TIROCINIUM:

OR, A

REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη.

PLATO.

Αρχη πολιτειας απασης, νεων τροφα.

DIOG. LAERT.

REV.

THE

REC

AN

BY

Olney,

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,

RECTOR OF STOCK IN ESSEX,

THE TUTOUR OF HIS TWO SONS,

THE FOLLOWING

P O E M,

RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION

IN PREFERENCE TO

AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

WILLIAM COWPER.

Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.

TIROCINIUM.

IT is not from his form in which we trace
Strength joined with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the maſter of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form indeed, th' aſſociate of a mind
Vaſt in its pow'rs, ethereal in its kind,
That form, the labour of almighty ſkill,
Framed for the ſervice of a free-born will,
Aſſerts precedence, and beſpeaks controul,
But borrows all its grandeur from the ſoul.
Hers is the ſtate, the ſplendour and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.

For her, the mem'ry fills her ample page
With truths pour'd down from ev'ry diſtant age,
For her amaſſes an unbounded ſtore,
The wiſdom of great nations, now no more,
Though laden, not incumber'd with her ſpoil,
Laborious, yet unconſcious of her toil,
When copiouſly ſupplied, then moſt enlarged,
Still to be fed, and not to be ſurcharged.
For her, the fancy roving unconfined,
The preſent muſe of ev'ry penſive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To nature's ſcenes, than nature ever knew,
At her command, winds riſe and waters roar,
Again ſhe lays them ſlumb'ring on the ſhore,
With flow'r and fruit the wilderneſs ſupplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp ariſe.
For her, the judgment, umpire in the ſtrife,
That grace and nature have to wage through life,
Quick-ſighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed ſage preceptor to the will,

Condemns,

Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
Guides the deciſion of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth
To yon fair ſun and his attendant earth,
And when deſcending he reſigns the ſkies,
Why takes the gent'ler moon her turn to riſe,
Whom ocean feels through all his countleſs waves,
And owns her pow'r on ev'ry ſhore he laves?
Why do the ſeaſons ſtill enrich the year,
Fruitful and young as in their firſt career?
Spring hangs her infant bloſſoms on the trees,
Rock'd in the cradle of the weſtern breeze,
Summer in haſte the thriving charge receives
Beneath the ſhade of her expanded leaves,
'Till autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
Dye them at laſt in all their glowing hues—
'Twere wild profuſion all, and bootleſs waſte,
Pow'r miſemployed, munificence miſplaced,

 Had

Had not its author dignified the plan,
And crowned it with the majeſty of man.
Thus form'd, thus placed, intelligent, and taught
Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought
The wildeſt ſcorner of his Maker's laws
Finds in a ſober moment time to pauſe,
To preſs th' important queſtion on his heart,
" Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art ?"
If man be what he ſeems, this hour a ſlave,
The next mere duſt and aſhes in the grave,
Endued with reaſon only to deſcry
His crimes and follies with an aching eye,
With paſſions, juſt that he may prove with pain
The force he ſpends againſt their fury, vain,
And if ſoon after having burnt by turns
With ev'ry luſt with which frail nature burns,
His being end where death diſſolves the bond,
The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond,
Then he, of all that nature has brought forth
Stands ſelf-impeach'd the creature of leaſt worth,

And uſeleſs while he lives, and when he dies,
Brings into doubt the wiſdom of the ſkies.

Truths that the learn'd purſue with eager thought,
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at laſt, though told in pompous ſtrains,
A childiſh waſte of philoſophic pains;
But truths on which depends our main concern,
That 'tis our ſhame and mis'ry not to learn,
Shine by the ſide of ev'ry path we tread
With ſuch a luſtre, he that runs may read.

'Tis true, that if to trifle life away
Down to the ſun-ſet of their lateſt day,
Then periſh on futurity's wide ſhore
Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
Were all that heav'n required of human kind,
And all the plan their deſtiny deſigned,
What none could rev'rence all might juſtly blame,
And man would breathe but for his Maker's ſhame.

But reaſon heard, and nature well peruſed,
At once the dreaming mind is diſabuſed.
If all we find poſſeſſing earth, ſea, air,
Reflect his attributes who plac'd them there,
Fulfill the purpoſe, and appear deſign'd
Proofs of the wiſdom of th' all-ſeeing mind,
'Tis plain, the creature whom he choſe t' inveſt
With kingſhip and dominion o'er the reſt,
Received his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the power in which he ſtands array'd,
That firſt or laſt, hereafter if not here,
He too might make his author's wiſdom clear,
Praiſe him on earth, or obſtinately dumb
Suffer his juſtice in a world to come.
This once believed, 'twere logic miſapplied
To prove a conſequence by none denied,
That we are bound to caſt the minds of youth
Betimes into the mould of heav'nly truth,
That taught of God they may indeed be wiſe,
Nor ignorantly wand'ring miſs the ſkies.

