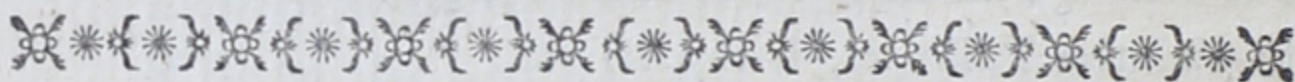


The critic, that with plodding head
 Toils o'er the learning of the dead ;
 The cloister'd hermit that explores,
 By midnight lamp, religion's stores ;
 Each sage that marks, with thoughtful gaze,
 The lunar orb, or planet's maze ;
 And ev'ry bard, that strays along
 The sylvan shade, intent on sacred song ;
 Shall all to thee those various praises give,
 Which, through thy friendly aid, themselves receive :
 For tho' thou mayst from glory's seats retire,
 Where loud applause proclaims the honour'd name ;
 Yet doth thy modest wisdom still inspire
 Each nobler work that swells the voice of Fame.



The PICTURE of HUMAN LIFE.

Translated from the GREEK of CEBES the THEBAN.

By Mr. T. SCOTT.

Et vitæ monstrata via est.

HOR.

WHILE Saturn's ^a fane with solemn step we trod,
 And view'd the ^b votive honours of the God,

^a This temple was probably in the city of Thebes, for Cebes was a Theban.

^b Devout offerings, for the most part in discharge of vows.

A pictur'd

A pictur'd tablet, o'er the portal rais'd,
 Attach'd our eye: in wonder lost, we gaz'd.
 The pencil there some strange device had wrought, 5
 And fables, all its own, disguis'd the thought.

Nor camp it seem'd, nor city: the design,
 Whose moral mock'd our labour to divine,
 Was a wall'd court, where rose another bound,
 And, higher still, a third still less'ning ground. 10

The nether area open'd, at a gate
 Where a vast crowd impatient seem'd to wait.
 Within, a group of female figures stood,
 In motley dress, a sparkling multitude.

Without, in station at the porch, was seen 15
 A venerable form, in act and mien
 Like some great teacher who with urgent tongue,
 Authoritative, warn'd the rushing throng.

From doubt to doubt we wander'd; when appear'd
 A fire, who thus the hard solution clear'd. 20

Strangers, that allegoric scene, I guess,
 Conquers your skill, our home-born wits no less.
 A foreigner, long since, whose nobler mind
 Learning's best culture to strong genius join'd,
 Here liv'd, convers'd, and shew'd th' admiring age 25
 Another *Samian* or *Elean* sage.

He rear'd this dome to *Saturn's* awful name,
 And gave that portrait to eternal fame.
 He reason'd much, high argument he chose,
 High as his theme his great conceptions rose. 30

Such wisdom flowing from a mouth but young
 I heard astonish'd, and enjoy'd it long :
 Him oft I heard this moral piece expound,
 With nervous eloquence and sense profound.

Father, if leisure with thy will conspire, 35

Yield, yield that comment to our warm desire.

Free to bestow, I warn you first, beware :
 Danger impends, which summons all your care.
 Wise, virtuous, blest, whose heart our precepts gain,
 Abandon'd, blind, and wretched, who disdain. 40

For know, our purpos'd theme resembles best
 The fam'd *Enigma* of the *Theban* pest :
 Th' interpreter a plighted crown enjoy'd,
 The stupid perish'd, by the Sphinx destroy'd.
 Count folly as a Sphinx to all mankind, 45

Her problem, How is Good and Ill defin'd ?
 Misjudging here, by Folly's law we die,
 Not instant victims of her cruelty ;
 From day to day our reasoning part she wounds,
 Devours its strength, its noblest pow'rs confounds : 50

Awakes the lash of a *Punishment*, and tears
 The mind with pangs which guilty life prepares,
 With opposite effect, where thoughtful skill
 Discerns the boundaries of Good and Ill,
 Folly must perish ; and th' illumin'd breast 55
 To Virtue fav'd, is like th' immortals blest.

