ARGUMENT of the FIRST BOOK.

The subject propos'd; verse 1, to 30. Difficulty of treating it poetically; v. 45. The ideas of the divine mind, the origin of every quality pleasing to the imagination; v. 56, to 78. The natural variety of constitution in the minds of men, with its final cause; to v. 96. The idea of a fine imagination, and the state of the mind in the enjoyment of those pleasures which it affords; v. 100, to 132. All the primary pleasures of imagination result from the perception of greatness, or wonderfulness, or beauty in objects; v. 145. The pleasure from greatness, with its final cause; v. 151, to 221. Pleasure from novelty or wonderfulness, with its final cause; v. 222, to 270. Pleasure from beauty, with its final cause; v. 275, to 372. The connection of beauty with truth and good, applied to the conduct of life; v. 384. Invitation to the study of moral philosophy; to v. 428. The different degrees of beauty in different species of objects; v. 448. Colour; shape; natural concretes; vegetables; animals; the mind; v. 445, to 475. The sublime, the fair, the wonderful of the mind; v. 497, to 526. The connection of the imagination and the moral faculty; v. 557. Conclusion.
THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.

Book the First.

With what attractive charms this goodly frame
Of nature touches the consenting hearts
Of mortal men; and what the pleasing stores
Which beauteous imitation thence derives

To deck the poet's, or the painter's toil;
My verse unfolds. Attend, ye gentle Pow'rs

Of musical Delight! and while I sing

Line 7.] The word Musical is here taken in its original and most extensive import; comprehending as well the pleasures we receive from the beauty or magnificence of natural objects, as those which arise from poetry, painting, music, or any other of the elegant and imaginative arts. In which sense it has been already used in our language by writers of unquestionable authority.

B

Your
The PLEASURES

Your gifts, your honours, dance around my strain.
Thou, smiling queen of every tunesful breast,
10 Indulgent Fancy! from the fruitful Banks
Of Avon, whence thy rosy fingers cull
Fresh flow'rs and dews to sprinkle on the turf
Where Shakespeare lies, be present: and with thee
Let Fiction come, upon her vagrant wings
15 Wafting ten thousand colours thro' the air,
And, by the glances of her magic eye,
Combining each in endless, fairy forms,
Her wild creation. Goddess of the lyre
Which rules the accents of the moving sphere,
20 Wilt thou, eternal Harmony! descend,
And join this festive train? for with thee comes
The guide, the guardian of their lovely sports,
Majestic Truth; and where Truth deigns to come,
Her sister Liberty will not be far.
25 Be present all ye Genii who conduct
The wand'ring footsteps of the youthful bard,
New to your springs and shades: who touch his ear
With finer sounds; who heighten to his eye

The
Book I. of Imagination

The bloom of nature, and before him turn
The gayest, happiest attitudes of things.

Oft have the laws of each poetic strain
The critic-verse imployst, yet still unsung
Lay this prime subject, tho' importing most
A poet's name: for fruitlest is th'attempt

By dull obedience and the curb of rules,
For creeping toil to climb the hard ascent
Of high Parnassus. Nature's kindling breath
Must fire the chosen genius; nature's hand
Must point the path, and imp his eagle-wings

Exulting o'er the painful steep to soar
High as the summit: there to breathe at large
Ætherial air; with bards and sages old,
Immortal sons of praise. These flattering scenes
To this neglected labour court my song;

Yet not unconscious what a doubtful task

Yet not unconscious.] Lucret. l. 2. v. 921.
Nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura, fæd æcrī
Percussit thyrso laudis spes magna meum eor,
Et simul incussit suavem mi in peleus amorem
Musarum; quo nunc infinitius mente vigenti

B 2
To paint the finest features of the mind,
And to most subtile and mysterious things
Give colour, strength and motion. But the love
Of nature and the muses bids explore,

Thro’ secret paths ere while untrod by man,
The fair poetic region, to detect
Untasted springs, to drink inspiring draughts;
And shade my temples with unsading flow’rs
Cull’d from the laureate vale’s profound recess,

Where never poet gain’d a wreath before.

From heav’n my strains begin; from heaven descends
The flame of genius to the human breast,
And love and beauty, and poetic joy
And inspiration. Ere the radiant sun

Sprung from the east, or ’mid the vault of night
The moon suspended her serener lamp;
Ere mountains, woods, or streams adorn’d the globe;

Avia Prióridum pergro loca, nullius ante
Trita solo: juvat intregos accedere fonteis,
Atque haurire: juvatque novos discernere flores:
Insignem meo capite petere inde coronam,
Unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musæ.
Or wisdom taught the sons of men her lore;
Then liv'd th' eternal One: then deep-retir'd
In his unfathom'd essence, view'd at large
The uncreated images of things;
The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal lamp,
The mountains, woods and streams, the rolling globe,
And wisdom's form celestial. From the first
Of days, on them his love divine he fix'd,
His admiration: till in time compleat,
What he admir'd and lov'd, his vital smile
Unfolded into being. Hence the breath
Of life informing each organic frame,
Hence the green earth, and wild resounding waves;
Hence light and shade alternate; warmth and cold;
And clear autumnal skies and vernal show'rs,
And all the fair variety of things.

But not alike to every mortal eye
Is this great scene unveil'd. For since the claims
Of social life, to diff'rent labours urge
The active pow'rs of man; with wise intent
The PLEASURES

The hand of nature on peculiar minds
Imprints a diff'rent byas, and to each
85 Decrees its province in the common toil.
To some she taught the fabric of the sphere,
The changeful moon, the circuit of the stars,
The golden zones of heav'n: to some she gave
To weigh the moment of eternal things,
90 Of time, and space, and fate's unbroken chain,
And will's quick impulse: others by the hand
She led o'er vales and mountains, to explore
What healing virtue swells the tender veins
Of herbs and flow'rs; or what the beams of mori,
95 Draw forth, distilling from the clifted rind
In balmy tears. But some, to higher hopes
Were destin'd; some within a finer mould
She wrought, and temper'd with a purer flame.
To these the fire omnipotent unfolds
100 The world's harmonious volume, there to read
The transcript of himself. On every part
They trace the bright impressions of his hand:
In earth or air, the meadow's purple stores,
Book I. of Imagination. 15

105 The moon's mild radiance, or the virgin's form

Blooming with rosy smiles, they see portray'd

That uncreated beauty, which delights

The mind supreme. They also feel her charms;

Enamour'd, they partake th' eternal joy.

As Memnon's marble harp, renown'd of old

110 By fabling Nilus, to the quivering touch

Of Titan's ray, with each repulsive string

Consenting, founded thro' the warbling air

Unbidden strains; ev'n so did nature's hand

To certain species of external things,

115 Attune the finer organs of the mind:

So the glad impulse of congenial pow'rs,

Or of sweet sound, or fair-proportion'd form,

The grace of motion, or the bloom of light,

Thrills thro' imagination's tender frame,

120 From nerve to nerve: all naked and alive

As Memnon's marble harp.] The statue of Memnon, so famous in antiquity, stood in the temple of Serapis at Thebes, one of the great cities of old Egypt. It was of a very hard, iron-like stone, and, according to Juvenal, held in its hand a lyre, which being touch'd by the sun-beams, emitted a distinct and agreeable sound. Tacitus mentions it as one of the principal curiosities which Germanicus took notice of in his journey through Egypt; and Strabo affirms that he, with many others, heard it.
They catch the spreading rays: till now the soul
At length discloses every tuneful spring,
To that harmonious movement from without,
Responsive. Then the inexpressive strain

125 Diffuses its enchantment: fancy dreams
Of sacred fountains and Elysian groves,
And vales of bliss: the intellectual pow'r
Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
And smiles: the passions gently sooth'd away,

Sink to divine repose, and love and joy
Alone are waking; love and joy, serene
As airs that fan the summer. O! attend,
Whoe'er thou art whom these delights can touch,
Whose candid bosom the refining love

135 Of nature warms, O! listen to my song;
And I will guide thee to her fav'rite walks,
And teach thy solitude her voice to hear,
And point her loveliest features to thy view.

Know then, whate'er of nature's pregnant stores,

140 Whate'er of mimic art's reflected forms
With love and admiration thus inflame

The
Book I. of IMAGINATION. 17

The pow'rs of fancy, her delighted sons
To three illustrious orders have referr'd;
Three sister-graces, whom the painter's hand,
145 The poet's tongue confesses; the sublime,
The wonderful, the fair. I see them dawn!
I see the radiant visions, where they rise,
More lovely than when Lucifer displays
His beaming forehead thro' the gates of morn,
150 To lead the train of Phœbus and the spring.

Say, why was man so eminently rais'd
Amid the vast creation; why ordain'd

Say, why was man, &c.] In apologizing for the frequent negligence of the sublimest authors of Greece, Those god-like geniuses, says Longinus, were well-assured that nature had not intended man for a low-spirited or ignoble being: but bringing us into life and the midst of this wide universe, as before a multitude assembled at some heroic solemnity that we might be spectators of all her magnificence, and candidates high in emulation for the prize of glory; she has therefore implanted in our souls an inextinguishable love of every thing great and exalted, of every thing which appears divine beyond our comprehension. Whence it comes to pass, that even the whole world is not an object sufficient for the depth and rapidity of human imagination, which often falls far beyond the limits of all that surrounds us. Let any man cast his eye through the whole circle of our existence, and consider how especially it abounds in excellent and grand objects, he will soon acknowledge for what enjoyments and pursuits we were destined. Thus by the very propensity of nature we are led to admire, not little springs or shallow rivulets, however clear and delicious, but the Nile, the Rhine, the Danube, and much more than all, the ocean, &c. Dionys. Longin. de Sublim. $.$ xxxiv.

C Thro'
The PLEASURES

Thro' life and death to dart his piercing eye,
With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame;
But that th' Omnipotent might send him forth
In sight of mortal and immortal pow'rs,
As on a boundless theatre, to run
The great career of justice; to exalt
His gen'rous aim to all diviner deeds;
To shake each partial purpose from his breast;
And thro' the mists of passion and of sense,
And thro' the toiling tide of chance and pain
To hold his course unfaltering, while the voice
Of truth and virtue, up the steep ascent
Of nature, calls him to his high reward,
Th' applauding smile of heav'n? Elfe wherefore burns,
In mortal bosoms, this unquenched hope
That breathes from day to day sublimer things,
And mocks possession? wherefore darts the mind,
With such resistless ardor to embrace
Majestic forms? impatient to be free,
Spurning the gross controul of wilful might;
Proud of the strong contention of her toils;

Proud
Proud to be daring? Who but rather turns
To heav’n’s broad fire his unconstrained view,
Than to the glimm’ring of a waxen flame?
Who that, from Alpine heights, his lab’ring eye
Shoots round the wide horizon to survey
The Nile or Ganges rowl his wasteful tide

Thro’ mountains, plains, thro’ empires black with shade,
And continents of sand; will turn his gaze
To mark the windings of a scanty rill
That murmurs at his feet? The high-born soul
Disdains to rest her heav’n-aspiring wing

Beneath its native quarry. Tir’d of earth
And this diurnal scene, the springs aloft
Thro’ fields of air; pursues the flying storm;
Rides on the volley’d lightning thro’ the heav’ns;
Or yok’d with whirlwinds and the northern blast,

Sweeps the long tract of day. Then high she soars
The blue profound, and hovering o’er the sun,
Beholds him pouring the redundant stream
Of light; beholds his unrelenting sway
Bend the reluctant planets to absolve
The PLEASURES

195 The fated rounds of time. Thence far effus'd
She darts her swiftness up the long career
Of devious comets; thro' its burning signs
Exulting circles the perennial wheel
Of nature, and looks back on all the starrs,

200 Whose blended light, as with a milky zone,
Invests the orient. Now amaz'd she views
Th' empyreal waste, where happy spirits hold,
Beyond this concave heav'n, their calm abode;
And fields of radiance, whose unfading light

205 Has travell'd the profound fix thousand years,
Nor yet arrives in sight of mortal things.
Ev'n on the barriers of the world untir'd
She meditates th' eternal depth below;
Till, half recoiling, down the headlong steep

Th' empyreal waste.] No se peut-il point qu'il y a un grand espace audelà de la
region des etoiles? Que ce soit le ciel empyré, ou non, toujours cet espace immense
qui enivonne toute cette region, pourra être rempli de bonheur & de gloire. Il
pourra être conçu comme l'océan, où se rendent les fleuves de toutes les créatures
bienheureuses, quand elles feront venues à leur perfection dans le système des etoiles.
Leibnitz dans la Theodicee, part. i. §. 19.

Whose unfading light, &c.] It was a notion of the great M. Huygens, that
there may be fix'd stars at such a distance from our solar system, as that their
light shall not have had time to reach us, even from the creation of the world
to this day.

She
Book I. of Imagination.

210 She plunges, soon o'erwhelm'd and swallow'd up
In that immense of being. There her hopes
Rest at the fated goal. For from the birth
Of mortal man, the sov'reign Maker said,
That not in humble or in brief delight,

215 Not in the fading echoes of renown,
Pow'r's purple robes, or pleasure's flow'ry lap,
The soul should find injoyment: but from these
Turning disdainful to an equal good,
Thro' all th' ascent of things inlarge her view,

220 Till every bound at length should disappear,
And infinite perfection close the scene.

Call now to mind what high, capacious pow'r's
Lie folded up in man; how far beyond
The praise of mortals, may th' eternal growth

225 Of nature to perfection half divine,
Expand the blooming soul? What pity then
Should sloth's unkindly fogs deprefs to earth
Her tender blossom; choak the streams of life,
And blast her spring! Far otherwise design'd

Almighty
The PLEASURES

230 Almighty wisdom; nature's happy cares
    Th' obedient heart far otherwise incline.
    Witness the sprightly joy when aught unknown
    Strikes the quick sense, and wakes each active pow'r
    To brisker measures: witness the neglect

235 Of all familiar prospects, tho' beheld
    With transport once; the fond, attentive gaze
    Of young astonishment; the sober zeal
    Of age, commenting on prodigious things.
    For such the bounteous providence of heav'n,

240 In every breast implanting this desire

----------------------the neglect

Of all familiar prospects, &c.] It is here said, that in consequence of the love
of novelty, objects which at first were highly delightful to the mind, lose that
effect by repeated attention to them. But the influence of habit is oppos'd to
this observation; for there, objects at first dishafteful are in time render'd inte-
riely agreeable by repeated attention.