In early days the conſcience has in moſt
A quickneſs, which in later life is loſt,
Preſerved from guilt by ſalutary fears,
Or, guilty, ſoon relenting into tears.
Too careleſs often as our years proceed,
What friends we ſort with, or what books we read,
Our parents yet exert a prudent care
To feed our infant minds with proper fare,
And wiſely ſtore the nurs'ry by degrees
With wholeſome learning, yet acquired with eaſe.
Neatly ſecured from being ſoiled or torn
Beneath a pane of thin tranſlucent horn,
A book (to pleaſe us at a tender age
'Tis call'd a book, though but a ſingle page)
Preſents the pray'r the Saviour deign'd to teach,
Which children uſe, and parſons—when they preach.
Liſping our ſyllables, we ſcramble next,
Through moral narrative, or ſacred text,
And learn with wonder how this world began,
Who made, who marr'd, and who has ranſom'd man.

Points, which unleſs the Scripture made them plain,
The wiſeſt heads might agitate in vain.
Oh thou, whom borne on fancy's eager wing
Back to the ſeaſon of life's happy ſpring,
I pleaſed remember, and while mem'ry yet
Holds faſt her office here, can ne'er forget,
Ingenious dreamer, in whoſe well told-tale
Sweet fiction and ſweet truth alike prevail,
Whoſe hum'rous vein, ſtrong ſenſe, and ſimple ſtile,
May teach the gayeſt, make the graveſt ſmile,
Witty, and well-employ'd, and like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables his ſlighted word,
I name thee not, leſt ſo deſpiſed a name
Should move a ſneer at thy deſerved fame;
Yet ev'n in tranſitory life's late day
That mingles all my brown with ſober gray,
Revere the man, whoſe *Pilgrim* marks the road
And guides the *Progreſs* of the ſoul to God.
'Twere well with moſt, if books that could engage
Their childhood, pleaſed them at a riper age;

The

The man approving what had charm'd the boy,
Would die at laſt in comfort, peace, and joy,
And not with curſes on his art who ſtole
The gem of truth from his unguarded ſoul,
The ſtamp of artleſs piety impreſs'd
By kind tuition on his yielding breaſt,
The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
Regards with ſcorn, though once received with awe,
And warp'd into the labyrinth of lies
That babblers, called philoſophers, deviſe,
Blaſphemes his creed as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
Aſſert the native evil of his heart,
His pride reſents the charge, although the proof *
Riſe in his forehead, and ſeem rank enough;
Point to the cure, deſcribe a Saviour's croſs
As God's expedient to retrieve his loſs,

BIBLIOTHECA REGIA

The

* See Chron. Ch. 26. v. 19.

The young apoſtate ſickens at the view,
And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere nature proves,
Oppos'd againſt the pleaſures nature loves!
While ſelf-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
She longs to yield, no ſooner wooed than won.
Try now the merits of this bleſt exchange
Of modeſt truth for wits eccentric range.
'Time was, he cloſed as he began the day
With decent duty, not aſhamed to pray.
The practice was a bond upon his heart,
A pledge he gave for a conſiſtent part,
Nor could he dare preſumptuouſly diſpleaſe
A pow'r confeſs'd ſo lately on his knees.
But now, farewell all legendary tales,
The ſhadows fly, philoſophy prevails,
Pray'r to the winds and caution to the waves,
Religion makes the free by nature ſlaves.

Prieſts

Prieſts have invented, and the world admired
What knaviſh prieſts promulgate as inſpired,
'Till reaſon, now no longer overawed,
Reſumes her pow'rs, and ſpurns the clumſy fraud,
And common-ſenſe diffuſing real day,
The meteor of the goſpel dies away.
Such rhapſodies our ſhrew'd diſcerning youth
Learn from expert enquirers after truth,
Whoſe only care, might truth preſume to ſpeak,
Is not to find what they profeſs to ſeek.
And thus well-tutor'd only while we ſhare
A mother's lectures and a nurſe's care,
And taught at ſchools much mythologic ſtuff, *
But ſound religion ſparingly enough,

Our

* The author begs leave to explain, ſenſible that without ſuch knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor hiſtorians can be taſted or indeed underſtood, he does not mean to cenſure the pains that are taken to inſtruct a ſchool-boy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of chriſtian culture which leaves him ſhamefully ignorant of his own.

Our early notices of truth diſgraced
Soon loſe their credit, and are all effaced.

Would you your ſon ſhould be a ſot or dunce,
Laſcivious, headſtrong, or all theſe at once,
That in good time, the ſtripling's finiſh'd taſte
For looſe expence and faſhionable waſte,
Should prove your ruin, and his own at laſt,
Train him in public with a mob of boys,
Childiſh in miſchief only and in noiſe,
Elſe of a manniſh growth, and five in ten
In infidelity and lewdneſs, men.
There ſhall he learn 'ere ſixteen winter's old,
That authors are moſt uſeful, pawn'd or ſold,
That pedantry is all that ſchools impart,
But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart,
There waiter Dick with Bacchanalian lays
Shall win his heart and have his drunken praiſe,
His counſellor and boſom-friend ſhall prove,
And ſome ſtreet-pacing harlot his firſt love.