^c *The Caselian and Salmasian editions read πονηροί wicked, instead of πικροί bitter.* JOHNSON.

^d *Vid. γ. 186.*

Give audience, then, with no unheeding ear.

O haste, no heedless auditors stand here,

With strong desire, in dread suspense we wait,

So great the blessing, and the bane so great. 60

Instant, he rais'd his oratorical hand,

And said (our eye he guided with a wand)

Behold life's pencil'd scene, the natal gate,

The numbers thronging into mortal state.

Which danger's path, and which to safety bears, 65

That ancient, *Genius of mankind*, declares.

See him aloft, benevolent he bends,

One hand is pointing, one a roll extends

Reason's imperial code; by heav'n impress

In living letters on the human breast. 70

Oppos'd to him, *Delusion* plies her part,

With skin of borrow'd snow, and blush of art,

With hypocritic fawn, and eyes askance

Whence soft infection steals in every glance,

Her faithless hand presents a crystal bowl, 75

Whose pois'nous draught intoxicates the soul.

Error and ignorance infus'd, compose

The fatal beverage which her fraud bestows.

Is that the hard condition of our birth?

Must all drink Error who appear on earth? 80

All; yet in some their measure drowns the mind,

Others but taste, less erring and less blind.

• Th' *Opinions*, and *Desires*, and *Pleasures* rise
 Behind the gate, thick-glitt'ring on our eyes ;
 Thick as bright atoms in the solar ray, 85
 Diverse their drap'ry and profusely gay.
 These tempting forms, each like a mistress dress,
 Our early steps with powerful charms arrest :
 Soon as we enter life, with various art
 Of dalliance they assail th' unguarded heart. 90
 All promise joy, we rush to their embrace ;
 To bliss or ruin here begins our race.
 Happy, thrice happy, who intrust their youth
 To *right Opinions*, and ascend to *Truth* :
 Whom *Wisdom* tutors, whom the *Virtues* hail, 95
 And with their own substantial feast regale.
 The rest are harlots : by their flatt'ries won,
 In chase of empty sciences we run :
 Or Fortune's vanities pursue, and stray
 With *sensual Pleasure* in more dang'rous way. 100
 See the mad rounds their giddy followers tread,
Delusion's cup strong-working in their head.
 Fast as one shoal of fools have delug'd thro',
 Succeeding shoals the busy farce renew.

Who on that globe stands stretching to her flight ? 105
 Wild seems her aspect, and bereav'd of sight.
 Fortune, blind, frantic, deaf. With restless wings
 The world she ranges, and her favours flings :

• *The first court, or the sensual life.*

Flings

Flings and resumes, and plunders and bestows,
 Caprice divides the blessings and the woes. 110

Her grace unstable as her tott'ring ball,
 Whene'er she smiles she meditates our fall.

When most we trust her, we are cheated most,
 In desolating loss we mourn our boast :

Her cruel blast invades our hasty fruit, 115
 And withers all our glory at the root.

What mean those multitudes around her? Why

Such motley attitudes perplex our eye?

Some, in the act of wildest rapture, leap,

In agony some wring their hands, and weep. 120

Th' unreas'ning crowd; to passion's sequel blind,

By passion fir'd and impotent of mind :

Competitors in clamorous, suit to share

The toys she tosses with regardless air ;

Trifles, for solid worth by most pursu'd, 125

Bright-colour'd vapours and fantastic good :

The pageantry of wealth, the blaze of fame,

Titles, an offspring to extend the name,

Huge strength, or beauty which the strong obey,

The victor's laurel, and despotic sway. 130

These, humour'd in their vows, with lavish praise

The glory of the gracious goddess raise :

Those other, losers in her chance-full game,

Shorn of their all, or frustrate in their aim,

In murmurs of their hard mishap complain, 135

And curse her partial and malignant reign.