The difficulty in this case will be remov'd, if we consider, that when objects at
first agreeable, lose that influence by frequently recurring, the mind is wholly paf-
sive and the perception involuntary; but habit, on the other hand, generally sup-
poses choice and activity accompanying it: so that the pleasure arises here not from
the object, but from the mind's conscious determination of its own activity; and
consequently increases in proportion to the frequency of that determination.

It will still be urged perhaps, that a familiarity with disagreeable objects ren-
ders them at length acceptable, even when there is no room for the mind to
resolve or all at all. In this case, the appearance must be accounted for, one
of these ways,

The
Book I. of IMAGINATION. 23

Of objects new and strange, to urge us on
With unremitting labour to pursue
Those sacred stores that wait the ripening soul,
In truth's exhaustless bosom. What need words

245 To paint its pow'r? For this, the daring youth
Breaks from his weeping mother's anxious arms,
In foreign climes to rove: the pensive sage,
Heedless of sleep or midnight's harmful damp,
Hangs o'er the sickly taper; and untir'd

The pleasure from habit may be meerly negative. The object at first gave uneasiness; this uneasiness gradually wears off as the object grows familiar; and the mind finding it at last entirely remov'd, reckons its situation really pleasurable, compar'd with what it had experienced before.

The dislike conceiv'd of the object at first, might be owing to prejudice or want of attention. Consequently the mind being necessity to review it often, may at length perceive its own mistake, and be reconcil'd to what it had look'd on with aversion. In which case, a sort of instinctive justice naturally leads it to make amends for the injury, by running toward the other extreme of fondness and attachment.

Or lastly, tho' the object itself should always continue disagreeable, yet circumstances of pleasure or good fortune may occur along with it. Thus an association may arise in the mind, and the object never be remember'd without those pleasing circumstances attending it; by which means the disagreeable impression it at first occasion'd will in time be quite obliterated.

-------------this desire

Of objects new and strange-----] These two ideas are oft confounded; tho' it is evident the mere novelty of an object makes it agreeable, even where the mind is not affected with the least degree of wonder: whereas wonder indeed always implies novelty, being never excited by common or well-known appearances. But the pleasure in both cases is explicable from the same final cause, the acquisition of knowledge and enlargement of our views of nature: and on this account it is natural to treat of them together.

The
The PLEASURES

250  The virgin follows, with enchant'd step,
     The mazes of some wild and wond'rous tale,
     From morn to eve; unmindful of her form,
     Unmindful of the happy dress that stole
     The wishes of the youth, when every maid

255  With envy pin'd. Hence finally, by night
     The village-matron, round the blazing hearth,
     Suspends the infant-audience with her tales,
     Breathing astonishment! of witching rhymes,
     And evil spirits; of the death-bed call

260  To him who robb'd the widow, and devour'd
     The orphan's portion; of unquiet souls
     Ris'n from the grave to eafe the heavy guilt
     Of deeds in life conceal'd; of shapes that walk
     At dead of night, and clank their chains, and wave

265  The torch of hell around the murd'rer's bed.
     At every solemn pause the crowd recoil
     Gazing each other speechless, and congeal'd
     With shiv'ring sighs: till eager for th' event,
     Around the beldame all arrest they hang,

270  Each trembling heart with grateful terrors quell'd.

But
But lo! disclos'd in all her smiling pomp,
Where Beauty onward moving claims the verse
Her charms inspire: the freely-flowing verse
In thy immortal praise, O form divine,
Smoother her mellifluent stream. Thee, Beauty, thee
The regal dome, and thy enlivening ray
The mossy roofs adore: thou, better sun!
For ever beamest on th' enchanted heart
Love, and harmonious wonder, and delight
Poetic. Brightest progeny of heav'n!
How shall I trace thy features? where select
The roseate hues to emulate thy bloom?
Haste then, my song, thro' nature's wide expanse,
Haste then, and gather all her comeliest wealth,
Whate'er bright spoils the florid earth contains,
Whate'er the waters, or the liquid air,
To deck thy lovely labour. Wilt thou fly
With laughing Autumn to th' Atlantic isles,

Atlantic isles.] By these islands, which were also called the Fortunate, the ancients are now generally supposed to have meant the Canaries. They were celebrated
The PLEASURES

And range with him th’ Hesperian field, and see,

Where’er his fingers touch the fruitful grove,

‘The branches shoot with gold; where’er his step

Marks the glad soil, the tender clusters glow

With purple ripeness, and invest each hill

As with the blushes of an evening sky.

Or wilt thou rather fllop thy vagrant plume,

Where, gliding thro’ his daughter’s honour’d shades,

The smooth Penéus from his glassy flood

Reflects purpureal Tempe’s pleasant scene?

Fair Tempe! haunt belov’d of sylvan pow’rs,

Of nymphs and fawns; where in the golden age

They play’d in secret on the shady brink

With ancient Pan: while round their choral steps

Young hours and genial gales with constant hand

Show’r’d blossoms, odours, show’r’d ambrosial dews,

And spring’s Elysian bloom. Her flow’ry store

To thee nor Tempe shall refuse; nor watch

brated by the poets for the mildness and fertility of the climate; for the gardens
of the daughters of Hesperus, the brother of Atlas; and the dragon which con-
stantly watch’d their golden fruit, till it was slain by the Tyrian Hercules.

Where gliding thro’ his daughter’s honour’d shades.] Daphne, the daughter of
Penéus, transformed into a laurel.

Of
Of winged Hydra guard Hesperian fruits
From thy free spoil. O bear then, unreprou'd,
Thy smiling treasures to the green recess

310 Where young Dione stays. With sweetest airs
Intice her forth to lend her angel-form
For beauty's honour'd image. Hither turn
Thy graceful footsteps; hither, gentle maid,
Incline thy polish'd forehead; let thy eyes

315 Effuse the mildness of their azure dawn;
And may the fanning breezes waft aside
Thy radiant locks, dissolving as it bends
With airy softness from the marble neck
The cheek fair-blooming, and the rosy lip

320 Where winning smiles and pleasure sweet as love,
With sanctity and wisdom, temp'ring blend
Their soft allurement. Then the pleasing force
Of nature, and her kind parental care,
Worthier I'd sing: then all th' enamour'd youth,

325 With each admiring virgin to my lyre
Should throng attentive, while I point on high
Where beauty's living image, like the morn
The PLEASURES

That wakes in Zephyr's arms the blushing May,
Moves onward; or as Venus, when she stood
Effulgent on the pearly car, and smil'd,
Fresh from the deep, and conscious of her form,
To see the Tritons tune their vocal shells,
And each cærulean sifter of the flood
With fond acclaim attend her o'er the waves,
To seek th' Idalian bow'r. Ye smiling band
Of youths and virgins, who thro' all the maze
Of young desire with rival-steps pursue
This charm of beauty; if the pleasing toil
Can yield a moment's respite, hither turn
Your favourable ear, and trust my words.
I do not mean to wake the gloomy form
Of superstition drest in wisdom's garb,
To damp your tender hopes; I do not mean
To bid the jealous thund'rer fire the heav'ns,
Or shapes infernal rend the groaning earth
To fright you from your joys: my cheerful song
With better omens calls you to the field,
Pleas'd with your gen'rous ardour in the chace,
And warm as you. Then tell me, for you know,
Does beauty ever deign to dwell where health
And active use are strangers? Is her charm
Confess'd in aught, whose most peculiar ends
Are lame and fruitless? Or did nature mean
This awful stamp the herald of a lye;
To hide the shame of discord and disease,
And catch with fair hypocrisy the heart
Of idle faith? O no! with better cares,
Th' indulgent mother, conscious how infirm
Her offspring tread the paths of good and ill,
By this illustrious image, in each kind
Still most illustrious where the object holds
Its native pow'rs most perfect, she by this
Illumes the headlong impulse of desire,
And sanctifies his choice. The generous glebe
Whose bosom smiles with verdure, the clear tract
Of streams delicious to the thirsty soul,
The bloom of nectar'd fruitage ripe to sense,
And every charm of animated things,
Are only pledges of aflate sincere,
Th' integrity and order of their frame,
The PLEASURES

When all is well within, and every end
Accomplish'd. Thus was beauty sent from heav'n,
The lovely ministr'd of truth and good
In this dark world: for truth and good are one,
And beauty dwells in them, and they in her,

With

---------Truth and good are one,

And beauty dwells in them, &c.] Do you imagine, says Socrates to his libertine
disciple, that what is good is not also beautiful? Have you not observ'd that
these appearances always co-incide? Virtue, for instance, in the same respect as to
which we call it good, is ever acknowledg'd to be beautiful also. In the cha-
acters of men we always join the two denominations together. The beauty of
human bodies corresponds, in like manner, with that economy of parts which
constitutes them good; and in all the circumstances which occur in life, the same
object is constantly account'd both beautiful and good, inasmuch as it answers the
purposes for which it was design'd. Xenophon, memorab. Socrat. l. 3. c. 8.

This excellent observation has been illustrated and extended by the noble
restorer of ancient philosophy; see the Characteristicks, vol. 2. p. 399. & 422.
& vol. 3. p. 181. And his most ingenious disciple has particularly shewn, that it
holds in the general laws of nature, in the works of art, and the conduct of the
sciences. Inquiry into the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue, Treat. 1.
§. 8. As to the connection between beauty and truth, there are two opinions
concerning it. Some philosophers affirm an independent and invariable law in
nature, in consequence of which all rational beings must alike perceive beauty in
some certain proportions, and deformity in the contrary. And this necessity be-
ning supposed the same with that which commands the affest or diffident of the
understanding, it follows of course that beauty is founded on the universal and
unchangeable law of truth.

But others there are who believe beauty to be merely a relative and arbitrary
thing; that indeed it was a benevolent desin in nature to annex so delightful a
sensation to those objects which are best and most perfect in themselves, that so
we might be engaged to the choice of them at once and without staying to infer
their usefulness from their structure and effects; but that it is not impossible,
in a physical sense, that two beings, of equal capacities for truth, should perceive,
one of them beauty, and the other deformity, in the same relations. And upon

† This the Athenians did in a peculiar manner by the words καλογραφία & καλογραφία.
Book I. of IMAGINATION.

With like participation. Wherefore then,
O sons of earth! would you dissolve the yte?
O wherefore, with a rash, imperfect aim,
Seek you those flow'ry joys with which the hand

Of lavish fancy paints each flatter'ring scene
Where beauty seems to dwell, nor once inquire
Where is the sanction of eternal truth,
Or where the seal of undeceitful good,
To save your search from folly? Wanting these,

Lo! beauty withers in your void embrace,
And with the glitt'ring of an idiot's toy
Did fancy mock your vows. Nor let the gleam
Of youthful hope that shines upon your hearts,
Be chill'd or clouded at this awful task

To learn the lore of undeceitful good,

this supposition, by that truth which is always connected with beauty, nothing more can be meant than the conformity of any object to those proportions upon which, after careful examination, the beauty of that species is found to depend. Polycleitus for instance, the famous sculptor of Sicyon, from an accurate mensuration of the several parts of the most perfect human bodies, deduced a canon or sytem of proportions, which was the rule of all succeeding artists. Suppose a statue modell'd according to this canon. A man of meer natural taste, upon looking at it, without entering into its proportions, confesses and admires its beauty; whereas a professor of the art applies his measures to the head, the neck, or the hand, and, without attending to its beauty,pronounces the workmanship to be just and true.

And
The PLEASURES

And truth eternal. Tho' the pois'rous charms
Of baleful superition, guide the feet
Of servile numbers, thro' a dreary way
To their abode, thro' deserts, thorns and mire;

And leave the wretched pilgrim all forlorn
To muse, at last, amid the ghostly gloom
Of graves, and hoary vaults, and cloifter'd cells;
To walk with spectres thro' the midnight shade,
And to the screaming owl's accursed song

Attune the dreadful workings of his heart;
Yet be not you dismay'd. A gentler star
Your lovely search illumines. From the grove
Where wisdom talk'd with her Athenian sons,
Could my ambitious hand intwine a wreath

Of Plato's olive with the Mantuan bay,
Then should my pow'rful voice at once dispel
These monkish horrors: then in light divine
Disclose th' Elysian prospect, where the steps
Of those whom nature charms, thro' blooming walks,

Thro' fragrant mountains and poetic streams,
Amid the train of sages, heroes, bards,
Led by their winged Genius and the choir
Of laurel'd science and harmonious art,
Proceed exulting to th' eternal shrine,

Where truth inthron'd with her celestial twins,
The undivided partners of her sway,
With good and beauty reigns. O let not us,
Lull'd by luxurious pleasure's languid strain,
Or crouching to the frowns of bigot-rage,

O let not us a moment pause to join
The god-like band. And if the gracious pow'r
That first awaken'd my untutor'd song,
Will to my invocation breathe anew
The tuneful spirit; then thro' all our paths,

Ne'er shall the sound of this devoted lyre
Be wanting; whether on the rosy mead,
When summer smiles, to warn the melting heart
Of luxury's allurement; whether firm
Against the torrent and the stubborn hill

To urge bold virtue's unremitting nerve,
And wake the strong divinity of soul
That conquers chance and fate; or whether struck
The PLEASURES

For sounds of triumph, to proclaim her toils
Upon the lofty summit, round her brow

To twine the wreath of incorruptive praise;
To trace her hallow’d light thro’ future worlds,
And bless heav’n’s image in the heart of man.

Thus with a faithful aim have we presum’d,
Advent’rous, to delineate nature’s form;

Whether in vast, majestic pomp array’d,
Or dreft for pleasing wonder, or serene
In beauty’s rosy smile. It now remains,
Thro’ various being’s fair-proportion’d scale,
To trace the rising lustre of her charms,

From their first twilight, shining forth at length
To full meridian splendour. Of degree
The least and lowliest, in th’effusive warmth
Of colours mingling with a random blaze,
Doth beauty dwell. Then higher in the line

And variation of determin’d shape,
Where truth’s eternal measures mark the bound
Of circle, cube, or sphere. The third ascent

Unites
Book I. of IMAGINATION.

