

The DESIGN

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



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
5 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

Lin. 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

Your gifts, your honours, dance around my strain.
 Thou, smiling queen of every tuneful 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

BOOK I. of IMAGINATION. II

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

Oft have the laws of each poetic strain
The critic-verse employ'd ; yet still un Sung
Lay this prime subject, tho' importing most
A poet's name : for fruitless is th' attempt
35 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
40 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 flatt'ring scenes
To this neglected labour court my song ;
45 Yet not unconscious what a doubtful task

Yet not unconscious.] Lucret. l. 2. v. 921.

*Nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura, sed acri
Percussit thyrsos laudis spes magna meum cor,
Et simul incussit suavem mi in pectus amorem
Musarum ; quo nunc instinctus mente vigenti*

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,
 50 Thro' secret paths erewhile untrod by man,
 The fair poetic region, to detect
 Untasted springs, to drink inspiring draughts ;
 And shade my temples with unfading flow'rs
 Cull'd from the laureate vale's profound recess,
 55 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
 60 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 Piëridum peragro loca, nullius ante
 Trita solo : juvat integros accedere fonteis,
 Atque haurire : juvatque novos discerpere flores ;
 Insignem meo capiti 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
 65 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 cœlestial. From the first
 70 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,
 75 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
 80 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

The hand of nature on peculiar minds
 Imprints a diff'rent byass, 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 starrs,
 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 morn
 95 Draw forth, distilling from the clefted 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,

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

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 Elyfian groves,
 And vales of blifs : the intellectual pow'r
 Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
 And smiles : the passions gently sooth'd away,
 130 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 pow'rs of fancy, her delighted sons
 To three illustrious orders have referr'd ;
 Three sifter-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 sallies forth 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.

Thro' life and death to dart his piercing eye,
 With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame ;
 155 But that th' Omnipotent might fend him forth
 In fight 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 ;
 160 To shake each partial purpose from his breast ;
 And thro' the mists of passion and of sense,
 And thro' the tossing tide of chance and pain
 To hold his course unfalt'ring, while the voice
 Of truth and virtue, up the steep ascent
 165 Of nature, calls him to his high reward,
 Th' applauding smile of heav'n ? Else wherefore burns,
 In mortal bosoms, this unquenched hope
 That breathes from day to day sublimer things,
 And mocks possession ? wherefore darts the mind,
 170 With such resistless ardor to imbrace
 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
175 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
180 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
185 Beneath its native quarry. Tir'd of earth
And this diurnal scene, she 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,
190 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

195 The fated rounds of time. Thence far effus'd
 She darts her swiftnefs up the long career
 Of devious comets; thro' its burning figns
 Exulting circles the perennial wheel
 Of nature, and looks back on all the ftarrs,
 200 Whofe 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 fight 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.] Ne ſe peut-il point qu'il y a un grand eſpace audelà de la region des etoiles? Que ce ſoit le ciel empyréé, ou non, toujours cet eſpace immense qui environne toute cette region, pourra être rempli de bonheur & de gloire. Il pourra être conçu comme l'ocean, où ſe rendent les fleuves de toutes les creatures bienheureuſes, quand elles ſeront 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

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'rs 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'rs
 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 depress to earth
 Her tender blossom ; choak the streams of life,
 And blast her spring ! Far otherwise design'd

Almighty

- 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

Of

-----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 instance of *habit* is oppos'd to this observation ; for *there*, objects at first distasteful are in time render'd intirely 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 *passive* and the perception *involuntary* ; but habit, on the other hand, generally supposes *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 renders them at length acceptable, even when there is no room for the mind to *resolve* or *act* at all. In this case, the appearance must be accounted for, one of these ways.

The

Of objects new and strange, to urge us on
 With unremitted 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 flicking taper; and untir'd

The pleasure from habit may be merely negative. The object at first gave uneasiness: this uneasiness gradually wears off as the object grows familiar; and the mind finding it at last intirely 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 necessitated to review it often, may at length peceive 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 meer *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

250 The virgin follows, with enchanted 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 ease 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 croud recoil
Gazing each other speechless, and congeal'd
With shiv'ring sighs : till eager for th' event,
Around the beldame all arrect 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,
 275 Smooths 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
 280 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,
 285 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,

