



THE
ESTIMATE of LIFE,

IN THREE PARTS.

A P O E M:

By JOHN GILBERT COOPER, Esq;

P A R T I.

MELPOMENE: or, The Melancholy.

————— *Reason thus with Life;*
If I lose thee, I do lose a thing,
That none but fools would weep.

SHAKESP. Meaf. for Meaf.

OFFSPRING of folly and of noise,
Fantastick train of airy joys,
Cease, cease your vain delusive lore,
And tempt my serious thoughts no more,

O 4

Ye

Ye horrid forms, ye gloomy throng,
 Who hear the bird of midnight's song;
 Thou too, DESPAIR, pale spectre, come,
 From the self-murd'rer's haunted tomb,
 While sad MELPOMENE relates,
 How we're afflicted by the fates.

What's all this wish'd-for empire, Life?
 A scene of mis'ry, care, and strife;
 And make the most, that's all we have
 Betwixt the cradle and the grave.
 The being is not worth the charge,
 Behold the estimate at large.
 Our youth is silly, idle, vain;
 Our age is full of care and pain;
 From wealth accrues anxiety;
 Contempt and want from poverty;
 What trouble business has in store!
 How idleness fatigues us more!
 To reason, th' ignorant are blind;
 The learned's eyes are too refin'd
 Each wit deems every wit his foe,
 Each fool is naturally so;
 And ev'ry rank and ev'ry station
 Meet justly with disapprobation.
 Say, man, is this the boasted state,
 Where all is pleasant, all is great?
 Alas! another face you'll see,
 Take off the vail of vanity.

Is aught in pleasure, aught in pow'r,
 Has wisdom any gift in store,
 To make thee stay a single hour?

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Tell me, ye youthful, who approve
 Th' intoxicating sweets of love,
 What endless nameless throbs arise,
 What heart-felt anguish and what sighs,
 When jealousy has gnaw'd the root,
 Whence love's united branches shoot.

Or grant that Hymen lights his torch,
 To lead you to the nuptial porch,
 Behold! the long'd-for rapture o'er!

Desire begins to lose its pow'r,
 Then cold indifference takes place,
 Fruition alters quite the case;
 And what before was extasy,
 Is scarcely now civility.

Your children bring a second care;
 If childless, then you want an heir;
 So that in both alike you find
 The same perplexity of mind.

Do pow'r or wealth more comfort own?
 Behold yon pageant on a throne,
 Where filken swarms of flattery
 Obsequious wait his asking eye.
 But view within his tortur'd breast,
 No more the downy seat of rest,

Suspicion

Suspicion casts her poison'd dart,
And guilt, that scorpion, stings his heart,

Will knowledge give us happiness?
In that, alas! we know there's less,
For every pang of mental woe
Springs from the faculty, to *know*.

Hark! at the death-betok'ning knell
Of yonder doleful passing-bell,
Perhaps a friend, a father's dead,
Or the lov'd partner of thy bed!
Perhaps thy only son lies there,
Breathless upon the sable bier!
Say, what can ease the present grief,
Can former joys afford relief?
Those former joys remember'd still,
The more augment the recent ill,
And where you seek for comfort, gain
Additional increase of pain.
What woes from mortal ills accrue!
And what from natural ensue!
Disease and casualty attend
Our footsteps to the journey's end;
The cold catarrh, the gout and stone,
The dropsy, jaundice, join'd in one,
The raving fever's inward heat,
The pale consumption's fatal sweat,
And thousand more distempers roam,
To drag us to th' eternal home.

And

And when solution sets us free
 From prison of mortality,
 The soul dilated joins in air,
 To go, alas! we know not where,
 And the poor body will become
 A cloud within a lonely tomb.
 Reflection sad! such bodies must
 Return, and mingle with the dust!
 But neither sense nor beauty have
 Defensive charms against the grave,
 Nor virtue's shield, nor wisdom's lore,
 Nor true religion's sacred pow'r;
 For as that charnel's earth you see,
 E'en, my EUDOCIA, you will be.

P A R T II.

C A L L I O P E: or, The Chearful,

*Inter cuncta leges et percunctabere doctos
 Qua ratione queas traducere leniter ævum.*

HOR. Lib. 1. Ep. 18.

GRIM Superstition, hence away
 To native night, and leave the day,
 Nor let thy hellish brood appear,
 Begot on Ignorance and Fear.
 Come, gentle Mirth, and Gaiety,
 Sweet daughter of Society;

Whilst

Whilst fair CALLIOPE pursues
 Flights worthy of the chearful muse.

O life, thou great essential good,
 Where ev'ry blessing's understood!
 Where Plenty, Freedom, Pleasure meet,
 To make each fleeting moment sweet,
 Where moral Love and Innocence,
 The balm of sweet Content dispense,
 Where Peace expands her turtle wings,
 And Hope a constant requiem sings,
 With easy thought my breast inspire,
 To thee I tune the sprightly lyre.
 From Heav'n this emanation flows,
 To Heav'n again the wand'rer goes:
 And whilst employ'd beneath on earth,
 Its boon attendants, Ease and Mirth,
 Join'd with the Social Virtues three,
 And their calm parent Charity,
 Conduct it to the sacred plains
 Where Happiness terrestrial reigns.
 'Tis Discontent alone destroys
 The harvest of our ripening joys;
 Resolve to be exempt from woe,
 Your resolution keeps you so.
 Whate'er is needful man receives,
 Nay more superfluous Nature gives,
 Indulgent parent, source of bliss,
 Profuse of goodness to excess!