Unites this varied symmetry of parts
With colour’s bland allurement; as the pearl
Shines in the concave of its azure bed,
And painted shells indent their speckled wreath.
Then more attractive rise the blooming forms
Thro’ which the breath of nature has infus’d
Her genial pow’r to draw with pregnant veins

Nutritious moisture from the bounteous earth,
In fruit and seed prolific: thus the flow’rs
Their purple honours with the spring resume;
And such the stately tree which autumn bends
With blushing treasures. But more lovely still

Is nature’s charm, where to the full consent
Of complicated members, to the bloom
Of colour, and the vital change of growth,
Life’s holy flame and piercing sense are giv’n,
And active motion speaks the temper’d soul:

So moves the bird of Juno; so the steed
With rival ardour beats the dusty plain,
And faithful dogs with eager airs of joy
Salute their fellows. Thus doth beauty dwell

E 2

There
The PLEASURES

There most conspicuous, ev'n in outward shape,
Where dawns the high expression of a mind:
By steps conducting our inraptur'd search
To that eternal origin, whose pow'r,
Tho' all th'unbounded symmetry of things,
Like rays effulgeng from the parent sun,
This endless mixture of her charms diffus'd.

MIND, MIND alone, bear witness, earth and heav'n!
The living fountains in itself contains
Of beauteous and sublime: here, hand in hand,
Sit paramount the Graces; here inthron'd,

Coelestial Venus, with divinest airs,
Invites the soul to never-fading joy.
Look then abroad thro' nature, to the range
Of planets, funs, and adamantine spheres
Wheeling unshaken thro' the void immense;

And speak, O man! does this capacious scene
With half that kindling majesty dilate
Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose

As when Brutus rose, &c.] Cicero himself describes this fact----Caesaris inter-
feiit----statim cruuentum altè extollens M. Brutus pugionem, Ciceronem nominatim
Book I. of IMAGINATION.

Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar’s fate,
Amid the crowd of patriots; and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
When guilt brings down the thunder, call’d aloud
On Tully’s name, and shook his crimson steel,
And bade the father of his country, hail!
For lo! the tyrant prostrate on the dust,
And Rome again is free?—Is aught so fair
In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
In the bright eye of Hesper or the morn,
In nature’s fairest forms, is aught so fair
As virtuous friendship? as the candid blush.

Of him who strives with fortune to be just?
The graceful tear that streams for other’s woes?
Or the mild majesty of private life,
Where peace with ever-blooming olive crowns
The gate; where honour’s liberal hands effuse
Unenvy’d treasures, and the snowy wings
Of innocence and love protect the scene?
Once more search, undismayed, the dark profound
Where nature works in secret; view the beds
Of
Of min'ral treasure, and th' eternal vault
That bounds the hoary ocean; trace the forms
Of atoms moving with incessant change
Their elemental round; behold the seeds
Of being, and the energy of life
Kindling the mass with ever-active flame:

Then to the secrets of the working mind
Attentive turn; from dim oblivion call
Her fleet, ideal band; and bid them, go!
Break thro' time's barrier, and o'ertake the hour
That saw the heav'ns created: then declare

If aught were found in those external scenes
To move thy wonder now. For what are all
The forms which brute, unconscious matter wears,
Greatness of bulk, or symmetry of parts?
Not reaching to the heart, soon feeble grows

The superficial impulse; dull their charms,
And satiate soon, and pall the languid eye.
Not so the moral species, or the pow'rs
Of genius and design; th' ambitious mind
There sees herself; by these congenial forms

Touch'd
Book I. of IMAGINATION

535 Touch'd and awaken'd, with intenser act
She bends each nerve, and meditates well-pleas'd
Her features in the mirror. For of all
Th' inhabitants of earth, to man alone
Creative wisdom gave to lift his eye

540 To truth's eternal measures; thence to frame
The sacred laws of action and of will,
Discerning justice from unequal deeds,
And temperance from folly. But beyond
This energy of truth, whose dictates bind

545 Assenting reason, the benignant fire,
To deck the honour'd paths of just and good,
Has added bright imagination's rays:
Where virtue, rising from the awful depth
Of truth's mysterious bosom, doth forfake

550 The unadorn'd condition of her birth;
And dress'd by fancy in ten thousand hues,
Assumes a various feature, to attract,

Where virtue rising from the awful depth
Of truth's mysterious bosom, &c.] According to the opinion of those who
assert moral obligation to be founded on an immutable and universal law, and
that pathetic feeling which is usually call'd the moral sense, to be determin'd by
the peculiar temper of the imagination and the earliest associations of ideas.

With
With charms responsive to each gazer's eye,
The hearts of men. Amid his rural walk,
Th' ingenuous youth whom solitude inspires
With purest wishes, from the pensive shade
Beholds her moving, like a virgin-muse
That wakes her lyre to some indulgent theme
Of harmony and wonder: while among
The herd of servile minds, her strenuous form
Indignant flashes on the patriot's eye,
And thro' the rolls of memory appeals
To ancient honour; or in act serene,
Yet watchful, raises the majestic sword
Of public pow'r, from dark ambition's reach
To guard the sacred volume of the laws.

Genius of ancient Greece! whose faithful steps
Well-pleas'd I follow thro' the sacred paths
Of nature and of science; nurse divine
Of all heroic deeds and fair desires!
O! let the breath of thy extended praise
Inspire my kindling bosom to the height
Of this untempted theme. Nor be my thoughts
Presumptuous counted, if, amid the calm
That sooths this vernal evening into smiles,
I steal impatient from the fordid haunts
Of strife and low ambition, to attend
Thy sacred presence in the sylvan shade,
By their malignant footsteps ne'er profan'd.

Descend, propitious! to my favour'd eye;
Such in thy mien, thy warm, exalted air,
As when the Persian tyrant, foil'd and stung
With shame and desperation, gnash'd his teeth
To see thee rend the pageants of his throne;

And at the lightning of thy lifted spear
Crouch'd like a slave. Bring all thy martial spoils,
Thy palms, thy laurels, thy triumphal songs,
Thy smiling band of arts, thy godlike fires
Of civil wisdom, thy heroic youth

Warm from the schools of glory. Guide my way
Thro' fair Lycéum's walk, the green retreats
Of Academus, and the thymy vale,
Where oft enchanted with Socratic sounds,
Ilissus pure devolv'd his tuneful stream

595 In gentler murmurs. From the blooming store
Of these auspicious fields, may I unblam'd
Transplant some living blossoms to adorn
My native clime: while far above the flight
Of fancy's plume aspiring, I unlock

600 The springs of ancient wisdom; while I join
Thy name, thrice honour'd! with th' immortal praise
Of nature; while to my compatriot youth
I point the high example of thy sons,
And tune to Attic themes the British lyre.

Ilissus.] One of the rivers on which Athens was situated. Plato, in some of
his finest dialogues, lays the scene of the conversation with Socrates on its banks.

End of the FIRST BOOK.
THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.
Book the Second.
ARGUMENT of the SECOND BOOK.

THE separation of the works of imagination from philosophy, the cause of their abuse among the moderns; to verse 41. Prospect of their re-union under the influence of public liberty; to v. 61. Enumeration of accidental pleasures, which increase the effect of objects delightful to the imagination. The pleasures of sense; v. 73. Particular circumstances of the mind; v. 84. Discovery of truth; v. 97. Perception of contrivance and design; v. 121. Emotion of the passions; v. 136. All the natural passions partake of a pleasing sensation, with the final cause of this constitution illustrated by an allegorical vision, and exemplified in sorrow, pity, terror and indignation; from v. 155 to the end.
THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.

Book the Second.

WHEN shall the laurel and the vocal string
Resume their honours? When shall we behold
The tuneful tongue, the Prométhéan hand
Aspire to ancient praise? Alas! how faint,

5 How flow the dawn of beauty and of truth
Breaks the reluctant shades of Gothic night
Which yet involve the nations! Long they groan’d
Beneath the furies of rapacious force;

10 Oft as the gloomy north, with iron-swarms
Tempestuous pouring from her frozen caves,

Blasted
Blasted th' Italian shore, and swept the works
Of liberty and wisdom down the gulph
Of all-devouring night. As long immur'd
In noontide darkness by th' glimm'ring lamp,
Each muse and each fair science pin'd away
The fordid hours: while foul, barbarian hands
Their mysteries profan'd, unstrung the lyre,
And chain'd the soaring pinion down to earth.
At last the Muses rose, and spurn'd their bonds,
And wildly warbling scatter'd, as they flew,
Their blooming wreaths from fair Valclusa's bow'rs
To Arno's myrtle border and the shore

At last the Muses rose, &c.] About the age of Hugh Capet, the founder of
the third race of French kings, the poets of Provence were in high reputation;
a sort of strolling bards or rhapsodists, who went about the courts of princes and
noblemen, entertaining them at festivals with music and poetry. They at-
tempted both the epic ode and satire, and abounded in a wild and fantastic vein
of fable, partly allegorical, and partly founded on traditionary legends of the
Saracen wars. These were the rudiments of the Italian poetry. But their
taste and composition must have been extremely barbarous, as we may judge
by those who followed the turn of their fable in much politer times; such as
Boiardo, Bernardo Tasso, Ariosto, &c.

Valclusa.] The famous retreat of Francesco Petrarcha, the father of Italian
poetry, and his mitres Laura, a lady of Avignon.

Arno.] The river which runs by Florence, the birth-place of Dante and Boc-
cacio.
Book II. of IMAGINATION.

Of soft Parthenope. But still the rage
Of dire ambition and gigantic pow'r,
25 From public aims and from the busy walk
Of civil commerce, drove the bolder train
Of penetrating science to the cells,
Where studious ease consumes the silent hour
In shadowy searches and unfruitful care.

30 Thus from their guardians torn, the tender arts
Of mimic fancy and harmonious joy,

To

Parthenope.] Or Naples, the birth-place of Sannazaro. The great Torquato
Tasso was born at Sorrento in the kingdom of Naples.

Of dire ambition, &c.] This relates to the cruel wars among the republics
of Italy, and the abominable politics of its little princes, about the fifteenth
century. These at last, in conjunction with the papal power, entirely exting-
uished the spirit of liberty in that country, and established that abuse of the
fine arts which has since been propagated over all Europe.

Thus from their guardians torn the tender arts, &c.] Nor were they only lofers
by the separation. For philosophy itself, to use the words of a noble philoso-
pher, being thus sever'd from the sprightly arts and sciences, must conseqeu-
tly grow drowsy, insipid, pedantic, useless, and directly opposite to the real knowledge
and practice of the world. Infomuch, that a gentleman, says another excellent
writer, cannot easily bring himself to like so austere and ungainly a form: so
greatly is it changed from what was once the delight of the finest gentlemen of
antiquity, and their recreation after the hurry of public affairs! From this
condition it cannot be recovered but by uniting it once more with the works of
imagination; and we have had the pleasure of observing a very great progress
made towards their union in England within these few years. It is hardly po-
sible to conceive them at a greater distance from each other than at the revolu-
tion, when Locke stood at the head of one party, and Dryden of the other.
But the general spirit of liberty, which has ever since been growing, naturally
invited
To prieſtly domination and the luft
Of lawlesfs courts, their amiable toil
For three inglorious ages have resign'd,
In vain relucant: and Torquato's tongue
Was tun'd for slavish pæans at the throne
Of tinfole pomp; and Raphael's magic hand
Effus'd its fair creation to inchant
The fond adoring herd in Latian fanes
To blind belief; while on their prostrate necks
The fable tyrant plants his heel secure.
But now behold! the radiant æra dawns,
When freedom's ample fabric, fix'd at length
For endless years on Albion's happy shore
In full proportion, once more shall extend
To all the kindred pow'rs of social blis
A common mansion, a parental roof.
There shall the Virtues, there shall Wisdom's train,
Their long-lost friends rejoining, as of old,
50 Imbrace the smiling family of arts,
The Muses and the Graces. Then no more
Shall vice, distracting their delicious gifts
To aims abhor'd, with high distaste and scorn
Turn from their charms the philosophic eye,
55 The patriot-boom: then no more the paths
Of public care or intellectual toil,
Alone by footsteps haughty and severe
In gloomy state be trod: th' harmonious Muse
And her persuasive sisters then shall plant
60 Their sheltrong laurels o'er the bleak ascent,
And shed their flow'rs along the rugged way.
Arm'd with the lyre, already have we dar'd
To pierce divine philosophy's retreats,
And teach the Muse her lore; already strove
65 Their long-divided honours to unite,
While temp'ring this deep argument we sang
Of truth and beauty. Now the same fair task
Impends; now urging our ambitious toil,
We hasten to recount the various springs
70 Of adventitious pleasure, which adjoin
Their grateful influence to the prime effect
Of objects grand or beauteous, and enlarge
The complicated joy. The sweets of sense,
Do they not oft with kind accession flow,

75 To raise harmonious fancy's native charm?
So while we taste the fragrance of the rose,
Glows not her blush the fairer? While we view
Amid the noontide walk a limpid rill
Gush thro' the trickling herbage, to the thirst

80 Of summer yielding the delicious draught
Of cool refreshment; o'er the mossy brink
Shines not the surface clearer, and the waves
With sweeter music murmur as they flow?

Nor this alone; the various lot of life

85 Oft from external circumstance assumes
A moment's disposition to rejoice
In those delights which at a different hour
Would pass unheeded. Fair the face of spring,
When rural songs and odours wake the morn,
Book II. of Imagination.

To every eye; but how much more to his,
Round whom the bed of sickness long diffus’d
Its melancholy gloom! how doubly fair,
When first with fresh-born vigour he inhales
The balmy breeze, and feels the blessed sun

Warm at his bosom, from the springs of life
Chasing oppressive damps and languid pain!

Or shall I mention, where celestial truth
Her awful light discloses, to effulge
A more majestic pomp on beauty’s frame?