D

And

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

And range with him th' Hesperian field, and see,
 290 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.
 295 Or wilt thou rather stoop 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,
 300 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,
 305 And spring's Elyfian 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 constantly watched 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 winged Hydra guard Hesperian fruits
From thy free spoil. O bear then, unprov'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 allurements. 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

That wakes in Zephyr's arms the blushing May,
 Moves onward ; or as Venus, when she stood
 330 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 cœrulean sister of the flood
 With fond acclaim attend her o'er the waves,
 335 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
 340 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,
 345 Or shapes infernal rend the groaning earth
 To fright you from your joys : my chearful 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,

350 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;
 355 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,
 360 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
 365 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 a state sincere,
 370 Th' integrity and order of their frame,

When

When all is well within, and every end
 Accomplish'd. Thus was beauty sent from heav'n,
 The lovely ministrers of truth and good
 In this dark world: for truth and good are one,
 375 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 characters of men we always † join the two denominations together. The beauty of human bodies corresponds, in like manner, with that oeconomy of parts which constitutes them good; and in all the circumstances which occur in life, the same object is constantly accounted 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 assert 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 being supposed the same with that which commands the assent or dissent 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 meerly a relative and arbitrary thing; that indeed it was a benevolent design 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

† This the Athenians did in a peculiar manner by the words *καλοκαγαθοί* & *καλοκαλία*.

With like participation. Wherefore then,
 O fons of earth! would you dissolve the tye?
 O wherefore, with a rash, imperfect aim,
 Seek you those flow'ry joys with which the hand
 380 Of lavish fancy paints each flatt'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,
 385 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
 390 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. *Polycletus* 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 system 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

And truth eternal. Tho' the pois'nous charms
 Of baleful superstition, guide the feet
 Of servile numbers, thro' a dreary way
 To their abode, thro' desarts, thorns and mire;
 395 And leave the wretched pilgrim all forlorn
 To muse, at last, amid the ghostly gloom
 Of graves, and hoary vaults, and cloister'd cells;
 To walk with spectres thro' the midnight shade,
 And to the screaming owl's accursed song
 400 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
 405 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,
 410 Thro' fragrant mountains and poetic streams,
 Amid the train of sages, heroes, bards,

Led by their winged Genius and the choir
 Of laurell'd science and harmonious art,
 Proceed exulting to th' eternal shrine,
 415 Where truth inthron'd with her cœlestial twins,
 The undivided part'ners 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,
 420 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,
 425 Ne'er shall the found of this devoted lyre
 Be wanting; whether on the rosy mead,
 When summer smiles, to warn the melting heart
 Of luxury's allurements; whether firm
 Against the torrent and the stubborn hill
 430 To urge bold virtue's unremitted nerve,
 And wake the strong divinity of soul
 That conquers chance and fate; or whether struck

For sounds of triumph, to proclaim her toils
 Upon the lofty summit, round her brow
 435 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 ;
 440 Whether in vast, majestic pomp array'd,
 Or dress'd 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,
 445 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
 450 And variation of determin'd shape,
 Where truth's eternal measures mark the bound
 Of circle, cube, or sphere. The third ascent

Unites this varied symmetry of parts
 With colour's bland allurements; as the pearl
 455 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
 460 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
 465 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:
 470 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

There most conspicuous, ev'n in outward shape,
 475 Where dawns the high expression of a mind :
 By steps conducting our inraptur'd search
 To that eternal origin, whose pow'r,
 Thro' all th'unbounded symmetry of things,
 Like rays effulging from the parent sun,
 480 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,
 485 Cœlestial Venus, with divinest airs,
 Invites the soul to never-fading joy.
 Look then abroad thro' nature, to the range
 Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres
 Wheeling unshaken thro' the void immense ;
 490 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---Cæsare inter-
fecto---statim cruentum altè extollens M. Brutus pugionem, Ciceronem nominatim
exclamavit, atque ei recuperatam libertatem est gratulatus. Cic. Philipp. 2. 12.

Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,
Amid the croud of patriots; and his arm
495 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,
500 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
505 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
510 Unenvy'd treasures, and the snowy wings
Of innocence and love protect the scene?
Once more search, undismay'd, the dark profound
Where nature works in secret; view the beds

Of

Of min'ral treasure, and th' eternal vault
 515 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 :
 520 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
 525 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
 530 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

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 forsake
 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,
 555 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
 560 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
 565 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
 570 Of all heroic deeds and fair desires !
 O ! let the breath of thy extended praise
 Inspire my kindling bosom to the height

Of

Of this untempted theme. Nor be my thoughts
 Presumptuous counted, if, amid the calm
 575 That sooths this vernal evening into smiles,
 I steal impatient from the sordid haunts
 Of strife and low ambition, to attend
 Thy sacred presence in the sylvan shade,
 By their malignant footsteps ne'er profan'd.
 580 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;
 585 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
 590 Warm from the schools of glory. Guide my way
 Thro' fair Lycéum's walk, the green retreats
 Of Academus, and the thymy vale,

Lycéum.] The school of *Aristotle*.

Academus.] The school of *Plato*.

F

Where

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

THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.

BOOK the SECOND.

F 2

ARGU-

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 Promethéan hand
Aspire to ancient praise? Alas! how faint,
5 How slow 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;
Oft as the gloomy north, with iron-swarms
10 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,
 15 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,
 20 And wildly warbling scatter'd, as they flew,
 Their blooming wreaths from fair Valclufa'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 attempted 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.

Valclufa.] The famous retreat of *Francesco Petrarca*, the father of *Italian* poetry, and his mistress *Laura*, a lady of *Avignon*.

Arno.] The river which runs by *Florence*, the birth-place of *Dante* and *Boccaccio*.

Of

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*.

—————*the rage*
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, intirely extinguished 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 losers by the separation. For philosophy itself, to use the words of a noble philosopher, *being thus sever'd from the sprightly arts and sciences, must consequently grow dronish, insipid, pedantic, useles, 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 possible to conceive them at a greater distance from each other than at the revolution, 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 lust
 Of lawless courts, their amiable toil
 For three inglorious ages have resign'd,
 35 In vain reluctant: and Torquato's tongue
 Was tun'd for slavish pæans at the throne
 Of tinsel pomp; and Raphael's magic hand
 Effus'd its fair creation to enchant
 The fond adoring herd in Latian fanes
 40 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
 45 In full proportion, once more shall extend
 To all the kindred pow'rs of social blifs
 A common mansion, a parental roof.
 There shall the Virtues, there shall Wisdom's train,

invited our men of wit and genius to improve that influence which the arts of persuasion give them with the people, by applying them to subjects of importance to society. Thus poetry and eloquence became considerable; and philosophy is now of course obliged to borrow of their imbellishments, in order even to gain audience with the public.

Their

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 abhorr'd, with high distaste and scorn
 Turn from their charms the philosophic eye,
 55 The patriot-bosom : 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 sheltring 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 inlarge
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,
Glow 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,

90 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
95 Warm at his bosom, from the springs of life
Chafing 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?
100 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
105 To me have shone 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

110 Piercing thro' every cryſtalline convex
 Of cluſt'ring 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,

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 founding 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

150 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.

155 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
 160 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, deserved a very particular consideration in this poem.

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-whisp'ring 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

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

205 As midnight storms, the scene of human things,
 Appear'd before me ; desarts, 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
 210 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 ?
 215 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 !
 220 Thus I, impatient ; when at once effus'd,
 A flashing torrent of cœlestial 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,

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 stood 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 engrav'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 ?

245 Thy wisdom all-sufficient? Thou, alas!
 Dost 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 tendernefs innate and social love,
 Holiest of things! by which the general orb
 Of being, as with adamantine links,
 Was drawn to perfect union and sustain'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

265 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 stoop'd sublime, and touching with his hand
 My dazzled forehead, Raise thy sight, he cry'd,
 270 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
 275 Of hills with many a shaggy forest mix'd,
 With many a fable 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,
 280 The crumbling soil; and still at every fall
 Down the steep windings of the channel'd rock,
 Remurm'ring rush'd the congregated floods
 With hoarser inundation; till at last
 They reach'd a grassy plain, which from the skirts

285 Of that high defart spread her verdant lap,
 And drank the gushing moisture, where confin'd
 In one smooth current, o'er the liliated 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 osiers. 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 list'ning pow'rs
 300 Were aw'd, and every thought in silence hung,
 And wond'ring expectation. Then the voice
 Of that cœlestial pow'r, the mystic show
 Declaring, thus my deep attention call'd.