And

Schools, unleſs diſcipline where doubly ſtrong,
Detain their adoleſcent charge too long.
The management of Tiro's of eighteen
Is difficult, their puniſhment obſcene.
The ſtout tall Captain, whoſe ſuperior ſize
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
His pride that ſcorns t' obey or to ſubmit,
With them is courage, his effront'ry wit.
His wild excurſions, window-breaking feats,
Robb'ry of gardens, quarrels in the ſtreets,
His hair-breadth 'ſcapes, and all his daring ſchemes,
Tranſport them, and are made their fav'rite themes.
In little boſoms ſuch atchievements ſtrike
A kindred ſpark, they burn to do the like.
Thus half accompliſh'd, 'ere he yet begin
To ſhow the peeping down upon his chin,
And as maturity of years comes on
Made juſt th' adept that you deſign'd your ſon,

T' inſure the perſeverance of his courſe,
And give your monſtrous project all its force,
Send him to college. If he there be tamed,
Or in one article of vice reclaimed,
Where no regard of ord'nances is ſhown
Or look'd for now, the fault muſt be his own.
Some ſneaking virtue lurks in him no doubt,
Where neither ſtrumpets charms nor drinking-bout,
Nor gambling practices can find it out.
Such youths of ſpirit, and that ſpirit too
Ye nurs'ries of our boys, we owe to you.
Though from ourſelves the miſchief more proceeds,
For public ſchools 'tis public folly feeds.
The ſlaves of cuſtom and eſtabliſh'd mode,
With pack-horſe conſtancy we keep the road
Crooked or ſtrait, through quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of our leaders bells.
To follow fooliſh precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is eaſier than to think,

And ſuch an age as ours baulks no expence]
Except of caution and of common-ſenſe,
Elſe ſure, notorious fact and proof ſo plain
Would turn our ſteps into a wiſer train.
I blame not thoſe who with what care they can
O'erwatch the num'rous and unruly clan,
Or if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promiſe a work of which they muſt deſpair.
Have ye, ye ſage intendants of the whole,
An ubiquarian preſence and controul,
Eliſha's eye, that when Gehazi ſtray'd
Went with him, and ſaw all the game he play'd?
Yes—ye are conſcious; and on all the ſhelves
Your pupils ſtrike upon, have ſtruck yourſelves.
Or if by nature ſober, ye had then
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men,
Ye knew at leaſt, by conſtant proofs addreſs'd
To ears and eyes, the vices of the reſt.
But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
And evils not to be endured, endure,

Leſt pow'r exerted, out without ſucceſs,
Should make the little ye retain ſtill leſs.
Ye once were juſtly famed for bringing forth
Undoubted ſcholarſhip and genuine worth,
And in the firmament of fame ſtill ſhines
A glory bright as that of all the ſigns
Of poets raiſed by you, and ſtateſmen and divines.
Peace to them all, thoſe brilliant times are fled,
And no ſuch lights are kindling in their ſtead.
Our ſtriplings ſhine indeed, but with ſuch rays
As ſet the midnight riot in a blaze,
And ſeem, if judged by their expreſſive looks,
Deeper in none than in their ſurgeons books.

Say muſe (for education made the ſong,
No muſe can heſitate or linger long)
What cauſes move us, knowing as we muſt
That theſe *Menageries* all fail their truſt,
To ſend our ſons to ſcout and ſcamper there,
While colts and puppies coſt us ſo much care?

Be it a weakneſs, it deſerves ſome praiſe,
We love the play-place of our early days.
The ſcene is touching, and the heart is ſtone
That feels not at that ſight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving ſkill,
The very name we carved ſubſiſting ſtill,
The bench on which we ſat while deep-employ'd
Though mangled, hack'd and hew'd, not yet deſtroy'd,
The little ones unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very ſpot,
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw,
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dex'trous pat,
The pleaſing ſpectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That viewing it, we ſeem almoſt t' obtain
Our innocent ſweet ſimple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place
Whence firſt we ſtarted into life's long race,

Maintains

Maintains its hold with ſuch unfailing ſway,
We feel it ev'n in age, and at our lateſt day.
Hark! how the ſire of chits whoſe future ſhare
Of claſſic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeneſs placed on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee,
And tells them as he ſtrokes their ſilver locks,
That they muſt ſoon learn Latin and to box;
Then turning, he regales his lift'ning wife
With all th' adventures of his early life,
His ſkill in coachmanſhip or driving chaiſe,
In bilking tavern bills and ſpouting plays,
What ſhifts he uſed detected in a ſcrape,
How he was flogg'd, or had the luck t' eſcape,
What ſums he loſt at play, and how he ſold
Watch, ſeals, and all, 'till all his pranks are told.
Retracing thus his *frolics* ('tis a name
That palliates deeds of folly and of ſhame)
He gives the local biaſs all its ſway,
Reſolves that where he play'd his ſons ſhall play,

