PEREGRINATIONS

OF THE

MIND

THROUGH THE

MOST GENERAL AND INTERESTING

SUBJECTS,

Which are usually agitated in Life.

By THE RATIONALIST. K

Τριῶν γὰρ ὄντων βίων, ὧν ὁ μὲν ἐστὶ πρακτικὸς, ὁ δὲ θεωρητικὸς, ὁ δὲ ἀπολαυστικός· ὁ μὲν ἐκλυτος καὶ δοῦλος τῶν ἡδονῶν, ζωώδης καὶ μικροπρεπής ἐστιν· ὁ δὲ θεωρητικὸς, τῷ πρακτικῷ διαμαχόμενος, ἀνωφελής. ὁ δὲ πρακτικὸς, ἀμοιρήσας τῆς φιλοσοφίας, ἄμυστος καὶ πολυμμελής. ——

PLUTARCH. de Liberor. Ed.

LONDON:
Printed for G. PEARCH, Numb. 12, in Cheapside.
M.DCC.LXX.

PREFACE.

IT is ſet down as a duty incumbent on every author, to give ſome plauſible reaſon for his appearance in that conſpicuous and hazardous character, by way of apology for the deſtruction he makes in pen, ink, and paper. For my own part, I can, with truth, affirm, that amuſement was my firſt inducement to write:

Dum nihil habemus majus, calamo ludimus,

ſays Phædrus; whoſe apology ſhall be my own. But this is not all: amuſement is no bad plea for writing; yet it cannot be urged in defence of publication; for which alſo an author is accountable. *Why did you publiſh?*

the cruel critic cries. This is the question that makes me tremble; and, before I answer it, I must demand a moment's respite, to recollect my scattered spirits ——

Conscious of a pure intention in the moral part of the work, and sensible that a mean capacity may suggest some useful hint to the wisest man, I have ventured into the ocean of critics, and launched some innocent opinions, which cannot be productive of harm, but may possibly be attended with good, as they plead the cause of VIRTUE.

The subjects are miscellaneous; partly sentimental, partly speculative; many of them such as have given occasion to a variety of opinions; which are freely canvassed, with a view to merit, at least, the applause that waits on the appearance of candor.

The

PREFACE.

The merit, or demerit, of the execution will be pronounced at the critic's dread tribunal; from which there is no appeal. I will only add, that gentle correction will be kindly taken; and that it is easier to demolish a castle than to build a cot.

ERRATA.

Page 44, l. 20, for *opinions* read *inclinations*
Page 75, l. 5, take out *their*
Page 80, l. 7, for *on* read *to*
Page 89, l. last but 2, for *excellence* r. *pre-eminence*
Page 105, note, for *ipsaqe* read *ipsaque*
Page 139, l. 20, for *age* read *ago*
Page 141, note, l. 2, take out *ne*
Page 162, l. 12, for *overweaning* r. *overweening*
Page 165, l. 20, for *hearts* read *lives*
Page 226, l. 25, for *sower* read *sour*
Page 252, l. 3, for *not that that* r. *not considered that*

CONTENTS.

With the MOTTOS tranſlated.

CHAPTER I.

On the ſtage — — Page 1

MOTTO.

To mortal man no bleſſing e'er is giv'n,
Which may not prove a curſe, tho' ſent from heav'n.

OVID.

CHAPTER II.

On love — — — 12

MOTTO.

Thrice bleſt the pair who know not jarring ſtrife,
And whoſe laſt day of love's the laſt of life.

HORACE.

CHAPTER III.

On happineſs — — 22

MOTTO.

In raptures ſudden, and in flights too high,
Expect and fear a fall; for danger's nigh.

TASSO.

CHAPTER IV.

On bigotry — — 30

MOTTO *from* POPE.

CHAPTER V.

On deistical publications —— 40

MOTTOS.

It is requisite that the mad multitude be restrained by the fear of the gods. FLORUS. ——

For scant of reason tempts the wav'ring mind.

LUCRET.

CHAPTER VI.

On politeness —— —— 48

MOTTO.

Let adulation, the assistant of vice, be banished: it is unworthy a friend, and a liberal mind.

CICERO.

CHAPTER VII.

On war — — — 55

MOTTO.

Peace dwell with man; and brutes alone contend.

OVID.

CHAPTER VIII.

On theatrical humour —— 63

MOTTO.

Justice forbids violation; and modesty offence. Herein consists decorum. TULLY.

CHAPTER IX.

Whether knowledge contributes to happiness 73

MOTTO.

Better, at seasons, not to know too much.

EURIPIDES.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER X.

On the passions — — 81

MOTTO.

——— *The passions, God has implanted in man, as spurs to noble actions.* VOSSIUS.

CHAPTER XI.

On patriotism — — 94

MOTTO.

— *For only the name of liberty is contended for by the multitude, who are the ministers of licentiousness; and by the nobles, who are the tools of slavery. Their views are, to shake off obedience to the laws, and subordination.* MACHIAVEL.

CHAPTER XII.

On the public exercise of prostitution 103

MOTTO.

What street abounds not in obscenity?

JUVENAL.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ancient and modern virtues compared 117

MOTTO.

O'er vice the sacred veil of virtue's spread;
And gravity may shroud a villain's head.

JUVENAL.

CHAPTER XIV.

On conjectural metaphysics ——— 133

MOTTOS.

——— *To warn philosophers not to coin new words, and trifle about what they do not comprehend.* LUCIAN. ———

——— *For it cannot be, that our thoughts should reach the heights of first principles.* SIMPLICIUS.

CHAPTER XV.

The unreasonable compliments paid to the ancients for their works, exemplified in Homer 147

MOTTO.

——— *Good old Homer takes his naps.*
HORACE.

CHAPTER XVI.

Reflections on matrimony ——— 162

MOTTO *from* MILTON.

CHAPTER XVII.

Reflexions on cruelty ——— 175

MOTTO.

He who, unmov'd, *can hear the dying cry*
Of beasts, may see, unmov'd, a brother die.
OVID.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Scattered remarks on the sciences 185

MOTTO.

As we find the bee settling on, and extracting sweets from, every flower; so should the candidates for science gather from all its branches, and be totally ignorant of nothing. ISOCRATES.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIX.

A lay sermon ——— ——— 202

MOTTOS.

——— *Never, having done a shameful action, expect to escape; for if no one else should know it, you cannot hide it from yourself.* ISOCRATES.

Virtue review'd protracts the good man's days:
He lives twice o'er whose conduct merits praise.
MARTIAL.

CHAPTER XX.

Whether extraordinary mental acquisitions are conducive to virtue ——— 217

MOTTO.

I may venture to add, that nature without learning is preferable to learning without nature.
CICERO.

CHAPTER XXI.

On haughtiness ——— 230

MOTTO.

True glory follows of its own accord, and is not courted. But if it follows not, good actions are not the less meritorious. PLINY.

CHAPTER XXII.

The chemistry of morality ——— 241

MOTTO.

Consider well these trifles. PHÆDRUS.

CHAPTER XXIII, AND LAST.

On prejudice — — 255

MOTTO.

The mind sits loftily enthroned in man; and is endowed with the gifts of circumspection and penetration, to acquire knowledge: Nature having assigned it as its province, to follow what, on examination, it most approves. THEAGES.

5 JY 62

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

IT may not be thought amiſs, by way of introduction, to give ſome little account of the following chapters; the reaſons for the choice of them, and the end propoſed by them.

Chap. 1. [On the Stage.] is in anſwer to ſome retaled objections, that were originally ſuggeſted by bigotry * and prejudice, againſt theatrical amuſements, much inſiſted on by the prieſts of the Romiſh communion, to ſerve the purpoſe of ſpiritual tyranny, which was endangered by freedoms

* In tracing objections to theatrical exhibitions from bigotry, the author was aware that reflexions had been thrown on them at a time when bigotry was out of the queſtion: ſuch we find in lib. xiv. of Tacitus's Annals. But againſt what were they levelled? Againſt lewdneſs. To lewdneſs, then, let them be confined; and not extended to ſcenes of innocence.

freedoms aſſumed in laſhing and unmaſking vices hid under the cloke of ſolemnity. If, in defending theſe improving amuſements, the author ſhould ſeem, to any one, too much inclined to recommend diſſipation, he declares he no farther approves them than they are conducive to welfare.

The ſecond chapter [On Love.] was penned in conſequence of a private diſpute with a learned and ſenſible gentleman, who maintained the exiſtence of it to be a reſult of faſhion. It was judged proper to premiſe this, leſt the author ſhould ſeem to be fighting againſt the air.

Chap. 3. [On Happineſs.] may poſſibly bear a Stoical aſpect, not meant to belong to it; but it is deſigned only to convey the dictates of a rational voluptuary.

The three ſubſequent chapters ſeem to demand no comment.

The chapter on War is taken up on an old grievance; but a repetition of ſuch ſentiments will, it is feared, be never unſeaſonable: for what ſignify inveighing againſt and puniſhing crimes that affect only

only a few individuals, and overlooking enormities that tend to the deſtruction of millions? As often as war is mentioned, the old, yet ſhrewd, remark of the little pirate to the great robber will ever ſtart up in the memory. It has, indeed, been alleged, as a conſolation for this inhuman butchery, that, in combination with peſtilence and other calamities, it takes off ſuperfluities that would, in a courſe of years, overſtock the globe: tho' there is little danger of ſuch a redundance: a very conſiderable part of the world is at this day, and has been, time immemorial, uninhabited, as if to make room for emigrants. But warriors have not that remedy in view; their own ambition is all they conſult: on which account they are not ſo amiable as executioners, who remove only the nuiſances of ſociety. It is that ſpirit of greedineſs and ferocity, that incites to war, which is cenſured; a ſpirit which, within a ſmaller circle, within the private concerns of mankind, produces knaves and villains. Even if it were neceſſary to prune the luxuriance of the human race, let Calmucks and Tar-

tars,

tars, Turks and Arabs, the weeds and worthlefs branches, be lopped off; men whofe uncultured paffions confound them with brutes, and who could almoft feed on the carcafes of thofe they flaughter; not the polifhed and civilized inhabitants of Europe, who are enlightened by the beams of fcience, and ought to fhake off favage manners.

Chap. 8, in defence of theatrical humour, appeared not unfeafonable at a time when the rage for refinement, imported from a neighbour kingdom, bids fair for banifhing one of the moft pleafing qualities of the ftage, the reprefentation of real character.

From this we pafs on to chap. 11. [On Patriotifm.] introduced as a fubject much in queftion at thefe jarring times.

Chap. 13. [Ancient and modern virtues compared.] attacks what the author efteems a prejudice; by which the want of referve and gravity is conftrued as a proof of corruption, to the difcredit of that freedom which every honeft heart muft love. Befides, there is fomething fo gloomy in the unreafonable notion of

continual

continual degeneracy, as quite to dis-hearten a man.*

The fourteenth chapter [on the ſecrets of metaphyſics,] is a natural reſult of the diſappointment which ever awaits the diving reſearches of an inquiſitive mind in the myſteries of nature. In this chapter no reflections are meant to be thrown on the philoſophic ornaments of literature: but only a lamentation on the boundaries of human knowledge, which is bewildered when it would graſp at what is beyond its reach.

Leſt the author ſhould be arraigned for detraction in chapter 15. [On the unreaſonable compliments paid to the ancients for their works, exemplified in Homer,] he will here, as he has in the body

* Should it be thought that the authorities adduced from Petronius are doubtful; that M. Nodot has impoſed on the world in his ſtory of the copy ſaid to be found at Belgrade; and that the conſul Petronius was not the author of what has been long fathered on him; admitting all this, no ſhining quality beſide patriotiſm ſeems ſo to blazon the Greek and Roman characters, in the unimpeached accounts of other writers, as to raiſe our envy; and even that principle, amiable as it was when confined to the proper limits of its native diſtrict, was ſullied by many unwarrantable ſallies it made, ſword in hand, abroad.

body of that chapter, remark, that he reverences genius in every age, whether amongſt ancients or moderns; at the ſame time that he prefers that which is combined with judgement. The beautiful quotations wirh which he has adorned ſeveral of his pages ſhall ſerve to evince what a regard he has for their real excellences; which he is ſorry to find interſperſed with deformities: the greateſt portion of them, notwithſtanding, it muſt be confeſſed, falls to the ſhare of the proſe writers, though a poet is here in queſtion; judgement being more particularly the province of the former, and genius of the latter.

Since chap. 17. [On cruelty.] was penned, a doubt ſtarted up, whether a repetition on this ſubject, to a reader of feeling, does not merit that appellation. If it ſhould chance to offend, let the inſertion of it be numbered with the Errata of the book.

Thus far was judged proper to be premiſed of particular chapters.

Many of the chapters (1, 2, 9, 13, 16, and 20,) are caſuiſtical. The reaſon why they were choſen was, that in problematical, or controverted, topics, there

is

is greater ſcope for argument, and a leſs probability of the charge of triteneſs being exhibited, than in others. It is at all times allowed to obtrude opinions on diſputed points, when ſettled and confirmed notions would not ſuffer a repetition.

If it be objected, that ſome of the ſubjects have been handled before, the author anſwers, in his vindication, that he has not always been ſatisfied with the opinions he has met with, which have too much reſted on ſyſtems, and on ſyſtems frequently not founded in nature. The remarks he has ventured to expoſe are ſuch as were ſuggeſted by his own private obſervation or experience: and where they concur with the ſentiments of authors that precede him, he has their ſuffrage; where they do not, he will take candor for his plea, and the love of what appeared to him in the guiſe of truth. He has talked much of prejudice: if he has given any examples of it peculiar to himſelf, he begs his readers pardon, and, when convicted, with pleaſure kiſſes the rod of correction, from whatever quarter. Candor with him ever does, with every one ever ought to wear the *faireſt form*.

The

The learned reader will find many obſervations herein contained old and familiar, which may to others appear in the garb of novelty and importance. It is with books on every ſubject, in ſome degree, as it is with a grammar; that a ſyſtem, be it good or bad, is made up of trifles; on the ſelection of which depends the character of the author. In grammar, letters, ſyllables, and words are to be properly arranged: in ſpeculative topics we look for a juſt diſpoſition and choice of ideas and ſentiments.

In moſt common ſubjects, after the multitude of authors, little elſe is to be hoped for but a difference of dreſs. Writing has this in common with painting. The human body has been painted numberleſs times by numberleſs painters, with limbs, colours, and canvaſs, nearly the ſame; but each has a manner peculiar to himſelf: and it were more agreeable ſometimes to gaze on a faulty piece, for the ſake of variety, than always to be confined to the ſight of a few excellent portraits.

THE RATIONALIST.

CHAPTER I.

On the Stage.

Nil prodeſt quod non lædere poſſit idem.
Ovid. Triſt. 2.

THE general tendency of the theatre has been the ſubject of much controverſy among moraliſts. It has been thought by ſome to have a good effect in reforming the manners of a people; whilſt others have declaimed againſt it as one of the inſtruments of the devil. One repreſents it as the ſchool of virtue; another as the nurſery of vice. One aſſerts that it

 inflames

inflames the paſſions; another that it dilates the breaſt and opens the human heart: but both ſides agree that it is not a matter of indifference which can do neither good nor harm.

In all controverſies (it is proper to premiſe) the diſputants on either ſide preſent the dark or favourable ſide of a queſtion to view, according as it ſuits their ſeveral purpoſes; and endeavour to conceal and ſuppreſs every circumſtance that makes for their antagoniſts. This obſervation is founded in fact, and true of moſt diſputes in general; but it is eminently applicable to the friends and enemies of the drama, who have, each in their turn, variouſly characteriſed it according as their different fancies led them.

Among the ancients the theatre was in general in eſteem with their writers, the moſt auſtere of whom conſidered it as a ſchool of inſtruction: another cauſe for objections againſt it muſt be aſſigned, which is not difficult to be diſcovered. Bigotry and ſuperſtition have been, at different times, the parents of every folly, and, what is worſe, the nurſery of crimes. From this odious ſource are originally derived the objections which have been made to the repreſentation and writing of plays, for the public entertainment; and (to the honour of dramatic pieces be it ſpoken,) they have met with the moſt virulent oppoſition from the profeſſors of the Romiſh communion, who even deny thoſe concerned in them the privileges of their fellow-citizens. A

reaſon

reaſon for this is caſy to be imagined, and has been often hinted at: as it is the proper province of the comic muſe to expoſe knavery and folly, that church had the higheſt reaſon to dread her laſh. The prieſts gave the alarm, and the ſimple part of the world have ecchoed back their cries.

