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 vitae monstrata via est. Hor.

While Saturn's a sable we trod,
And view'd the 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 loof, we gaz'd.
The pencil there some strange device had wrought,
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 fill, a third fill les'n'ing ground.
The nether area open'd, at a gate
Where a vast crowd impatient seem'd to wait.
Within, a group of female figures flood,
In motley dress, a sparkling multitude.
Without, in station at the porch, was seen
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.
Strangers, that allegoric scence, 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
Another Samian or Elean sage.
He rear'd this dome to Saturn's aweful name,
And gave that portrait to eternal fame.
He reason'd much, high argument he chose,
High as his theme his great conceptions rose.
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,
Yield, yield that comment to our warm desire.
Free to bestow, I warn you first, beware:
Danger impends, which summons all your care.
Wife, virtuous, blest, whose heart our precepts gain,
Abandon'd, blind, and wretched, who disdain.
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,
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'r's confounds:
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
To Virtue sav'd, is like th' immortals blest.

\* The Cæselian and Salmasian editions read πουντος
wicked, instead of πικτος bitter.\n\* Vid. y. 180.
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.

Instant, he rais'd his oratorial 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,

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 impref't
In living letters on the human breast.

Oppos'd to him, Delusion plies her part,
With skin of borrow'd snow, and blush of art,
With hypocritick fawn, and eyes askance
Whence soft infection steals in every glance,
Her faithles's hand presents a crystal bowl,
Whose pois'nous draught intoxicates the soul.
Error and ignorance infus'd, compose
The fatal beverage which her fraud beflows.

Is that the hard condition of our birth?

Must all drink Error who appear on earth?

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,
Diverfe their drap'ry and profusely gay.
These tempting forms, each like a mistress drest,
Our early steps with powerful charms arrest:
Soon as we enter life, with various art
Of dalliance they affa'il th' unguarded heart.
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,
And with their own substantial feast regale.
The rest are harlots: by their flatteries won,
In chase of empty sciences we run:
Or Fortune's vanities pursue, and stray
With sensual Pleasure in more dang'rous way.
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 flands stretching to her flight?
Wild seems her aspect, and bereav'd of sight.
Fortune, blind, frantic, deaf. With reflcfs wings
The world she ranges, and her favours flings:

* The first court, or the sensual life.  

Flings
Flings and refuseth, and plunders and bestows,
Caprice divides the blessings and the woes.
Her grace unstable as her tottering 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,
And withers all our glory at the root.

What mean those multitudes around her? Whence
Such motley attitudes perplex our eye?
Some, in the act of wildest rapture, leap,
In agony some wringing their hands, and weep.
Th' unreasoning crowd; to passion's sequel blind,
By passion fired and impotent of mind:
Competitors in clamorous suit to share,
The toys she tosses with regardless airs; 
Trifles, for solid worth by most pursu'd,
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.
These, humour'd in their vows, with lavish praise
The glory of the gracious goddess raise:
Those other, loyers in her chance-ful game,
Shorn of their all, or frustrate in their aim,
In murmurs of their hard mishap complain,
And curse her partial and malignant reign.

Now
Now, further still in this low sensual ground,
Traverse you 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'r'ful 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,
There dimpling Adulation smooths her Iye. 145

There fruition'd to what end?

In watch for prey,

Fortune's infatuate favourites of a day.
These they cares, they flatter, they entreat
To try the pleasures of their soft retreat,
Life disencumber'd, frolicsom, 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 jovial hours skim round,
Sparkles the bowl, the sestal songs resound:
His blood ferments, sir'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;
The prodigal, in raptur'd fancy, roves
O'er fairy fields and thro' Elysian groves:

Sees
Sees glitt'ring visions in succession rise,
And laughs at Socrates the chaste and wise.
'Till, sober'd by distress, awake, confus'd,
Amaz'd, he knows himself a wretch abused;
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:
Compell'd to suffer hard and hungry need,
Compell'd to dare each foul and desper'd deed.
Villain, or knave, he joins the sharpening tribe,
Robbs altars, or is perjur'd for a bribe:
Stabs for a purse, his country pawns for gold,
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.
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 fluttering shreds their vile defence from cold.
High-brandishing her lash, with stern regard,
Stands Punishment, an ever-waking ward;
While full of 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.
Who that ill-features of a man,
Shivering 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,
Fell vultures, 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 soul fiends, the wretch begins
Sharp penance, wages of remember'd sins:
Then deeper sinks, plung'd in the pit of Woe,
Worse suff'res rings in worse hell to undergo:
Unless, rare guest, Repentance o'er the gloom
Diffuse her radiance, and repeal his doom.
She comes! meek-eyed, array'd in grave attire,
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 flees.
Come forth, she calls, come forth to liberty,
Guilt-harras'd thrall: thy future lot decide,
And, pond'ring well, elect thy future guide.
Momentous option! choosing right he'll find
A sov'reign medicine for his ulcer'd mind;
Led to True Wisdom, whose cathartic bowl
Recover's, and beatifies the soul.
Misguided else, a counterfeit he'll gain,
Whose art is only to amuse the brain:
From vice to studious folly now he flies,
From bliss still erring, still betray'd by lies.

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

View her there.

At yonder gate, with decent port, she stands,
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.

The sav'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,
The plain man's path, without proud Science wise.

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,
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,
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,
D disdainful soaring up to heights untry'd.
All who in learned trifles spin their wit,
Or comment on the works by trilfers writ.

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

The same.