And deſtines their bright genius to be ſhown
Juſt in the ſcene where he diſplay'd his own.
The meek and baſhful boy will ſoon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought,
The rude will ſcuffle through with eaſe enough,
Great ſchools ſuit beſt the ſturdy and the rough.
Ah happy deſignation, prudent choice,
Th' event is ſure, expect it and rejoice!
Soon ſee your wiſh fulfilled in either child,
The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
Excuſed th' incumbrance of more ſolid worth,
Are beſt diſpoſed of, where with moſt ſucceſs
They may acquire that confident addreſs,
Thoſe habits of profuſe and lew'd expence,
That ſcorn of all delights but thoſe of ſenſe,
Which though in plain plebeians we condemn,
With ſo much reaſon all expect from them.

But

But families of leſs illuſtrious fame,
Whoſe chief diſtinction is their ſpotleſs name,
Whoſe heirs, their honours none, their income ſmall,
Muſt ſhine by true deſert, or not at all,
What dream they of, that with ſo little care
They riſk their hopes, their deareſt treaſure there?
They dream of little Charles or William graced
With wig prolix, down-flowing to his waiſt,
They ſee th' attentive crowds his talents draw,
They hear him ſpeak—the oracle of law.
The father who deſigns his babe a prieſt,
Dreams him epiſcopally ſuch at leaſt,
And while the playful jockey ſcow'rs the room
Briſkly, aſtride upon the parlour broom,
In fancy ſees him more ſuperbly ride
In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its ſide.
Events improbable and ſtrange as theſe,
Which only a parental eye foreſees,
A public ſchool ſhall bring to paſs with eaſe.

But

But how? reſides ſuch virtue in that air
As muſt create an appetite for pray'r?
And will it breathe into him all the zeal
That candidates for ſuch a prize ſhould feel,
To take the lead and be the foremoſt ſtill
In all true worth and literary ſkill?
" Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught
" The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!
" Church-ladders are not always mounted beſt
" By learned Clerks and Latiniſts profeſs'd.
" Th' exalted prize demands an upward look,
" Not to be found by poring on a book.
" Small ſkill in Latin, and ſtill leſs in Greek,
" Is more than adequate to all I ſeek,
" Let erudition grace him or not grace,
" I give the bawble but the ſecond place,
" His wealth, fame, honors, all that I intend,
" Subſiſt and center in one point—a friend.
" A friend, whate'er he ſtudies or neglects,
" Shall give him conſequence, heal all defects,

His

" His intercourſe with peers, and ſons of peers—
" There dawns the ſplendour of his future years,
" In that bright quarter his propitious ſkies
" Shall bluſh betimes, and there his glory riſe.
" *Your Lordſhip and your Grace*, what ſchool can teach
" A rhet'ric equal to thoſe parts of ſpeech ?
" What need of Homer's verſe or Tully's proſe,
" Sweet interjections ! if he learn but thoſe ?
" Let rev'rend churls his ignorance rebuke,
" Who ſtarve upon a dogs-ear'd Pentateuch,
" The parſon knows enough who knows a Duke."—
Egregious purpoſe ! worthily begun
In barb'rous proſtitution of your ſon,
Preſſed on *his* part by means that would diſgrace
A ſcriv'ner s clerk or footman out of place,
And ending, if at laſt its end be gained,
In ſacrilege, in God's own houſe profaned.
It may ſucceed ; and if his ſins ſhould call
For more than common puniſhment, it ſhall.

The

The wretch ſhall riſe, and be the thing on earth
Leaſt qualified in honor, learning, worth,
To occupy a ſacred, awful poſt,
In which the beſt and worthieſt tremble moſt.
The *royal letters*, are a thing of courſe,
A king that would, might recommend his horſe,
And Deans no doubt and Chapters, with one voice
As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
Behold your Biſhop! well he plays his part,
Chriſtian in name, and Infidel in heart,
Ghoſtly in office, earthly in his plan,
A ſlave at court, elſewhere a lady's man,
Dumb as a ſenator, and as a prieſt
A piece of mere church-furniture at beſt;
To live eſtranged from God his total ſcope,
And his end ſure, without one glimpſe of hope.
But fair although and feaſible it ſeem,
Depend not much upon your golden dream;
For Providence that ſeems concern'd t' exempt
The hallow'd bench from abſolute contempt,

In ſpite of all the wrigglers into place,
Still keeps a ſeat or two for worth and grace,
And therefore 'tis, that, though the ſight be rare,
We ſometimes ſee a Lowth or Bagot there.
Beſides, ſchool-friendſhips are not always found,
Though fair in promiſe, permanent and ſound.
The moſt diſint'reſted and virtuous minds
In early years connected, time unbinds.
New ſituations give a diff'rent caſt
Of habit, inclination, temper, taſte,
And he that ſeem'd our counterpart at firſt,
Soon ſhows the ſtrong ſimilitude revers'd.
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make miſtakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are at beſt but pretty buds unblown,
Whoſe ſcent and hues are rather guefs'd than known.
Each dreams that each is juſt what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When diſpoſition like a ſail unfurl'd
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.