Now

Now, further still in this low sensual ground,
 Traverse yon flow'ry mount's sequester'd bound.
 In the green center of those citron shades,
 'Mong gardens, fountains, bow'ry walks, and glades, 140
Voluptuous Sin her pow'rful spells employs,
 Souls to seduce, seducing she destroys.
 See! *Lewdness*, loosely zon'd, her bosom bares,
 See! *Riot* her luxurious bowl prepares :
 There stands *Avidity*, with ardent eye, 145
 There dimpling *Adulation* smoothes her lye.
There station'd to what end?

In watch for prey,

Fortune's infatuate favourites of a day.
 These they carefs, they flatter, they entreat
 To try the pleasures of their soft retreat, 150
 Life disencumber'd, frolicksom, and free,
 All ease. all mirth, and high felicity.
 Whome'er by their inveigling arts they win
 To tread that magic paradise of *Sin*,
 In airy dance his jocund hours skim round, 155
 Sparkles the bowl, the festal songs resound :
 His blood ferments, fir'd by the wanton glance,
 And his loose soul dissolves in am'rous trance.
 While circulating joys to joys succeed,
 While new delights the sweet delirium feed ; 160
 The prodigal, in raptur'd fancy, roves
 O'er fairy fields and thro' Elyfian groves :

Sees glitt'ring visions in succession rise,
And laughs at *Socrates* the chaste and wise.

'Till, sober'd by distress, awake, confus'd, 165
Amaz'd, he knows himself a wretch abus'd ;

A short illusion his imagin'd feast,
Himself the game, himself the slaughter'd beast.

Now, raving for his squander'd wealth in vain,
Slave to those tyrant jilts he drags their chain : 170

Compell'd to suffer hard and hungry need,
Compell'd to dare each foul and desp'rate deed.

Villain, or knave, he joins the sharpening tribe,
Robs altars, or is perjur'd for a bribe :

Stabs for a purse, his country pawns for gold, 175
To every crime of blackest horror fold.

Shiftless at length, of all resource bereft,
In the dire gripe of *Punishment* he's left.

Observe this strait-mouth'd cave : th' unwilling light
Just shews the dismal deep descent to night. 180

In centry see these haggard crones, whose brows
Rude locks o'erhang, a frown their forehead plows :

Swarthy and foul their shrivell'd skin behold,
And flutt'ring shreds their vile defence from cold.

High-brandishing her lash, with stern regard, 185
Stands *Punishment*, an ever-waking ward ;

While fullen *Melancholy* mopes behind,
Fix'd, with her head upon her knees reclin'd :

And, frantic with remorseful fury, there
Fierce *Anguish* stamps, and rends her shaggy hair. 190

Who

Who that ill-featur'd spectre of a man,
Shiv'ring in nakedness, so spare and wan?
And she, whose eye aghast with horror stares,
Whose meagre form a sister's likeness bears?
 Loud Lamentation, wild Despair. All these, 195
 Fell vulturs, the devoted caitiff seize.
 Ah dreadful durance! with these fiends to dwell!
 What tongue the terrors of his soul can tell?
 Worry'd by these foul fiends, the wretch begins
 Sharp penance, wages of remember'd sins: 200
 Then deeper sinks, plung'd in the pit of *Woe*,
 Worse suff'rings in worse hell to undergo:
 Unless, rare guest, *Repentance* o'er the gloom
 Diffuse her radiance, and repeal his doom.
 She comes! meek-ey'd, array'd in grave attire, 205
 See *Right Opinion*, join'd with *Good Desire*,
 Handmaids of *Truth*: with those, an adverse pair
 (*False Wisdom's* minions, that deceiving fair)
 Attend her solemn step: the furies flee.
 Come forth, she calls, come forth to liberty, 210
 Guilt-harrass'd thrall: thy future lot decide,
 And, pond'ring well, elect thy future guide.
 Momentous option! chusing right he'll find
 A sov'reign med'cine for his ulcer'd mind;
 Led to *True Wisdom*, whose cathartic bowl 215
 Recovers and beatifies the soul.
 Misguided else, a counterfeit he'll gain,
 Whose art is only to amuse the brain:

From

From vice to studious folly now he flies,
From blifs still erring, still betray'd by lies. 220

*O heavens! where end the risks we mortals run?
How dreadful this, and yet how hard to shun!
Say, father, what distincti-ve marks declare
That counterfeit of Wisdom?*

^f View her there.