In order to juſtify their cenſure of the drama, its enemies of every denomination have unfairly ſelected the looſe and unchaſte productions of ſome writers of this claſs, and from them pronounced ſentence on them all. The partiality and injuſtice of this procedure are too glaring to be pointed at. I am not at all ſurpriſed if objections are made to unchaſte comedies: it is not the intereſt of a well-regulated community to encourage them. Luxury and debauchery unnerve the human frame, and are undoubtedly the characteriſtics of a ſtate leaning rather to a decay, than riſing to a greater perfection, as hiſtory amply teſtifies; and they ſcarcely ever need a ſpur, as nature is but too prone to prompt to thoſe irregularities: but the paſſion of love, indulged with ſuch reſtrictions as comedy ought to teach, is a generous principle, and may, under certain circumſtances, be deemed even a virtue.

Now I am on this point, a fair opportunity offers itſelf of paying a compliment to the delicacy of the preſent age. It is notorious (particularly of late years) that the higheſt diſappro-

bation has been ſhewn of whatever borders on indelicacy in any ſhape; and that even to an exceſs. To ſuch a height has this humour been carried, as to explode what might have been very fairly allowed without violation of decorum, and what the colouring of character ſometimes requires in ſupport of a piece.* From Ariſtophanes,

* A memorable example of this mock-delicacy was not long ſince exhibited in the cold reception an excellent comedy met with from the ſpectators. The piece I mean is The Good-natured Man, the production of an author of confeſſed abilities. The intereſting ſcene of the bailiff and his follower, a ſcene abounding in real humour, upon which the plot in a great meaſure turned, was ordered to be curtailed, becauſe it repreſented *low-life*, and wounded the *delicate ears* of the *Midaſes* of the upper gallery, who firſt conceived diſguſt. The Jovial Crew, the Beggars Opera, and ſome others that might be named, meet with the greateſt applauſe; the latter is even indulged ſo far as to be played for weeks without intermiſſion. Is it their delicacy and connection with high-life that commands this encouragement? But the public is a fickle judge, and does not always render merit its due. Could the eſtimation of thoſe pieces be obliterated, it is chance but they would now meet the hiſs that is levelled at ſuppoſed indecorum. Time is the touch-ſtone of merit, and they have ſtood the teſt. The people are told they are good, and therefore preſume not to cenſure them on that ſcore.

phanes, who had the least imaginable regard to decency, down to our own times, comic writers have, by a reformation on this head, gradually and wisely contributed to wipe off aspersions of this kind, as sensible that the wantonness of men needs not satyrion, nor their madness wine.

The objections made to indecent comedies then are equally applicable to writings of other kinds. Indecent memoirs, indecent novels, or indecent dialogues, are likewise to be exploded: but it does not follow that all memoirs, dialogues, and novels are to be extirpated because some are bad, any more than that all theatrical performances are to be forbidden because there have been unchaste comedies. By a similarity of reasoning might we plead for the prohibition of writings of all sorts, since pure and unexceptionable works of every species may be contrasted with an Aretine, a Rochester, a Petronius, or a Cleland. The amount of such objections as these is actually no more than that bad plays are bad things; and so are bad priests or bad magistrates; but we are not therefore to discard all priests and magistrates because some have been bad.

It is likewise urged by the enemies of the stage, that there are some who indulge in diver-

score. I mean not to depreciate either; they have their excellence; but this partiality to the prejudice of more modern adventurers in authorship is too gross to pass unnoticed.

ſions of this nature to an exceſs. To this it may be replied, that if the children or dependents of any one are too much addicted to them, and beſtow more time and expence on them than their circumſtances will warrant, it is partly to be laid to the account of the head of the family himſelf, who ſuffers this exceſs. Or even admitting that others, who are under no controul but that of their own wills, incline to the ſame extreme, is the whole body of the public to be denied all amuſement becauſe ſome few indulge to a fault? As well might we aſſert that no public benefit whatever ſhould be allowed, becauſe all are capable of abuſe. Would it be reaſonable, for inſtance, to iſſue orders for the extirpation of fruit-trees, or for filling up all the wells in the kingdom, becauſe it may happen that a boy may eat of the one, or drink of the other, in a burning heat, and ſo be thrown into a fever? Queſtions of this ſort might be aſked without number, were it at all neceſſary. There is nothing but what is capable of abuſe and miſapplication from human perverſeneſs. Prudence is the only guide in theſe and all other points, and by that guide ought every one to ſteer his courſe in the conduct of life. If there are men who have not the leaſt ſhare of this uſeful qualification in their compoſitions, I know not what methods can be taken with them: they are unfit for this world, and the ſooner they are out of it the better.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, in tempers of the common ſtamp, a principal reaſon aſſignable for an immoderate paſſion for any thing, is, that it is too great a novelty. This has been found to be the caſe in country towns where the comedians do not conſtantly reſort: the conſequence of which has been, that when they made their appearance, the magiſtrates judged it expedient to diſmiſs them, becauſe the giddy minds of the youths of both ſexes were intoxicated with the pleaſure they enjoyed in theſe ſpectacles: which diſmiſſion partly depended on the taſte of the petty ſovereign who preſided during the theatric viſit. If he chanced to be a miſer, a clown, or an hour-glaſs-maker, with a taſte on a level with thoſe characters, woe to the company! ——— Excluding the players does indeed prevent the effects of exceſſive indulgence; but a ſurfeit is the moſt radical cure.

In vindication of dramatic performances, it may with juſtice be ſaid, that if they do ſwell the paſſions, it is the nobler paſſions which are called forth; paſſions which, if well-directed, are the ornaments of human nature. That they be properly regulated, it is the buſineſs of the author to provide. It is deemed by judges an imperfection in a performance if it does not recommend virtue and propriety. The diſcerning poet eſteems it his part to render vice as odious as poſſible, and to expoſe to view the deformity of it; to preſent virtue in its native charms,

and to enforce its dictates. The ſeveral paſſions of the human breaſt are by him ſummoned only where they ought, and where Nature herſelf is the prompter. Hatred for a villain, pity for the unfortunate virtuous, and love for the amiable fair, are no blemiſhes in reaſon or humanity.

Plays are uſeful in another view. They contribute to the poliſhing and adorning mankind; and politeneſs is a ſubordinate ſpecies of humanity. It is a point of conſequence worth contending for, to keep a nation from a rude and barbarous ſtate, by the aſſiſtance of the arts and ſciences. Comedies, in particular, may boaſt this tendency, as greatly ſubſervient to the purpoſe. In them every vice, every impropriety, every indecorum, is marked and corrected; and by them the ſpectator may be taught to diſapprove in another what he could not diſcover in his own character.

They are ſerviceable in diſplaying the variety of character in the world, and very proper leſſons to teach what the dull apprehenſions of many would otherwiſe have ſcarcely learned from their own obſervations. Their moſt obſtinate enemies will not ſurely deny that to be one advantage reſulting from them, or deem ſuch an inſight into life a point of no moment. It muſt be acknowledged that this conſideration merits every one's regard, as a principal view of education; and it is as indiſputable a truth that the high colouring of a play is more

more ſtriking and affecting than the inſipid and faint ſcenes of common life.

If the reaſons above alleged are judged inconcluſive, an additional plea, and a material one, remains ſtill behind. Granting that plays are, upon the whole, productive of neither good nor harm, (which is the greateſt conceſſion that ought to be made,) yet even in that caſe they ſhould be tolerated from a conſideration of the pleaſure and amuſement which are derived from them. Some relaxation is requiſite in life from the toils and cares that ſurround us:* 'Apollo 'does not always bend his bow.' Theatrical exhibitions are, by the generality of the world, eſteemed a moſt agreeable ſpecies of entertainment. They are more than bare repreſentations of life; they are repreſentations embelliſhed with all the decorations of fancy, and cannot fail to charm where taſte is not wanting to reliſh the beauties of genius. This laſt conſideration of pleaſure (as it is an innocent pleaſure) is a plea that may be as ſtrongly inſiſted on as any of the foregoing. It will be combated by none but thoſe who have loſt their reliſh for enjoyment, or are naturally ſour or inſenſible in their diſpoſitions. As ſuch, they are not to be regarded in the common light of human beings, but rather as marble ſtatues, devoid of feeling.

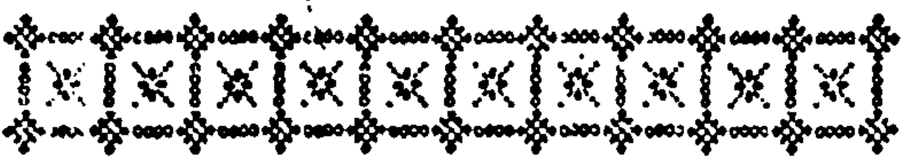
* Horat. lib. ii. od. 10.

—— Καὶ γὰρ τὰ τόξα καὶ τὰς λύρας ἀνίεμεν, ἵνα ἱκανοὶ τεῖναι δυνηθῶμεν. Plutarch. de educat.

There are certain inſtances of vice, and certain cuſtoms prevailing in ſociety, which every individual in the kingdom would agree to condemn: ſuch inſtances and ſuch cuſtoms, if inquired into, would probably appear to merit the general cenſure. The encouragement given to the ſtage is not one of thoſe inſtances, as the cenſure paſſed on it is by no means general. The greater and more ſenſible half of the world conſent to give it their countenance. Thoſe that have denied it their ſuffrages are much inferior in number, and prejudiced by education, niggardlineſs, or want of taſte, circumſtances ariſing from ſome peculiar ſituation in life; and yet even they, under a change of their education or ſituation, would probably have entertained opinions of it wide of thoſe they now are found to harbour. No one, with the common human feelings about him, can *naturally* diſlike the ſtage; and arguments deduced from *reaſon*, I am perſuaded, will not condemn it. An averſion to it muſt, in courſe, be regarded only as one of thoſe prejudices of a little mind which a peculiarity of education has given birth to, and deſerves to be received with that contempt which is due to want of ſentiment.

Upon the whole, though I cannot accede to their opinion who think that plays ought to be diſcountenanced, yet I will not be ſo bigotted in their favour as to affirm that mens morals are *much* mended by them in reſpect to virtue and vice,

vice. That is a good effect which I can ſcarcely attribute to knowledge itſelf in general, and therefore do not much expect to find reſult from any particular branch of it: but thus much I muſt again and again inſiſt on in favour of the drama, that as far as it contributes to inſpire with generous ſentiments, to promote good-nature and the ſocial affections, and to enlarge and refine the mind, we have ample recompence for all the evil it can poſſibly have introduced.



CHAPTER II.

On Love.

Felices ter et amplius
Quos irrupta tenet copula, nec malis
Divulsus querimoniis
Suprema citius solvet amor die.
Hor. od. 18.

THE force and influence of that great tyrant Custom are so powerful, that the effects of it have been often blended with, and mistaken for, those of Nature herself. Amongst other doubts which this confusion has given rise to, it has been with many a question, Whether the passion of Love, as confined to one particular object, to the utter exclusion of all others, is not rather a consequence of fashion, than a propensity of nature.

For my own part, with respect to this dispute, both from a superficial view, and from a nice observation, I should esteem it highly probable that it has as real an existence, independently on custom, as anger, or pity, or envy, or any other affection of the mind. First then let it be remarked, that the natural tendency of education (or custom) is to diminish and curb the passions.

paſſions. In proportion as learning and knowledge advance, inſtinct and nature retire: reaſon then bears the ſway, which (conſidered as abſtracted from the body) condemns and diſcards all emotions whatever.

There cannot be a more convincing proof of this, than the characters and conditions of thoſe who have been the ſtrongeſt, or (if you will) *weakeſt*, ſubjects of love. Scarce any journal of occurrences but furniſhes inſtances of ſome unhappy lovers, who, diſappointed in their views, ſeek that repoſe from their anxiety in the cold arms of death, which they could not obtain in the embraces of thoſe they loved. The conditions of ſuch unhappy victims (if we take notice) have been generally humble and low, and the parties of an inferior education, and conſequently more the ſons and daughters of Nature than thoſe who deny the exiſtence of love a foundation in her reign of ſimplicity. Now it cannot, with any tolerable ſhew of reaſon, be ſuppoſed, thas an ordinary and trifling degree of emotion could prompt a rational being to a remedy which is beſet with terrors at all points. Fear is an exceedingly powerful and univerſal paſſion; and fear of death (to the vulgar eſpecially) is the ſtrongeſt of fears: yet, mighty as it is, we often ſee it ſuperſeded by the force of love.

Nor are the ignorant alone ſubject to ſuch the powerful effects of this paſſion. It finds its way

to

to the hearts of the polished and well-educated part of the world, though a general taste does more prevail among them, than among the former, and a less partiality to a particular object above another.

It must likewise be considered, that as one passion or view is counteracted and diminished by the presence of another,* the effects of love are rendered less general than they would otherwise be, by the intervention of some other object, which distracts the mind and half engages its attention. This is eminently the case in matrimonial views and contracts. One of the first and principal notions inculcated into children by their parents, is, the necessity of amassing wealth above all things.† With this notion they at first set out, and in it they are confirmed by the practice of their neighbours, and an experience that money will purchase innumerable blessings of life, with which the iniquity of the times will not present them without it. Love and Avarice then divide the empire between them, and according as the heart of

* —— Ira cadit metu.

OVID. Amor. l. ii. el. 13.

† Διὰ τοῦτον [ἄργυρον] ἐκ ἀδελφὸς,
Διὰ τοῦτον ὁ τοκῆς·
Πολέμοι, φόνοι, δι' αὐτόν.
Τὸ δὲ χρυσὸν, ὀλλύμεσθα
Διὰ τοῦτον οἱ φιλοῦντες.

ANACREON.

of our adventurer is generous or unfeeling, either rival gets the better of the other.

Perhaps, to ſome readers, that may ſcarce ſeem to deſerve the name of a paſſion, which men have in their power to ſuſpend or indulge ſo much at eaſe. But this does not amount to an objection. We have abundant examples of mens diſregarding or ſubduing the ſeveral feelings of nature, by dint of reſolution, or by inattention to their dictates, according as a diſtraction of views, their opinions of virtue, or their thirſt of glory, led them. There are ſtill greater examples of triumph over human weakneſs: Patriotiſm, in particular, among the Romans, may ſeem ſo to have tranſported ſome great ſouls, as to have raiſed them above the condition of humanity, and to have realized the fancied ſuperior order of Heroes.* If Regulus could ſo far contemn his own private feelings and ſufferings, when ſet in competition with his country's good, as to ſubmit to torture and death, rather than in his own opinion approve himſelf an unworthy ſon of it, it was no proof of his want of feeling, but of an extraordinary reſolution ariſing from another motive.

It

* Sed nec illo voluntario ad hoſtes ſuos reditu, [Reguli,] nec ultimo ſive carceris, ſive crucis, ſupplicio, deformata majeſtas: imo his omnibus admirabilior, quid aliud quam victus de victoribus? atque etiam, quia Carthago non ceſſerat, de Fortuna triumphavit. — FLORUS.

It is rare indeed that a firſt-ſight view will kindle a flame. Love, as well as other affections, requires time and indulgence to wind it up to ſuch a pitch as to occupy the chief attention of that perſon who is the ſubject of it, and deſerve the name of a paſſion. Like the herbs of the field it vegetates and increaſes, in proportion as it is tended and cheriſhed; and, like them too, it is checked and blaſted, if diſcouraged or neglected.

Love will bear the ſtricteſt metaphorical compariſon with fire. A ſingle ſpark will often kindle a high-built pile; but it needs ſome trifling aſſiſtance when it is in ſo weak a ſtate. It is at firſt diminutive and ſcarce to be perceived; but a little fanning and encouragement will kindle it into flame, and convince the by-ſtander of its powerful force, by an appeal to his quickeſt ſenſes. In like manner, the origin of many an amour has been equally inconſiderable, and the moſt trivial action, the moſt trifling circumſtance, obſerved in either ſex, has often ſhot a ſpark into the boſom of the other, and produced a flame requiring a river of water to extinguiſh it, and which has not died away but with the lamp of life itſelf.