If therefore, ev'n when honeſt in deſign,
A boyiſh friendſhip may ſo ſoon decline,
'Twere wiſer ſure t' inſpire a little heart
With juſt abhorrence of ſo mean a part,
Than ſet your ſon to work at a vile trade
For wages ſo unlikely to be paid.

Our public hives of puerile reſort
That are of chief and moſt approved report,
To ſuch baſe hopes in many a ſordid ſoul
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whoſe proud pretenſions paſs
Unqueſtioned, though the jewel be but glaſs,
That with a world not often over-nice
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice,
Or rather a groſs compound, juſtly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealouſy, and pride,
Contributes moſt perhaps t' inhance their fame,
And Emulation is its ſpecious name.

Boys once on fire with that contentious zeal
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel,
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in theirs the ſcholar's prize.
The ſpirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns,
Each vainly magnifies his own ſucceſs,
Reſents his fellows, wiſhes it were leſs,
Exults in his miſcarriage if he fail,
Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
And labors to ſurpaſs him day and night,
Leſs for improvement, than to tickle ſpite.
The ſpur is pow'rful, and I grant its force,
It pricks the genius forward in its courſe,
Allows ſhort time for play, and none for ſloth,
And felt alike by each, advances both,
But judge where ſo much evil intervenes,
The end, though plauſible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, claſſical deſert
Againſt an heart depraved and temper hurt,

Hurt too perhaps for life, for early wrong
Done to the nobler part, affects it long,
And you are ſtaunch indeed in learning's cauſe,
If you can crown a diſcipline that draws
Such miſchiefs after it, with much applauſe.

Connection form'd for int'reſt, and endear'd
By ſelfiſh views, thus cenſured and caſhier'd,
And emulation, as engend'ring hate,
Doom'd to a no leſs ignominious fate,
The props of ſuch proud ſeminaries fall,
The JACHIN and the BOAZ of them all.
Great ſchools rejected then, as thoſe that ſwell
Beyond a ſize that can be managed well,
Shall royal inſtitutions miſs the bays,
And ſmall academies win all the praiſe?
Force not my drift beyond its juſt intent,
I praiſe a ſchool as Pope a government;
So take my judgment in his language dreſs'd,
"Whate'er is beſt adminiſter'd, is beſt."

Few

Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well.
Then aſk not, whether limited or large,
But, watch they ſtrictly, or neglect their charge?
If anxious only that their boys may *learn*,
While *Morals* languiſh, a deſpiſed concern,
The great and ſmall deſerve one common blame,
Diff'rent in ſize, but in effect the ſame.
Much zeal in virtue's cauſe all teachers boaſt,
Though motives of mere lucre ſway the moſt.
Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there, the game they ſeek is eaſieſt found,
Though there, in ſpite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are moſt abundant too.
If ſhrew'd, and of a well-conſtructed brain,
Keen in purſuit, and vig'rous to retain,
Your ſon come forth a prodigy of ſkill,
As whereſoever taught, ſo form'd, he will,
The pædagogue, with ſelf-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praiſe as his due ſhare;

But

But if with all his genius he betray,
Not more intelligent, than looſe and gay,
Such vicious habits as diſgrace his name,
Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame,
Though want of due reſtraint alone have bred
The ſymptoms that you ſee with ſo much dread,
Unenvied there, he may ſuſtain alone
The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.

Oh 'tis a ſight to be with joy peruſed
By all whom ſentiment has not abuſed,
New-fangled ſentiment, the boaſted grace
Of thoſe who never feel in the right place,
A ſight ſurpaſſed by none that we can ſhow,
Though Veſtris on one leg ſtill ſhine below,
A father bleſt with an ingenuous ſon,
Father and friend and tutour all in one.
How? turn again to tales long ſince forgot,
Æſop and Phædrus and the reſt?—why not?