For man loves knowledge, and the beams of truth
More welcome touch his understanding’s eye,
Than all the blandishments of sound, his ear,
Than all of taste his tongue. Nor ever yet
The melting rainbow’s vernal-tinctur’d hues

To me have shown so pleasing, as when first
The hand of science pointed out the path
In which the sun-beams gleaming from the west
Fall on the watry cloud, whose darksome veil
Involves the orient; and that trickling show'r

G 2

Piercing
The PLEASURES

110 Piercing thro' every crystalline convex
Of clus'tring dew-drops to their flight oppos'd,
Recoil at length where concave all behind
Th' internal surface of each glassy orb
Repells their forward passage into air;

115 That thence direct they seek the radiant goal
From which their course began; and, as they strike
In diff'rent lines the gazer's obvious eye,
Assume a diff'rent lustre, thro' the brede
Of colours changing from the splendid rose

120 To the pale violet's dejected hue.

Or shall we touch that kind access of joy,
That springs to each fair object, while we trace,
'Thro' all its fabric, wisdom's artful aim
Disposing every part, and gaining still

125 By means proportion'd her benignant end?
Speak, ye, the pure delight, whose favour'd steps
The lamp of science thro' the jealous maze
Of nature guides, when haply you reveal
Her secret honours: whether in the sky,
BOOK II. of IMAGINATION. 53

130 The beauteous laws of light, the central pow’rs
That wheel the pensile planets round the year;
Whether in wonders of the rowling deep,
Or smiling fruits of pleasure-pregnant earth,
Or fine-adjusted springs of life and sense,
135 You scan the counsels of their author’s hand.

What, when to raise the meditated scene,
The flame of passion, thro’ the struggling soul
Deep-kindled, shows across that sudden blaze
The object of its rapture, vast of size,
140 With fiercer colours and a night of shade?
What? like a storm from their capacious bed
The sounding seas o’erwhelming, when the might
Of these eruptions, working from the depth
Of man’s strong apprehension, shakes his frame
145 Ev’n to the base; from every naked sense
Of pain or pleasure dissipating all
Opinion’s feeble cov’rings, and the veil
Spun from the cobweb-fashion of the times
To hide the feeling heart? Then nature speaks

Her
Her genuine language, and the words of men,
Big with the very motion of their souls,
Declare with what accumulated force,
Th' impetuous nerve of passion urges on
The native weight and energy of things.

Yet more; her honours where nor beauty claims,
Nor shews of good the thirsty sense allure,
From passion's pow'r alone our nature holds
Essential pleasure. Passion's fierce illapse
Rouzes the mind's whole fabric; with supplies

Of daily impulse keeps th' elastic pow'rs
Intensely poiz'd, and polishes anew
By that collision all the fine machine:
Else rust would rise, and foulness, by degrees

From passion's power alone, &c.] This very mysterious kind of pleasure which is often found in the exercise of passions generally counted painful, has been taken notice of by several authors. Lucretius resolves it into self-love,

Suave mari magno, &c. lib. II. 1.

As if a man was never pleas'd in being moved at the distress of a tragedy, without a cool reflection that tho' these fictitious personages were so unhappy, yet he himself was perfectly at ease and in safety. The ingenious and candid author of the reflexions critiques sur la poesie & sur la peinture, accounts for it by the general delight which the mind takes in its own activity, and the abhorrence it feels of an indolent and unattentive state: And this, join'd with the moral applause of its own temper, which attends these emotions when natural and just, is certainly the true foundation of the pleasure, which as it is the origin and basis of tragedy and epic, deserves a very particular consideration in this poem.
Book II. of Imagination.

Incumb'ring, choak at last what heav'n design'd
165 For ceaseless motion and a round of toil.
—But say, does every passion men endure
Thus minister delight? That name indeed
Becomes the rosy breath of love; becomes
The radiant smiles of joy, th' applauding hand
170 Of admiration: but the bitter show'r
That sorrow sheds upon a brother's grave,
But the dumb palsy of nocturnal fear,
Or those consuming fires that gnaw the heart
Of panting indignation, find we there
175 To move delight? —Then listen, while my tongue
Th' unalter'd will of heav'n with faithful awe
Reveals; what old Harmodius wont to teach
My early age; Harmodius, who had weigh'd
Within his learned mind whate'er the schools
180 Of wisdom, or thy lonely-whispering voice,
O faithful nature! dictate of the laws
Which govern and support this mighty frame
Of universal being. Oft the hours
From morn to eve have stole unmark'd away,

While
The PLEASURES

185 While mute attention hung upon his lips,
As thus the sage his awful tale began.

'Twas in the windings of an ancient wood,
When spotless youth with solitude resigns
To sweet philosophy the studious day,

190 What time pale autumn shades the silent eve,
Musing I rov'd. Of good and evil much,
And much of mortal man my thought revolv'd;
When starting full on fancy's gushing eye,
The mournful image of Parthenia's fate,

195 That hour, O long belov'd and long deplor'd!
When blooming youth, nor gentlest wisdom's arts,
Nor Hymen's honours gather'd for thy brow,
Nor all thy lover's, all thy father's tears
Avail'd to snatch thee from the cruel grave;

200 Thy agonizing looks, thy last farewell
Struck to the inmost feeling of my soul
As with the hand of death. At once the shade
More horrid nodded o'er me, and the winds
With hoarser murm'ring shook the branches. Dark
Book II. of Imagination

As midnight storms, the scene of human things,
Appear'd before me; deserts, burning sands
Where the parch'd adder dies; the frozen south,
And desolation blasting all the west
With rapine and with murder: tyrant-pow'r.

Here sits inthron'd in blood; the baleful charms
Of superstition there infect the skies,
And turn the sun to horror. Gracious heav'n!
What is the life of man? Or cannot these,
Not these portents thy awful will suffice?

That propagated thus beyond their scope,
They rise to act their cruelties anew
In my afflicted bosom, thus decreed
The universal sensitive of pain,
The wretched heir of evils not its own!

Thus I, impatient; when at once effus'd,
A flashing torrent of celestial day
Burst thro' the shadowy void. With slow descent
A purple cloud came floating thro' the sky,
And pois'd at length within the circling trees.
The PLEASURES

225 Hung obvious to my view: till opening wide
Its lucid orb, a more than human form
Emerging lean'd majestic o'er my head,
And instant thunder shook the conscious grove,
Then melted into air the liquid cloud,

230 And all the shining vision flood reveal'd.
A wreath of palm his ample forehead bound,
And o'er his shoulder, mantling to his knee,
Flow'd the transparent robe, around his waist
Collected with a radiant zone of gold

235 Æthereal: there in mystic signs ingrav'd,
I read his office high and sacred name,
Genius of human kind: Appall'd I gaz'd
The godlike presence; for athwart his brow
Displeasure, temper'd with a mild concern,

240 Look'd down reluctant on me, and his words
Like distant thunders broke the murm'ring air.

Vain are thy thoughts, O child of mortal birth,
And impotent thy tongue. Is thy short span
Capacious of this universal frame?
Book II. of IMAGINATION

245 Thy wisdom all-sufficient? Thou, alas!
Doft thou aspire to judge between the lord
Of nature and his works? to lift thy voice
Against the sov'reign order he decreed
All good and lovely? to blaspheme the bands

250 Of tenderneas innate and social love,
Holiest of things! by which the general orb
Of being, as with adamantine links,
Was drawn to perfect union and sustaine'd
From everlasting? Hast thou felt the pangs

255 Of soft'ning sorrow, of indignant zeal
So grievous to the soul, as thence to wish
The ties of nature broken from thy frame;
That so thy selfish, unrelenting heart
May cease to mourn its lot, no longer then

260 The wretched heir of evils not its own?
O fair benevolence of gen'rous minds!
O man by nature form'd for all mankind!

He spoke; abash'd and silent I remain'd, As conscious of my lips' offence, and aw'd

H 2 Before
Before his presence, tho' my secret soul
Disdain'd the imputation. On the ground,
I fix'd my eyes; till from his airy couch
He swoop'd sublime, and touching with his hand
My dazzled forehead, Raise thy sight, he cry'd,
And let thy sense convince thy erring tongue.

I look'd, and lo! the former scene was chang'd;
For verdant alleys and surrounding trees,
A solitary prospect, wide and wild,
Rush'd on my senses. 'Twas a horrid pile
Of hills with many a shaggy forest mix'd,
With many a sable cliff and glitt'ring stream.
Aloft recumbent o'er the hanging ridge,
The brown woods wav'd, while ever-trickling springs
Wash'd from the naked roots of oak and pine,
The crumbling soil; and still at every fall
Down the steep windings of the channel'd rock,
Remur'm'ring rush'd the congregated floods
With hoar'fer inundation; till at last
They reach'd a grasy plain, which from the skirts
Of
Book II. of Imagination

285 Of that high desert spread her verdant lap,
And drank the gushing moisture, where contain'd
In one smooth current, o'er the lilièd vale
Clearer than glass it flow'd. Autumnal spoils
Luxuriant spreading to the rays of morn,

290 Blush'd o'er the cliffs, whose half-incircling mound
As in a sylvan theatre inclos'd
That flow'ry level. On the river's brink
I spy'd a fair pavilion, which diffus'd
Its floating umbrage 'mid the silver shade

295 Of ofiers. Now the western sun reveal'd
Between two parting cliffs his golden orb,
And pour'd across the shadow of the hills,
On rocks and floods, a yellow stream of light
That cheer'd the solemn scene. My lift'ning pow'rs

300 Were aw'd, and every thought in silence hung,
And wond'ring expectation. Then the voice
Of that celestial pow'r, the mystic show
Declaring, thus my deep attention call'd.
Inhabitant of earth, to whom is giv'n
The gracious ways of providence to learn;
Receive my sayings with a stedfast ear——
Know then, the sov'reign spirit of the world,
Tho' self-collected from eternal time,
Within his own deep essence he beheld
The circling bounds of happiness unite;
Yet by immense benignity inclin'd

Inhabitant of earth, &c.] The account of the economy of providence here introduced, as the most proper to calm and satisfy the mind, when under the compunction of private evils, seems to have come originally from the Pythagorean school: but of all the ancient philosophers, Plato has most largely inflected upon it, has established it with all the strength of his capacious understanding, and ennobled it with all the magnificence of his divine imagination. He has one passage to full and clear on the head, that I am persuaded the reader will be pleased to see it here, tho' somewhat long. Addressing himself to such as are not satisfied concerning divine providence, The being who presides over the whole, says he, has disposed and complicated all things for the happiness and virtue of the whole, every part of which, according to the extent of its influence, does and suffers what is fit and proper. One of these parts is yours, O unhappy man! which tho' in itself most inconceivable and minute, yet being connected with the universe, ever seeks to co-operate with that supreme order. You in the mean time are ignorant of the very end for which all particular natures are brought into existence, that the all-comprehending nature of the whole may be perfect and happy, existing, as it does, not for your sake, but the cause and reason of your existence, which, as in the symmetry of every artificial work, must of necessity concur with the general design of the artist, and be subservient to the whole of which it is a part. Your complaint therefore is ignorant and groundless; since according to the various energy of creation, and the common laws of nature, there is a constant provision of that which is best at the same time for you and for the whole.——For the
To spread around him that primæval joy
Which fill’d himself, he rais’d his plastic arm,
And founded thro’ the hollow depth of space
The strong, creative mandate. Strait arose
These heav’nly orbs, the glad abodes of life
Effusive kindled by his breath divine
Thro’ endless forms of being. Each inhal’d
From him its portion of the vital flame,
In measure such, that from the wide complex
Of coexistent orders, one might rise,

The governing intelligence clearly beholding all the actions of animated and self-moving creatures, and that mixture of good and evil which diversifies them, considered first of all by what disposition of things, and what situation of each individual in the general system, vice might be depressed and subdued, and virtue made secure of victory and happiness, with the greatest facility and in the highest degree possible. In this manner be order’d thro’ the entire circle of being, the internal constitution of every mind, where should be its station in the universal fabric, and thro’ what variety of circumstances it should proceed in the whole tenour of its existence. He goes on in his sublime manner to affect a future state of retribution, as well for those who, by the exercise of good dispositions being harmonized and assimilated to the divine virtue, are consequently removed to a place of unblemish’d sanctity and happiness; as of those who by the most flagitious arts have arisen from contemptible beginnings to the greatest affluence and power, and whom therefore you look upon as unanswerable instances of negligence in the Gods, because you are ignorant of the purposes to which they are subjervient, and in what manner they contribute to that supreme intention of good to the whole.

Plato de Leg. x. 16.

This theory has been deliver’d of late, especially abroad, in a manner which subverts the freedom of human actions; whereas Plato appears very careful to preserve it, and has been in that respect imitated by the best of his followers.

---one might rise,

One
One order, all-involving and intire.
He too beholding in the sacred light
Of his essential reason, all the shapes
Of swift contingency, all successive ties
Of action propagated thro' the sum
Of possible existence, he at once,
Down the long series of eventful time,
So fix'd the dates of being, so dispos'd,
To every living soul of every kind,
The field of motion and the hour of rest,
That all conspir'd to his supreme design,
To universal good; with full accord,
Answering the mighty model he had chose,
The best and fairest of unnumber'd worlds
That lay from everlasting in the store

One order, &c.] See the meditations of Antoninus, and the characteristics, passim.
The best and fairest, &c.] This opinion is so old, that Timæus Locrus calls the supreme being, Δημιουργός τῆς θεοτοκίας, the artificer of that which is best; and represents him as resolving in the beginning to produce the most excellent work, and as copying the world most exactly from his own intelligible and essential idea; so that it yet remains, as it was at first, perfect in beauty, and will never stand in need of any correction or improvement. There is no room for a caution here, to understand these expressions not of any particular circumstances of human life separately consider'd, but of the sum or universal system of life and being. See also the vision at the end of the Théodicée of Leibnitz.
Of his divine conceptions. Nor content,
By one exertion of creating pow'r,
His goodness to reveal; thro' every age,
Thro' every moment up the tract of time,
His parent-hand with ever-new increase
Of happiness and virtue has adorn'd
The vast harmonious frame: his parent-hand,
From the mute shell-fish gasping on the shore,
To men, to angels, to celestial minds,
For ever leads the generations on
To higher scenes of being; while supply'd
From day to day by his inlivening breath,
Inferior orders in succession rise
To fill the void below. As flame ascends,
As bodies to their proper center move,
As the poiz'd ocean to th' attracting moon
Obedient swells, and every headlong stream
Devolves its winding waters to the main;
So all things which have life aspire to God,

As flame ascends, &c.] This opinion, tho' not held by Plato or any of the
ancients, is yet a very natural consequence of his principles. But the disquisition
is too complex and extensive to be enter'd upon here.
The PLEASURES

The sun of being, boundless, unimpair'd,
Center of souls! Nor does the faithful voice
Of nature cease to prompt their eager steps
Aright; nor is the care of heav'n withheld
From granting to the task proportion'd aid;
That in their stations all may persevere
To climb th' ascent of being, and approach
For ever nearer to the life divine.