For thee 'tis, man, the zephyr blows,
 For thee the purple vintage flows,
 Each flow'r its various hue displays,
 The lark exalts her vernal lays,
 To view yon azure vault is thine,
 And my EUDOCIA's form divine.

Hark ! how the renovating Spring
 Invites the feather'd choir to sing,
 Spontaneous mirth and rapture glow
 On ev'ry shrub, and ev'ry bough,
 Their little airs a lesson give,
 They teach us mortals how to live,
 And well advise us whilst we can,
 To spend in joy the vital span.
 Ye gay and youthful all advance,
 Together knit in festive dance,
 See blooming HEBE leads the way,
 For youth is Nature's holiday.
 If dire Misfortune should employ
 Her dart to wound the timely joy,
 Solicit Bacchus with your pray'r,
 No earthly goblin dares come near,
 Care puts an easier aspect on,
 Pale Anger smooths her threat'ning frown,
 Mirth comes in Melancholy's stead,
 And Discontent conceals her head.
 The thoughts on vagrant pinions fly,
 And mount exulting to the sky ;

Thence

'Thence with enraptur'd views look down
On golden empires all their own.

Or let, when Fancy spreads her sails,
Love waft you on with easier gales,
Where in the soul-bewitching groves,
EUPHROSINE, sweet goddess, roves ;
'Tis rapture all, 'tis extasy !

An earthly immortality !
This all the ancient Bards employ'd,
'Twas all the ancient Gods enjoy'd,
Who often from the realms above
Came down on earth t' indulge in love.

Still there's one greater blifs in store,
'Tis virtuous Friendship's social hour,
When goodness from the heart sincere
Pours forth Compassion's balmy tear,
For from those tears such transports flow,
As none but friends, and angels know.

Blest state ! where ev'ry thing conspires
To fill the breast with heav'nly fires !
Where for a while the soul must roam,
To preconceive the state to come,
And when thro' life the journey's past,
Without repining or distaste,
Again the spirit will repair,
To breathe a more celestial air,
And reap, where blessed beings glow,
Completion of the joys below.

P A R T III.

TERPSICHORE: or, The Moderate.

—διδε δ' αγαθον τε κακον τε:

HOM. Od. Θ.

*Hæc satis est orare Jovem. Qui donat et aufert,
Det vitam, det opes; æquum mi animum ipse parabo.*

HOR. Lib. I. Ep. 18.

DESCEND, Astræa, from above,
Where Jove's celestial daughters rove,
And deign once more to bring with thee
Thy earth-deserting family,
Calm Temperance, and Patience mild,
Sweet Contemplation's heavenly child,
Reflection firm, and Fancy free,
Religion pure, and Probity,
Whilst all the Heliconian throng
Shall join TERPSICHORE in song.

Ere man great Reason's lord was made,
Or the world's first foundations laid,
As high in their divine abodes,
Consulting fate the mighty gods,
Jove on the chaos looking down,
Spoke thus from his imperial throne:

“ Ye deities and potentates,
“ Aerial pow'rs, and heav'nly states,

“ Lo,

“ Lo, in that gloomy place below,
 “ Where darkness reigns and discord now,
 “ There a new world shall grace the skies,
 “ And a new creature form'd arise,
 “ Who shall partake of our perfections,
 “ And live and act by our directions,
 “ (For the chief blifs of any station
 “ Is nought without communication)
 “ Let therefore ev'ry godhead give
 “ What this new being should receive,
 “ But care important must be had,
 “ To mingle well of good and bad,
 “ That by th' allaying mixture, he
 “ May not approach to deity.”

The sovereign spake, the gods agree,
 And each began in his degree :
 Behind the throne of Jove there stood
 Two vessels of celestial wood,
 Containing just two equal measures,
 One fill'd with pain, and one with pleasures ;
 The gods drew out from both of these,
 And mix'd 'em with their essences,
 (Which essences are heav'nly still,
 When undisturb'd by nat'ral ill,
 And man to moral good is prone,
 Let but the moral pow'rs alone,
 And not pervert 'em by tuition,
 Or conjure 'em by superstition)

Hence

Hence man partakes an equal share
 Of pleasing thoughts and gloomy care,
 And Plain and Pleasure e'er shall be,
 As * PLATO says, in company.
 Receive the one, and soon the other
 Will follow to rejoin his brother.
 Those who with pious pain pursue
 Calm Virtue, by her sacred clue,
 Will surely find the mental treasure
 Of Virtue, only real pleasure :
 Follow the pleasurable road,
 That fatal Siren reckons good,
 'Twill lead thee to the gloomy cell,
 Where Pain and Melancholy dwell.
 Health is the child of Abstinence,
 Disease, of a luxurious sense ;
 Despair, that hellish fiend, proceeds
 From loosen'd thoughts, and impious deeds ;
 And the sweet offspring of Content,
 Flows from the mind's calm government.
 Thus, man, thy state is free from woe,
 If thou would'st chuse to make it so.
 Murmur not then at Heav'n's decree,
 The gods have given thee liberty,
 And plac'd within thy conscious breast,
 Reason, as an unerring test,
 And should'st thou fix on misery,
 The fault is not in them, but thee.

* See the PHÆDO of Plato.