He will not bluſh that has a father's heart,
To take in childiſh plays a childiſh part,
But bends his ſturdy back to any toy
That youth takes pleaſure in, to pleaſe his boy;
Then why reſign into a ſtranger's hand
A taſk as much within your own command,
That God and nature and your int'reſt too
Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
Why hire a lodging in a houſe unknown
For one whoſe tend'reſt thoughts all hover round your own?
This ſecond weaning, needleſs as it is,
How does it lacerate both your heart and his!
Th' indented ſtick that loſes day by day
Notch after notch, 'till all are ſmooth'd away,
Bears witneſs long 'ere his diſmiſſion come,
With what intenſe deſire he wants his home.
But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
Bid fair enough to anſwer in the proof

Harmleſs

Harmleſs and ſafe and nat'ral as they are,
A diſappointment waits him even there:
Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,
He bluſhes, hangs his head, is ſhy and ſtrange,
No longer takes, as once, with fearleſs eaſe
His fav'rite ſtand between his father's knees,
But ſeeks the corner of ſome diſtant ſeat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And leaſt familiar where he ſhould be moſt,
Feels all his happieſt privileges loſt.
Alas poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by abſence chilled into reſpect.
Say, what accompliſhments at ſchool acquired
Brings he to ſweeten fruits ſo undeſired?
Thou well deſerv'ſt an alienated ſon,
Unleſs thy conſcious heart acknowledge—none.
None that in thy domeſtic ſnug receſs,
He had not made his own with more addreſs,
Though ſome perhaps that ſhock thy feeling mind,
And better never learn'd, or left behind.

Add too, that thus eſtranged thou can'ſt obtain
By no kind arts his confidence again,
That here begins with moſt that long complaint
Of filial frankneſs loſt, and love grown faint,
Which, oft neglected in life's waning years,
A parent pours into regardleſs ears.

Like caterpillars dangling under trees
By ſlender threads, and ſwinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and ſore diſgrace
The boughs in which are bred th' unſeemly race,
While ev'ry worm induſtriouſly weaves
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;
So num'rous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of ev'ry ſprightly boy,
Imaginations noxious and perverſe,
Which admonition can alone diſperſe.
Th' encroaching nuiſance aſks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,

To

To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhauſt the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page
At ſtated hours his freakiſh thoughts engage,
Ev'n in his paſtimes he requires a friend
To warn, and teach him ſafely to unbend,
O'er all his pleaſures gently to preſide,
Watch his emotions and controul their tide,
And levying thus, and with an eaſy ſway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
T' impreſs a value not to be eras'd
On moments ſquander'd elſe, and running all to waſte.
And ſeems it nothing in a father's eye
That unimproved thoſe many moments fly?
And is he well content, his ſon ſhould find
No nouriſhment to feed his growing mind
But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined?
For ſuch is all the mental food purvey'd
By public hacknies in the ſchooling trade,

Who feed a pupils intellect with ſtore
Of ſyntax truely, but with little more,
Diſmiſs their cares when they diſmiſs their flock,
Machines themſelves, and govern'd by a clock.
Perhaps a father bleſt with any brains
Would deem it no abuſe or waſte of pains,
T' improve this diet at no great expence,
With ſav'ry truth and wholeſome common ſenſe.
To lead his ſon for proſpects of delight
To ſome not ſteep, though philoſophic height,
Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
Yon circling worlds, their diſtance, and their ſize,
The moons of Jove and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To ſhow him in an inſect or a flow'r,
Such microſcopic proofs of ſkill and pow'r,
As hid from ages paſs'd, God now diſplays
To combat Atheiſts with in modern days;
To ſpread the earth before him, and commend
With deſignation of the fingers end

Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the moſt remote;
To teach his heart to glow with gen'rous flame
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame,
And more than all, with commendation due
To ſet ſome living worthy in his view,
Whoſe fair example may at once inſpire
A wiſh to copy what he muſt admire.
Such knowledge gained betimes, and which appears
Though ſolid, not too weighty for his years,
Sweet in itſelf, and not forbidding ſport,
When health demands it, of athletic ſort,
Would make him what ſome lovely boys have been,
And more than one perhaps that I have ſeen,
An evidence and reprehenſion both
Of the mere ſchool-boy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man profeſſionally tied,
With all thy faculties elſewhere applied,

Too buſy to intend a meaner care
Than how to enrich thyſelf, and next, thine heir;
Or art thou (as though rich, perhaps thou art)
But poor in knowledge, having none to impart—
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad,
His ſprightly mingled with a ſhade of ſad,
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men,
No jeſter, and yet lively in diſcourſe,
His phraſe well choſen, clear, and full of force,
And his addreſs, if not quite French in eaſe,
Not Engliſh ſtiff, but frank and formed to pleaſe,
Low in the world becauſe he ſcorns its arts,
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts,
Unpatronized, and therefore little known,
Wiſe for himſelf and his few friends alone,
In him, thy well appointed proxy ſee,
Armed for a work too difficult for thee,
Prepared by taſte, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy ſon, to ſtrike his genius forth,

Beneath

Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye to prove
The force of diſcipline when back'd by love,
To double all thy pleaſure in thy child,
His mind informed, his morals undefiled.
Safe under ſuch a wing, the boy ſhall ſhow
No ſpots contracted among grooms below,
Nor taint his ſpeech with meanneſſes deſign'd
By footman Tom for witty and refin'd.
There—in his commerce with the liveried herd
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd.
For ſince (ſo faſhion dictates) all who claim
An higher than a mere plebeian fame,
Find it expedient, come what miſchief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
And they that can afford th' expence of more,
Some half a dozen, and ſome half a ſcore,
Great cauſe occurs to ſave him from a band
So ſure to ſpoil him, and ſo near at hand,
A point ſecured, if once he be ſupplied
With ſome ſuch Mentor always at his ſide.