That rocky pile thou see'st, that verdant lawn
Fresh-water'd from the mountains. Let the scene
Paint in thy fancy the primâval feat
Of man, and where the will supreme ordain'd
His mansion, that pavilion fair-diffus'd
Along the shady brink, in this recess
To wear th' appointed season of his youth;
Till riper hours should open to his toil
The high communion of superior minds,
Of consecrated heroes and of gods.
Nor did the fire omnipotent forget
His tender bloom to cherish; nor withheld

Celestial
Book II. of Imagination.

Cælestial footsteps from his green abode.
Oft from the radiant honours of his throne,
He sent whom most he lov'd, the sov'reign fair,
The effluence of his glory, whom he plac'd

380 Before his eyes for ever to behold;
The goddess from whose inspiration flows
The toil of patriots, the delight of friends;
Without whose work divine, in heav'n or earth,
Nought lovely, nought propitious comes to pass,

385 Nor hope, nor praise, nor honour. Her the fire
Gave it in charge to rear the blooming mind,
The folded pow'rs to open, to direct
The growth luxuriant of his young desire;
And from the laws of this majestic world

390 To teach him what was good. As thus the nymph
Her daily care attended, by her side
With constant steps her gay companion stay'd,
The fair Euphrosyné, the gentle queen
Of smiles, and graceful gladness, and delights

395 That cheer alike the hearts of mortal men
And pow'rs immortal. See the shining pair!

Behold,
Behold, where from his dwelling now disclos'd,
They quit their youthful charge and seek the skies.

I look'd, and on the flow'ry turf there stood,
Between two radiant forms, a smiling youth
Whose tender cheeks display'd the vernal flow'r
Of beauty; sweetest innocence illum'd
His bashful eyes, and on his polish'd brow
Sate young Simplicity. With fond regard

He view'd th' associates, as their steps they mov'd;
The younger chief his ardent eyes detain'd,
With mild regret invoking her return.
Bright as the star of evening she appear'd
Amid the dusky scene. Eternal youth

O'er all her form its glowing honours breath'd;
And smiles eternal, from her candid eyes,
Flow'd like the dewy lustre of the morn
Effusive trembling on the placid waves.
The spring of heav'n had shed its blushing spoils

To bind her fable tresses: full diffus'd
Her yellow mantle floated in the breeze;
And in her hand she wav'd a living branch

Rich
Book II. of Imagination.

Rich with immortal fruits, of pow'r to calm
The wrathful heart, and from the bright'ning eyes
To chase the cloud of sadness. More sublime
The heav'nly part'ner mov'd. The prime of age
Compos'd her steps. The presence of a god,
High on the circle of her brow inthon'd,
From each majestic motion darted awe,
Devoted awe! till, cherish'd by her looks
Benevolent and meek, confiding love
To filial rapture soften'd all the soul.
Free in her graceful hand she poiz'd the sword
Of chaste dominion. An heroic crown
Display'd the old simplicity of pomp
Around her honour'd head. A matron's robe,
White as the sunshine streams thro' vernal clouds,
Her flately form invested. Hand in hand
Th' immortal pair forsook th' enamell'd green,
Ascending slowly. Rays of limpid light
Gleam'd round their path; celestial rounds were heard,
And thro' the fragrant air ætherial dews
Distill'd around them; till at once the clouds
Disparting
Disparting wide in midway sky, withdrew
440 Their airy veil, and left a bright expanse
Of empyrean flame, where spent and drown'd,
Affected vision plung'd in vain to scan
What object it involv'd. My feeble eyes
Indur'd not. Bending down to earth I stood,
445 With dumb attention. Soon a female voice,
As watry murmurs sweet, or warbling shades,
With sacred invocation thus began.

Father of gods and mortals! whose right arm
With reins eternal guides the moving heav'n's,
450 Bend thy propitious ear. Behold well-pleas'd
I seek to finish thy divine decree.
With frequent steps I visit yonder seat
Of man, thy offspring; from the tender seeds
Of justice and of wisdom, to evolve
455 The latent honours of his generous frame;
Till thy conducing hand shall raise his lot
From earth's dim scene to these aetherial walks,
The temple of thy glory. But not me,

Not
Not my directing voice he oft requires,
Or hears delighted: this enchanting maid,
Th' associate thou hast giv'n me, her alone
He loves, O father! absent, her he craves;
And but for her glad presence ever join'd,
Rejoices not in mine: that all my hopes
This thy benignant purpose to fulfil,
I deem uncertain; and my daily cares
Unfruitful all and vain, unless by thee
Still farther aided in the work divine.

She ceas'd; a voice more awful thus reply'd.
O thou! in whom for ever I delight,
Fairer than all th' inhabitants of heaven,
Best image of thy author! far from thee
Be disappointment, or distaste, or blame;
Who soon or late shalt every work fulfil,
And no resistance find. If man refuse
To hearken to thy dictates; or allur'd
By meaner joys, to any other pow'r
Transfer the honours due to thee alone;
That
That joy which he pursues he ne'er shall taste,
That pow'r in whom delighteth ne'er behold.
Go then once more, and happy be thy toil;
Go then! but let not this thy smiling friend
Partake thy footsteps. In her stead, behold!
With thee the son of Nemesis I send;
The fiend abhorr'd! whose vengeance takes account
Of sacred order's violated laws.
See where he calls thee, burning to be gone,
Fierce to exhaust the tempest of his wrath
On yon devoted head. But thou, my child,
Controul his cruel frenzy, and protect
Thy tender charge. That when despair shall grasp
His agonizing bosom, he may learn,
Then he may learn to love the gracious hand
Alone sufficient in that hour of ill,
To save his feeble spirit; then confess
Thy genuine honours, O excelling fair!
When all the plagues that wait the deadly will
Of this avenging daemon, all the storms
Of night infernal, serve but to display
The
Book II. of Imagination. 73

500 The energy of thy superior charms
   With mildest awe triumphant o'er his rage;
   And shining clearer in the horrid gloom.

   Here ceas'd that awful voice, and soon I felt
   The cloudy curtain of refreshing eve

505 Was clos'd once more, from that immortal fire
   Shelt'ring my eye-lids. Looking up, I view'd
   A vast gigantic spectre striding on
   Thro' murm'ring thunders and a waste of clouds,
   With dreadful action. Black as night his brow

510 Relentless frowns involv'd. His savage limbs
   With sharp impatience violent he writh'd,
   As thro' convulsive anguish; and his hand
   Arm'd with a scorpion-lash, full oft he rais'd
   In madness to his bosom; while his eyes

515 Rain'd bitter tears, and bellowing loud he shook
   The void with horror. Silent by his side
   The virgin came. No discomposure stirr'd
   Her features. From the glooms which hung around,
   No stain of darkness mingled with the beam
The PLEASURES

520 Of her divine effulgence. Now they stoop
Upon the river-bank; and now to hail
His wonted guests, with eager steps advanc'd
The unsuspecting inmate of the shade.

As when a famish'd wolf, that all night long
525 Had rang'd the Alpine snows, by chance at morn
Sees from a cliff incumbent o'er the smoke
Of some lone village, a neglected kid
That strays along the wild for herb or spring;
Down from the winding ridge he sweeps amain,

530 And thinks he tears him: so with tenfold rage,
The monster sprung remorseless on his prey.
Amaz'd the stripling stood; with panting breast
Feebly he pour'd the lamentable wail
Of helpless consternation, struck at once,

535 And rooted to the ground. The queen beheld
His terror, and with looks of tend'rest care
Advanc'd to save him. Soon the tyrant felt
Her awful pow'r. His keen, tempestuous arm
Hung nerveless, nor descended where his rage

Had
Book II. of Imagination.

540  Had aim'd the deadly blow: then dumb retir'd
    With fullen rancour. Lo! the sov'reign maid
Folds with a mother's arms the fainting boy,
Till life rekindles in his rosy cheek;
Then grasps his hand, and chears him with her tongue.

545  O wake thee, rouze thy spirit! Shall the spite
Of yon tormentor thus appall thy heart,
While I, thy friend and guardian, am at hand
To rescue and to heal? O let thy soul
Remember, what the will of heav'n ordains

550  Is ever good for all; and if for all,
Then good for thee. Nor only by the warmth
And soother sunshine of delightful things,
Do minds grow up and flourish. Oft misled
By that bland light, the young unpractis'd views

555  Of reason wander thro' a fatal road,
Far from their native aim: as if to lye
Inglorious in the fragrant shade, and wait
The soft access of ever-circling joys,
Were all the end of being. Ask thy self,
560 This pleasing error did it never lull

Thy wishes? Has thy constant heart refus’d

The filken fetters of delicious ease?

Or when divine Euphrofyne appear’d

Within this dwelling, did not thy desires

565 Hang far below that measure of thy fate,

Which I reveal’d before thee? and thy eyes,

Impatient of my counsels, turn away

To drink the soft effusion of her smiles?

Know then, for this the everlasting fire

570 Deprives thee of her presence, and instead,

O wise and still benevolent! ordains

This horrid visage hither to pursue

My steps; that so thy nature may discern

Its real good, and what alone can save

575 Thy feeble spirit in this hour of ill

From folly and despair. O yet belov’d!

Let not this headlong terror quite o’erwhelm

Thy scatter’d pow’rs; nor fatal deem the rage

Of this tormentor, nor his proud assault,

580 While I am here to vindicate thy toil,
Book II. of IMAGINATION.

Above the generous question of thy arm.
Brave by thy fears, and in thy weakness strong,
This hour he triumphs; but confront his might,
And dare him to the combat, then with ease
585 Disarm'd and quell'd, his fierceness he resigns
To bondage and to scorn: while thus inur'd
By watchful danger, by unceasing toil,
Th' immortal mind, superior to his fate,
Amid the outrage of external things,
590 Firm as the solid base of this great world,
Rests on his own foundations. Blow, ye winds!
Ye waves! ye thunders! roil your tempest on;
Shake, ye old pillars of the marble sky!
Till all its orbs and all its worlds of fire
595 Be loosen'd from their seats; yet still serene,
Th' unconquer'd mind looks down upon the wreck,
And ever stronger as the storms advance,
Firm thro' the closing ruin holds his way,
Where nature calls him to the destin'd goal.
600 So spake the goddess; while thro' all her frame
Celestial raptures flow'd, in every word,
In ev'ry motion kindling warmth divine
To seize who listen'd. Vehement and swift
As light'ning fires the aromatic shade
605 In Æthiopian fields, the stripling felt
Her inspiration catch his servid soul,
And starting from his languor thus exclaim'd.

Then let the trial come! and witness thou,
If terror be upon me; if I shrink.
610 To meet the storm, or faulter in my strength
When hardest it besets me. Do not think
That I am fearful and infirm of soul,
As late thy eyes beheld: for thou hast chang'd
My nature; thy commanding voice has wak'd.
615 My languid pow'rs to bear me boldly on,
Where'er the will divine my path ordains
Thro' toil or peril: only do not thou
Forsake me; O be thou for ever near,

That
BOOK II. of IMAGINATION.

That I may listen to thy sacred voice,
And guide by thy decrees my constant feet.
But say, for ever are my eyes bereft?
Say, shall the fair Euphrosyné not once
Appear again to charm me? Thou, in heav’n!
O thou eternal arbiter of things!

Be thy great bidding done: for who am I
To question thy appointment? Let the frowns
Of this avenger every morn o’ercast
The cheerful dawn, and every evening damp
With double night my dwelling; I will learn

To hail them both, and unrepining bear
His hateful presence: but permit my tongue
One glad request, and if my deeds may find
Thy awful eye propitious, O restore
The rosy-featur’d maid; again to cheer

This lonely feat, and bless me with her smiles.
He spoke; when instant, thro’ the fable glooms
With which that furious presence had involv’d
The ambient air, a flood of radiance came
Swift as the light’ning-flash; the melting clouds

Flew
The PLEASURES

640 Flew diverse, and amid the blue serene
Euphrosyné appear’d. With sprightly step
The nymph alighted on th’ irriguous lawn,
And to her wond’ring audience thus begun.

Lo! I am here to answer to your vows,
645 And be the meeting fortunate! I come
With joyful tidings; we shall part no more——
Hark! how the gentle Echo from her cell
Talks thro’ the cliffs, and murm’ring o’er the stream
Repeats the accent; we shall part no more.

650 O my delightful friends! well-pleas’d on high
The father has beheld you, while the might
Of that stern foe with bitter trial prov’d
Your equal doings: then for ever spake
The high decree; that thou, celestial maid!

655 Howe’er that grievously phantom on thy steps
May sometimes dare intrude, yet never more
Shalt thou descending to th’ abode of man,
Alone indure the rancour of his arm,
Or leave thy lov’d Euphrosyné behind.
Book II. of Imagination. 81

660 She ended; and the whole romantic scene
Immediate vanish'd: rocks, and woods, and rills,
The mantling tent, and each mysterious form
Flew like the pictures of a morning dream,
When sun-shine fills the bed. A while I stood

665 Perplex'd and giddy; till the radiant pow'r
Who bade the visionary landscape rise,
As up to him I turn'd, with gentlest looks
Preventing my inquiry, thus began.