The riſe and progreſs of this paſſion are different under different circumſtances. It not only may not ariſe from a trifling interview, but even not be conceived till after the conjugal knot is tied. Love is ſometimes the fruit of matrimony,

as well as matrimony is of love, and Cupid is the infant offspring of their mutual embraces. This is perhaps the happieſt condition of a marriage-ſtate, as no mortifying diſappointment lurks behind. If the pairs did not expect a heaven of bliſs, they were not alarmed when they found it not: but to find more than there was reaſon to hope for is doubly a bleſſing, and the poſſibility of it is ſpur ſufficient to ſtir up many an adventurer, who, but for this, would never have proved his fate.

The very conſtitution of ſociety, the connexions formed between a man and his wife, and the neceſſity of the care of both of them for their offspring were doubtleſs foreſeen by the great Author of creation. As the caſe of man differs much from the condition of brutes, a different œconomy was requiſite for their ſituation, and the mutual love of the ſexes was the nobleſt inſtance of wiſdom that could have been exhibited. By this circumſtance the intereſt in the tender babe, which is the fruit of their amour, is common to either parent, and the father is almoſt equally concerned for its ſafety and ſupport with the mother that bore it.

The ſacred flame that animates a human breaſt is a noble compoſition of benevolence to the object beloved, differing from the attachment of brutes, with which it is almoſt profaneneſs to compare it. Friendſhip is the foundation for this noble affection, which, when the

the contrary ſex is the ſubject of it, by a prejudice of nature, is converted into that particular ſpecies called LOVE. It is however poſſible that the different ſexes may conceive a friendſhip for each other without the leaſt tincture of the other paſſion; but this will be found to be the caſe, when a diſparity of years, a prepoſſeſſion in favour of another, or a form which pleaſes not, intervenes. But let nature have her full ſcope and direction, let beauty be contraſted with beauty, and youth with youth, and the conſequences of ſuch a ſituation will evince how far the paſſion of love is of natural growth, provided no circumſtance of prejudice diminiſh the human feelings.

By a bountiful profuſion of nature, the cauſes of love are as various as the different complexions of the human race. Some a temper allures, ſome a face. The treſſes of his miſtreſs, like the chains of a conqueror, hold another enſlaved. There are again thoſe who are captivated by the charms of a mind, and behold the virtues through a face, which is (as a late maſterly writer expreſſes himſelf) 'their tranſ-'parent covering.' An arm, a heel, a mein, a ſize, and a thouſand more ſuch diſtinctions, have, each in its turn, captivated the heart of a hero.*

That

* Nigra μελιχροὸς eſt; immunda et fœtida ἄκοσμος· Cæſia Παλλάδιον· nervoſa et lignea δορκάς·

Parvola,

That a man is often partly taken with the elegance of dreſs in his miſtreſs, and not with her own perſonal charms alone, and that conſequently his attachment in ſuch a caſe ſhould not be eſteemed the thraldom of love but a mere taſte for magnificence — even this is an arrant miſtake, and I can, upon the authority of one of the greateſt maſters of love the world ever produced, declare ſuch an opinion erroneous and falſe. Ornaments of art, as well as the accompliſhments of nature, when they really enhance the elegance of appearance in a female, are as much a part of the dear charmer that wears them, as her ſparkling eyes, her boſom of ſnow, or any other ſnare the ſyren bears about her. Natural endowments, and artificial ornaments, in ſuch a manner aſſimilate, as to become inſeparable. Dreſs, according to Ovid,† is to be conſidered

Parvola, pumilio, Χαρίτων ἴα, tota merum ſal;
Magna atque immanis, κατάπληξις, plenaque honoris;
Balba loqui non quit, τραυλίζει· muta pudens eſt;
At flagrans, odioſa, loquacula, λαμπάδιον fit:
Ἰσχνὸν ἐρώμενον tum fit quom vivere non quit
Præ macie: ἐφθὴ vero eſt jam mortua tuſſi;
At gemina et mammoſa Ceres eſt ipſa ab Iaccho:
Simula Σιληνὴ ac ſatyra 'ſt; labioſa φίλημα.

LUCRET. lib. iv.

† Auferimur cultu: gemmis auroque teguntur
Omnia: pars minima eſt ipſa puella ſui.

Sæpe

ſidered in this light, and not as an adventitious or diſtinct mode of excellence. It is, as he obſerves, a part of the ægis which the god Cupid carries with him, amongſt many other of his warlike accoutrements.

If indeed it had ever been known, that a ſtatue dreſſed up, or a poſt adorned with female attire, equally charmed, and gained admirers, with a woman, I will give up the point I contend for, and with chearfulneſs own myſelf in the wrong; but till I read of a man's falling in love with a milkmaid's garland, or a poliſhed golden image, I muſt inſiſt on conſidering the dreſs of a woman as a part of her perſon.

Upon a recapitulation in my own mind of the arguments I have urged to refute the deniers of the exiſtence of Love, it occurred to me how much eaſier a taſk it would have been for ſome of the lovely fair ones I have been talking of, with that powerful perſuaſion, the eloquence of looks and ornaments, which nature and art combine to lend them, to have converted theſe infidels.‡ Before ſuch conviction as they could afford, the ſophiſtry of argument would appear dry and impertinent;

Sæpe ubi ſit quod amas, inter tam multa, requiras.
Decipit hac oculos ægide dives amor.
Ov. Rem. Am. lib. i.

‡ Θυγάτηρ ἐπίγαμεν, κἂν ὅλως μηδὲν λαλῇ,
Διὰ τὴν σιωπὴν πλεῖστα περὶ αὐτῆς λέγει.
Menand. S.

pertinent, and all I have advanced as empty words: but alas! our philoſophers are not ſo good as they ought to be — they ſeldom appear at a church, where the fair ſhew themſelves to the greateſt advantage; and an aſſembly is by much too trifling for a ſtoic. As the puniſhment due to their crimes, their inflexible obſtinacy, and inſenſibility, may they perſiſt in their courſe therein, and never love!

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

On Happiness.

Et a i voli troppo alti et repentini
Sogliono i precipitii esser vicini.

TASSO.

'HAPPINESS (says an ancient writer) 'bears the semblance of satisfaction and 'perfection, being the ultimate aim of all our 'actions.'* How to arrive at it is the grand question, the great business of life: but it is universally agreed, that without a contented mind we catch at a shadow in the pursuit of it. He that is not tolerably easy in every station, will never be perfectly satisfied in any.

Nothing is more frequent amongst moral writers than to represent content, a quality merely constitutional, as a virtue and a duty, and discontent as a vice or a crime, a repugnance to the dispensations of heaven, and a tacit rebellion against its decrees. How far this idea is just, I shall not now inquire; but whether it be reasonable or not, sure I am it is a lesson as little regarded as any that ever flowed from

Τέλειον δέ τι φαίνεται καὶ αὔταρκες ἡ εὐδαιμονία, τῶν πρακτῶν ἕνεκα τέλος. — ARISTOT. Eth. lib. 1.

from the pen of a moralist. To oppose mens restlessness in search after happiness, is to stem a torrent, and to barely enjoin content is to talk in an unknown tongue.

In all our attempts to correct and inform we should consider it as an essential point to humour the objects of our endeavours, without which all our precepts are lost in air. The most cogent and persuasive rhetoric that can be used, is to speak to the utility and self-love of mankind; to make appear that our precepts are conducive to the desired end; that happiness is equally the desideratum of both writer and reader. The disciple of this reasoning will listen with attention to such a promising preceptor, and eagerly swallow a potion that is sweetened to his palate, as preferable to the bitter draught administered by the hand of a stoic. —— And whence, it may justly be asked, can be derived a more powerful persuasive in favour of content, (which is the essence of happiness,) than from a consideration of the *nearly equal distribution of it amongst the whole human race?*

That this position of a nearly equal share of felicity is no chimæra, will, I trust, be admitted by every one who thoroughly examines it at all points, and considers it in every view. Arguments deduced from actual pleasure and pain, if we attentively consider those sensations, suggest reasons to confirm the supposition. Let us trace things to their very source. Pain (which

is

is in many cases the strongest of those two sensations) diminishes in a certain ratio, proportioned to the time it has been endured, by the very constitution of nature. This is not only the case in the more slight and common instances, in the little inconveniences of life, but even in such as strike with horror at the bare mention of them. As a proof of it may be urged a memorable circumstance relating to one of the most striking examples of pain that the rigour of law could inflict, in the execution of a notorious criminal in France; * who, after he had sustained part of the dreadful punishment denounced against him, was asked a few questions relating to the pain he had felt. Among other particulars of his answers is one which has an intimate connexion with the present argument. He declared that even under this most intense circumstance of misery, after he had been some little time in torture, his sense of pain became by degrees so languid, as in a great measure to diminish the rigour of his sentence. But lest my gentle reader should be shocked at the cruelty of the example here given, I will dismiss it, and observe that every situation in nature is pregnant with such proofs. As the hands become hard with labour, the body and mind both grow callous and insensible to pain: a circumstance which

* Mandrin, a famous smuggler, who was broke on the wheel for murder and other crimes — A sentence which he bore with a fortitude that would have done honour to innocence.

which tends to alleviate the ſufferings of the miſerable in every degree, by a peculiar bleſſing of nature. I have choſen to ſpeak chiefly of pain, as it appeared to me the ſtronger inſtance of ſenſation: not but that pleaſure (which is the immediate point in queſtion) would have equally anſwered the purpoſe of conviction. The ſweetneſs of honey, when firſt it is taſted, is exquiſite; but repeated doſes of it at laſt become palling and nauſeous. There are certain bounds of pleaſure and pain which cannot be paſſed or continued in their intenſity: when arrived at thoſe degrees, they ſtop, and gradually die away.

So much being premiſed, we may draw a conſequent inference, too obvious to be denied, as the pleaſures of body and mind in ſuch manner repreſent each other, as to admit of the ſame arguments and obſervations — The concluſion I mean is, that however flattering the ſtate of one man appears to another who is leſs diſtinguiſhed by the favours of Fortune, or more involved in the hurries and buſineſs of life, yet it by no means follows that the former is happier than the latter. Buſineſs employs the load of time; wants are the forerunners of wiſhes, and wiſhes of enjoyment. The moſt elevated ſtation, the moſt extenſive poſſeſſions, the moſt exalted glory, which is the Elyſium of heroes, pall and fade at laſt. The king on his throne ſurfeits with honour: he that has all earthly bleſſings at his command, has no more left to covet and raiſe his hopes: like Alexander, he finds that one world's

extent will not fill up his wiſhes. It is not the nature of our conſtitution to keep up an even and conſtant zeſt for enjoyment; and the more intenſe the pleaſure is, the ſooner the fibres of ſenſibility are broken.

It muſt be allowed that a tranſition from a preſent to a more deſired ſtate conſtitutes a ſhort-lived happineſs; but it is at the commencement of our change we muſt expect it. Afterwards we drop from the ſummit of our wiſhes, as from a high tower, meaſuring our fall by the degree of impatience with which we ſoared to our deſires.

Happineſs then is content under another name. Without it a man cannot be happy, and with it it is impoſſible he ſhould be miſerable. A conſideration of this truth (though it is not expected it ſhould prevent us from ſnatching at every little innocent whim that floats within our reach) is a ſtrong argument for reſiſting inordinate and unattainable deſires, which, like a vulture, prey continually on the vitals of the ambitious and reſtleſs.* If human nature requires ſometimes a recreation, to keep off a general ſtagnation and torpor, we ſhould marſhal and diſcipline our deſires, and direct them in

* Nam petere imperium quod inane 'ſt, nec datur unquam,
Atque in eo ſemper durum ſufferre laborem,
Hoc eſt adverſo nixantem trudere monte
Saxum ——— LUCRET. lib. III.

in their career. Cuſtom is a potent maſter, and the powers and functions of body and mind, by a little perſeverance, will ſubmit to its controul.

Had men of letters in the ſeveral ages of the world been duly ſenſible of this one truth, *the nearly equal diſtribution of happineſs*, ſuch a confuſion of ſyſtems had never been introduced, as the philoſophers have formed, in their purſuit after that one great object of human wiſhes. School had not been ſet up againſt ſchool, and ſyſtem againſt ſyſtem. The Stoic had not preached up apathy, as the only means of attaining it, and the Epicurean ſenſual delights. Cooler reaſon had reigned among men, and common ſenſe been the ſtandard of truth and touchſtone of abſurdity. Content, which is eſſential happineſs, would have continued in their ſteady courſe thoſe whoſe ill-judged and overweening expectations led aſtray after ſuch a ſhare of it as no ſituation in life will afford. Ambition, the Fury that ſtirs up envy and contention, would not have urged on the reſtleſs and greedy minds of ſelfiſh men to invade the property of an envied neighbour. The ſhepherd would have been pleaſed with his flock, and the lord of one kingdom ſatisfied without aſpiring after univerſal monarchy, and ſometimes purchaſing to himſelf the mortification of diſappointment.

The nobleſt gift of heaven is content. Riches and honour are but the flattering promiſers of what content alone can give. Viewed through the medium of content, kings and peaſants are ſeen on a level, and the cot ſuffers no diminution when ſet by the ſide of the crown. The one is not deſpiſed, nor the other envied: but they are equally conſidered as accompanied with their ſhare of felicity.

He never wants who never wiſh'd for more:
Who ever ſaid an anchoret was poor?

But, after all, if happineſs is ſo eaſily to be attained, why will not every one purchaſe it at the price of his ambition? — Alas! prejudice is blind, and paſſion is ſtrong. Men are with difficulty perſuaded out of notions interwoven with their conſtitutions. It is eaſy to form an untinctured mind, but not eaſy to diſpoſſeſs it of the ſtrong garriſon of early prejudice, which, as a lawleſs tyrant, rules and directs the actions and opinions. But though there are few who can be perſuaded out of their favourite notions, the felicity of content may not be diſputed. Some have actually *felt* the force of it, which others have not been able to *conceive*. Even ſhould the advocate of content himſelf, the dictating moraliſt, by his unbridled wiſhes give the lie to his doctrine, content is ſtill the ſame only parent of happineſs it ever was, and

no

no ſubſtitute whatever can be found to repreſent it.

Weighty and natural as this truth is, it will ſeldom convert; and the precepts that enjoin it are looked on as the ruſt and rubbiſh of chimerical morality. Regarding deſires which reſt on probability as the principal ſources of pleaſure, men will not remember that unreaſonable longings are the parents of pain. I will therefore diſmiſs my preaching, and not farther encumber a ſimple truth with needleſs remarks on it, leſt the dull clothing it wears ſhould contribute to ſcare away thoſe who might otherwiſe be tempted to embrace it.

CHAPTER IV.

On Bigotry.

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight:
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right.

Pope.

THERE is not on earth a blessing which the perverseness of man has not, at times, converted to a curse. Religion itself, which derives its birth from heaven, and is intended to perfect what Nature has laid the foundation for, has among other things, by peculiar blindness and obstinacy, been oft pressed into the service of murderers, cheats, and debauchees.*

The greatest ornament of humanity is a propensity to universal charity and benevolence: it is the noblest instinct Nature has given us, the great foundation whereon all other virtues are to be built, and the only proper standard by which we

* Literally so. Under the first of these denominations may be comprized the herd of persecutors. Oracular priests have some right and title to the second appellation of *cheats*: and Bacchanalians, and the more modern sects, who keep their love-feasts, or *agapai*, are to be considered as under the third distinction of *debauchees*. — A hopeful tribe indeed, to grace the cause of religion!

we muſt eſtimate them. The firſt object then, which religion, as the aſſiſtant of nature, ought to have in view, after gratitude to the divine Author of our being is ſatisfied, is to perfect this univerſal love, to harmonize and attune the ſoul to its accents, and extend its influence over the whole human race.

The great aim of religion being thus defined, what ideas muſt a rational man entertain of the bigotted, perſecuting, uncharitable, ſectaries, that diſgrace that noble principle, by aſſuming its ſacred name and authority? Rather than eſteem them as having perfected and exalted the human condition above its natural ſtandard, he muſt reflect on them as degrading it to a level with the brute creation, whoſe proper province it is to ravage and deſtroy.