At yonder gate, with decent port, she stands, 225
Her spotless form that second court commands:
Styl'd *Wisdom* by the crowd, the thinking few
Know her disguise, the phantom of the true:
Skill'd in all learning, skill'd in ev'ry art
To grace the head, not meliorate the heart. 230

The fav'd, who meditate their noble flight
From a bad world, to *Wisdom's* lofty height,
Just touching at this inn, for short repast,
Then speed their journey forward to its last.

This the sole path?

Another path there lies, 235

The plain man's path, without proud Science wife.

Who they, which traverse this deluder's bound?

A busy scene, all thought or action round.

Her lovers, whom her specious beauty warms,
Who grasp, in vision, *Truth's* immortal charms, 240
Vain of the glory of a false embrace:
Fierce syllogistic tribes, a wrangling race,

[£] *The second court, or the studious life.*

Bards rapt beyond the moon on Fancy's wings,
 And mighty masters of the vocal strings :
 Those who on labour'd speeches waste their oil, 245
 Those who in crabbed calculations toil,
 Who measure earth, who climb the starry road,
 And human fates by heav'nly signs forebode,
 Pleasure's philosophers, *Lyceum's* pride,
 Disdainful soaring up to heights untry'd. 250
 All who in learned trifles spin their wit,
 Or comment on the works by triflers writ.

*Who are you active females, like in face
 To the lewd harlots, in the nether space,
 Vile agents of voluptuous Sin?*

The same. 255

Admitted here?

Ev'n here, eternal shame!

They boast some rarer less ignoble spoils,
 Art, wit, and reason, tangled in their toils.
 And *Fancy*, with th' *Opinions* in her rear,
 Enjoys these studious walks, no stranger here : 260
 Where wild hypothesis, and learn'd romance
 Too oft lead up the philosophic dance.
 Still these ingenious heads alas! retain
 Delusion's dose, still the vile dregs remain
 Of ignorance with madding folly join'd, 265
 And a foul heart pollutes th' embellish'd mind.
 Nor will presumption from their souls recede,
 Nor will they from one vicious plague be freed,

'Till,

'Till, weary of these vanities, they've found
Th' exalted way to *Truth's* enlighten'd ground, 270

Quaff'd her cathartic, and all cleans'd within,
By that strong energy, from pride and sin,
Are heal'd and sav'd. But loit'ring here they spend
Life's precious hours in thinking to no end :

From science up to science let them rise, 275
And arrogate the swelling style of wise,
Their wisdom's folly, impotent and blind,
Which cures not one distemper of the mind.

*Enough. Discover now the faithful road,
Which mounts us to the joys of Truth's abode. 280*

Survey this solitary waste, which rears
Nor bush nor herb, nor cottage there appears.

At distance see yon strait and lonely gate
(No crowds at the forbidding entrance wait)
Its avenue a rugged rocky soil, 285

Travell'd with painful step and tedious toil.

Beyond the wicket, tow'ring in the skies
See Difficulty's cragg'd mountain rise,
Narrow and sharp th' ascent ; each edge a brink,
Whence to vast depth dire precipices sink. 290

Is that the way to Wisdom? Dreadful way!

The landskip frowns with danger and dismay.

Yet higher still, around the mountain's brow
Winds yon huge rock, whose steep smooth sides allow
No track. Its top two sister figures grace, 295
Health's rosy habit glowing in their face.