Are

Are ſuch men rare? perhaps they would abound
Were occupation eaſier to be found,
Were education, elſe ſo ſure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable ſcale,
And ſchools that have outlived all juſt eſteem,
Exchang'd for the ſecure domeſtic ſcheme.
But having found him, be thou duke or earl,
Show thou haſt ſenſe enough to prize the pearl,
And as thou would'ſt th' advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Reſpect, as is but rational and juſt,
A man deem'd worthy of ſo dear a truſt.
Deſpiſed by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly, than the ſame neglect?
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That inſtant, upon all his future pains;
His leſſons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all the inſtructions of thy ſon's beſt friend
Are a ſtream choak'd, or trickling to no end.

Doom

Doom him not then to ſolitary meals,
But recollect that he has ſenſe, and feels.
And, that poſſeſſor of a ſoul refin'd,
An upright heart and cultivated mind,
His poſt not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
And if admitted at thy board he ſit,
Account him no juſt mark for idle wit,
Offend not him whom modeſty reſtrains
From repartee, with jokes that he diſdains,
Much leſs transfix his feelings with an oath,
Nor frown, unleſs he vaniſh with the cloth.—
And truſt me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hired or bound to teach,
Much traſh unutter'd and ſome ills undone,
Through rev'rence of the cenſor of thy ſon.

But if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with exceſs, and with diſcourſe obſcene,

Doom

And

And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan
The world accounts an honourable man,
Becauſe forſooth thy courage has been tried
And ſtood the teſt, perhaps on the wrong ſide,
Though thou hadſt never grace enough to prove
That any thing but vice could win thy love;
Or haſt thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chained to the routs that ſhe frequents, for life,
Who, juſt when induſtry begins to ſnore,
Flies, wing'd with joy, to ſome coach-crouded door,
And thrice in ev'ry winter throngs thine own
With half the chariots and ſedans in town,
Thyſelf meanwhile e'en ſhifting as thou may'ſt,
Not very ſober though, nor very chaſte;
Or is thine houſe, though leſs ſuperb thy rank,
If not a ſcene of pleaſure, a mere blank,
And thou at beſt, and in thy ſob'reſt mood,
A trifler, vain, and empty of all good?
Though mercy for thyſelf thou can'ſt have none,
Hear nature plead, ſhow mercy to thy ſon.

Saved from his home, where ev'ry day brings forth
Some miſchief fatal to his future worth,
Find him a better in a diſtant ſpot,
Within ſome pious paſtor's humble cot,
Where vile example (your's I chiefly mean,
The moſt ſeducing and the oft'neſt ſeen)
May never more be ſtamp'd upon his breaſt
Not yet perhaps incurably impreſs'd.
Where early reſt makes early riſing ſure,
Diſeaſe or comes not, or finds eaſy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain,
Or if it enter, ſoon ſtarved out again.
Where all th' attention of his faithful hoſt
Diſcreetly limited to two at moſt,
May raiſe ſuch fruits as ſhall reward his care,
And not at laſt evaporate in air.
Where ſtillneſs aiding ſtudy, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleaſures paſt or follies yet to come,

His virtuous toil may terminate at laſt
In ſettled habit and decided taſte.
But whom do I adviſe? the faſhion-led,
Th' incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead,
Whom care and cool deliberation ſuit
Not better much, than ſpectacles a brute,
Who if their ſons ſome ſlight tuition ſhare,
Deem it of no great moment, whoſe, or where,
Too proud t' adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay t' have any of their own.
But courage man! methought the muſe replied,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide;
The oſtrich, ſillieſt of the feather'd kind,
And form'd of God without a parent's mind,
Commits her eggs, incautious, to the duſt,
Forgetful that the foot may cruſh the truſt;
And while on public nurſ'ries they rely,
Not knowing, and too oft not caring why,
Irrational in what they thus prefer,
No few, that would ſeem wiſe, reſemble her.

But

But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
May here and there prevent erroneous choice,
And ſome perhaps, who, buſy as they are,
Yet make their progeny their deareſt care,
Whoſe hearts will ache once told what ills may reach
Their offspring left upon ſo wild a beach,
Will need no ſtreſs of argument t' inforce
Th' expedience of a leſs advent'rous courſe.
The reſt will ſlight thy counſel, or condemn,
But *they* have human feelings. Turn to *them*.