Were it indeed the buſineſs of religion to generate nothing but malice and cruelty, it would be a hopeful aſſiſtant to human weakneſs. The common abuſe and miſapplication of the paſſions, when men are not incited by external and adventitious cauſes to animoſity and ſtrife, are ſufficiently deſtructive of peace and harmony, without adding fuel to flame. The ſum of religion being comprized in gratitude to God, and love to man, it can never be the will of the Deity, that the latter diviſion of it ſhould be given up to ſhew a zeal for the former: nor can it be ſuppoſed that he created, in order that man might perſecute and deſtroy the work of his hands. Yet, ab-

ſurd as this picture of religious zealots may appear, it is an exact caricature of the pious murderers who have inliſted under the banner of religion.

Modes of faith, and exterior forms of worſhip, are but the connexions and bands by which religion is compacted, and the frame or outward ſhell in which the more ſacred and eſſential part is depoſited; an accidental ornament, but no neceſſary and indiſpenſable adjunct. He, therefore, that pleads the cauſe of externals as equally a duty with the pure and ſimple parts of worſhip, ſets up the ſhadow in competition with the ſubſtance, and diſhonours the cauſe he profeſſes to ſerve. Religion receives no ſanction from rites, but rites are conſecrated by religion, which are no farther proper than they contribute to its advancement. To ſuppoſe that the Deity requires as indiſpenſable, and regards as important, what in the bare eye of reaſon, and to a moderate ſhare of underſtanding, appears trivial and idle, is derogatory from his wiſdom, and a far greater affront to his glory, than to baniſh for ever every ſpecies of ceremony from his worſhip. But to perſecute and torment others on theſe accounts; to impriſon and ſlay, to hate and deteſt, our fellow-creatures, for not adopting the ſame preciſe form of words in their oaths of fidelity and expreſſions of homage to their great Superior, and to ſhelter our cruelty under the ſanction

tion of his ſacred will, is treaſon againſt his divine nature and undeſigned blaſphemy. The great object of our adoration is but one, and every form in which he beholds his worſhipper is accepted, when ſanctified by purity of intention and an upright heart.*

As it is the characteriſtic of ſuperſtition to ſet up the pageantry of religion in oppoſition to the eſſence, it may, with a degree of propriety, be termed *idolatry*. Wherein can be the difference whether we worſhip and adore images, which are the works of our hands, or idolize and doat on the inventions of our brain? If gratitude to himſelf, and love to one another, be all the Deity requires at our hands, to remove thoſe virtues, in order to give place to our own fond conceits, is actual idolatry.

If we examine into the characters of bigots in general, far from finding them to be perſons

* Quin damus id ſuperis, de magna quod dare lance
Non poſſit magni Meſſallæ lippa propago,
Compoſitum jus faſque animi, ſanctoſque receſſus
Mentis, et incoctum generoſo pectus honeſto?
Hæc cedo admoveam templis, et farre litabo.

PERSIUS, ſat. II.

Animadverto enim etiam deos ipſos non tam accuratis adorantium precibus, quam innocentia et ſanctitate, lætari; gratioremque exiſtimari qui delubris eorum puram caſtamque mentem, quam qui meditatum carmen, intulerit.

PLIN. paneg.

of greater virtues than others, we can see in them nothing that is amiable and laudable. Than these exists not a more disagreeable and odious tribe; and in such a soil generally flourish the more ignoble passions, whose growth, with respect to our neighbours, by virtue's laws, demand to be curbed, and not encouraged. It is observable that these animals are, some ill-natured, others covetous, others suspicious, others revengeful, others envious and spiteful, and all obstinate and perverse, rigid and unyielding. But prejudice is blind: could it but see truth and propriety, view things in their genuine colours, and discover its own deformity, it would be no longer prejudice.*

It is not enough for the heated zealot that he alone enjoys his peculiar notions and customs: his fury hurries him farther, and he discards the virtues of religion, meekness, charity, and universal love, which are the sweetest incense man can offer at the altar, to make room for the apish quackery of superstition. He is not content alone to fall prostrate before the idol himself has set up, but he must compel others to partake in his idolatry.

The

* Nihil enim in speciem fallacius est quam prava religio. Ubi deorum numen prætenditur sceleribus, subit animos timor, ne, fraudibus humanis vindicandis, divini juris aliquid immistum violemus. Cons. ap. Liv. dec. 4.

The numerous evils diſtempered zeal has given birth to in the world, at many different periods of time, are not unknown to any one the leaſt converſant in hiſtory. They piouſly murdered and piouſly tortured the meek and conſcientious profeſſors of harmleſs opinions. It was for the glory of God that Calvin plotted the death of Caſtalio, becauſe he diſſented from his ridiculous abſurdities; and for the glory of God the perſecuting Catholics ſpread ravage and deſolation among the nobleſt of his works, the upright and innocent, whoſe meekneſs would not even ſuffer them to make a juſt reſiſtence to their unfeeling tormentors.

The ſubject of theſe complaints is not become ſtale. If we want recent inſtances of religious barbarity, we need but give a glance at ſome neighbouring kingdoms, to ſee it in all its blackneſs. Poland preſents us with a ſcene of inexpreſſible confuſion: natives of the kingdom, undutiful and rebellious children, tearing up the bowels of their mother country; and their unhappy ſovereign, unable to heal theſe diviſions, ready to fly for protection to a neighbour kingdom. In Spain and Portugal we have been in our times entertained with the cruelties of an Inquiſition; and the cloven tongues of the Holy Ghoſt have been impiouſly counterfeited by flames of real fire.

Suppoſing we were to grant that religion allowed ſeverity to *compel men to come in*, provided

they could thereby effect their purpoſe of making converts; yet it is not to be imagined that thoſe who have withſtood all the artillery of their arguments can be moved by an exertion of their rage and malice. Such a carriage to their diſciples could only be productive of hypocriſy and inſincerity. The opinions of a man are not under his controul: he cannot change them as a chamæleon changes his ſkin. What is not in his power, he can never be accountable for; and bare profeſſions are of no weight or value. We may add to theſe reaſons the perverſeneſs of party ſpirit, which is only increaſed by the attempts of compulſion.

There are, on the contrary, advocates for ceremony as a ſubordinate part of religion; as a form in which it ſhould be ſeen and known; as proper to entice and aſſemble ſuch for its votaries as would not otherwiſe, through ſlowneſs of apprehenſion, have diſcovered its reſidence; and as conducing to confirm the minds of thoſe who are inliſted in its ſervice. With them I readily concur. The undiſcerning minds of the vulgar are not ſufficiently refined to reliſh the ſentimental and pure dictates of religion without externals: ſomething ſtriking and viſible muſt be adopted, which is brought down on a level with their capacities. What they do not comprehend can never pleaſe them; and what does not pleaſe them will not uſurp their attention. But force muſt not be allowed a ſhare in our ſchemes, any

more

more than the laws require in the adminiſtration of juſtice.

Externals then, with perſons of judgement, are to be conſidered only as inſtruments or aſſiſtants of religion, not as actually a conſtituent part of it. Under that view they are tolerable, uſeful, and in ſome caſes neceſſary. But as punctilios in our behaviour one towards another, mere compliments of politeneſs, are not honoured with the name of friendſhip, ſo neither are ceremonies in religion dignified with the appellation of religion; but they ſhould be uſed or neglected, curtailed or increaſed, as the caprice of mankind and the ſituation of a people are judged to require.

I have been the more particular in reflexions that muſt be obvious to any perſon of ſenſe, on account of the great prevalence of religious prejudice and animoſity amongſt ſome men of genius and learning, who have, to the diſgrace of both religion and learning, eſpouſed the cauſe of perſecution, vainly ſuppoſing, that while they were the authors of miſery and death to thoſe of a different opinion, they were laying the foundation of life and felicity for themſelves. And how ever often ſuch remarks have been ecchoed by different writers, the dignity of the ſubject claims all the attention that has been paid to it, as a point of moment in the manners of a nation. It is true, actual perſecution by fire and ſword is not in faſhion in our

happy

happy country; but the ſeeds of it ſtill remain in the breaſt of many a bigot, and need only the foſtering care of public encouragement to bring them to maturity. Secret hatred, private malice, is ſtill rankling at the heart, and ready to ſpread its venom where want of opportunity now denies it acceſs. Want of opportunity to exerciſe vice, when the intention is not wanted, is not to be pleaded in excuſe. If the intention of a man is ſet on miſchief, he has already virtually incurred that guilt which external circumſtances alone prevented. Could we view his heart, we ſhould diſcover in it the hideous train of forms, ſlaughter and bloodſhed, ſtripes and tortures,* pictured in their proper colours, and threatening to break out of their confinement, as did the evils from Pandora's box, to annoy mankind.

With double care ought every attempt to introduce the Romiſh religion among us to be oppoſed. To ſtop their progreſs, it were even juſtifiable (as it would be for the good of mankind) to uſe a reaſonable ſeverity to thoſe who ſhould dare to propagate their notions, as they are to be conſidered in ſome reſpects as criminals.

* Neque fruſtra præſtantiſſimus ſapientiæ [Plato, de repub.] firmare ſolitus eſt: Si recludantur tyrannorum mentes, poſſe aſpici laniatus et ictus; quando ut corpora verberibus, ita ſævitia, libidine, malis conſultis, animus dilaceretur.

TACIT. Annal. l. 6.

nals. The treatment they unjuſtly ſhew to perſons of a different communion, might with propriety be retorted on them.

From the late diſperſion of the Jeſuits over Europe, alarms were raiſed in the minds of ſeveral, and fears that their endeavours and inſinuations would meet with ſucceſs: but let us hope, for the honour of our nation, that their tenets have too odious an appearance ever to gain proſelytes among us. And if they are ſeen in their native and genuine characters, they certainly muſt make that odious appearance, as they not only perſecute in order to favour their advances, but teach their diſciples to do the ſame, as a tenet of their religion.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER V.

On Deistical Publications.

Ita res popoſcit, ut ferox populus deorum metu mitigaretur. Florus. ——

Tentat enim dubiam mentem rationis egeſtas.

Lucret.

THOUGH I all along profeſs myſelf a friend to freedom in opinions, I yet am led to think there are certain inſtances of diſcovering that freedom, which may be of dangerous tendency when they come under the notice of weak, unſettled, minds. A caution of this kind may not improperly be recommended to thoſe writers who have taken upon them the taſk of examining and exploding the eſtabliſhed religion of their country.

That a man is entitled to the privilege of thinking and examining for himſelf before he gives his aſſent to any point in debate, is indiſputable, and none but a bigot would go about to deny it. It is not only no crime, but the duty of a reaſonable being to exerciſe the talent he has received, and improve his underſtanding; and if his own reflexion informs him that what is palmed on him as a divine truth gives the lie to his reaſon, he muſt be weak indeed to ſlight what ought to be his ſtrongeſt conviction. The

moſt

moſt ſtrenuous advocates for the wildeſt ſcheme of doctrine that ever was formed have ſome recourſe to reaſon as the conductor to the points they have undertaken to ſupport, and appeal to it as the higher tribunal. We have all imaginable cauſe, then, to conſult this guide, and not the ſhadow of a plea why we are to reject its remonſtrances. The medicine is avowedly good; but it is beſt in the hands of a ſkilful phyſician.

Suppoſing it even a misfortune to entertain notions repugnant to eſtabliſhed doctrines, (as I have already obſerved,) that can never be imputed as a crime which is not in our power. The opinions of a man are not of his own making, any more than the face he bears about him. They are accidents ariſing from the circumſtances he is beſet with, which irreſiſtibly compel his aſſent. To ſuppoſe that the Deity can be offended with what he cannot help, is to attribute to him a weakneſs and injuſtice which would be a blot in the character of a man. I will allow our deiſts the full extent of this argument: I will make them every conceſſion of this kind they can deſire. They have a licence from the dictates of common ſenſe to think for themſelves: but it does not follow, that they ſhould propagate ſuch opinions as would only tend to diſturb the repoſe of a nation.

The enemies of the Chriſtian faith are particularly to blame, as it is a profeſſion tending to

promote

promote nothing but virtue and goodneſs, when perfectly underſtood, and received in its genuine ſpirit and meaning. The precepts of it recommend meekneſs, virtue, and univerſal benevolence, which are the ſoul of religion, as the moſt important duties required of its profeſſors, and not as ſubordinate and trivial qualifications; in oppoſition to graceleſs and perſecuting zealots: and if there are litigated points among its different ſectaries, they are ſuch as affect not morality, and had their riſe in the blindneſs and obſtinacy of mankind.

The troubles attending a change in religion (granting it in the power of deiſts to prove Chriſtianity falſe) are not deſirable objects of a nation's wiſhes: and ſure I am, no better ſubſtitute could be compoſed, to humanize and correct mankind. Were Chriſtianity replete with exhortations to hate and perſecute for opinions; to treat thoſe that diſſent from its doctrines with ſeverity and malice; or even not highly recommendatory of virtue, and a foe to vice, it would be incumbent on every one with all his might to oppoſe its progreſs in the world. But no ſuch charge can be brought againſt the moſt virtuous ſyſtem of religion that ever was compiled; a religion whoſe precepts allow not even a competition between the life and virtue of its profeſſors, but command to loſe our exiſtence rather than deſert the cauſe for which we exiſt.

I have

I have elſewhere obſerved, that the minds of the ignorant are not ſufficiently refined to reliſh a merely ſentimental religion. Deiſm is by much too ſimple to captivate their ideas. A form of religion is found neceſſary, containing promiſes and threatenings in a particular manner expreſſed, rewards and puniſhments in peculiar form denounced, and even ceremonies, religion's apes,* as a part of the ſyſtem recommended to their obſervance. On this account (not unwiſely) did Origen aſſert the propriety of preaching eternal puniſhment for the wicked, though ſuch a doctrine, in his opinion, arraigned the juſtice of the Deity. None but a delicate mind, he was ſenſible, could be capable of delicate notions. The lower order of people, whoſe reaſon is a lamer guide to them than their paſſions,† as being rude and unrefined, are more to be influenced by hopes and fears excited by the apprehenſions of divine and human juſtice, than charmed with the beauty and propriety of virtue. And this notion is reinforced by a precedent ſet by Nature herſelf, who has not

* Nulla res efficacius *multitudinem* regit quam ſuperſtitio: alioquin impotens, ſæva, mutabilis, melius vatibus quam ducibus ſuis paret.

Q. Curt. l. 4.

† Quantunque debil freno a mezo il corſo
Animoſo deſtrier ſpeſſo raccolga,
Raro è però che di ragione il morſo
Libidinoſa furia adietro volga.

Arioste.

not chosen to entrust the care of a new-born babe to the common humanity and reason of its parent, but has implanted a passion extraordinary to secure its preservation; and even, with seeming cruelty, animated that passion by the pangs and throes of labour.*

Together with the abolition of an established form, would follow the extinction of religion in general, in a great degree. When unruly tempers are once set free, they know no bounds to their career:

Ask where's the north? At York 'tis on the Tweed,
In Scotland at the Orcades, and there
At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.

If men are told that this or that is a mere human invention, and of no intrinsic value, they are too prone to regard the whole scheme of morality as an imposition. It is not safe to leave the formation of religion to the vulgar, who would make it square with their opinions, instead of correcting themselves by its precepts, and by these means the bridle would be taken away from every unruly affection. A mistaken freedom, contracted from a misconstruction of natural religion, would probably introduce amongst them a contempt for virtue itself. Like the dove, when they forsake the ark, they have no resting-place for

* Ἔτι δὲ τὰ ἐπιπόνως γινόμενα πάντες μᾶλλον στέργουσιν, οἷον καὶ τὰ χρήματα· οἱ κτησάμενοι τῶν παραλαβόντων. Δοκεῖ δὴ τὸ μὲν εὖ πάσχειν ἄπονον εἶναι, τὸ δὲ εὖ ποιεῖν ἐργῶδες· διὰ ταῦτα δὲ καὶ αἱ μητέρες φιλοτεκνικωτέραι, ἐπιπονώτερα γὰρ ἡ γένεσις. ARISTOT. Eth. ix.

for the ſole of their foot. But men are not ſo abandoned, (not even the viciouſly inclined) as readily to run counter to what they eſteem a command of heaven. Religious injunctions may ſometimes bind, even againit inclination.

It is worthy of obſervation too, that the ignorant confound deiſm with atheiſm : they know no diſtinction between them. An author that takes up his pen to write againſt Chriſtianity is vulgarly ſuppoſed to eſpouſe the cauſe of atheiſm, and to renounce all obligations whatever. That this is a fact, a little obſervation will evince: and that it muſt be an unfortunate circumſtance with weak minds, will be readily allowed.