With

With arms protended o'er the verge they lean,
 The promptitude of friendship in their mien.
 The pow'rs of *Continence* and *Patience*, there
 Station'd by *Wisdom*, her commission bear 300

To rouze the spirit of her fainting son
 Thus far advanc'd, and urge and urge him on.
 Courage! they call, the coward's sloth disdain,
 Yet, yet awhile, the noble toil sustain:
 A lovely path soon opens to your fight. 305

But ah! how climb'd that rock's bare slipp'ry height?
 These generous guides, who Virtue's course befriend,
 In succour of her pilgrim, swift descend,
 Draw up their trembling charge; then, smiling, greet
 With kind command to rest his weary feet, 310

With their own force his panting breast they arm,
 And with their own intrepid spirit warm:
 Next, plight their guidance in his future way
 To *Wisdom*, and in rapt'rous view display
 The blissful road (there it invites your eyes) 315
 How smooth and easy to the foot it lies,
 Through beauteous land, from all annoyance clear,
 Of thorny evil and perplexing fear.

§ Yon lofty grove's delicious bow'rs to gain,
 You cross th' expanse of this enamell'd plain; 320
 A meadow with eternal beauty bright,
 Beneath a purer heav'n, o'erflow'd with light.

§ *The third court, or the virtuous life.*

Full

Full in the center of the plain, behold
 A court far-flaming with its wall of gold
 And gate of diamond; where the righteous rest; 325

This clime their home, the country of the blest:
 Here all the *Virtues* dwell, communion sweet!
 With *Happiness*, who rules the peaceful seat.

In station at th' effulgent portal, see
 A beauteous form of mildest majesty. 330

Her eyes how piercing! how sedate her mien!
 Mature in life, her countenance serene:
 Spirit and solid thought each feature shows,
 And her plain robe with state unstudy'd flows.

She stands upon a cube of marble, fix'd 335

As the firm rock, two lovely nymphs betwixt,
 Her daughters, copies of her looks and air,
 Here candid *Truth*, and sweet *Persuasion* there:

She, she is *Wisdom*. In her stedfast eye
 Behold th' oppressive type of certainty: 340

Certain her way, and permanent the deed
 Of gift substantial to her friends decreed.

She gives the confidence erect and clear,
 She gives magnanimous contempt of fear,

And bids th' invulnerable mind to know 345
 Her safety from the future shafts of woe.

O treasure, richer than the sea or land!

But why without the walls her destin'd stand?

There standing, she presents her potent bowl,
 Divine cathartic, which restores the soul. 350

This asks a comment.

In some dire disease,
Machaon's skill first purges off the lees :
 Then clear and strong the purple current flows,
 And life renew'd in every member glows :
 But if the patient all controul despise, 355
 Just victim of his stubborn will he dies.
 So *Wisdom*, by her rules, with healing art
 Expells *Delusion's* mischiefs from the heart ;
 Blindness, and error, and high-boasting pride,
 Intemp'rance, lust, fierce wrath's impetuous tide, 360
 Hydropic avarice, all the plagues behind
 Which in the first mad court oppress'd the mind.
 Thus purg'd, her pupil thro' the gate she brings,
 The *Virtues* hail their guest, the guest enraptur'd sings.
 Behold the spotless band, celestial charms ! 365
 Scene that with awe chastises whom it warms :
 No harlotry, no paint, no gay excess,
 But beauty unaffected as their dress.
 See *Knowledge* grasping a refulgent star,
 See *Fortitude* in panoply of war : 370
Justice her equal scale aloft displays,
 And rights both human and divine she weighs.
 There *Moderation*, all the pleasures bound
 In brazen chains her dreaded feet surround.
 There bounteous *Liberality* expands 375
 To want, to worth, her ever-loaded hands.

The

The florid hue of *Temperance*, her side
 Adorn'd by *Health*, a nymph in blooming pride.
 Lo, soft-ey'd *Meekness* holds a curbing rein,
 Anger's high-mettled spirit to restrain : 380
 While *Moral Order* tunes her golden lyre,
 And white-rob'd *Probity* compleats the choir.

O fairest of all fair ! O blissful state !

What hopes sublime our ravish'd soul dilate !

Substantial hopes, if by the doctrine taught, 385
 The fashion'd manners are to habit wrought.

Yes, 'tis resolv'd. We'll every nerve employ.