To you then, tenants of life's middle ſtate,
Securely placed between the ſmall and great,
Whoſe character, yet undebauch'd, retains
Two thirds of all the virtue that remains,
Who wiſe yourſelves, deſire your ſons ſhould learn
Your wiſdom and your ways—to you I turn.
Look round you on a world perverſely blind,
See what contempt is fall'n on human kind,

See wealth abuſed, and dignities miſplac'd,
Great titles, offices, and truſts diſgrac'd,
Long lines of anceſtry renown'd of old,
Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold,
See Bedlam's cloſetted and hand-cuff'd charge
Surpaſs'd in frenzy by the mad at large,
See great commanders making war a trade,
Great lawyers, lawyers without ſtudy made,
Churchmen, in whoſe eſteem their bleſt employ
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
Who far enough from furniſhing their ſhelves
With goſpel lore, turn infidels themſelves,
See womanhood deſpiſed, and manhood ſhamed
With infamy too nauſeous to be named,
Fops at all corners lady-like in mien,
Civetted fellows, ſmelt 'ere they are ſeen,
Elſe coarſe and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curſes and with nonſenſe hung,
Now fluſh'd with drunk'neſs, now with whoredom pale,
Their breath a ſample of laſt night's regale,

See volunteers in all the vileſt arts
Men well endowed, of honourable parts,
Deſign'd by nature wiſe, but ſelf-made fools;
All theſe, and more like theſe, were bred at ſchools.
And if it chance, as ſometimes chance it will,
That though ſchool-bred, the boy be virtuous ſtill,
Such rare exceptions ſhining in the dark,
Prove rather than impeach the juſt remark,
As here and there a twinkling ſtar deſcried
Serves but to ſhow how black is all beſide.
Now look on him whoſe very voice in tone
Juſt echos thine, whoſe features are thine own,
And ſtroke his poliſh'd cheek of pureſt red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
And ſay, my boy, th' unwelcome hour is come,
When thou, tranſplanted from thy genial home
Muſt find a colder ſoil and bleaker air,
And truſt for ſafety to a ſtranger's care;
What character, what turn thou wilt aſſume
From conſtant converſe with I know not whom,

Who there will court thy friendſhip, with what views,
And, artleſs as thou art, whom thou wilt chuſe,
Though much depends on what thy choice ſhall be,
Is all chance-medley and unknown to me.
Can'ſt thou, the tear juſt trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful riſque foreſeen, forbids,
Free too, and under no conſtraining force,
Unleſs the ſway of cuſtom warp thy courſe,
Lay ſuch a ſtake upon the loſing ſide,
Merely to gratify ſo blind a guide?
Thou can'ſt not: Nature pulling at thine heart
Condemns th' unfatherly, th' imprudent part.
Thou would'ſt not, deaf to Nature's tend'reſt plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling ſea,
Nor ſay, *go thither*, conſcious that there lay
A brood of aſps, or quickſands in his way,
Then only govern'd by the ſelf-ſame rule
Of nat'ral pity, ſend him not to ſchool.
No—Guard him better; Is he not thine own,
Thyſelf in miniature, thy fleſh, thy bone?

And hopeſt thou not ('tis ev'ry father's hope)
That ſince thy ſtrength muſt with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need ſome comfort to aſſuage
Health's laſt farewell, a ſtaff of thine old age,
That then, in recompenſe of all thy cares,
Thy child ſhall ſhow reſpect to thy grey hairs,
Befriend thee of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?
Aware then how much danger intervenes,
To compaſs that good end, forecaſt the means.
His heart, now paſſive, yields to thy command;
Secure it thine. Its key is in thine hand.
If thou deſert thy charge and throw it wide,
Nor heed what gueſts there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and baſe
Supplant thee in it, and uſurp thy place.
But if thou guard its ſacred chambers ſure
From vicious inmates and delights impure,
Either his gratitude ſhall hold him faſt,
And keep him warm and filial to the laſt,

Or if he prove unkind, as who can ſay
But being man, and therefore frail, he may)
One comfort yet ſhall cheer thine aged heart,
Howe'er he ſlight thee, thou haſt done thy part.

Oh barb'rous! would'ſt thou with a Gothic hand
Pull down the ſchools—what!—all the ſchools i' th' land?
Or throw them up to liv'ry-nags and grooms,
Or turn them into ſhops and auction-rooms?
A captious queſtion, ſir, and your's is one,
Deſerves an anſwer ſimilar, or none.
Would'ſt thou, poſſeſſor of a flock, employ
(Apprized that he is ſuch) a careleſs boy,
And feed him well and give him handſome pay,
Merely to ſleep, and let them run aſtray?
Survey our ſchools and colleges, and ſee
A ſight not much unlike my ſimile.
From education, as the leading cauſe,
The public character its colour draws,

Thence the prevailing manners take their caſt,
Extravagant or ſober, looſe or chaſte.
And though I would not advertize them yet,
Nor write on each—*This Building to be Lett*,
Unleſs the world were all prepared to embrace
A plan well-worthy to ſupply their place,
Yet backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,
(Forgive the crime) I wiſh them, I confeſs,
Or better managed, or encouraged leſs,