Men have been in all ages alarmed with the cry of *prieſtcraft*, and warned to be cautious how they are bubbled out of their reaſon and ſenſes : in conſequence, when they find that writers of learning and abilities have endeavoured to fix this charge on the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, they are ready enough to apply the caution that has been, time immemorial, dinned into their ears. That the clergy take the part of the eſtabliſhed confeſſion, is conſtrued only as an exerciſe of their trade, as a defence of what yields firſt-fruits for themſelves and families, and ſupplies the comforts of life. Their ſincerity and learning are ſuppoſed to be inliſted in this cauſe, and of no avail to the promotion of truth and the declaration of their real opinions.

nions. But the writings of deists, they are led to think, can have no such imputation laid to their charge, as they have no benefices to fight for, and no apparent views to serve but the defence of their real sentiments. Hence the friends of deism have a pass on Christian writers, supposing their causes equally defensible.

The greater half of mankind, we all know, are biassed in their judgements by the opinions of others, whom they esteem wiser than themselves: they are particularly allured by the glare of what is bold and striking; and charmed with novelty above all things. Inducements like these, seasoned with proclamations of liberty, (particularly to Englishmen) are too strong to suffer resistence. *Liberty* is a word of such an enchanting sound, that, in defence of it, they will forfeit every other blessing, and break thro' the most sacred ties. They will pay their adoration to any deity that promises them liberty. The most intoxicating potion of the most deadly liquid is deified and adored, because it affords them a temporary liberty, and can boast inspiring qualities which were not to be found in the river-gods of old.

My love for candor will not allow me to think the writers I have been here censuring were influenced by motives to endeavour after the corruption of a people, as has been charged to them by some over-zealous defenders of Christianity. They were doubtless wrought on

by

by a conviction which they ſuppoſed proceeded from the fountain of truth itſelf, and which they were willing to communicate to the reſt of the world, that they might alſo ſhare in the bleſſings they fondly imagined they had diſcovered — A humour this, reſembling that of the Lydian king Candaules, who was ſo ſmitten with the hidden beauties of his royal conſort, that he was tempted to expoſe her to his confident Gyges in the pure ſtate of nature, that he alſo might ſee her heaven of charms, and be a witneſs of his happineſs. —— The event of either conduct is of fatal conſequence. The folly of the Lydian monarch coſt him his life, by the revenge of his queen, and fixed his crown on the head of the conſcious friend. The unadviſed freedom of the deiſt, by his fondneſs for communicating his bleſſings, lets looſe the people and diſturbs the ſtate.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

On Politeness.

—— *Assentatio, vitiorum adjutrix, procul amoveatur; quæ non modo amico, sed ne libero quidem digna est.* Cic. de amic.

ANIMADVERSIONS on real and pretended religion, by a resemblance between the two principles, naturally lead to reflexions on real and pretended friendship. In considering the observations I had made on the one, I was insensibly drawn to reflect on the other, as ceremonies in either, with many people, are prized and adopted as the essence of those noble principles themselves, to the great detriment and disgrace of the amiable causes they were invented to serve.

If a true idea of politeness had been generally entertained, ceremony had never so universally usurped the place of friendship as it has been unfortunately found to do. Had the world been sufficiently aware that it is no farther of use than as it is subservient to rendering society agreeable, the superfluities of it had been long ago discarded.

There is a season for all things, according to the old proverb. The time when formal politeness

neſs is tolerable, is at the firſt contractions of friendſhip: after which it is to be conſidered only as a burdenſome embargo. When perfect ſtrangers are joined, by accident, in company together, intemperate freedom is improper, and ſome little ceremony is required to keep the different parties in countenance. In ſuch caſes a moderate ſhare of it will be found not only not troubleſome, but even deſirable.

But ceremony is not confined within theſe reſtrictions. It is an univerſal complaint urged againſt the formal viſits of acquaintance that freedom is denied the viſitants on each ſide: they are unhappy under the conſtraint of behaviour which the mode of politeneſs impoſes on them, and, regarding ſuch interviews as a mere debt, expreſs their ſatisfaction at the expiration of their thraldom. One might have ſuppoſed that the natural evils of life had been ſufficient, without the invention of artificial plagues; but the world, it may be preſumed, has been generally of a different opinion, and therefore ſet up ceremony as a tax on friendſhip.

The misfortune which principally cauſes this complaint, is, that neither party is hardy enough to ſet the laudable example of freedom. One will not be rude, and another will not be rude, and by theſe means a general inconvenience is kept up, to the torment of all parties: whereas repeated experience daily proves, that

the firſt advances to freedom are always commended by the oppoſite party which receives them, and conſtrued as the effects of good-nature and an obliging diſpoſition: they that throw off reſerve ever meet with applauſe: and yet (ſuch is human perverſeneſs!) ceremony is ſtill the model of good-breeding.

If politeneſs be *a method of rendering the mutual communications of friendſhip agreeable*, (which is the only interpretation it can bear) when it aſſumes a form that is diſpleaſing to our friend, it becomes, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, want of good-breeding, inſtead of a mark of it. Wherein can be the difference whether my friend affronts me by a box on the ear, or by an inſufferable load of formalities, if my viſit to him is rendered equally diſagreeable by either conduct? In ſome caſes, I believe, the box on the ear would be the more deſirable compliment of the two, as it would be the faireſt plea for a diſmiſſion from purgatory.

Pride is one of the ſtrongeſt enemies to true friendſhip, and ceremony is always the forerunner of pride. Ceremonies are, as it were, the pages of honour to pride, and help to keep up that ſtate which the proud man is not willing ſhould be infringed by the freedom of an inferior. Every inſtance of ceremony is regarded as a token of pride which commands a return of reſerve, and conſequently muſt prove prejudicial to friendſhip. The proudeſt men, it is a

conſtant

conſtant remark, are ever the moſt obſervant of punctilios in behaviour.

To the credit of freedom it may be obſerved, that the higher ranks of people are leſs ceremonious in private than the middle claſs in life, amongſt whom ceremony is now principally aſſumed, as the caſt-off cloaths of the great. A citizen and his wife frequently diſplay more airs, and require more homage from their inferiors and dependants, than thoſe who can boaſt noble blood. Their inferiority is the very cauſe of this. What they want in dignity, they are deſirous of making up in parade. The rank of a nobleman commands reſpect, without any pains of his to create it; whilſt the condition of a tradeſman requires labour to produce it. In the one inſtance the reſpect that is paid is genuine and natural; in the other it is feigned and laboured.

It muſt be allowed, notwithſtanding, that ceremony appears to be on the decline. The charge brought againſt it might have been urged ſome time ſince with ſtill greater propriety than at preſent. However, there is yet too much formality obſerved for a free and open-hearted man to ſubmit to. Real friendſhip needs not its aſſiſtance, and when it is only pretended, there is nothing but hypocriſy; which is odious to an ingenuous mind.

It may be obſerved to the advantage of our neighbours the French, that notwithſtanding

their rage for compliment, they are ſooner acquainted, and have more eaſe in their manner, than the natives of our country. They have an agreeable impudence (not in all inſtances approved by the modeſty of Engliſh ladies) which ſoon puts conſtraint to flight; and it were to be wiſhed a due ſhare of it enlivened our Engliſh converſation.

The beſt receipt to promote freedom in thoſe we converſe with, is to ſet the example of it ourſelves; which ſeldom fails of the deſired effect. The world are naturally fond of freedom, however they have combined to baniſh it from ſociety. It is at beſt conſidered but as a leſſon to learn, and as a taſk to ſubmit to, to conform to all the rules of preciſion which cuſtom ſeems to have exacted: but men are content to run the gantelope, rather than in the eyes of the ceremonious approve themſelves *ſavages*, as they would otherwiſe be termed by the critics of behaviour.

Reſerve has its ſeaſon, without appearing where it is not agreeable. There are, on the other hand, examples of freedom, at which the moſt intimate friends may conceive diſguſt, and which are ſometimes ſhewn, to the confuſion even of familiars. Under the maſk of friendſhip impertinent curioſity and familiarity are ſometimes indulged to exceſs. One friend, it is preſumed, cannot be offended at any liberty taken by another: he may pry into ſecrets, give impertinent

impertinent advice almoſt in the form of a command, unaſked, and take a diſapprobation of his advice amiſs: which is a humour that has its examples. In inſtances of this kind, friends are as much under obligations of propriety and reſerve as the greateſt ſtranger. Be it obſerved, even ſuperfluous ceremony itſelf is to be diſcarded only on account of the trouble it creates between man and man: by parity of reaſon, no freedoms ſhould be taken which are equally a burden: one man ſhould not affront another with the impertinence of freedom, any more than with the formalities of compliment.

Real politeneſs, politeneſs which deſerves that appellation, being an inferior branch of humanity, merits great encomiums: but no behaviour whatever ought to be dignified with that name which is calculated only to give pain and trouble. The rules of it are eaſily underſtood, as being very ſimple and natural. What formalities we do not reliſh ourſelves, we have no right to ſuppoſe will be agreeable to our friend; and what impertinences we diſapprove in others, we ourſelves ſhould never be guilty of. This general rule (which is alſo the great ſtandard of all moral juſtice) can ſeldom fail of pleaſing when it is ſtrictly obſerved.

In a word, politeneſs is the utmoſt eaſe in our own deportment, and an endeavour to promote it in others, by equally ſhunning the rude

and forbidding ſalutes of a ſurly brute, the cold and uninviting indifference of a careleſs friend, and the inſufferable chatter of a mere compliment-monger. Thus defined, it is the moſt agreeable invention that can be imagined, and ſhould on no account be ſlighted, as the happineſs of thoſe we are connected with is in ſome meaſure concerned therein: and, in ſuch a form, it will be neither a taſk to ſhew it, nor a pain to ſuffer it: the ſchool for it will be our own experience and inclination, and the precepts of it legible to the moſt curſory obſervation.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VII.

On War.

Candida pax homines, trux decet ira feras.
Ovid. Amor. 2.

IT is matter of much ſurpriſe, that after all the leſſons of morality to inculcate juſtice and a virtuous deportment between individuals; after all the execrations, with general conſent, denounced againſt thoſe that infringe and violate the ſocial compact by which harmony reigns among men; after the ſtricteſt penalties enacted againſt crimes, from murder down to the moſt trifling inſtances of fraud; ſo little concern ſhould have been in all ages expreſſed for the greateſt example of violation, by the wantonneſs of War, that can ſully the human character.

A robber (as the pirate Dionides well obſerved to Alexander, a greater offender than himſelf,) who alone, or, at moſt, with a few aſſociates, attacks a ſingle traveller and plunders him, is ſtigmatized with the moſt odious names language can furniſh, is treated with all the ſeverity law can inflict, and at laſt pays his life, as the moſt valuable forfeit he is in a condition to make, for his crime: but an ambitious prince,

whoſe wants are ſupplied even before they ariſe, who has no hunger to ſatisfy, and no apprehenſions of indigence to diſturb his repoſe, may, becauſe incircled with a diadem, legally ſlaughter armies of thouſands, make widows of wives, and orphans of children, and render countries, before happy and flouriſhing, the ſeats of deſolation and the burying-places of thoſe who were born to cultivate and enjoy them: and (as if rewards were due to crimes) he is for this applauded with the acclamations of a multitude, as a glorious conqueror, and an ornament to human nature —— Nefarious, though ſanctified, enemy of mankind! deteſted, though enthroned, deſtroyer!

The brute creation, even the fierceſt among them, expreſs a tenderneſs for thoſe of their own ſpecies;* but man, adorned with reaſon, enabled to diſtinguiſh virtue and vice, ſoftened by nature, and fitted to receive the tender impreſſions of compaſſion, (a privilege denied to brutes) forgetting the excellence of his character, drinks the blood of man, and ſacrifices the actual lives of his fellow-creatures, to procure himſelf a mean, becauſe unmerited, honour whilſt alive, and an imaginary life after death. But none but the ſpirit of a deſtroyer can venerate the actions of a deſtroyer: if theſe licenſed

* Indica tigris agit rabida cum tigride pacem
Perpetuam: ſævis inter ſe convenit urſis.
JUVEN. ſat. XV.

licenſed murderers ever receive their laurels, it is from ſuch hands as modeſt virtue would not conſent to accept them from.

When the tyger ranges over the woods to ſeek his prey, he has hunger for his apology, and, as if to ſhame the human ſpecies, abſtains from the blood of tygers: want impels him, and he purſues the only courſe his ſituation preſents for his relief: nature bids him devour, and he obeys. His hunger ſatisfied, he lays him by, nor repeats his ſlaughter, till commanded by a ſecond ſummons from within, which is his only conſcience. ——— Ye ruthleſs ſons of ambition, have you ſo fair a plea for your cruelties? can you plead hunger and ignorance, nature and neceſſity, in defence of your crimes? Were ye as obedient to Nature as he,* did ye as kindly receive the tender feelings ſhe imparts to your ſpecies, inſtead of ſtaining your hands with the blood of your fellow-creatures, you would bathe their wounds with your tears, and heal them with the balm of compaſſion!

The moſt unfeeling and inconſiderate of theſe heroes would without heſitation condemn a murderer when brought before him, and ſub-

 ſcribe

* Οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐκ ἀπραγμονέστερος τῶν βίων ἔδοξέ μοι τοῦ ἀνθρωπείου, μόναις ταῖς φυσικαῖς ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ χρείαις ἐμμεμετρήμενος· τελώνην δὲ ἵππον, ἢ συκοφάντην βάτραχον, ἢ σοφιστὴν κολοιὸν, ἢ ὀψοποιὸν κώνωπα, ἢ κίναιδον ἀλεκτρυόνα, καὶ τἄλλα ὅσα ὑμεῖς ἐπιτηδεύετε, οὐκ ἂν ἴδοις ἐν ἐκείνοις. LUCIAN. [Gallus loquitur.]

ſcribe his execution; but (ſuch is the blind partiality of men in their own favour!) would never once reflect, that in this action of juſtice a great murderer was ſigning the doom of a little one, and that the criminal at the bar was far more innocent than the judge who condemned him. We may aſk, Is murder leſs murder becauſe committed by wholeſale? Is it a crime to kill one man, and a virtue to ſlaughter thouſands? Are hunger and want, anger and reſentment, deteſtable motives to a cruel deed, and is vanity, the emptieſt of all paſſions, the moſt unreaſonable of all impulſes, a ſufficient, a juſt, and an honourable motive?

Ambition, it will be ſaid, is noble, and the criterion of a great mind. Moſt true it is a mark of greatneſs when under the diſcipline of reaſon and direction of juſtice: ambition with principle is a noble paſſion. But the ambition of a profeſſed warrior, whoſe glory is meaſured only by the length of his ſword, is infernal; and every aſpirer after univerſal monarchy, from Alexander down to Louis XIV. is a glorious murderer, an eminent robber, and a peſtilence in the human ſhape.

Muſt then ambition have no object? my hero will ſay: has Nature inſpired in vain? — No: if ever the perverſeneſs of the enemy will force him to the field, then there is a laudable occaſion for courage and intrepidity: the hero then is not a deſtroyer, but a defender of his country; he

he is not a murderer, but a ſubduer and puniſher of murderers: the odium devolves on his adverſary, and at his hands ſhould the lives of the ſlain be required. But even under theſe circumſtances he is not exempt from diſcretional obligations of humanity. Blood ought not wantonly to be ſpilt, nor lives to be ſported away for the victor's pleaſure. The innocent hirelings of ambition ſhould be reſerved, as far as is conſiſtent with ſafety, to grace the triumphal car of the conqueror, without taking that breath away which might afterwards proclaim his compaſſion.

If there be no enemy abroad to conquer, and his breaſt ſtill burns with ardent thirſt for glory, I will tell him a nobler conqueſt at home, a victory without bloodſhed. Let him plume himſelf on the victory over his lawleſs and unreaſonable affections, regard unjuſt ambition as his greateſt foe, as the diſturber of the common repoſe and his own felicity, and triumph over it. Such a conqueſt is real glory, and commands the applauſes due to virtue: no remorſe can follow it; no reflection of mind can embitter it. He has ſubdued an enemy within.