Live, then, restor'd ; and reap the promis'd joy.

But whither do the Virtues lead their trust ?

To *Happiness*, rewarder of the just. 390

Look upward to the hill beyond the grove,

A sovereign pile extends its front above :

Stately and strong, the lofty castle stands,

Its boundless prospect all the courts commands.

Within the porch, high on a jasper throne, 395

'Th' Imperial Mother by her form is known ;

Bright as the morn, when smiling on the hills

Earth, air, and sea with vernal joy she fills.

Rich without lavish cost her vest behold

In colours of the sky, and fring'd with gold : 400

A tiar, wreath'd with every flow'r that blows

Of liveliest tints, around her temples glows :

Eternal bloom her snowy temples binds,

Fearless of burning suns and blasting winds.

Now, with a crown of wond'rous pow'r, her hand 405
 (Assistant, round her, all the Virtues stand)
 Adorns her hero, honourable meed
 Of conquests won by many a valiant deed.

What conquests?

Formidable beasts subdu'd :
 Lab'ring he fought, he routed, he pursu'd. 410
 Once, a weak prey, beneath their force he cowl'd,
 O'erthrown, and worry'd, and well-nigh devour'd :
 Till rous'd from his inglorious sloth, possess'd
 With generous ardour kindling in his breast,
 Lord of himself, the victor now constrains 415
 Those hostile monsters in his pow'rful chains.

Explain those savage beasts at war with man.

Error and Ignorance, which head the van,
 Heart-gnawing Grief, and loud-lamenting Woe,
 Incontinence, a wild-destroying foe, 420
 Rapacious Avarice ; cruel numbers more :
 O'er all he triumphs now, their slave before.

*O great achievements ! more illustrious far
 These triumphs, than the bloody wreaths of war.*

But, say ; what salutary pow'r is shed 425

By the fair crown, which decks the hero's head ?

Most beatific. For possessing this
 He lives, rich owner of man's proper bliss :
 Bliss independent or on wealth or pow'r,
 Fame, birth, or beauty, or voluptuous hour. 430

His

His hope's divorc'd from all exterior things,
 Within himself the fount of pleasure springs;
 Springs ever in the self-approving breast,
 And his own honest heart's a constant feast.

Where, next, his steps?

He measures back his way, 435

Conducted by the *Virtues*, to survey
 His first abode. The giddy crowd, below,
 Wasting their wretched span in crime, they show;
 How in the whirl of passions they are tost,
 And, shipwreck'd on the lurking shelves, are lost: 440

Here fierce *Ambition* haling in her chain
 The mighty, there a despicable train
 Impure in *Lust's* inglorious fetter bound,
 And slaves of *Avarice* rooting up the ground:
 Thralls of *Vain-glory*, thralls of swelling *Pride*, 445
 Unnumber'd fools, unnumber'd plagues beside.

All-pow'rless they to burst the galling band,
 To spring aloft, and reach yon happy land,
 Entangled, impotent the way to find,
 The clear instruction blotted from their mind 450
 Which the *Good Genius* gave; Guilt's gloomy fears
 Becloud their suns and sadden all their years.

I stand convinc'd, but yet perplex'd in thought

Why to review a well-known scene he's brought.

Scene rudely knowh. Uncertain and confus'd, 455
 His judgment by illusions was abus'd.

His evil was not evil, nor his good
 Aught else but vanity misundestood.
 Confounding good and evil, like the throng,
 His life, like theirs, was action always wrong. 460
 Enlighten'd now in the true blifs of man,
 He shapes his alter'd course by *Wisdom's* plan:
 And, blest himself, beholds with weeping eyes
 The madding world an hospital of sighs.
This retrospection ended, where succeeds 465
His course?

Where'er his wise volition leads,
 Where'er it leads, safety attends him still:
 Not safer, should he on *Apollo's* hill,
 Among the Nymphs, among the vocal Pow'rs,
 Dwell in the Sanctum of *Corycian* bow'rs: 470
 Honour'd by all, the friend of human kind,
 Belov'd physician of the fin-sick mind;
 Not *Esculapius* more, whose pow'r to save
 Redeems his patient from the yawning grave.
But never more shall his old restless foes 475
Awake his fears, nor trouble his repose?