*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:
Where wild hypothesis, and learn'd romance
Too oft lead up the philosophic dance.
Still these ingenious heads alas! retain
Delusion's dofe, still the vile dregs remain
Of ignorance with madding folly join'd,
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,
Quaff'd her cathartic, and all cleans'd within,
By that strong energy, from pride and sin,
Are heal'd and fav'd. But loit'ring here they spend
Life's precious hours in thinking to no end:
From science up to science let them rise,
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.
Survey this solitary waste, which rears
Nor bush nor herb, nor cottage there appears.
At distance see yon frait and lonely gate
(Non crowds at the forbidding entrance wait)
Its avenue a rugged rocky soil,
Travell'd with painful step and tedious toil.
Beyond the wicket, tow'ring in the skies
See Difficulty's cragged mountain rise,
Narrow and sharp th' ascent; each edge a brink,
Whence to vast depth dire precipices sink.

Is that the way to Wisdom? Dreadful way!
The landscape 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,
Health's rosy habit glowing in their face.

With
With arms pretended o'er the verge they lean,
The promptitude of friendship in their mien.
The pow'rs of Contiúence and Patience, there
Station'd by Wisdom, her commission bear
To rouze the spirit of her fainting son
Thus far advance'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 sight.

But ah! how climb'd that rock's bare slippery height?
These generous guides, who Virtue's course befriended,
In succour of her pilgrim, swift descend,
Draw up their trembling charge; then, smiling, greet
With kind command to rest his weary feet,
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)
How smooth and easy to the foot it lies,
Through beauteous land, from all annoyance clear,
Of thorny evil and perplexing fear.

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

The third court, or the virtuous life.
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.
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 stately 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:
Certain her way, and permanent the deed
Of gift substantial to her friends decreed.
She gives the confidence erect and clear,
She gives magnificent 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.

Vol. VI.  H

This
This asks a comment.

In some dire disease,
Machiavell'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 control despite,
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,
Intemperance, lust, fierce wrath's impetuous tide,
Hydropic avarice, all the plagues behind
Which in the first mad court oppres'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!
Scene that with awe chariseth whom it warms:
No harlotry, no paint, no gay excess,
But beauty unaffected as their drees.
See Knowledge grasping a refulgent star,
See Fortitude in panoply of war:
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
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:
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 ravi'sh'd soul dilate!
Substantial hopes, if by the doctrine taught,
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.

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,
The 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:
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,
Now, with a crown of wond'rous pow'r, her hand
(Asfiant, 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.
Once, a weak prey, beneath their force he cowr'd,
O'erthrown, and worry'd, and well-nigh devour'd:
Till rouz'd from his inglorious sloth, possest
With generous ardour kindling in his breast,
Lord of himself, the victor now constrains
Those hostile monsters in his pow'rful chains.

Explain these 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,
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
By the fair crown, which deck 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.

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,

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:

Here fierce Ambition hailing 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,
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
Which the Good Genius gave; Guilt's gloomy fears
Becloud their suns and fadden all their years.

I stand convinced, but yet perplex'd in thought
Why to review a well-known scene he's brought,
Scene rudely known. Uncertain and confus'd,
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.
Enlightened now in the true bliss 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 retrospect ended, where succeeds
His course?

Where’er his wife 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:
Honour’d by all, the friend of human kind,
Belov’d physician of the sin-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
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:
Like him, who, of some virtuous drug possi’d,
Grasps the fell viper coil’d within her neaf.
Hears her dire hissings, sees her terrors rise,
And, unappall'd, destruction's tooth defies.

You troops in motion from the mount explain,
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,
Captives of some strange female crew.

The crown'd,

Long seeking, safe arriv'd at Wisdom's bound,
Exult in her imparted grace. "The rest,
Those on whom Wisdom, unprevailing, prey
Her healing aid; rejected from her care,
In evil plight their wicked days they wear:
Those too, who Difficulty's hill had gain'd,
There safely stopp'd, by dastard sloth detain'd:
Apostate now, in thorny wilds they rove,
Pursuing furies scourge the caitiff drove;
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,
Unblushing at themselves, but drunk with spleen,
Wisdom's high worth their canker'd tongues dispraise,
Revile her children, and blaspheme her ways.

\[ 483 \]

\[ 490 \]

\[ 495 \]

\[ 500 \]

\[ 505 \]

H 4

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

What pleasures boast they?

Pleasures of the fiends,

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

But who that lovely busy, blithe and gay,
So smoothly gliding down the billy way?

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

Why ingress yielded to their favour'd award

Among the Virtues, to themselves debarr'd?

Opinion's foot is never found
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,
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.
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
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'ful bond demands
Its unremember'd cov'nant from their hands.
Unlike to such, without a sigh restore
What Fortune lends: anon she'll lavish more:
Repeating of her bounty snatch away,
Yea seize your patrimonial fund for prey.
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
Distinguishes false interest 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:

The instructions of the Genius.
For short reflection, 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,
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.

'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.

But wise, solicitous our souls to save,
Assistance from those 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.

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,
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 useless in its way.
But Virtue may be reach'd, thro' all her rules,
Without the curious subtileties of schools.

How! not the learn'd excel the common shoal,
In pow'rfull 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?
Skill'd in all tongues, of all the arts possest,
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?

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
They dwell, content with nearness to the seat
Of Virtuous Wisdom.

Near, methinks, in vain:
'Since numbers, oft, from out the nether plain,
'Scasp'd from the snares of Lewdness and Excess,
Undevious to her lofty station pres,
Yet pass these letter'd claus.

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.

*Decipher that.*

Pride, pride averts their eyes
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.
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,
And hence the healing of their souls delay'd.

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

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The