Inhabitant

Inhabitant of earth, to whom is giv'n
 305 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
 310 The circling bounds of happiness unite ;
 Yet by immense benignity inclin'd

To

Inhabitant of earth, &c.] The account of the œconomy 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 insisted 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 so 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 dispos'd 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 inconsiderable 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
 315 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,
 320 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 he 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 assert 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 subservient, 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
 325 Of swift contingence, 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,
 330 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,
 Answ'ring the mighty model he had chose,
 335 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, *δαμουργός τῷ βελτίονι*, *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 *Theodicée* of *Leibnitz*.

Of his divine conceptions. Nor content,
 By *one* exertion of creating pow'r,
 His goodness to reveal; thro' every age,
 340 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,
 345 To men, to angels, to cœlestial minds,
 For ever leads the generations on
 To higher scenes of being; while supply'd
 From day to day by his invivifying breath,
 Inferior orders in succession rise
 350 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;
 355 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 fun 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
 360 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
 365 Fresh-water'd from the mountains. Let the scene
 Paint in thy fancy the primæval feat
 Of man, and where the will supreme ordain'd
 His mansion, that pavilion fair-diffus'd
 Along the shady brink, in this recess
 370 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
 375 His tender bloom to cherish; nor withheld

Cœlestial 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 desires,
 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, 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,
400 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
405 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
410 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
415 To bind her sable tresses : full diffus'd
Her yellow mantle floated in the breeze ;
And in her hand she wav'd a living branch

Rich with immortal fruits, of pow'r to calm
The wrathful heart, and from the bright'ning eyes
420 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 inthron'd,
From each majestic motion darted awe,
425 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 seiz'd the sword
Of chaste dominion. An heroic crown
430 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 stately form invested. Hand in hand
Th' immortal pair forsook th' enamell'd green,
435 Ascending slowly. Rays of limpid light
Gleam'd round their path; cœlestial rounds were heard,
And thro' the fragrant air ætherial dews
Distill'd around them; till at once the clouds

Disparting wide in midway sky, withdrew
 440 Their airy veil, and left a bright expanse
 Of empyréan flame, where spent and drown'd,
 Afflicted 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'ns,
 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 conducting hand shall raise his lot
 From earth's dim scene to these ætherial walks,
 The temple of thy glory. But not me,

Not my directing voice he oft requires,
460 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
465 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.

470 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 ;
475 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,
 480 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;
 485 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,
 490 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,
 495 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 dæmon, all the storms
 Of night infernal, serve but to display

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

74 The P L E A S U R E S

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

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 cheers 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 soothing 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 silken fetters of delicious ease?
Or when divine Euphrosyné 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,

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 ! rowl your tempest on ;
Shake, ye old pillars of the marble sky !
Till all its orbs and all its worlds of fire
595 Be loos'n'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
 Cœlestial 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 fervid 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 falter 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 I may listen to thy sacred voice,
620 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!
625 Be thy great bidding done: for who am I
To question thy appointment? Let the frowns
Of this avenger every morn o'ercast
The chearful dawn, and every evening damp
With double night my dwelling; I will learn
630 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 chear
635 This lonely seat, and bless me with her smiles.
He spoke; when instant, thro' the sable 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

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, cœlestial maid!
 655 Howe'er that griesly 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.

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, howe'er pursued
 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

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 aching breast,
And turns his tears to rapture—— Ask the crowd
Which flies impatient from the village-walk
695 To climb the neighb'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

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,
705 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,
710 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
715 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,
720 The praises of his son. If then thy soul,
Spurning the yoke of these inglorious days,

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 curst ambition ; when the pious band
 Of youths who fought for freedom and their fires,
 Lie side by side in gore ; when ruffian-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 slavish, 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 went 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 batalion of Thebes, which at the battle of Chæronéa was utterly
 destroy'd, every man being found lying dead by his friend.

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, with surer 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 would'st thou then exchange
 Those heart-ennobling sorrows for the lot

Philip.] The Macedonian.

Of

760 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
 765 " Intrude upon mine ear?—— The baleful dreggs
 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 fordid shame
 770 The native honours of the human soul,
 Nor so effac'd the image of its fire.

End of the SECOND BOOK.



THE

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-form'd imagination.