Never. In righteous habitude inur'd,
 From Passion's baneful anarchy secur'd,
 In each enticing scene, each instant hard,
 That sovereign antidote his mind will guard: 480
 Like him, who, of some virtuous drug possess'd,
 Grasps the fell viper coil'd within her nest,

Hears

Hears her dire hissings, sees her terrors rise,
And, unappall'd, destruction's tooth defies.

Yon troops in motion from the mount explain, 485

Various to view; for there a goodly train,

With garlands crown'd, advance with comely pace,

Noble their port, and in each tranquil face

Joy sparkles: others, a bare-headed throng,

Batter'd and gasp'd, drag their slow steps along, 490

Captives of some strange female crew.

The crown'd,

Long seeking, safe arriv'd at *Wisdom's* bound,

Exult in her imparted grace. ⁿ The rest,

Those on whom *Wisdom*, unprevailing, prest

Her healing aid; rejected from her care, 495

In evil plight their wicked days they wear:

Those too, who *Difficulty's* hill had gain'd,

There basely stopp'd, by dastard sloth detain'd:

Apostate now, in thorny wilds they rove,

Pursuing furies scourge the caitiff drove; 500

Sorrows which gnaw, *remorseful Thoughts* which tear,

Blindness of mind, and *heart-oppressing Fear*,

With all the contumelious rout of *Shame*,

And every ill, and every hateful name.

Relaps'd to *Lewdness*, and her *sensual Queen*, 505

Unblushing at themselves, but drunk with spleen,

Wisdom's high worth their canker'd tongues dispraise,

Revile her children, and blaspheme her ways.

ⁿ *Apostates.*

Deluded wretches, (thus their madneſs cries)
 Dull mopes, weak dupes of philoſophic lies, 510
 Uncomforted, unjoyous, and unbleſt,
 Loſt from the pleaſures here at large poſſeſt.

What pleaſures boaſt they?

Pleaſures of the ſtews,
 Pleaſures which *Riot's* frantic bowls infuſe.
 Theſe high fruition their groſs ſouls repute, 515
 And man's chief good to ſink into a brute.

But who that lovely bevy, blithe and gay,

So ſmoothly gliding down the hilly way?

¶ Thoſe are th' *Opinions*, who have guided right
 The unexperienc'd to the plain of light: 520
 Returning, new adventurers to bring,
 The bleſſings of the laſt-arriv'd they ſing.

Why ingreſs yielded to their favour'd ward

Among the Virtues, to themſelves debarr'd?

Opinion's foot is never never found 525
 Where *Knowledge* dwells, 'tis interdicted ground,
 At *Wisdom's* gate th' *Opinions* muſt reſign
 Their charge, thoſe limits their employ confine.
 Thus trading barks, ſkill'd in the wat'ry road,
 To diſtant climes convey their precious load, 530
 Then turn their prow, light bounding o'er the main,
 And with new traffic ſtore their keels again.

Thus far is clear. But yet untold remains

What the Good Genius to the crowd ordains,

¶ *The diſtinction between Opinion and Knowledge.*

Juſt

Just on the verge of life.

* He bids them hold 535

A spirit with erected courage bold.
 Never (he calls) on *Fortune's* faith rely,
 Nor grasp her dubious gifts as property.
 Let not her smile transport, her frown dismay,
 Nor praise, nor blame, nor wonder at her sway 540
 Which reason never guides: 'tis fortune still,
 Capricious chance and arbitrary will,
 Bad bankers, vain of treasure not their own,
 With foolish rapture hug the trusted loan :
 Impatient, when the pow'rful bond demands 545
 Its unremember'd cov'nant from their hands.
 Unlike to such, without a sigh restore
 What *Fortune* lends : anon she'll lavish more :
 Repenting of her bounty snatch away,
 Yea seize your patrimonial fund for prey. 550
 Embrace her proffer'd boon, but instant rise,
 Spring upward, and secure a lasting prize,
 The gift which *Wisdom* to her sons divides ;
 Knowledge, whose beam the doubting judgment guides,
 Scatters the sensual fog, and clear to view 555
 Distinguishes false int'rest from the true.
 Flee, flee to this, with unabating pace,
 Nor parly for a moment at the place
 Where *Pleasure* and her *Harlots* tempt, nor rest
 But at *False Wisdom's* inn, a transient guest : 560