War is only lawful as far as it is the inſtrument of peace, as a moraliſt of Rome obſerves,* a city that too much delighted in its ravages. When undertaken with that view, ſo far from

* Bellum autem ita ſuſcipiatur, ut nihil aliud niſi pax quæſita videatur. TULL. OFF. I.

being a violation, it is a duty we owe our country, which has a right to expect protection from her members, and cannot find it but among the ſons of her boſom. Every ſtep, therefore, purſued to bring back peace that is fled, is a filial act, and the revenge that is taken on the aggreſſor is but the ſcourge of juſtice lifted up againſt the enemy that chaſed her away. It is ſickly puritaniſm, unworthy a liberal mind, to think that one nation ought tamely to ſubmit to the repeated inſults and injuries of its neighbour, without endeavouring to redreſs the grievance, as that would be only removing the evil to a leſs proper ſituation, and making the innocent ſuffer for the guilty. Chaſtiſement is required by the laws of policy. As well might we forbid the puniſhment of a criminal who has violated the laws, as withhold the execution of juſtice on an offending nation.

I would not be thought in the leaſt to reflect on the profeſſion of a ſoldier: they are the honourable and choſen bulwark of their country; and their courage (at all times an excellence, as well as a nurſery for the bolder and hardier virtues) is with peculiar propriety exerted on occaſion of the neceſſities of ſtate. Riſque of life is the dearest tribute a ſubject can pay.

Wars of ambition, denounced for no other cauſe than a thirſt for rule, or at moſt for a punctilio of honour affronted only in imagination, are what alone merit our abhorrence,

as

as contrary to reaſon, to the general intereſts of ſociety, and to humanity. As war comprizes in itſelf and conſequences all the natural evils of life, he that is deliberately and without neceſſity the author of it is juſtly to be conſidered as the greateſt moral offender. It is the duty of every power to combine againſt ſuch a common diſturber, by becoming guarantee of general peace. The monarch that thus eſpouſed the cauſe of juſtice would be an ornament to his throne, and merit the diadem fortune has given him.

Before I quit this ſubject, I cannot forbear a national reflexion on our rival France; a kingdom ever reſtleſs and troubleſome to the repoſe of its neighbours; which, inſtead of enriching its ſubjects by confining its attention to interior policy, to manufactures, and to agriculture, the gift of heaven and a happy climate, (which are the only real ſources of wealth,) is taken up with the view of external acquiſitions, purchaſed, if purchaſed at all, at the dear price of rivers of blood.

With France even the ratifications of the moſt ſolemn treaties of peace have ſerved as preludes and preparations to ſome future more ſucceſsful war: and when the ſucceſſes of their arms have not kept pace with their eager wiſhes, (which has frequently proved their merited recompence,) the courts of foreign princes have been ſecretly embroiled by their intrigues.

To

To the ambitious designs of this nation every state in Europe has, in its turn, been exposed. Even the generous inhabitants of a little island, who possess the smallest pittance the most penurious Agrarian Law would have bestowed on so deserving a people, cannot escape their avaricious and turbulent attempts to enslave them, and bow their necks to a yoke which nothing but a voluntary submission has a right to impose. A double portion of the liturgic curse is due to such notorious and wholesale *removers of a neighbour's landmark*; such infringers of the inherent rights of mankind, rights coæval with nature, the enjoyment of liberty and laws of their own enaction.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VIII.

On Theatrical Humour.

Justitiæ partes sunt, non violare homines; verecundiæ, non offendere: in quo maxime perspicitur vis decori. Tull. Off. 1.

AFFECTATION of every kind is odious and insufferable; and an ape is, as Locke observes, more disliked because he approaches the shape and look of what he is not; namely, of a man. Mock-religion, respecting mere externals, and mock-friendship, as comprizing only the ceremonies of that noble principle, have already been censured, as the shadows and phantoms of what they would pass for; and, as the temper of the age seems to call for it, it may not be amiss to hazard a few remarks on mock-delicacy, another ape in a form it has no pretensions to assume.

Lest I should be misconstrued in my sentiments, I will premise it as my opinion of real delicacy, that it is an elegant refinement; that it is even a branch of virtue, a *petite morale*, which does honour to the character of a man; that it distinguishes him from a brute, and raises him above the level of human brutes, the gross

and

and ſenſeleſs rabble, a ſet as far beneath the brute creation in merit, as they are above them in opportunities of improvement.

Delicacy is a principal ingredient in the compoſition of that being we ſtile *a gentleman*, which is, when well defined and well underſtood, the higheſt character in life; as in the real gentleman are included, the duties of virtue, the niceties of honour, and the ornaments of ſentiment. A man may be honeſt, he may be juſt, he may be virtuous, and yet, with thoſe valuable qualities, for want of delicacy, be regarded as of common mould. Great encomiums are unqueſtionably due to this principle, when genuine; and as great cenſure ought to be paſſed on the affectation of it; particularly when thoſe are the pretenders to it who have the leaſt imaginable ſhare in it. It is juſt that impoſtures of all kinds ſhould meet the rebuke and puniſhment due to fraud.

The affectation of delicacy I am about to introduce is of the theatric kind, a chronical diſtemper, which ſpreads during the ſeaſon for plays, to the deſtruction of wit, humour, and pleaſantry: and the perſons that generally firſt catch the infection (*may every flower they tread on become a roſe!*) are the innocent lambs in the upper galleries of the theatre, whoſe taſte and manners cannot endure the leaſt approaches to vulgarity, as foreign to their natures. To exhibit a ſcene, or to uſe an expreſſion, that is

groſs

groſs or low, in their preſence, is cruel indeed, as cruel as to utter unchaſte expreſſions before a modeſt lady; which (according to the common cant) *no gentleman would be guilty of.*

It is a pity that our nation, in general, not content with adopting the agreeable cuſtoms and real improvements of its neighbours, ſhould likewiſe tranſplant their blemiſhes with them. I do not here intend a glance at caprices in dreſs, which have afforded much ſubject for ſatire; for, with reſpect to that particular, I cannot entirely acquieſce in certain remarks thoſe caprices have given birth to.* I now mean to attack

* Real beauty in dreſs is a point hard to be fixed. Beauty, in general, that beauty particularly which does not reſt on mathematical proportion, muſt be chiefly reſolved into fancy ariſing from cuſtom. I have excepted mathematical proportion, as being of opinion that does really conſtitute beauty (I had almoſt ſaid) even in the *divine mind*, and abſtractedly from the prejudice of cuſtom. Not a living ſoul would affirm that a trapezium is equally beautiful with a geometrical ſquare, or a ſcalene with a right-angled triangle. To theſe we may join the abſtract ideas of beauty and deformity, which we ſhould not tranſfer to the doctrine of dreſs or millenery. It is idle to ſay that the ladies of this age wear head-dreſſes too large, or to quarrel with their hats, except indeed when their poſition hides beauties no art can rival. What is faſhionable is beautiful, at leaſt in ſome degree. Cuſtom

attack the reigning taſte of aping the inſipidity of the French, and exploding real humour from

Cuſtom rules incontroulably in theſe matters; elſe how is it poſſible even a Hottentot could annex the idea of *agreeable* to being ſmeared with fat and powdered with buchu? how could the uncouth head-dreſs of a Henry IV. or the frightful coif of a Q. Anne Bullen, have been ſo admired, as to have been choſen for ornaments to the head of majeſty? The idea of dignity once annexed to a perſon, even the dreſs of that perſon will derive a value from the wearer. Nay, ſo ſtrong is the chain of ideas, that beauty of perſon, as well as of dreſs, are often fancied by a ſpectator where, prejudice apart, they would not have been thought to exiſt. Mens judgements are influenced by merely material objects more than they are aware: whence the uſeful variety of choices. And though it be allowed that ſuch is the conſtruction of man, as that the race in general ſhould be prepared for, or rendered ſuſceptible of, certain opinions; granting that there are ſome univerſal notions, (of colours, for inſtance,) in which men are agreed; as that red, or blue, or green, are more pleaſing than brown, or grey, or black; yet ideas of beauty and dignity, of rank and ornament, are capriciouſly connected and ſeparated by faſhion and cuſtom, and will not bear metaphyſical precepts. ——— But a truce with the philoſophy of dreſs: as this is not the profeſſed buſineſs of the chapter in hand, we will make a halt, and intreat our reader's pardon for the digreſſion.

from our English, ſtage: a circumſtance of conſequence to the cauſe of literature.

If we only repreſent *what men ſhould be*, under the ſeveral refinements of taſte and propriety, I cannot conceive the leaſt pleaſure, or uſe, reſulting from plays; (for the latter of theſe views is ſtrenuouſly contended for by the advocates of the drama.) No folly, or vice, is exploded; the end of comedy is defeated; and true humour, which conſiſts in expoſing real character, is loſt. It is true, we are to teach *what men ſhould be*; but it is alſo requiſite that we repreſent *what men are*: by the one we paint patterns for imitation; by the other, examples to be avoided.

As I have already obſerved, I will never be ſo blindly prejudiced in favour of the theatre as to conſider it as much contributing to reform vice, however great an advocate I am for it; but it may with truth be affirmed, that it is greatly inſtrumental in baniſhing follies and improprieties. By excluding ſtriking characters, then, it follows, that we actually cut off the view of utility propoſed by dramatic writers in one eſſential point at leaſt. But if it muſt be granted, that vice is alſo corrected by a proper repreſentation of it, there is an additional reaſon why high colouring for odious characters is indiſpenſable. To ſatirize nothing is no ſatire; to repreſent nothing is no repreſentation.

That plays ſhould not be overcharged with ſcenes of low-life and brutality, will be readily granted.

granted. *Too much of one thing* (ſays the old proverb) *is good for nothing*. Neither ſhould an endleſs repetition of the moſt amiable characters be ſerved up to the public. Variety is to be conſulted, as a principal recommendation in all ſorts of amuſement. Let every ſpecies of character take its turn, and that variety will of courſe ſubſiſt. Pleaſure and profit are both ſerved by the help of variety: a ſameneſs has no influential charm. More than this, I will even allow that the groſſer characters ſhould be judiciouſly and ſparingly interſperſed; but neither nature nor pleaſure will countenance an utter excluſion of them.

If my opponents will warmly maintain the cauſe of ſentimental plays in the extreme, let them confine their taſte to certain reſtrictions, and aſſign proper and diſtinct provinces for ſentiment and humour; make tragedy a vehicle for the former, and comedy for the latter. This diſtinction might be adopted with ſucceſs, as the dignity of tragedy would diſpenſe with ſallies of pleaſantry and humour, whilſt comedy naturally calls for them. Such a conduct in writing would not be an exact picture of nature, which requires things to be drawn as they happen in life; yet, rather than a worſe regulation ſhould be admitted, this would be entitled to toleration.

But on no account ſhould indelicacies in affairs of love be encouraged. Such examples will

will never mend the manners of an age already too prone to diſſoluteneſs. If ever the hiſs is raiſed, filth like this demands it. But ſo great is the partiality of the people, that indecent jokes of this kind in the older dramatic writers meet with applauſe, or at leaſt eſcape cenſure, when an innocently low character by a more modern writer, who has not acquired the ſanction of time, is received with marks of diſſatisfaction. Which unfair diſtribution of applauſe and cenſure may be laid to the account of the itch for finding fault, the prejudice in favour of eſtabliſhed performances, and the inability of the greater half of an audience to judge for themſelves.

That the lower ranks in life are ever the moſt forward in expreſſing a diſapprobation of vulgar ſcenes is worthy of obſervation. They are ſenſible of their own failings, and regard the ſcenes before them as a ſatire on themſelves: they view their own deformity in a glaſs, and are diſpleaſed at the appearance they make, and wreak their vengeance on the author that drew them. From their tribunal (which is the higheſt in the theatre) is iſſued the hiſs of diſſatisfaction, and that hiſs is ecchoed back by ſuch as cannot hazard an opinion of their own: an expreſſion of diſſapprobation ſeems to imply diſcernment and taſte: the firſt opinions are generally the ſtrongeſt; and thus the diſpute is finally determined.

To

To resume the thread of my argument: I am sensible there should be a difference made between a puppet-show at Bartholomew-Fair and a comedy at the Theatre-Royal. There should also be a difference between a comedy and a sermon. The excess of too much sentiment is as easily incurred as that of too little delicacy. When I called an expression of dislike to the humourous exhibition of a low character, *affectation*, I had my reason for the expression, and fact in view. At these public places of entertainment it is a principal concern of the company in general to approve their good breeding and consequence; and a more natural way of effecting their purpose does not seem to offer itself than that of exploding low-life. This, they think, insinuates that they themselves are persons of some rank and taste, and that their genteel education and conversation in polite life disqualify them for approving the scenes before them. Thus is the genius of our authors cramped by an obsequiousness to the people's humour.

Were the subject a little canvassed, I am of opinion it would appear that the higher ranks of people are less prone to testify an aversion to a scene of coarse breeding than those of ignoble birth. Perpetual scenes of high-life (perhaps sometimes aukwardly painted by a poet whose general residence has been confined to a third story) are too common and familiar to them to afford

afford them entertainment: they are ſick of an eternal round of what they ſee every day at home, and require a diverſity of repreſentation to amuſe them, and awaken an attention that has been palled by a ſurfeit. If this circumſtance had been duly attended to by our affected gentry, they would not be ſo apt to ſhelter their conſequence behind ſo thin a veil; they would enjoy a variety they love at heart, and not teaze themſelves by a ſelf-denial that gives them pain.

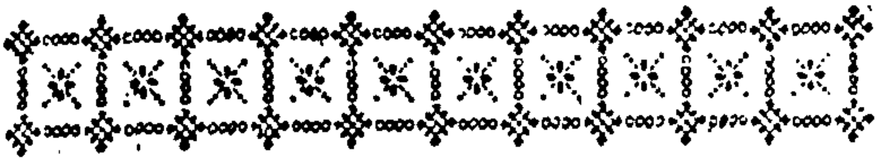
It ought to be conſidered, that there is a wide diſtinction between *viewing* a part, and *playing* it in our lives. That we do not approve of murder and villany is no reaſon why we may not ſee them repreſented and ſatirized on the ſtage. To exclude ſuch ſcenes on account of their baſeneſs is as abſurd as to forbid the erection of St. Paul's cathedral becauſe the people could not *eat* it when built. But as St. Paul's cathedral was not intended for food, but for the purpoſes of devotion and the ends of magnificence; ſo the unamiable ſcenes of a dirty knave may be made ſubſervient to the purpoſes of ſatire, though they cannot be propoſed as patterns for imitation.

The laſt argument I ſhall advance in favour of ſometimes permitting a low repreſentation, is drawn from the ſuppoſed utility of the ſtage above-mentioned. It is the lower ranks in life, if any, that will be laughed out of their faults

and

and follies, as they do not think themſelves above the poet's laſh. Perſons of quality, on the contrary, are generally ſeen to ſcorn his ſatire, and conſider his cenſures with as much reverence as the barking of their lap-dogs. Like divinities in painting, they diſplay themſelves nakedly and without diſguiſe, under ſanction of their acknowledged ſuperiority.

CHAPTER



CHAPTER IX.

WHETHER KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTES TO HAPPINESS.

Ἔστιν οὖν ἵνα ἡδὺ μὴ λίαν φρονεῖν.
EURIP. Iphig.

AS I have taken upon myſelf, as it were, the buſineſs of a caſuiſt, among other diſputed points, I have endeavoured to examine the merits of a queſtion which has been often aſked, Whether, and how far, knowledge contributes to happineſs? a queſtion in caſuiſtry of real importance.

The ſubſtance of a foregoing chapter (chap. iii.) is employed in proving, that there is *nearly an equal portion of felicity diſtributed throughout the world*; and as the diviſion of men into the two diſtinct claſſes of learned and ignorant may well be allowed, the concluſion drawn on that head might have nearly ſerved as an anſwer to the preſent query, did not the merits of it ſeem to demand a particular diſcuſſion.

However knowledge may refine human nature, and elevate it above that of brutes, it betrays a want of experience and obſervation on the various characters of men, and the different

conditions of life, not to know that the ſtrongeſt pleaſures of ſenſe are heightened by the abſence of knowledge and ſpeculation, which tend to give a diſreliſh, at leaſt in ſome degree, to every ſenſual enjoyment. The paſſions are the ſprings of numberleſs pleaſures, and they are chilled by the intervention of mental acquiſitions. True it is, a purſuit after knowledge is a feaſt to the mind, and worthy the attention of a rational being, as it, in the eye of reaſon, compenſates for the loſs of corporal delights: but it actually abridges us of other ſources of pleaſure, and caſts a ſickly veil over them.

