From Macedonia's madman to the Swede ; 220

The whole strange purpose of their lives to find

Or make an enemy of all mankind !

Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,

Yet ne'er looks forward further than his nose.

No less alike the politic and wife ; 225

All fly flow things, with circumspective eyes :

Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,

Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.

But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat ;

'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great : 230

Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,

Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.

Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
 Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,
 Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed 235
 Like Socrates, that Man is great indeed.

What's fame? a fancy'd life in others breath,
 A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death.
 Just what you hear, you have, and what's unknown
 The fame (my lord) if Tully's, or your own. 240
 All that we feel of it begins and ends
 In the small circle of our foes or friends;
 To all beside as much an empty shade
 An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead;
 Alike or when, or where, they shone or shine,
 Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine. 246
 A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
 An honest Man's the noblest work of God.

Fame but from death a villain's name can save,
 As justice tears his body from the grave ; 250
 When what t' oblivion better were resign'd,
 Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.
 All fame is foreign, but of true desert ;
 Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart :
 One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
 Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas ; 256
 And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,
 Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

In parts superior what advantage lies ?
 Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise? 260
 'Tis but to know how little can be known ;
 To see all others faults, and feel our own ;
 Condemn'd in bus'ness or in arts to drudge,
 Without a second, or without a judge :

Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land ?

All fear, none aid you, and few understand. 266

Painful pre-eminence ! yourself to view

Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

Bring then these blessings to a strict account ;

Make fair deductions ; see to what they 'mount :

How much of other each is sure to cost ; 271

How each for other oft is wholly lost ;

How inconsistent greater goods with these ;

How sometimes life is risqu'd, and always ease :

Think, and if still the things thy envy call, 275

Say, wouldst thou be the man to whom they fall ?

To fight for ribbands if thou art so filly,

Mark how they grace lord Umbra, or Sir Billy.

Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life ?

Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife. 280

If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shin'd,
 The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind :
 Or ravish'd with the whistling of a name,
 See Cromwell, damn'd to everlasting fame !
 If all, united, thy ambition call, 285
 From ancient story learn to scorn them all.
 There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
 See the false scale of happiness complete !
 In hearts of kings, or arms of queens who lay,
 How happy those to ruin, these betray ! 290
 Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,
 From dirt and sea-weed as proud Venice rose.
 In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,
 And all that rais'd the hero sunk the Man :
 Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold, 295
 But stain'd with blood, or ill-exchang'd for gold :

Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,
Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.

Oh wealth ill-fated ! which no act of fame
E'er taught to shine, or sanctified from shame !

What greater bliss attends their close of life ? 301

Some greedy minion, or imperious wife ;

The trophy'd arches, story'd halls invade,

And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.

Alas ! not dazzled with their noon-tide ray, 305

Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day ;

The whole amount of that enormous fame,

A tale, that blends their glory with their shame !

Know then this truth (enough for man to know),

“ Virtue alone is happiness below.” 310

The only point where human bliss stands still,

And tastes the good without the fall to ill ;

Where only merit constant pay receives,
Is blest in what it takes, and what it gives ;
The joy unequal'd, if its end it gain, 315
And if it lose, attended with no pain :
Without satiety, tho' e'er so blest,
And but more relish'd as the more distress'd :
The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears,
Less pleasing far than virtue's very tears : 320
Good, from each object, from each place acquir'd,
For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd ;
Never elated, while one Man's oppress'd ;
Never dejected, while another's blest ;
And where no wants, no wishes can remain, 325
Since but to wish more virtue, is to gain.

See the sole bliss Heav'n could on all bestow !

Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know ;

Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
The bad muſt miſs ; the good, untaught, will find ;
Slave to no ſect, who takes no private road, 331
But looks thro' Nature up to Nature's God ;
Pursues that chain which links th' immense deſign,
Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine ;
Sees, that no being any bliſs can know, 335
But touches ſome above and ſome below ;
Learns from this union of the riſing whole,
The firſt, laſt purpoſe of the human ſoul ;
And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
All end, in LOVE OF GOD, and LOVE OF MAN.
For him alone hope leads from goal to goal, 341
And opens ſtill, and opens on his ſoul ;
Till lengthen'd on to faith, and unconfin'd,
It pours the bliſs that fills up all the mind.

He sees why Nature plants in Man alone 345

Hope of known bliss, and faith in bliss unknown :

(Nature, whose dictates to no other kind

Are giv'n in vain, but what they seek they find)

Wife is her present ; she connects in this

His greatest virtue with his greatest bliss ; 350

At once his own bright prospect to be blest,

And strongest motive to assist the rest.

Self-love thus push'd to social, to divine,

Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.

Is this too little for the boundless heart ? 355

Extend it, let thy enemies have part :

Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,

In one close system of benevolence :

Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,

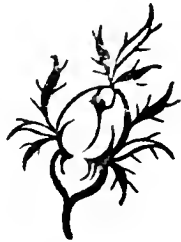
And height of bliss but height of charity. 360