There let thy soul acknowledge its complaint

670 How blind, how impious! There behold the ways
Of heav'n's eternal destiny to man,
For ever just, benevolent and wise:
That Virtue's awful steps, how'er pursu'd
By vexing fortune and intrusive Pain,

675 Should never be divided from her chaste,
Her fair attendant, Pleasure. Need I urge
Thy tardy thought thro' all the various round
Of this existence, that thy soft'ning soul
At length may learn what energy the hand

Of
The PLEASURES

680 Of virtue mingles in the bitter tide
   Of passion swelling with distress and pain,
   To mitigate the sharp with gracious drops
   Of cordial pleasure? Ask the faithful youth,
   Why the cold urn of her whom long he lov'd

685 So often fills his arms; so often draws
   His lonely footsteps at the silent hour,
   To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?
   O! he will tell thee, that the wealth of worlds
   Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego

690 That sacred hour, when stealing from the noise
   Of care and envy, sweet remembrance sooths
   With virtue's kindest looks his aking breast,
   And turns his tears to rapture——Ask the crowd
   Which flies impatient from the village-walk

695 To climb the neigh'ring cliffs, when far below
   The cruel winds have hurl'd upon the coast
   Some helpless bark; while sacred pity melts
   The general eye, or terror's icy hand
   Smites their distorted limbs and horrent hair;

700 While every mother closer to her breast
Book II. of IMAGINATION

Catches her child, and pointing where the waves
Foam thro' the shatter'd vessel, shrieks aloud
As one poor wretch that spreads his piteous arms
For succour, swallow'd by the roaring surge,

As now another, dash'd against the rock,
Drops lifeless down: O deemest thou indeed
No kind indearment here by nature giv'n
To mutual terror and compassion's tears?
No sweetly-melting softness which attracts,

O'er all that edge of pain, the social pow'rs
To this their proper action and their end?
—Ask thy own heart. When at the midnight hour,
Slow thro' that studious gloom thy pausing eye
Led by the glimm'ring taper moves around

The sacred volumes of the dead; the songs
Of Græcian bards, and records wrote by fame
For Græcian heroes, where the present pow'r
Of heav'n and earth surveys th' immortal page,
Ev'n as a father blessing, while he reads,

The praises of his son. If then thy soul,
Spurning the yoke of these inglorious days,
The PLEASURES

Mix in their deeds and kindle with their flame;
Say; when the prospect blackens on thy view,
When rooted from the base, heroic states

725 Mourn in the dust and tremble at the frown
Of curt ambition; when the pious band
Of youths who fought for freedom and their fires,
Lie side by side in gore; when russian-pride
Usurps the throne of justice, turns the pomp

730 Of public pow’r, the majesty of rule,
The sword, the laurel, and the purple robe,
To lavish, empty pageants, to adorn
A tyrant’s walk, and glitter in the eyes
Of such as bow the knee; when honour’d urns

735 Of patriots and of chiefs, the awful bust
And storied arch, to glut the coward-rage
Of regal envy, strew the public way
With hallow’d ruins; when the muse’s haunt,
The marble porch where wisdom wont to talk

740 With Socrates or Tully, hears no more,

---when the pious band, &c.] The reader will here naturally recollect the fate of the sacred battalion of Thebes, which at the battle of Chaeronea was utterly destroy’d, every man being found lying dead by his friend.
Book II. of IMAGINATION.

Save the hoarse jargon of contentious monks,
Or female superstition's midnight pray'r;
When ruthless rapine from the hand of time
Tears the destroying scythe, withurer blow

745
To sweep the works of glory from their base;
Till desolation o'er the grass-grown street
Expands his raven-wings, and up the wall,
Where senates once the price of monarchs doom'd,
Hisses the gliding snake thro' hoary weeds

750
That clasp the mould'ring column; thus defac'd,
Thus widely mournful when the prospect thrills
Thy beating bosom, when the patriot's tear
Starts from thine eye, and thy extended arm
In fancy hurls the thunderbolt of Jove

755
To fire the impious wreath on Philip's brow,
Or dash Octavius from the trophied car;
Say, does thy secret soul repine to taste
The big distress? Or wouldst thou then exchange
Those heart-ennobling sorrows for the lot

Philip.] The Macedonian.
Of him who sits amid the gaudy herd
Of mute barbarians bending to his nod,
And bears aloft his gold-invested front,
And says within himself, "I am a king,
"And wherefore should the clam'rous voice of woe

"Intrude upon mine ear?——The baleful dredgs
Of these late ages, this inglorious draught
Of servitude and folly, have not yet,
Blest be th' eternal ruler of the world!
Defil'd to such a depth of sordid shame

The native honours of the human soul,
Nor so effac'd the image of its fire.

End of the SECOND BOOK.
THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

Book the Third.
ARGUMENT of the THIRD BOOK.

PLEASURE in observing the tempers and manners of men, even where vicious or absurd; v. 1, to 14. The origin of vice, from false representations of the fancy, producing false opinions concerning good and evil; v. 14, to 62. Inquiry into ridicule; v. 73. The general sources of ridicule in the minds and characters of men, enumerated; v. 14, to 240. Final cause of the sense of ridicule; v. 263. The resemblance of certain aspects of inanimate things to the sensations and properties of the mind; v. 282, to 311. The operations of the mind in the production of the works of imagination, described; v. 358, to 414. The secondary pleasure from imitation; to v. 436. The benevolent order of the world illustrated in the arbitrary connection of these pleasures with the objects which excite them; v. 458, to 514. The nature and conduct of taste; v. 515, to 567. Concluding with an account of the natural and moral advantages resulting from a sensible and well-formed imagination.
THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.
Book the Third.

WHAT wonder therefore, since th’indearing ties
Of passion link the universal kind
Of man so close, what wonder if to search
This common nature thro’ the various change
5 Of sex, and age, and fortune, and the frame
Of each peculiar, draw the busy mind
With unresisted charms? The spacious west,
And all the teeming regions of the south
Hold not a quarry, to the curious flight
10 Of knowledge, half so tempting or so fair,
As man to man. Nor only where the smiles
Of love invite; nor only where th' applause
Of cordial honour turns th' attentive eye
On virtue's graceful deeds. For since the course
Of things external acts in different ways
On human apprehensions, as the hand
Of nature temper'd to a different frame
Peculiar minds; so haply where the pow'rs
Of fancy neither lessen nor enlarge
The images of thing, but paint in all

---where the pow'rs

Of fancy, &c.] The influence of the imagination on the conduct of life is one of the most important points in moral philosophy. It were easy by an induction of facts to prove that the imagination directs almost all the passions, and mixes with almost every circumstance of action or pleasure. Let any man, even of the coldest head and soberest industry, analyse the idea of what he calls his interest; he will find that it consists chiefly of certain images of decency, beauty and order, variously combined into one system, the idol which he seeks to injoy by labour, hazard, and self-denial. It is on this account of the last consequence to regulate these images by the standard of nature and the general good; otherwise the imagination, by heightening some objects beyond their real excellence and beauty, or by representing others in a more odious or terrible shape than they deserve, may of course engage us in pursuits utterly inconsistent with the laws of the moral order.

If it be objected, that this account of things supposes the passions to be merely accidental, whereas there appears in some a natural and hereditary disposition to certain passions prior to all circumstances of education or fortune; it may be answered, that tho' no man is born ambitious or a miser, yet he may inherit from his parents a peculiar temper or complexion of mind, which shall render his imagination more liable to be struck with some particular objects, consequently dispose him to form opinions of good and ill, and entertain passions of a particular
Their genuine hues, the features which they wore
In nature; there opinion will be true,
And action right. For action treads the path
In which opinion says he follows good,
Or flies from evil; and opinion gives
Report of good or evil, as the scene
Was drawn by fancy, lovely or deform'd:
Thus her report can never there be true,
Where fancy cheats the intellectual eye,

ticular turn. Some men, for instance, by the original frame of their minds,
are more delighted with the vast and magnificent, others on the contrary with
the elegant and gentle aspects of nature. And it is very remarkable, that the
disposition of the moral powers is always similar to this of the imagination; that
those who are most inclin'd to admire prodigious and sublime objects in the
physical world, are also most inclin'd to applaud examples of fortitude and
heroic virtue in the moral. While those who are charm'd rather with the deli-
cacy and sweetness of colours, and forms, and sounds, never fail in like manner to
yield the preference to the softer scenes of virtue and the sympathies of a domes-
tic life. And this is sufficient to account for the objection.

Among the ancient philosophers, tho' we have several hints concerning this
influence of the imagination upon morals among the remains of the Socratic
school, yet the Stoics were the first who paid it a due attention. Zeno, their
founder, thought it impossible to preserve any tolerable regularity in life, without
frequently inspecting those pictures or appearances of things which the imagination
offers to the mind. (Diog. Laert. l. viii.) The meditations of M. Aurelius,
and the discourses of Epictetus, are full of the same sentiments; insomuch that
this latter makes the ἡ τεὸς ἃς ἀν ἔγινον τιν. or right management of the fancies,
the only thing for which we are accountable to providence, and without which
a man is no other than stupid or frantic. Arrian. l. i. c. 12. & l. ii. c. 22. See
also the Characteristics, vol. i. from p. 313, to p. 321. where this Stoical
doctrine is embellished with all the eloquence of the graces of Plato.
With glaring colours and distorted lines.
Is there a man, who at the sound of death,
Sees ghastly shapes of terror conjur’d up,
And black before him; nought but death-bed groans,
And fearful pray’rs, and plunging from the brink.

Of light and being, down the gloomy air,
An unknown depth? Alas! in such a mind,
If no bright forms of excellence attend
The image of his country; nor the pomp
Of sacred senates, nor the guardian voice.

Of justice on her throne, nor aught that wakes
The conscious bosom with a patriot’s flame;
Will not opinion tell him, that to die,
Or stand the hazard, is a greater ill
Than to betray his country? And in act

Will he not chuse to be a wretch and live?
Here vice begins then. From th’ enchanting cup
Which fancy holds to all, th’ unwary thirst
Of youth oft swallows a Circæan draught,
That sheds a baleful tincture o’er the eye

Of reason, till no longer he discerns,
And only guides to err. Then revel forth
A furious band that spurn him from the throne;
And all is uproar. Thus ambition grasps
The empire of the soul: thus pale revenge

55 Unsheaths her murd'rous dagger; and the hands
Of lust and rapine, with unholy arts,
Watch to o'erturn the barrier of the laws
That keeps them from their prey: thus all the plagues
The wicked bear, or o'er the trembling scene

60 The tragic muse discloses, under shapes
Of honour, safety, pleasure, ease or pomp,
Stole first into the mind. Yet not by all
Those lying forms which fancy in the brain
Engenders, are the kindling passions driv'n

65 To guilty deeds; nor reason bound in chains,
That vice alone may lord it: oft adorn'd
With solemn pageants, folly mounts his throne,
And plays her ideot-anticks, like a queen.
A thousand garbs she wears; a thousand ways

70 She wheels her giddy empire—Lo! thus far
With bold adventure, to the Mantuan lyre

I sing
The PLEASURES

I sing of nature's charms, and touch well-pleas'd
A stricter note: now haply must my song
Unbend her serious measure, and reveal

In lighter strains, how folly's awkward arts
Excite impetuous laughter's gay rebuke;
The sportive province of the comic muse.

See! in what crowds the uncouth forms advance;
Each would outstrip the other, each prevent

Our careful search, and offer to your gaze,
Unask'd, his motley features. Wait awhile,
My curious friends! and let us first arrange
In proper orders your promiscuous throng.

Behold the foremost band; of slender thought,

And easy faith; whom flattering fancy sooths

[--- how folly's awkward arts, &c.] Notwithstanding the general influence of ridicule on private and civil life, as well as on learning and the sciences, it has been almost constantly neglected or misrepresented, by divines especially. The manner of treating these subjects in the science of human nature, should be precisely the same as in natural philosophy; from particular facts to investigate the stated order in which they appear, and then apply the general law, thus discovered, to the explication of other appearances and the improvement of useful arts.

Behold the foremost band, &c.] The first and most general source of ridicule in the characters of men, is vanity or self-applause for some desirable quality or possession which evidently does not belong to those who assume it.
With lying spectres, in themselves to view
Illustrious forms of excellence and good,
That scorn the mansion. With exulting hearts
They spread their spurious treasures to the sun;
And bid the world admire! but chief the glance
Of wishful envy draws their joy-bright eyes,
And lifts with self-applause each lordly brow.
In number boundless as the blooms of spring,
Behold their glaring idols, empty shapes
By fancy gilded o'er, and then set up
For adoration. Some in learning's garb,
With formal band and fable-cinctur'd gown,
And rags of mouldy volumes. Some elate
With martial splendour, steely pikes, and swords
Of costly frame, and gay Phœnician robes
Inwrought with flowing gold, assume the port
Of stately valour: list'ning by his side
There stands a female form; to her, with looks
Of earnest import, pregnant with amaze,
He talks of deadly deeds, of breaches, storms,
And sulph'rous mines, and ambush: then at once
The PLEASURES

Breaks off, and smiles to see her look so pale,
And asks some wond’ring question of her fears.
Others of graver mien; behold, adorn’d

With holy ensigns, how sublime they move,
And bending off their sanctimonious eyes,
Take homage of the simple-minded throng;
Ambassadors of heav’n! Nor much unlike
Is he whose visage, in the lazy mist

That mantles every feature, hides a brood
Of politic conceits; of whispers, nods,
And hints deep-omen’d with unwieldy schemes,
And dark portents of state. Ten thousand more,
Prodigious habits and tumultuous tongues,

Pour dauntless in and swell the boastful band.

Then comes the second order; all who seek
The debt of praise, where watchful unbelief
Darts thro’ the thin pretence her squinting eye

Then comes the second order, &c.] Ridicule from the same vanity, where tho’ the possession be real, yet no merit can arise from it, because of some particular circumstances, which, tho’ obvious to the spectator, are yet overlook’d by the ridiculous character.
On some retir'd appearance which belies

The boasted virtue, or annuls th' applause

That justice else would pay. Here side by side

I see two leaders of the solemn train,

Approaching: one a female, old and grey,

With eyes demure and wrinkle-furrow'd brow,

Pale as the checks of death; yet still she stuns

The sickening audience with a nauseous tale;

How many youths her myrtle chains have worn,

How many virgins at her triumphs pin'd!

Yet how resolv'd she guards her cautious heart;

Such is her terror at the risques of love,

And man's seducing tongue! The other seems

A bearded sage, ungentle in his mien,

And fordid all his habit; peevish want

Grins at his heels, while down the gazing throng

He stalks, refounding in magnific phrase

The vanity of riches, the contempt

Of pomp and pow'r. Be prudent in your zeal,

Ye grave associates! let the silent grace

Of her who blushes at the fond regard

N

Her
Her charms inspire, more eloquent unfold
The praise of spotless honour: let the man
Whose eye regards not his illustrious pomp
And ample store, but as indulgent streams
To cheer the barren soil and spread the fruits.

Of joy, let him by juster measure fix
The price of riches and the end of pow'r.

Another tribe succeeds; deluded long
By fancy's dazzling optics, these behold
The images of some peculiar things.