THE



THE
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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,

M

As

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
 15 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
 20 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 sobrest 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 enjoy 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 answer'd, 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,
 25 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 *delicacy* 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 domestic 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. vii.*) The meditations of *M. Aurelius*, and the discourses of *Epietetus*, are full of the same sentiments ; insomuch that this latter makes the *ἄριστος δια δὲ φαντασιῶν*, 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. 1. from p. 313, to p. 321. where this *Stoical* doctrine is embellished with all the eloquence of the graces of *Plato*.

30 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
 35 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
 40 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^o
 Than to *betray* his country? And in act
 45 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 Circean draught,
 That sheds a baleful tincture o'er the eye
 50 Of reason, till no longer he discerns,

And

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 idiot-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 of nature's charms, and touch well-pleas'd
 A stricter note: now haply must my song
 Unbend her serious measure, and reveal
 75 In lighter strains, how folly's aukward arts
 Excite impetuous laughter's gay rebuke;
 The sportive province of the comic muse.

See! in what crouds the uncouth forms advance;
 Each would outstrip the other, each prevent
 80 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,
 85 And easy faith; whom flatt'ring fancy sooths

————— *how folly's aukward 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 ;
 90 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
 95 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
 100 Of costly frame, and gay Phœnician robes
 Inwrought with flow'ring 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,
 105 He talks of deadly deeds, of breaches, storms,
 And sulph'rous mines, and ambush : then at once

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
 110 With holy ensigns, how sublime they move,
 And bending oft 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
 115 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,
 120 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

On some retir'd appearance which belies
 125 The boasted virtue, or annulls 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,
 130 Pale as the cheeks of death; yet still she stuns
 The sickning 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;
 135 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
 140 He stalks, resounding 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

145 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
 150 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
 155 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,
 160 Untimely zeal her witlefs pride betrays ;
 And serious manhood, from the tow'ring aim

Another tribe succeeds, &c.] Ridicule from a notion of excellence in particular objects disproportion'd to their intrinsic value, and inconsistent with the order of nature.

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 knees,
 With fondest gesture and a suppliant's tongue,
 To win her coy regard: adieu, for him,
 The dull engagements 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 fighting hours,
 Is all he asks, and all that fate can give!
 Thee too, facetious Momion, wandring here,
 180 Thee, dreaded censor! oft have I beheld
 Bewilder'd unawares: alas! too long
 Flush'd with thy comic triumphs and the spoils

Of fly derision! till on every side
 Hurling thy random bolts, offended truth
 185 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 bandied from the lips
 Of all the vengeful brotherhood around,
 190 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 fickle; here the teeming soil affords
 195 Its richest growth. A fav'rite brood appears;
 In whom the dæmon, 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,
 200 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 ridiculous; as in the affectation of diseases or vices.

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,
 205 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
 210 Advance reluctant, and with fault'ring feet
 Shrink from the gazer's eye : infeebl'd hearts,
 Whom fancy chills with visionary fears,
 Or bends to servile tameness with conceits
 Of shame, of evil, or of base defect,
 215 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 shameful tears,

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

At

220 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 circumstances require us to know.

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 sting
 245 Distends her fallying 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 γελοῖον, says he, ἔστιν ἀμάρτημα τι καὶ αἰσχρὸν, ἀνώδυον καὶ ἐφθαρτικόν: *the ridiculous is some certain fault or turpitude without pain and not destructive to its subject.* (*Poetic. c. v.*) For allowing 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 consequential to that perception.
 So

250 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 happens 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 important 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 deformed ; or it is some circumstance of turpitude or deformity connected with what is in general excellent or beautiful : the inconsistent 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 sordid or deformed, is ridiculous ; 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 Thraso 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 incongruous 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 inconsistent properties must belong to the same order or class of being. A coxcomb in fine cloaths bedaubed by accident in foul weather, is a ridiculous object ; because his general apprehension of excellence and esteem is referr'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.

And

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 observ'd 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 meer 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:

These grateful stings of laughter, from disgust
 Educating pleasure? Wherefore, but to aid
 The tardy steps of reason, and at once
 By this prompt impulse urge us to depress
 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, obtruded 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 obtruding 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 satirist 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 obstinate declaimers against ridicule determine.