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

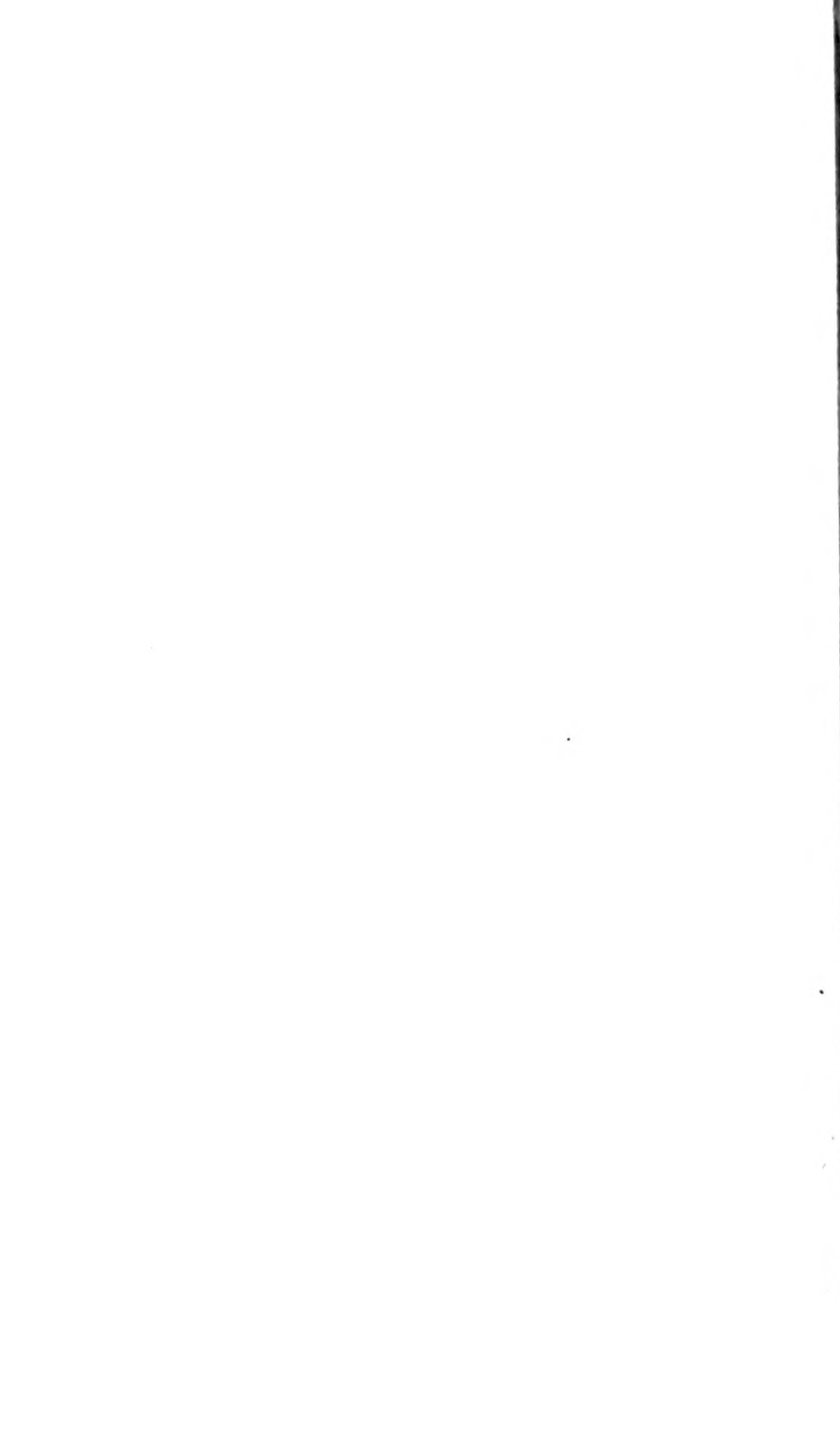
Come then, my friend! my genius! ,come along,
Oh master of the poet, and the song! 374
And while the Muse now stoops, or now ascends,
To Man's low passions, or their glorious ends,

Teach me, like thee in various Nature wise,
 To fall with dignity, with temper rise ;
 Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
 From grave to gay, from lively to severe ; 380
 Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
 Intent to reason, or polite to please.
 Oh ! while along the stream of time thy name
 Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame ;
 Say, shall my little bark attendant fail, 385
 Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale ?
 When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
 Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
 Shall then this verse to future age pretend
 Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend ? 390
 That, urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
 From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart ;

For wit's false mirror held up Nature's light ;
Shew'd erring pride, **WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT ;**
That **REASON, PASSION,** answer one great aim ; 395
That true **SELF-LOVE** and **SOCIAL** are the same ;
That **VIRTUE** only makes our bliss below ;
And all our knowledge is, **OURSELVES TO KNOW.**



THE
UNIVERSAL
P R A Y E R.
DEO OPT. MAX.



THE
UNIVERSAL PRAYER.
DEO OPT. MAX.

FATHER of all! in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime ador'd,
By faint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood:
Who all my sense confin'd
To know but this, that Thou art Good,
And that myself am blind;

Yet gave me in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill ;
And binding Nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than heav'n pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away ;
For God is paid when Man receives :
T' enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think Thee Lord alone of Man,
When thousand worlds are round :

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay ;
If I am wrong, oh teach my heart
To find that better way.

*well
u-let
p-ri*

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy Wisdom has deny'd,
Or aught thy Goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see ;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean tho' I am, not wholly so,
Since quicken'd by thy breath :
Oh lead me wherefoe'er I go,
Thro' this day's life or death.

This day, be bread and peace my lot :

All else beneath the sun,

Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,

And let thy will be done.

To Thee, whose temple is all space,

Whose altar, earth, sea, skies !

One chorus let all being raise ;

All Nature's incense rise !



THE
DYING CHRISTIAN

TO HIS SOUL.

O D E.

I.

VITAL spark of heav'nly flame,
Quit, oh quit this mortal frame ;
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying.
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying !
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

II.

Hark ! they whisper ; angels say,

Sister spirit, come away.

What is this absorbs me quite ?

Steals my senses, shuts my sight,

Drowns my spirits, draws my breath ?

Tell me, my soul, can this be Death ?

III.

The world recedes ; it disappears !

Heaven opens on my eyes ! my ears

With sounds seraphic ring :

Lend, lend your wings ! I mount ! I fly !

O Grave ! where is thy victory ?

O Death, where is thy sting ?

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