* *The instructions of the Genius.*

For short refection, at her table sit,
 And taste what science may your palate hit :
 Then wing your journey forward, till you reach
 True *Wisdom*, and imbibe the truths she'll teach.

Such is th' advice the friendly *Genius* gives, 565
 He perishes who scorns, who follows lives.
 And thus this moral piece instructs; if aught
 Is mystic still, reveal your doubting thought.

Thanks, generous Sire ; tell, then, the transient bait,
The Genius grants us at False Wisdom's gate. 570

¹ Whate'er in arts or sciences is found
 Of solid use, in their capacious round,
 These, *Plato* reasons, like a curbing rein,
 Unruly youth from devious starts restrain.

Must we, solicitous our souls to save, 575
Assistance from these previous studies crave ?

Necessity there's none. We'll not deny
 Their merit in some less utility ;
 But they contribute, we aver, no part
 To heal the manners and amend the heart. 580

An author's meaning, in a tongue unknown,
 May glimmer thro' translation in our own :
 Yet masters of his language, we might gain
 Some trivial purposes by tedious pain.

So in the sciences, tho', rudely taught, 585
 We may attain the little that we ought ;

¹ *Natural knowledge, how far useful, and when unprofitable
 and hurtful.*

Yet,

Yet, accurately known they might convey
 More light not wholly usefess in its way.
 But Virtue may be reach'd, thro' all her rules,
 Without the curious subtleties of schools. 590

*How! not the learn'd excel the common shoal,
 In pow'rful aids to meliorate the soul?*

Blind as the crowd alas! to good and ill,
 Intangled by the like corrupted will,
 What boasts the man of letters o'er the rest? 595
 Skill'd in all tongues, of all the arts posselt,
 What hinders but he sink into a sot,
 A libertine, or villain in a plot,
 Miser, or knave, or whatso'er you'll name
 Of moral lunacy and reason's shame? 600

Scandals too rife!

How, then, for living right
 Avail those studies, and their vaunted light
 Beyond the vulgar?

Nothing. But disclose

The cause from whence this strange appearance grows.
 Held by a potent charm in this retreat 605
 They dwell, content with nearness to the seat
 Of *Virtuous Wisdom*.

Near, methinks, in vain:

*Since numbers, oft, from out the nether plain,
 'Scap'd from the snares of Lewdness and Excess,
 Undevious to her lofty station press, 610
 Yet pass these letter'd clans.*

What,

What, then, are these
 In moral things, advantag'd o'er the lees
 Of human race? in moral things, we find
 These duller or less tractable of mind.

Decypher that.

Pride, pride averts their eyes 615
 From offer'd light: in self-sufficiency wise,
 Altho' unknowing, they presume to know:
 Clogg'd with that vain conceit they creep below,
 Nor can mount up to yon exalted bound,
 'True *Wisdom's* mansion, by the humble found. 620
 Not found by these, till the vain visions spread,
 By *False Opinion*, in the learned head,
Repentance scatter; and deceiv'd no more,
 They own th' illusion which deceiv'd before,
 That for *True Wisdom* they embrac'd her shade, 625
 And hence the healing of their souls delay'd.

Strangers, these lessons, oft revolving, hold
 Fast to your hearts, and into habit mould:
 To this high scope life's whole attention bend,
 Despise aught else as erring from your end. 630
 Do thus, or unavailing is my care,
 And all th' instruction dies away in air.