With brighter hues resplendent, and portray'd
With features nobler far than e'er adorn'd
Their genuine objects. Hence the fever'd heart
Pants with delirious hope for tinsel charms;
Hence oft obtrusive on the eye of scorn,

Untimely zeal her witless pride betrays;
And serious manhood, from the tow'ring aim.
Book III. of IMAGINATION

Of wisdom, stoops to emulate the boast
Of childish toil. Behold yon mystic form,
Bedeck'd with feathers, insects, weeds and shells!

165 Not with intenser brow the Samian sage
Bent his fix'd eye on heav'n's eternal fires,
When first the order of that radiant scene
Swell'd his exulting thought, than this surveys
A muckworm's entrails or a spider's fang.

170 Next him a youth, with flow'rs and myrtles crown'd,
Attends that virgin-form, and blushing kneels,
With fondest gesture and a suppliant's tongue,
To win her coy regard: adieu, for him,
The dull ingagements of the bustling world!

175 Adieu the sick impertinence of praise!
And hope, and action! for with her alone,
By streams and shades, to steal the sighing hours,
Is all he asks, and all that fate can give!
Thee too, facetious Momion, wandring here,

180 Thee, dreaded cenfor! oft have I beheld
Bewilder'd unawares: alas! too long
Flush'd with thy comic triumphs and the spoils

N 2
Of fly derision! till on every side
Hurling thy random bolts, offended truth
Assign'd thee here thy station with the slaves
Of folly. Thy once formidable name
Shall grace her humble records, and be heard
In scoffs and mock'ry banded from the lips
Of all the vengeful brotherhood around,
So oft the patient victims of thy scorn.

But now, ye gay! to whom indulgent fate,
Of all the muse's empire hath assign'd
The fields of folly, hither each advance
Your sickles; here the teeming foil affords
Its richest growth. A fav'rite brood appears;
In whom the daemon, with a mother's joy,
Views all her charms reflected, all her cares
At full repay'd. Ye most illustrious band!
Who scorning reason's tame, pedantic rules,
And order's vulgar bondage, never meant

*But now ye gay, &c.*] Ridicule from a notion of excellence, where the object
is absolutely odious or contemptible. This is the highest degree of the ridicul-
ous; as in the affectation of diseaces or vices.
Book III. of Imagination.

For souls sublime as yours, with generous zeal
Pay vice the rev’rence virtue long usurp’d,
And yield deformity the fond applause
Which beauty wont to claim; forgive my song,

That for the blushing diffidence of youth,
It shuns the unequal province of your praise.

Thus far triumphant in the pleasing guile
Of bland imagination, folly’s train
Have dar’d our search: but now a dastard-kind

Advance reluctant, and with fault’ring feet
Shrink from the gazer’s eye: infeebled hearts,
Whom fancy chills with visionary fears,
Or bends to servile tameness with conceits
Of shame, of evil, or of base defect,

Fantastic and delusive. Here the slave
Who droops abash’d when fullen pomp surveys
His humbler habit: here the trembling wretch
Unnerv’d and froze with terror’s icy bolts
Spent in weak wailings, drown’d in shamefull tears,

Thus far triumphant, &c.] Ridicule from false shame or groundless fear.
The PLEASURES

225 At every dream of danger: here subdued
By frontless laughter and the hardy scorn
Of old, unfeeling vice, the abject soul
Who blushing half resigns the candid praise
Of temperance and honour; half disowns

225 A freeman's hatred of tyrannic pride;
And hears with sickly smiles the venal mouth
With foulest licence mock the patriot's name.

Last of the motley bands on whom the pow'r
Of gay derision bends her hostile aim,

230 Is that where shameful ignorance presides.
Beneath her sordid banners, lo! they march,
Like blind and lame. Whate'er their doubtful hands
Attempt, confusion strait appears behind,
And troubles all the work. Thro' many a maze,

235 Perplex'd they struggle, changing every path,
O'erturning every purpose; then at last
Sit down dismay'd, and leave th'entangled scene

Last of the, &c.] Ridicule from the ignorance of such things as our circum-
stances require us to know.
Book III. of IMAGINATION. 103

For scorn to sport with. Such then is th' abode
Of folly in the mind; and such the shapes

240 In which she governs her obsequious train.
Thro' every scene of ridicule in things
To lead the tenour of my devious lay;
Thro' every swift occasion, which the hand
Of laughter points at, when the mirthful string

245 Distends her sallying nerves and choaks her tongue;
What were it but to count each crystal drop
Which morning's dewy fingers on the blooms
Of May distill? Suffice it to have said,
Where'er the pow'r of ridicule displays

——suffice it to have said, &c.] By comparing these general sources
of ridicule with each other, and examining the ridiculous in other objects, we
may obtain a general definition of it equally applicable to every species. The
most important circumstance of this definition is laid down in the lines refer'd
to; but others more minute we shall subjoin here. Aristotle's account of the
matter seems both imperfect and false; τὸ γὰρ γιγαντίαν, says he, ἐὰν ἀμφιθαῦνα
ηθίδορος καὶ τὸ σηματίζων: the ridiculous is some certain fault or turpi-
tude without pain and not destructive to its subject. (Poetic. c. v.) For allow-
ing it to be true, as it is not, that the ridiculous is never accompany'd with
pain, yet we might produce many instances of such a fault or turpitude which
cannot with any tolerable propriety be called ridiculous. So that the definition
does not distinguish the thing defined. Nay farther, even when we perceive the
turpitude tending to the destruction of its subject, we may still be sensible of a
ridiculous appearance, till the ruin become imminent and the keener sensations
of pity or terror banish the ludicrous apprehension from our minds. For the
sensation of ridicule is not a bare perception of the agreement or disagreement of
ideas; but a passion or emotion of the mind conseqential to that perception.
Her quaint-ey’d visage, some incongruous form,
Some stubborn dissonance of things combin’d,
Strikes on the quick observer: whether pomp,

So that the mind may perceive the agreement or disagreement, and yet not feel
the ridiculous, because it is engrossed by a more violent emotion. Thus it hap-
pens that some men think those objects ridiculous, to which others cannot endure
to apply the name; because in them they excite a much intenser and more im-
portant feeling. And this difference, among other causes, has brought a good
deal of confusion into this question.

That which makes objects ridiculous is some ground of admiration or esteem
connected with other more general circumstances, comparatively worthless or de-
formed; or it is some circumstance of turpitude or deformity connected with what
is in general excellent or beautiful: the incongruent properties existing either in
the objects themselves, or in the apprehension of the person to whom they relate;
belonging always to the same order or class of being, implying sentiment or design;
and exciting no acute or vehement emotion of the heart.

To prove the several parts of this definition: The appearance of excellence or
beauty connected with a general condition comparatively forlorn or deformed, is ri-
diculous; for instance, pompous pretensions to wisdom join’d with ignorance
and folly in the Socrates of Aristophanes; and the applause of military glory
with cowardice and stupidity in the Thraupis of Terence.

The appearance of deformity or turpitude in conjunction with what is in general
excellent or venerable, is also ridiculous: for instance, the personal weaknesses
of a magistrate appearing in the solemn and public functions of his station.

The incongruent properties may either exist in the objects themselves, or in the
apprehension of the person to whom they relate: in the last-mention’d instances
they both exist in the objects; in the instance from Aristophanes and Terence,
one of them is objective and real, the other only founded in the apprehension
of the ridiculous character.

The incongruent properties must belong to the same order or class of being. A
coxcomb in fine cloaths bedaub’d by accident in foul weather, is a ridiculous
object; because his general apprehension of excellence and esteem is refer’d
to the splendour and expence of his dress. A man of sense and merit in the
same circumstances, is not counted ridiculous; because the general ground of
excellence and esteem in him, is, both in fact and in his own apprehension, of
a very different species.

Every ridiculous object implies sentiment or design. A column placed by an
architect without a capital or base, is laugh’d at: the same column in a ruin
causes a very different sensation.
Book III. of IMAGINATION. 105

Or praise, or beauty mix their partial claim
Where fordid fashions, where ignoble deeds,
255 Where foul deformity are wont to dwell,
Or whether these with violation loath’d,
Invade resplendent pomp’s imperious mien,
The charms of beauty, or the boast of praise.

Ask we for what fair end, th’ almighty fire
260 In mortal bosoms wakes this gay contempt,

O These

And lastly, the occurrence must excite no acute or vehement emotion of the heart, such as terror, pity, or indignation; for in that case, as was observed above, the mind is not at leisure to contemplate the ridiculous.

Whether any appearance not ridiculous be involved in this description; and whether it comprehend every species and form of the ridiculous, must be determined by repeated applications of it to particular instances.

Ask we for what fair end, &c.] Since it is beyond all contradiction evident that we have a natural sense or feeling of the ridiculous, and since so good a reason may be assign’d to justify the supreme being for bestowing it; one cannot without astonishment reflect on the conduct of those men who imagine it is for the service of true religion to vilify and blacken it without distinction, and endeavour to persuade us that it is never applied but in a bad cause. Ridicule is not concerned with mere speculative truth or falsehood. It is not in abstract propositions or theorems, but in actions and passions, good and evil, beauty and deformity, that we find materials for it; and all these terms are relative, implying approbation or blame. To ask then whether ridicule be a test of truth, is, in other words, to ask whether that which is ridiculous can be morally true, can be just and becoming; or whether that which is just and becoming, can be ridiculous. A question that does not deserve a serious answer. For it is most evident, that as in a metaphysical proposition offer’d to the understanding for its assent, the faculty of reason examines the terms of the proposition, and finding one idea which was supposed equal to another, to be in fact unequal, of consequence rejects the proposition as a falsehood:
The PLEASURES

These grateful flings of laughter, from disgust
Educing pleasure? Wherefore, but to aid
The tardy steps of reason, and at once
By this prompt impulse urge us to deprest
265 The giddy aims of folly? Tho' the light
Of truth slow-dawning on th' inquiring mind,

falsehood: so in objects offer'd to the mind for its esteem or applause, the faculty of ridicule feeling an incongruity in the claim, urges the mind to reject it with laughter and contempt. When therefore we observe such a claim, obtused upon mankind, and the inconsistent circumstances carefully concealed from the eye of public, it is our business, if the matter be of importance to society, to drag out those latent circumstances, and by setting them full in view, convince the world how ridiculous the claim is; and thus a double advantage is gained; for we both detect the moral falsehood sooner than in the way of speculative inquiry, and impress the minds of men with a stronger sense of the vanity and error of its authors. And this and no more is meant by the application of ridicule.

But it is said, the practice is dangerous, and may be inconsistent with the regard we owe to objects of real dignity and excellence. I answer, the practice fairly managed can never be dangerous; men may be dishonest in obtunding circumstances foreign to the object, and we may be inadvertent in allowing those circumstances to impose upon us; but the sense of ridicule always judges right: the Socrates of Aristophanes is as truly ridiculous a character as ever was drawn.
—True; but it is not the character of Socrates, the divine moralist and father of ancient wisdom. What then? did the ridicule of the poet hinder the philosopher from detecting and disclaiming those foreign circumstances which he had falsely introduced into his character, and thus rendering the false doubly ridiculous in his turn? No: but it nevertheless had an ill influence on the minds of the people. And so has the reasoning of Spinoza made many atheists; he has founded it indeed on suppositions utterly false, but allow him these, and his conclusions are unavoidably true. And if we must reject the use of ridicule, because by the imposition of false circumstances, things may be made to seem ridiculous, which are not so in themselves; why we ought not in the same manner to reject the use of reason, because by proceeding on false principles, conclusions will appear true which are impossible in nature, let the vehement and obdurate declaimers against ridicule determine.

At
BOOK III. of IMAGINATION. 107

At length unfolds, thro' many a subtile tie,
How these uncouth disorders end at last
In public evil; yet benignant heav'n
270 Conscious how dim the dawn of truth appears
To thousands; conscious what a scanty pause
From labours and from care, the wider lot
Of humble life affords for studious thought
To scan the maze of nature; therefore stampt
275 The glaring scenes with characters of scorn,
As broad, as obvious to the passing clown,
As to the letter'd sage's curious eye.

Such are the various aspects of the mind—
Some heav'nly genius, whose unclouded thoughts
280 Attain that secret harmony which blends
Th' æthereal spirit with its mold of clay;
O! teach me to reveal the grateful charm
That searchless nature o'er the sense of man
Diffuses, to behold, in lifeless things,
285 The inexpressive semblance of himself,

*The inexpressive semblance,* &c.] This similitude is the foundation of almost all the ornaments of poetic diction.
Of thought and passion. Mark the fable woods
That shade sublime yon mountain’s nodding brow;
With what religious awe the solemn scene
Commands your steps! as if the reverend form

Of Minos or of Numa should forsake
Th’ Elysian seats, and down th’imbow’ring glade
Move to your pausing eye! Behold th’ expanse
Of yon gay landscape, where the silver clouds
Flit o’er the heav’ns before the sprightly breeze:

Now their grey cincture skirts the doubtful sun;
Now streams of splendor, thro’ their opening veil
Effulgent, sweep from off the gilded lawn
Th’ aerial shadows; on the curling brook,
And on the shady margin’s quiv’ring leaves

With quickest lustre glancing: while you view
The prospect, say, within your cheerful breast
Plays not the lively sense of winning mirth
With clouds and sunshine chequer’d, while the round
Of social converse, to th’ inspiring tongue

Of some gay nymph amid her subject-train,
Moves all obsequious? Whence is this effect,

This
This kindred pow'r of such discordant things?
Or flows their semblance from that mystic tone
To which the new-born mind's harmonious pow'rs

At first were strung? Or rather from the links
Which artful custom twines around her frame?

For when the diff'rent images of things
By chance combin'd, have struck th' attentive soul
With deeper impulse, or connected long,

Have drawn her frequent eye; howe'er distinct
Th' external scenes, yet oft th' ideas gain
From that conjunction an eternal tie,
And sympathy unbroken. Let the mind
Recall one partner of the various league,

Immediate, lo! the firm confed'rates rise,
And each his former station retains:
One movement governs the consenting throng,
And all at once with rosy pleasure shine,
Or all are sadden'd with the glooms of care.

