

The MOUSE's PETITION,*

Found in the TRAP where he had been confin'd all Night.

Parcere subjectis, & debellare superbos.

VIRGIL.

OH! hear a penfive prisoner's prayer,
For liberty that fights;

And never let thine heart be shut

Against the wretch's cries.

For

* To Doctor PRIESTLEY.

The Author is concerned to find, that what was intended as the petition of mercy against justice, has been construed as the plea of humanity against cruelty. She is certain that cruelty could never be apprehended from the Gentleman to whom this is addressed; and the poor animal would have suffered more as the victim of domestic œconomy, than of philosophical curiosity.

For here forlorn and sad I sit,
Within the wiry grate ;
And tremble at th' approaching morn,
Which brings impending fate.

If e'er thy breast with freedom glow'd,
And spurn'd a tyrant's chain,
Let not thy strong oppressive force
A free-born mouse detain.

Oh ! do not stain with guiltless blood
Thy hospitable hearth ;
Nor triumph that thy wiles betray'd
A prize so little worth.

The scatter'd gleanings of a feast
My frugal meals supply ;
But if thine unrelenting heart
That slender boon deny,

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The cheerful light, the vital air,
Are blessings widely given ;
Let nature's commoners enjoy
The common gifts of heaven.

The well-taught philosophic mind
To all compassion gives ;
Casts round the world an equal eye,
And feels for all that lives.

If mind, as ancient fages taught,
A never dying flame,
Still shifts thro' matter's varying forms,
In every form the same,

Beware, lest in the worm you crush
A brother's soul you find ;
And tremble lest thy luckless hand
Dislodge a kindred mind.

Or,

Or, if this tranfient gleam of day

Be *all* of life we fhare,

Let pity plead within thy breaft

That little *all* to fpare.

So may thy hofpitable board

With health and peace be crown'd ;

And every charm of heartfelt eafe

Beneath thy roof be found.

So, when deftruction lurks unfeen,

Which men like mice may fhare,

May fome kind angel clear thy path,

And break the hidden fnare.