At

At length unfolds, thro' many a subtle 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 stamp
 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
 290 Of Minos or of Numa should forsake
 Th' Elyfian feats, 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 :
 295 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
 300 With quickest lustre glancing : while you view
 The prospect, say, within your chearful 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
 305 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
 310 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,
 315 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,
 320 Immediate, lo! the firm confed'rates rise,
 And each his former station strait resumes:
 One movement governs the consenting throng,
 And all at once with rosy pleasure shine,
 Or all are fadden'd with the glooms of care.
 325 '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 quiv'ring to the pole ;
 330 Then, tho' disjoin'd by kingdoms, tho' the main
 Rowl'd its broad surge betwixt, and diff'rent stars
 Beheld their wakeful motions, yet preserv'd
 The former friendship, and remember'd still
 Th' alliance of their birth : whate'er the line
 335 Which one possess'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
 340 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. c. 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 list'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'ns
With fairer semblance ; not the sculptur'd gold
More faithful keeps the graver's lively trace,
Than he whose birth the sister-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
 365 Shed influence to the feeds of fancy kind;
 Than his attemper'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
 370 Refounds 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,
 375 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
 380 Of praise and wonder. By degrees the mind
 Feels her young nerves dilate: the plastic pow'rs
 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. 113

385 From heav'n to earth. Anon ten thousand shapes,
Like spectres trooping to the wifard's call,
Fleet swift before him. From the womb of earth,
From ocean's bed they come : th' eternal heav'ns
Disclose their splendors, and the dark abyfs
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 fantaftic 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 feeds
400 Of nature at the voice divine repair'd
Each to its place, till rofy earth unveil'd
Her fragrant bosom, and the joyful sun
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
 410 Contemplates. Then with Promethéan 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,
 415 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
 420 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.

Betwixt

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 orisons ascend.

Such various bliss the well-tun'd heart enjoys,
 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 sager frowns
 Condemns the fair enchantment. On, my strain,
 Perhaps ev'n now some cold, fastidious judge

445 Casts 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
450 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
455 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
460 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,
465 O'er the cærulean convex of the sea,
With equal brightness and with equal warmth

Might rowl his fiery orb ; nor yet the soul
 Thus feel her frame expanded, and her pow'rs
 Exulting in the splendor she beholds ;
 470 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 gentlest breath
 Melodious Philomela's wakeful strain
 Attemper, could not man's discerning ear
 475 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
 480 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
 485 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
 490 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
 495 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;
 500 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
 505 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,

Th' advent'rous heroe, bound on hard exploits,
 Beholds with glad surprize, by secret spells
 510 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.

515 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
 520 In species ? This, nor gems, nor stores of gold,
 Nor purple state, 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,
 525 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

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 tho' 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 invivening suns, and genial show'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

Another sighs for harmony, and grace,
 550 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
 555 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
 560 To spread his careless limbs amid the cool
 Of plantane shades, and to the list'ning deer,
 The tale of flighted 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 list'ning deer
 Attend my passion and forget to fear, &c.*

At Pens-hurst.

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
 570 Of sordid 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 tho' 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,

585 Beyond the proud possessor's narrow claim,
 His tuneful breast enjoys. 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 suffered him to make any great proficiency in the arts of eloquence and poetry, lest 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 sensibility of temper with a just comprehension of the universal order—will discern many amiable things, not credible to every mind, but to those alone who have entered into an honourable familiarity with nature and her works.* M. Antonin. iii. 2.

Fresh pleasure, unprov'd. Nor thence partakes
 Fresh pleasure only: for th' attentive mind,
 600 By this harmonious action on her pow'rs,
 Becomes herself harmonious: wont so long
 In outward things to meditate the charm
 Of sacred order, soon she seeks at home
 To find a kindred order, to exert
 605 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, if to gaze
 610 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
 615 Will be the change, and nobler. Would the forms
 Of servile custom cramp her generous pow'rs?
 Would sordid policies, the barb'rous growth
 Of ignorance and rapine, bow her down

To tame pursuits, to indolence and fear?
 620 Lo! she appeals to nature, to the winds
 And rowling 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.

F I N I S.



Book III. of IMAGINATION.

The sense of things, to indolence and fear,
 And the respect to nature, to the winds,
 And rowing waves, the sun's unwearied course,
 The elements and seasons: all declare
 For what the eternal Maker has ordain'd
 The powers of man: we feel within ourselves
 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,
 Benevolent and good. Thus the soul
 Whom nature's voice can charm, with God himself
 Holds converse; grows familiar, day by day
 With his commands: and upon his plan
 And form to his, the realm of their souls.

W. L. M. A. & C.