'Twas thus, if ancient fame the truth unfold,
Two faithful needles, from th' informing touch
Of the same parent-stone, together drew
Its mystic virtue, and at first conspir'd
With fatal impulse quivering to the pole;

Then, tho' disjoint'd by kingdoms, tho' the main
Rowl'd its broad surge betwixt, and different stars
Beheld their wakeful motions, yet preserv'd
The former friendship, and remember'd still
Th' alliance of their birth: whate'er the line

Which one posses'd, nor pause, nor quiet knew
The sure associate, ere with trembling speed
He found its path and fix'd unerring there.
Such is the secret union, when we feel
A song, a flow'r, a name at once restore

Those long-connected scenes where first they mov'd
Th' attention; backward thro' her mazy walks
Guiding the wanton fancy to her scope,
To temples, courts or fields; with all the band
Of painted forms, of passions and designs

Two faithful needles, &c.] See the elegant poem recited by Cardinal Bembo
in the character of Lucretius; Strada Prolus. vi. Academ. 2. v. 5.
Book III. of IMAGINATION. III

345 Attendant: whence, if pleasing in itself,
          The prospect from that sweet accession gains
Redoubled influence o'er the lift'ning mind.

          By these mysterious ties the busy pow'r,
Of mem'ry her ideal train preserves
350 Intire; or when they would elude her watch,
Reclaims their fleeting footsteps from the waste
Of dark oblivion; thus collecting all
The various forms of being to present,
Before the curious aim of mimic art,

355 Their largest choice: like spring's unfolded blooms:
Exhaling sweetness, that the skillful bee
May taste at will, from their selected spoils
To work her dulcet food. For not th' expanse
Of living lakes in summer's noontide calm,

360 Reflects the bord'ring shade and sun-bright heav'n's
With fairer semblance; not the sculptur'd gold
More faithful keeps the graver's lively trace,

Than he whose birth the fitter-pow'rs of art

By these mysterious ties, &c.] The act of remembering seems almost wholly
to depend on the association of ideas.
Propitious view'd, and from his genial star
Shed influence to the seeds of fancy kind;
Than his attenper'd bosom must preserve
The seal of nature. There alone unchang'd,
Her form remains. The balmy walks of May
There breathe perennial sweets: the trembling chord

Resounds for ever in th' abstracted ear,
Melodious; and the virgin's radiant eye,
Superior to disease, to grief, and time,
Shines with unbating lustre. Thus at length
Indow'd with all that nature can bestow,

The child of fancy oft in silence bends
O'er these mix'd treasures of his pregnant breast,
With conscious pride. From them he oft resolves
To frame he knows not what excelling things;
And win he knows not what sublime reward

Of praise and wonder. By degrees the mind
Feels her young nerves dilate: the plastic pow'r's
Labour for action: blind emotions heave
His bosom; and with loveliest frenzy caught,
From earth to heav'n he rolls his daring eye,
Book III. of IMAGINATION

385 From heav'n to earth. Anon ten thousand shapes,
Like spectres trooping to the wizard's call,
Fleet swift before him. From the womb of earth,
From ocean's bed they come: th' eternal heav'n's
Disclose their splendors, and the dark abyss

390 Pours out her births unknown. With fixed gaze
He marks the rising phantoms. Now compares
Their diff'rent forms; now blends them, now divides;
Inlarges and extenuates by turns;
Opposes, ranges in fantastic bands,

395 And infinitely varies. Hither now,
Now thither fluctuates his inconstant aim,
With endless choice perplex'd. At length his plan
Begins to open. Lucid order dawns;
And as from Chaos old the jarring seeds

400 Of nature at the voice divine repair'd
Each to its place, till rosy earth unveil'd
Her fragrant bosom, and the joyful fun
Sprung up the blue serene; by swift degrees
Thus disentangled, his entire design

405 Emerges. Colours mingle, features join,

P And
And lines converge: the fainter parts retire;
The fairer eminent in light advance;
And every image on its neighbour smiles.
A while he stands, and with a father's joy
Contemplates. Then with Promethean art,
Into its proper vehicle he breathes
The fair conception; which imbodied thus,
And permanent, becomes to eyes or ears
An object ascertain'd: while thus inform'd,
The various organs of his mimic skill,
The consonance of sounds, the featur'd rock,
The shadowy picture and impassion'd verse,
Beyond their proper pow'rs attract the soul
By that expressive semblance, while in sight
Of nature's great original we scan
The lively child of art; while line by line,
And feature after feature we refer
To that sublime exemplar whence it stole
Those animating charms. Thus beauty's palm

*Into its proper vehicle, &c.* This relates to the different sorts of corporeal mediums, by which the ideas of the artist are rendered palpable to the senses; as by sounds, in music; by lines and shadows, in painting; by diction, in poetry, &c.
Book III. of IMAGINATION

425 Betwixt 'em wav'ring hangs: applauding love
Doubts where to chuse; and mortal man aspires
To tempt creative praise. As when a cloud
Of gath'ring hail with limpid crusts of ice
Inclos'd and obvious to the beaming sun,

430 Collects his large effulgence; strait the heav'ns
With equal flames present on either hand
The radiant visage: Persia stands at gaze,
Appall'd; and on the brink of Ganges waits
The snowy-vested seer, in Mithra's name,

435 To which the fragrance of the south shall burn,
To which his warbled orifons ascend.

Such various bliss the well-tun'd heart injoys,
Favour'd of heav'n! While plung'd in fordid cares,
Th' unfeeling vulgar mocks the boon divine:

440 And harsh austerity, from whose rebuke
Young love and smiling wonder shrink away,
Abash'd and chill of heart, with fager frowns
Condemns the fair enchantment. On, my strain,
Perhaps ev'n now some cold, fastidious judge.
Cafts a disdainful eye; and calls my toil,
And calls the love and beauty which I sing,
The dream of folly. Thou grave censor! say,
Is beauty then a dream because the glooms
Of dullness hang too heavy on thy sense

To let her shine upon thee? So the man
Whose eye ne’er open’d on the light of heav’n,
Might smile with scorn while raptur’d vision tells
Of the gay, colour’d radiance flushing bright
O’er all creation. From the wise be far

Such gross, unhallow’d pride; nor needs my song
Descend so low; but rather now unfold,
If human thought could reach, or words unfold,
By what mysterious fabric of the mind,
The deep-felt joys and harmony of sound

Result from airy motion; and from shape
The lovely phantoms of sublime and fair.
By what fine ties hath God connected things
When present in the mind; which in themselves
Have no connection? Sure the rising sun,

O’er the cærulean convex of the sea,
With equal brightness and with equal warmth
Book III. of Imagination.

Might rowl his fiery orb; nor yet the soul
Thus feel her frame expanded, and her pow’rs
Exulting in the splendor she beholds;

Like a young conqu’ror moving thro’ the pomp
Of some triumphal day. When join’d at eve,
Soft-murm’ring streams and gales of gentleft breath
Melodious Philomela’s wakeful strain
Attemper, could not man’s discerning ear

Thro’ all its tones the symphony pursue;
Nor yet this breath divine of nameless joy
Steal thro’ his veins and fan th’awaken’d heart,
Mild as the breeze, yet rapt’rous as the song?

But were not nature still indow’d at large

With all which life requires, tho’ unadorn’d
With such enchantment? Wherefore then her form
So exquisitely fair? her breath perfum’d
With such ætherial sweetness? Whence her voice
Inform’d at will to raise or to depress

Th’impassion’d soul? and whence the robes of light
Which thus invest her with more lovely pomp

Than
Than fancy can describe? Whence but from thee,
O source divine of ever-flowing love,
And thy unmeasur’d goodness? Not content

With every food of life to nourish man,
By kind illusions of the wond’ring sense
Thou mak’st all nature beauty to his eye,
Or music to his ear; well-pleas’d he scans
The goodly prospect; and with inward smiles

Treads the gay verdure of the painted plain;
Beholds the azure canopy of heav’n,
And living lamps that over-arch his head
With more than regal splendor; bends his ears
To the full choir of water, air, and earth;

Nor heeds the pleasing error of his thought,
Nor doubts the painted green or azure arch,
Nor questions more the music’s mingling sounds
Than space, or motion, or eternal time:
So sweet he feels their influence to attract

The fixed soul; to brighten the dull glooms
Of care, and make the destin’d road of life
Delightful to his feet. So fables tell,
Book III. of Imagination. 119

Th' advent'rous hero, bound on hard exploits,
Beholds with glad surprize, by secret spells
Of some kind sage, the patron of his toils,
A visionary paradise disclos'd
Amid the dubious wild: with streams, and shades,
And airy songs, th' enchanted landscape smiles,
Cheers his long labours and renews his frame.

What then is taste, but these internal pow'rs
Active, and strong, and feelingly alive
To each fine impulse? a discerning sense
Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
From things deform'd, or disarrang'd, or gross
In species? This, nor gems, nor stores of gold,
Nor purple slate, nor culture can bestow;
But God alone, when first his active hand
Imprints the secret byas of the soul.
He, mighty parent! wise and just in all,
Free as the vital breeze or light of heav'n,
Reveals the charms of nature. Ask the swain
Who journeys homeward from a summer day's
Long labour, why, forgetful of his toils
The PLEASURES

And due repose, he loiters to behold

530 The sunshine gleaming as thro' amber clouds,
O'er all the western sky; full soon, I ween,
His rude expression and untutor'd airs,
Beyond the pow'r of language, will unfold
The form of beauty smiling at his heart,

535 How lovely! how commanding! But th'o' heav'n
In every breast hath sown these early seeds
Of love and admiration, yet in vain,
Without fair culture's kind parental aid,
Without inlivening suns, and genial how'rs,

540 And shelter from the blast, in vain we hope,
The tender plant should rear its blooming head,
Or yield the harvest promis'd in its spring.
Nor yet will every soil with equal stores
Repay the tiller's labour; or attend

545 His will, obsequious, whether to produce
The olive or the laurel. Diff'rent minds
Incline to different objects: one pursues,
The vast alone, the wonderful, the wild;

One pursues

The vast alone, &c.] See the note to ver. 18 of this book.

Another
Book III. of IMAGINATION

Another sighs for harmony, and grace,
And gentlest beauty. Hence when lightning fires
The arch of heav'n, and thunders rock the ground;
When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
And ocean, groaning from the lowest bed,
Heaves his tempestuous billows to the sky;
Amid the mighty uproar, while below

The nations tremble, Shakespear looks abroad
From some high cliff, superior, and enjoys
The elemental War. But Waller longs,
All on the margin of some flow'ry stream

To spread his careless limbs amid the cool
Of plantane shades, and to the lift'ning deer,
The tale of slighted vows and love's disdain
Resound soft-warbling all the live-long day:
Consenting Zephyr sighs; the weeping rill.

Waller longs, &c.]
O! how I long my careless limbs to lay
Under the plantane shade; and all the day
With am'rous airs my fancy entertain, &c.

WALLER, Battle of the Summer-Islands. Canto I.

And again,
While in the park I sing, the lift'ning deer
Attend my passion and forget to fear, &c.

Q Joins
565 Joins in his plaint, melodious; mute the groves;
    And hill and dale with all their echoes mourn.
Such and so various are the tastes of men.

          Oh! blest of heav’n, whom not the languid songs
    Of luxury, the Siren! not the bribes
Of fordid wealth, nor all the gaudy spoils
Of pageant honour can seduce to leave
Those ever-blooming sweets, which from the store
Of nature fair imagination culls
To charm th’ inliven’d soul! What th’ not all

575 Of mortal offspring can attain the heights
Of envied life; tho’ only few possess
Patrician treasures or imperial state;
Yet nature’s care, to all her children just,
With richer treasures and an ampler state

580 Indows at large whatever happy man
    Will deign to use them. His the city’s pomp,
The rural honours his. Whate’er adorns
The princely dome, the column and the arch,
The breathing marbles and the sculptur’d gold,

Beyond
Book III. of IMAGINATION.

585 Beyond the proud possessor's narrow claim,
    His tuneful breast in joys. For him, the spring
Distills her dews, and from the silken gem
Its lucid leaves unfolds: for him, the hand
Of autumn tinges every fertile branch

590 With blooming gold and blushes like the morn.
    Each passing hour sheds tribute from her wings;
And still new beauties meet his lonely walk;
And loves unfelt attract him. Not a breeze
Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud imbibes

595 The setting sun's effulgence, not a strain
    From all the tenants of the warbling shade
Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake

___Not a breeze, &c.] That this account may not appear rather
poetically extravagant than just in philosophy, it may be proper to produce the
sentiment of one of the greatest, wisest, and best of men on this article; one
so little to be suspected of partiality in the case, that he reckons it among those
favours for which he was especially thankful to the gods, that they had not suf-
fcred him to make any great proficiency in the arts of eloquence and poetry, left
by that means he should have been diverted from pursuits of more importance
to his high station. Speaking of the beauty of universal nature, he observes
that there is a pleasing and graceful aspect in every object we perceive, when once
we consider its connection with that general order. He instances in many things
which at first sight would be thought rather deformities, and then adds, that a
man who enjoys a feasibility of temper with a just comprehension of the universal
order—will discern many amiable things, not credibil to every mind, but to
those alone who have entered into an honourable familiarity with nature and
her works. M. Antonin. iii. 2.
Fesh pleasure, unreprov'd. Nor thence partakes
Fesh pleasure only: for th'attentive mind,

By this harmonious action on her pow'rs, I all
Becomes herself harmonious: wont so long in
In outward things to meditate the charm
Of sacred order, soon she seeks at home
To find a kindred order, to exert

Within herself this elegance of love,
This fair-inspir'd delight: her temper'd pow'rs,
Refine at length, and every passion wears
A chaster, milder, more attractive mien.
But if to ampler prospects, is to gaze,

On nature's form where negligent of all
These lesser graces, she assumes the port
Of that eternal majesty that weigh'd
The world's foundations, if to these the mind
Exalt her daring eye; then mightier far

Will be the change, and nobler. Would the forms
Of servile custom cramp her generous pow'rs?
Would fordid policies, the barbarous growth
Of ignorance and rapine, bow her down

To
Book III. of IMAGINATION.

To tame pursuits, to indolence and fear?
620 Lo! she appeals to nature, to the winds
And rolling waves, the sun's unwearied course,
The elements and seasons: all declare
For what th' eternal maker has ordain'd
The pow'rs of man: we feel within ourselves
625 His energy divine: he tells the heart,
He meant, he made us to behold and love
What he beholds and loves, the general orb
Of life and being; to be great like him,
Beneficent and active. Thus the men
630 Whom nature's works can charm, with God himself
Hold converse; grow familiar, day by day,
With his conceptions; act upon his plan;
And form to his, the relish of their souls.

FINIS.