That knowledge is not eſſential happineſs, is a truth exemplified, in an eminent manner, in children, and in the beaſts of the field; from whom a ſtrong inference may be drawn in ſupport of this opinion. It will, without diſpute, be readily acknowledged, that the lamb which ſkips and plays knows not ſorrow; and yet he is certainly but little indebted to knowledge for his felicity. Thoughtleſs and unconcerned, he ſeizes ſuch pleaſures as undeviating nature reaches forth to him, and is not excruciated with anxious doubts of the immortality of the ſoul, or the eternal exiſtence of matter, the neceſſity of moral evil, or the freedom of the will.

That we increaſe in knowledge as we advance in years, we all know; but we do not find that

we

we increaſe in happineſs. On the contrary, experience tells us, that childhood, which is the moſt ignorant, is likewiſe the happieſt, ſtate of human life; a circumſtance principally chargeable to their ignorance and ſimplicity. Evils multiply faſter than bleſſings. Knowledge brings care as well as pleaſure along with it; and he that eagerly embraces the one muſt be content to take his ſhare of the other, which is often its troubleſome companion. Pleaſure and Pain, like two monarchs, divide the empire of the world between them, and conjointly ſit on the ſame throne. Every one, whether learned Greek, or untaught barbarian, that is pleaſed to be a ſubject of the former, muſt at ſeaſons endure the incontroulable influence of the latter. It is, however, allowed, that age alone impairs the faculties of enjoyment; for which ſome deduction muſt be made.

The Belles Lettres, to thoſe whoſe taſte inclines that way, afford a pleaſure that leaves no diſguſt behind. But there are branches of ſcience, which, however agreeable under certain attitudes of the mind, are beſet with perplexity and gloom. The ingenious reader will readily conceive that I have an eye to deeply moral and metaphyſical diſquiſitions, which are apt to alienate the affections from common purſuits. I have ſingled out that particular branch of knowledge which treats of the Deity, of the ultimate end of man's creation, and of other ſuch

important points, as an acquaintance with these matters, so far as reason lends a beam, may be deemed noble, and as this part of science is particularly productive of dissatisfaction in affairs of life.

Fact and experience are doughty arguments in the scale of a dispute. It will reflect light on the question if we take a view of the characters of many studious men amongst us, and examine how far their appearance will countenance the above assertions. What gloom surrounds these consecrated votaries of the muses! The gay, the sportive joys seem to have bid them eternal adieu: forbidding looks, silence, melancholy, retreats, usurp their place.

Great application so captivates the eager student, as to render that common conversation, which the less cultivated mind would be pleased with, sickly and palling. The meanness and weakness of many an observation, the tediousness and unimportant circumstances of many a tale, are considered by him as so many intrusions on his time and patience; and with pain he listens to a discourse which exhibits neither instruction nor delight to him. Reasoning from causes he rises to effects. Penetrating into the temper of his companion, he has all his motives and weaknesses open to his view, and considers his reflexions as the mechanical effects of his several prejudices. He dies in the conversation of the living, and revives not till he re-

enters

enters the ſociety of the dead, entombed in his library.

Advancement in knowledge, and advancement in years, have, in fact, a reſemblance of each other: they both engender diſſatisfaction and peeviſhneſs, when they border on extremes; ſo that ſtudy without bounds is a premature age of the mind, like that of the body, not the center of pleaſure. Truth may be ſometimes diſagreeable, but it is always ſacred: we humble our hearts before the idol, even when we diſlike its form.

Though knowledge may ſtand in the ſtead of ſenſual delights, there are times when that will pall on the mind, like corporal ſweets on the body. Neither in ſenſual, nor in mental, gratifications muſt we expect a completion of happineſs. Poſſibly a *tenor* of exquiſite felicity may involve a contradiction, as every ſenſation exiſts by compariſon, or at leaſt is heightened by it. How far this circumſtance is a neceſſary condition of nature, is a queſtion beyond the reach of man. We ſee ſo much cauſe to thank the Creator for the bleſſings we inherit in things we underſtand, that we will conclude the evils of life, numerous as we find them, are the efflux of ſome general good, or the offſpring of uncontroulable neceſſity. We cannot with reaſon arraign the goodneſs of a Being, who has, upon a balance, given us a greater ſhare of good than evil.

The ſun does not always ſhine and chear the face of nature, but ſometimes veils his face, to burſt forth again with a more dazzling bláze. Day and night ſucceed each other alternate, and give pleaſure repeated birth. Variety ſparkles on the ſenſes, and beguiles the tedious hours, which would otherwiſe hang like a load upon us.

The moſt probable way of enjoying pleaſures in the higheſt perfection is to vary them as much as poſſible, and not to indulge in any to a ſurfeit. The pleaſures of ſenſe ſhould be wiſely blended with the recreations of the mind, and an agreeable variety, (as in muſic, the moſt delightful harmony,) would then ſucceed. We ſhould fly from ſcience to ſinging, from melancholy to muſic. In ſuch a combination as this, ſweetened with innocence and a ſerene conſciouſneſs of uprightneſs, except under peculiar circumſtances of miſery, or extraordinary gloom of mind, may ariſe ſuch a ſhare of felicity as will not make the poſſeſſor think exiſtence a burden; and beyond theſe bounds of happineſs neither the diving reſearches of the philoſopher, the giddy flights of the libertine, nor the unruffled ſerenity of a peaſant's life, will carry the moſt diligent enquirer.

There is a certain portion of happineſs meaſured out to us all; and the only queſtion is, in what purſuit it ſhall conſiſt; a queſtion which is determined by our choice or peculiar bias.

That

That choice is too generally imagined to be of great importance in the ſcale of happineſs; but time and familiarity level the difference that is at firſt ſuppoſed to exiſt between different choices. Happineſs is ſituate in idea. If we fancy we have it, it is ſufficient; but too few there are who fancy ſo. It is ſeen by many at a diſtance, like the *ignis fatuus*, and vaniſhes at their approach, when they are ready to ſeize it.

Chance, or ſome trifling circumſtance to univerſal taſte trifling as chance, at firſt determines a man to a particular courſe in life, which by a private prejudice he judges moſt promiſing to happineſs: and if under ſuch a choice, (whether it reſpects mental or ſenſual enjoyment) he can perſuade himſelf that he is happy, no one elſe muſt dare diſpute it. The wild lunatic himſelf, who is at ſo great a remove from rational knowledge, as, inſtead of poſſeſſing the common ſhare allotted to others, to treaſure up whims and nonſenſe diametrically oppoſite to reaſon, may yet be happy; perhaps more ſo than the proud philoſopher in Horace, who thinks himſelf *ſupremely wiſe*, and *king of kings*.*

* Ad ſummam, ſapiens uno minor eſt Jove, dives,
Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum;
Præcipuè ſanus, niſi cùm pituita moleſta eſt.
HORAT. lib. i. epiſt. i.

It affords a ſmile at many ancient, and ſome more modern, philoſophers, to reflect on the great emphaſis they laid on mental acquirement, as if that were excluſively the only buſineſs of life, as well as the only path that leads to bliſs. They did not conſider, that to appropriate ſo large a portion of time on ſpeculation, as to leave none for action, is to defeat the intention of many faculties we derive from nature beſides thoſe of the mind. It would ill become an author to decry the dignity of knowledge; nor would I be interpreted ſo to do: but happineſs is not always connected with dignity; and it is his office to warn againſt the dangerous effects of exceſs on human frailty, as tending to diſtort from the paths of propriety, without that harveſt of exquiſite felicity which the literary wanderer promiſes himſelf from his wild excurſions into the regions of fancy.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER X.

On the Passions.

——— *Affectus, quos Deus animis nostris indidit, ut sint tanquam stimuli ad honestas actiones.*

Vossius de Rhet.

THERE is not in the whole composition of man a more curious and noble contrivance displayed, than is visible in the construction and intention of the passions. The wisdom that is conspicuous in this part of his mechanism, and the inconceivable connexion of the soul and body, with the manner of their reciprocal action on each other, proclaim the hand that made him divine. The subject of these passions has been perhaps as much canvassed as any part of philosophy, and the application of them more perverted than any of the endowments of nature.

Ignorant of their use, the proud apathist, presuming to refine upon nature, judges a total extinction of them the business of life, and manufactures virtues out of a rock, valuable only for their toughness. Taking on himself the task of mending one of its greatest de-

ſigns, he tacitly pronounces himſelf wiſer than its Author, like the giants of old, waging war with heaven:* and, as if the dreams of one alone were not ſufficient, he erects the ſtoic ſchool, and has his diſciples.

Struck with the abſurdity of apathiſm, the ſenſualiſt runs into the oppoſite error, and ſhunning the gulph of Charybdis, unwarily ſplits on the rock of Scylla. Extremes ever border on each other; and one abſurdity is ſeldom ſeen without a thouſand in its train. The abolition of error oft reſembles the amputation of Hydra's heads — Becauſe the Stoic rejects the paſſions, the Epicurean preaches up the inordinate indulgence of them as the ſovereign good, equally to the prejudice of his much abuſed converts, and equally in repugnance to the dictates of reaſon.

That the paſſions are intended for wiſe purpoſes, we may infer from their univerſality in the animal world. In ſome men they are weaker than in others, but no one is without them. Reaſon, and moderation the offſpring of reaſon, are intruſted with the regulation of them; and, as far as they perform their office, the paſſions are harmleſs, uſeful, and neceſſary. Without them

* In hoc ſumus ſapientes, quod naturam, optimam ducem, tanquam deum, ſequimur, eique paremus. ---- Quid enim eſt aliud, gigantum more bellare cum diis, niſi naturæ repugnare?

CICERO de ſen.

them there would be a general ſtagnation, and by their impulſe all the wheels of action are ſet in motion. To ſuppoſe them not intended for uſe in the animal œconomy is a doctrine as little conſonant with reaſon as that of Lucretius, that the eyes were not made to ſee, or the ears to hear. They are the ſources of pleaſure, as well as the ſources of action.

Authors deal much in ſimile, and ſimiles are uſeful. The compariſon of the paſſions to the gale that wafts the ſhip along, or to the horſes that draw the chariot, is apt and ſtriking, and the precept conveyed in it ever ſeaſonable and new. The ſhip will not advance without a gentle gale to generate its motion, and a rude and ungovernable ſtorm will overſet it. The aſſiſtance of the ſkilful navigator is requiſite, to regulate the ſails and proportion them to the violence or gentleneſs of the wind. Man is a ſhip; his paſſions are his gale, and his reaſon is his pilot. Without his paſſions he will not move, and without his reaſon to command them, he will be loſt in his career —— Again: The chariot is uſeleſs if bereft of the horſes aid; and, without a charioteer, to direct and curb them, they would ſtray and be loſt in their courſe. Man is a chariot: diveſt him of his paſſions, and his wheels are at reſt: they are his horſes, and he wants their labour. Take away his reaſon, and he loſes his charioteer: reaſon is his charioteer, and his paſſions need its command.

——But let us review the principal affections, and separately speak of their qualifications and defects. As merit demands, we will begin with the noblest of them,

Pity for the miseries of others. But the immortal Shakespear lived before us, and has told us, in the genuine language of nature, that 'it descends, like rain, from heaven, 'upon the spot beneath. It is twice blessed: 'it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.' It is the most disinterested of all principles, and therefore the most commendable. The breast that is warmed by it partakes of divinity. The exercise of pity is the agency of the deity by man his substitute, to equalize and level the conditions of men, the sympathetic soul taking a share of anothers ills, as though it were a moiety of his burden.* The participation of evil by pity divides the pain, nor suffers an individual to be overborne. Pity is of more price than all the other virtues. One single tear shed on affliction is a liquid pearl of inestimable value; and he, that cannot feel for another, is, by the justice of nature, a stranger to the pleasure that awaits relieving compassion. As cruelty is the apex of vice, pity is the summit of virtue; and the soil where pity grows is a nursery for every virtue —— If there be passions whose dictates are too much attended to, pity is not one of

* Τῷ Θεῷ δανείζει τις τὰς ἀγαθὰς προαιρέσεις καὶ πράξεις. Simplic. c. 37.

of them : it needs leſs the diſcipline of reaſon than other affections. It is always meritorious, and ſeldom offends.

It were treaſon againſt the majeſty of Venus not to range the paſſion of LOVE next in order. This is an amiable paſſion, as it is a compoſition of benevolence and friendſhip, ſeaſoned with a ſenſation very *affettuoſo*, which its votaries alone can feel. The breaſt that is incapable of it is not a bed for the virtues : they require a generous warmth to produce them. Love (genuine and ſucceſsful love) is perhaps the ſource whence flows the greateſt delight human nature is ſuſceptible of : it is the feaſt of the mind as well as of the ſenſes. All other enjoyments are inſignificant and trifling when ſet in competition with the ſweets of love. The Author of nature has wiſely ordered that the increaſe of the human race (that ſecond creation) ſhould ariſe from the moſt enchanting paſſion he has implanted in man. But as the faireſt flowers that blow, as the fineſt works of art, are moſt expoſed to the injury of a ſpoiler, love, which is capable of producing the moſt genuine joy, is often the parent of as inſupportable pain. The effects of it are warily to be ſhunned where a proſpect of ſucceſs is cruelly denied. If reaſon aſſents, ſnatch the golden opportunity : if reaſon ſays, Forbear ; fly the inſidious ſyren, ere it be too late. Retreat on the firſt alarm. When love has ſeized its poſſeſſion, it will not be diſpoſſeſſed ;

poſſeſſed; and, like an imperious tyrant, it knows not controul. It is a paſſion wild and tumultuous as the ſea, and will not lend an ear to reaſon, whoſe voice is gentle, and heard only in a calm.

FEAR is indeed of ignoble birth; but it is more neceſſary to the animal œconomy than the moſt generous affections. Fear is the alarm-drum that apprizes us of danger, and bids us retreat in time. Fear in moderation is a friendly guard. By the warning it gives, it not only guards ourſelves from harm, but may even ſuggeſt a kind concern for the welfare of another: in either view we are indebted to its influence. But immoderate fear is a cruel tyrant, and it is miſery in the extreme to be a ſlave to it. When it unreaſonably and continually alarms, it is a diſeaſe of the mind, and realizes evils that are only ideal. If the pain of apprehenſion be equal to the harm we dread, it differs not which we embrace: the ſuffering is, in degree, the ſame. But a ſeverer charge than this has been brought againſt unbounded fear, as frequently the origin of crimes. Inſtances are recorded where it has inſpired with cruelty and rancour. As ſuch the emperor Tiberius is repreſented, whoſe cowardly apprehenſions would incite him to the meaneſt and moſt unprincely acts of cruelty. To his imaginary dangers he would readily have ſacrificed the lives of all his ſubjects.

REVENGE

REVENGE is a paſſion that deſerves to be well underſtood, and the ſubject of caution. Anger, like fire, is dreadful when it predominates, and tolerable only when under command. The cauſe that gives birth to revenge is injury, or a ſuppoſition of injury. A real injury received, the ſpirit of revenge will ſay, is a juſt cauſe for a requital, and the very laws imply the ſame, which are only a public revenge for injury, judicial puniſhment being a law of ſociety, and private requital a law of nature: and it muſt be granted that it is not an unreaſonable, but a natural paſſion. It needs, however, the rein rather than the ſpur. But in this conteſt we will call in reaſon for our counſel. Let it be obſerved, that though the injured perſon has a right to demand ſatisfaction, he may yet remit his claim as a debt, and abſolve the offender; and the remiſſion, which in an ordinary inſtance is no breach of duty, may riſe into an act of generoſity, and become a virtue. That it is in moſt cases better to drop our reſentment, may be concluded from theſe conſiderations: The affront offered may be undeſigned; it may ariſe from an error or weakneſs; or the offender may have been ſufficiently puniſhed for it in his own mind on a cool reflexion.* On any of

* ——————— Cur tamen hos tu
Evaſiſſe putes, quos, diri conſcia facti,
Mens habet attonitos, et ſurdo verbere cædit,
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum?
JUV. ſat. xiii.

of which ſuppoſitions the ſtifling of reſentment is a noble ſacrifice offered at the ſhrine of Virtue. It was delicately ſaid, that *the injurious are more the objects of pity than thoſe who ſuffer their wrongs** — A ſentiment ſometimes literally true, and always worthy an elevated mind, which can, in compaſſion to human frailty, overlook the inſolence of injury. He that has ſuch a ſhare of meekneſs in his complexion, as to act in conformity with this ſentiment, will at leaſt have a pleaſing ſatisfaction in a retroſpect view of his own generoſity, and eſcape that remorſe, which, as the ſcourge of a fiend, chaſtiſes the vindictive mind. To avoid the charge of rank Stoiciſm, I will notwithſtanding make ſome little conceſſion to the contrary opinion. If revenge is ſometimes proper, it is when the injurious foe triumphs in or repeats his wrongs. It is then a ſalutary correction, which may awaken him to a ſenſe of his injuſtice, as well as ſecure the ſufferer from future attack: and in ſome ſuch caſes it is an omiſſion of pernicious tendency, as well as a mark of meanneſs, to ſwallow reſentment.

Envy is the baſtard ſiſter of Emulation, whoſe place it frequently uſurps, and the paſſion of a little mind. To diſlike real excellence is injuſtice and folly; falſely imagined excellence calls for pity. Genuine envy is a compound of malevolence and meanneſs, and therefore the object of ſcorn. The envious are ill-natured,

* Ὁ ἀδικῶν τοῦ ἀδικουμένου κακοδαιμονέστερος.
Democrat. ſentent.

natured, or the prosperity of another would not give them pain. They are mean in spirit, as their envy is a tacit confession of superiority in their rivals.* As Nature has allowed us the use of reason, in combination with the passions, we will not so far dishonour her as to suppose her the champion of this base principle in all its littleness. Mere envy depresses and wastes its subject: emulation distends the breast and exalts its votaries. It follows, then, that envy should be banished from the heart, as the impostor that would represent emulation, that laudable spring of generous actions. Be it, nevertheless, observed, as a consequence of human weakness, that an inordinate desire of excelling may become, in a small degree, criminal, without any admixture of pining envy. Those who are too fond of themselves are found guilty of injustice to others. It is a received opinion concerning misers, that they are scarcely honest. If we apply this remark, more extensively, to those who are selfish in other respects, the inference is equally proper. So that a desire of excelling, however commendable in itself, may overleap due bounds as well as the other passions. In promoting our own cause, we ought to render justice to that of others. Were this always the case, the world would be happier than it is, as the rage for excellence is to many a principal cause of discontent.

GRIEF

* Qui invidet minor est. PLIN. epist.

GRIEF is a very tender affection of the ſoul, and bears about it a dignity that inſpires with awe. Miſery is ſacred. It is conſidered as the buſineſs of a philoſopher to account for every thing, whether he is able or not, and it is the humour of many to do ſo. In compliance with this reigning taſte we will obſerve, that this paſſion ſeems intended for the ſame office to the mind which pain performs for the body, and that they both ſubſerve a purpoſe, however unpleaſantly. Were it not for pain, we ſhould be too careleſs of providing againſt injuries ſubverſive of our welfare and exiſtence. The rankling of a wound is a powerful call to apply its cure: the pangs of grief are the ſpurs and warnings of the mind to avoid thoſe evils that give it birth —— But whether this ſenſation be deemed ſerviceable, or not, to the human œconomy, it is derived by a natural conſequence from the benevolent affections of love and friendſhip, and is their mournful orphan. Where exiſts a ſenſibility of pleaſure, by the influence of ſtubborn neceſſity, muſt likewiſe exiſt a ſenſibility of pain. Grief is the privation of joy, embittered by a compariſon, made in the mind, of a preſent unhappy ſituation with a former agreeable ſtate, and inſeparably attends the loſs of what engaged the affections. We cannot be too diligent in diſpelling its gloom, as immoderate ſorrow is dangerous, as well as fruitleſs, in its conſequences.

There

There are other ſubordinate and collateral branches of paſſion, which are ſome of them reducible to, and dependent on, the above leading and primary affections; but we will content ourſelves with ſurveying theſe in this curſory manner, as ſufficiently anſwering the purpoſe in view, of ſlightly repeating the beauties of this curious machinery, and hinting that, though they are all of them intended for the private purpoſes of pleaſure or neceſſity, at certain times, they are yet to join in the chorus of a concert conducted by benevolence, according to the beautiful idea of the elegant Maſon.*

But alas! in ſpite of all this fine reaſoning, notwithſtanding this airy and plauſible ſcheme, men will proceed in their choſen track, and Mr. Preceptor preaches almoſt in vain; ſuch is the influence of the dæmon Arimanius: but though their natural tempers predominate in mens

* Humanity, thy awful ſtrain
Shall ever meet our ear,
Sonorous, ſweet, and clear.
And as amid the ſprightly-ſwelling train
Of dulcet notes that breathe
From flute or lyre, the deep baſs rolls its manly melody,
Guiding the tuneful choir;
So thou, Humanity, ſhalt lead along
Th'accordant paſſions in their moral ſong,
And give our mental concert trueſt harmony.

Ælfrida.

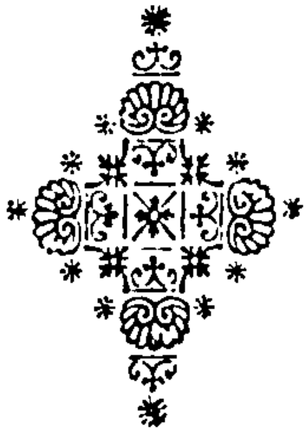
mens actions, that is no reason for suspending the office of a moralist. It is the part of a good reasoner to change the reigning humour by his reasonings, and convert it to the purposes of virtue and propriety. Studious men are different in their manners from others, and it is reading and reflection that occasion this metamorphosis, though it be not always for the better.

I may possibly be thought, by regular and cautious men, to insist too much on the utility of the passions; but they are recommended in combination with reflection. Be it remembered, that reason, the great boast of man, is sordidly selfish when the breast is untinctured with generosity; and generosity is seated in the nobler passions; the proper conduct of which constitutes the basis of morality.

In fact, if we would pursue the subject closely and urge it quite home, since self-love has so unlimited a share in human actions, it is the peculiar province of kings and governors (and even of the subject, as far as it lies within his sphere) to seek out and reward merit, wherever it is to be found, and to foster the seeds of virtue. If men in general always have acted, and always will act, from motives of interest, Prudence would take them by this foible and avail herself of it, by making their interest and their duty the same. The upright man should be the friend of the prince, because he is the friend of mankind. He should shower

his

his favours on a fruitful ſoil, and not waſte them on the ſand or on a river; court men for their virtue, and not their rank, and baniſh vice from his preſence and protection. His kingdom would then reap the harveſt of his munificence, and revere his nod. Virtue as inſeparably follows its reward as heat the fire.



CHAPTER

CHAPTER XI.

On Patriotism.

——— *Perche de la libertà ſolamente il nome da i miniſtri de la licenza, che ſono i popolani, et da quelli de la ſervitù, che ſono i nobili, è celebrato, deſiderando qualunche di coſtoro non eſſere ne à le leggi, ne à gli huomini, ſottopoſto.* MACHIAV.

POLITICS and patriotiſm are ſubjects ſo much in faſhion at preſent, that not to have given ſome little attention, in a miſcellaneous work, to the general buzzing about them, may be brought as an argument of ſtupidity. It is ſcarce worth while to reaſon about the former, as it is manufactured at the houſe of every publican: but patriotiſm being a moral theme, we will obtrude a few remarks on that extraordinary principle.

For the ſake of regularity, we will begin by obſerving, that as every action, and every geſture, of a man has its cauſe, we ſhould firſt endeavour to find out the motive of the principle in agitation, and from thence ſtamp an eſtimate on it. The great motive, the ſoul, of patriotiſm, when moſt ſincere and ſterling, is enthuſiaſm,

ſiaſm, and an ardent thirſt for glory.* That is a view adverſity cannot wreſt from us. In proportion as the patriot is ſanguine and warm in his complexion, his endeavours are hearty and genuine: and, as I have more than once taken notice, that the warmer affections of the ſoul are cooled by the influence of knowledge, by conſequence, as the world has gradually refined upon nature, (though every innovation does not deſerve the name of *refinement*,) patriotiſm, among other eager principles, has gradually declined in its influence. An indifference is frequently the conſequence of extenſive reflexion, and the bane of effort and action. Self-love, with a foundation leſs meritorious than a deſire of being renowned, has ſo far ſupplanted it, as ſcarce to permit us to conſider any man as a patriot, till we have proved him, like gold, in the hotteſt furnace of ſuffering adverſity.

A rigid patriot is one, who will loſe a real life, to gain an imaginary one. Glory is his god. In purſuit of that, he will reſign up the choiceſt bleſſings in the eſtimation of common ſouls, and ſee, in conſcious integrity and honour, all the happineſs earth can promiſe. He will regard his country as his neareſt relation, and renounce all other conſanguinity when put in competition with it.

Patriotiſm,

* Denique non parvas animo dat gloria vires;
Et fæcunda facit pectora laudis amor.
Triſtia, v. 12.

Patriotiſm, under all theſe diſadvantages, has no great allurements to a worldly mind. It is at beſt but a lottery, and ſuch an one as very few amongſt us will venture to ſtake their fortunes in. Whoever embarks in ſuch undertakings, though conſcious of his own integrity and reſolution, has a fickle judge of his character in the body of the nation; ſome of whom, influenced by private conſiderations of intereſt or perſonal diſlike, and others through blindneſs and ignorance, will not always reward and puniſh according to the directions of virtue and juſtice. When ſuch beings as patriots are really found, they are to be eſteemed the choiceſt gifts of heaven, and cheriſhed with unuſual care.

In caſes and queſtions of this ſort, if we would ſearch out a complete character, experience of the individual in queſtion will alone inform us; and experience muſt be the reſult of time, which is the only touchſtone of perſeverance, that primary ingredient of patriotiſm. Circumſtanced as we are, we muſt content ourſelves with the conviction of *fools*, who, as the Roman hiſtorian obſerves, are taught only by the event,* when no other information can be had, how much ſoever the pride of our judgements will ſuffer thereby; and we muſt believe no more, and no longer, than we read proofs of

* ——— Eventus; ſtultorum iſte magiſter eſt.
Liv. Dec. iii. l. 2.

of professions in the actions of our patriot. By the same principles of reasoning, if the people are wise, the professing friend of his country must patiently wait a while, before he can receive his laurels, to crown his endeavours after its good, from a full confidence in his integrity.

That many of the ancients, and some moderns, have earned applause for patriotic virtue, must not, nor can with justice, be denied. Through love of fame men have been known to slight the frowns of adversity, under the several distresses of want, hunger, pain, and death itself. If terrors like these could not scare them from their purposes, terrors at which we are prone to revolt, it were great injustice and cruelty to deny them that poor reward of their firmness which they have so dearly bought, our warmest acknowledgements.

Neither ought we to object to the motive of such noble actions as have signalized some of them in the behalf of their country. It is invidious to allege, that a desire of fame is a selfish consideration, since self-love is the *primum mobile* of all human actions, and it cannot be expected that any one but a lunatic will act for no apparent reason, or that a hero can entirely divest himself of the character of man. Love of glory is harmless, laudable, and useful, and springs from emulation, a nursery of virtue. It is to be highly caressed when it co-operates

 with

with the general good, and ſerves the public. The common notions of honour, the care an upright man takes to approve his conduct in life, are built on this principle; and even the bare endeavour to avoid reproach terminates in it. We muſt not, therefore, be too fond of dabbling in the doctrine of motives, to the prejudice of thoſe we judge. With us, fallible and ſhort-ſighted mortals, paſt actions alone muſt aſcertain our characters, when views cannot be diſcovered, and as they are more or leſs favourable, we muſt more or leſs eſteem the agent. But to deny us our motive entirely, is to launch a ſhip in a dead calm, and expect it will reach a port.

Who then is a patriot, a ſincere and honourable one, who from his heart diſdains to accept of praiſes he has not dearly bought? — I could name ſuch a man even in our times, and a little iſland would furniſh us the example: a commander, who does not, as Cæſar did, trample on the liberty of his country, but bravely defends it againſt a foreign invader: a hero that refuſed a crown, to wear the laurel, an enſign of greatneſs in his opinion ſurpaſſing the regal diadem. Such a man as this does indeed deſerve favour and ſupport from his countrymen, for whom he is ready to encounter every danger, and to give up his life, that he may live again in future ages. Virtue like his is more than we have reaſon to expect from a ſon of nature,

in

in body equally as ſenſible of injuries of every kind as the tendereſt of us, though endued with a ſpirit ſuperior to them all. Toils of war, hazard of loſing all our ſupport, and riſque of life, are bitter pills for mortals to ſwallow.

On the other hand, pretended patriotiſm, patriotiſm which runs no hazard of any kind, and veers about with every wind, as ſordid intereſt and pecuniary views incline, is a deſpicable meanneſs, and merits only the contempt and ſcorn of the world. That man muſt poſſeſs an ungenerous and a little ſoul, who arrogates to himſelf a glory which he is conſcious he merits not, and for which he is not ready to lay down an adequate purchaſe. He is to be conſidered as baſely taking an advantage of the ignorance or inattention of thoſe who credit his plauſible profeſſions, and as very a cheat as the thief that robs us of our money, when our abſence, or unwarineſs of his deſign, affords him the opportunity.

I ſhall, without queſtion, by ſome be underſtood to glance at a celebrated Engliſhman in the character laſt deſcribed; but I candidly own no ſuch perſonality is here intended, as I chuſe not to give my opinion what caricature will reſemble him. Ethics are of no party. It would ill beſeem a moral writer to enliſt on any ſide. I only offer a few remarks, to be applied at the reader's diſcretion.

.. he is judged to have rendered ſervice to his country, (as many of its friends affirm,) it is political, as well as moral, juſtice, that he ſhould reap the fruits of his labours for the time already paſt. Whether a man be ſincere, or not, it is policy to reward thoſe actions that are beneficial to the nation, by way of bribe and earneſt for future ſervices. If it were made worth mens while to be honeſt, they would be ſo. We ſtand on an excellent bottom where virtue and gain cement each o-other.

It is not ſo neceſſary to the politician, as is generally ſuppoſed, to enquire whether a man acts from public principles of honour, or from private views, provided he act at all: whatſoever the motive be, the benefit, or injury, (facts, without my ſuffrage, ſhall determine which) derived to his country, is juſt the ſame.

To confound private with public characters is beſide the purpoſe: they need not be ſet in contraſt when they concern not each other. If we make both conceſſions, that thoſe men our patriot has ſo roughly handled, are the baſe tools he has repreſented them to be; and that he himſelf is as totally devoid of principle; yet even on theſe ſuppoſitions, if he be really at enmity with them from private reſentment, the public may poſſibly be availed of his endeavours, as one knave is an excellent inſtrument to ex-

poſe

pose the baseness of another: it were almost too coarse to add, *that when rogues fall out, honest men come by their right.*

Allowing he is really interested at heart in repressing the encroachments of arbitrary power, (fame says he is,) he is embarked in a worthy cause. I wish I could say as much in favour of the mob, who compose his body-guard. I fear they are to be esteemed greater sticklers for it, when they compel the inhabitants of a city to illuminate their windows, whether they will or not, *(once because their patriot was sent to prison,)* than the most despotic minister.

I am much of the opinion of my author, [Machiavel,] that, in general, only the *name* of liberty is contended for by the heads and the dregs of a people. Few ages afford examples of integrity in administration. Interest has too large a gripe. The general good is swallowed up in the views of individuals. If the present be bad, it is no novelty. A perpetual round of the same causes cannot fail of producing the same effects. Men of dishonest principles are often fixed on for the stewards of a nation, and not sufficiently accountable to those who appoint them. The temptations they lie exposed to are great, and their virtue to resist them is none at all. The people fix the price of their liberties, and then repine if the minister lays down the purchase. Hence the tears they shed.

But, to take leave of our patriot: If after all his professions of patriotism, and protestations of integrity, (like some that have gone before him,) he meanly deserts his cause, thro' disappointments of sordid expectation, or unworthy allurements, he must not hope to be numbered with former worthies, those moral comets, who stem'd the torrent of corruption and opposition to the last, and would suffer an injury from so undeserving an interloper.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XII.

On the public Exercise of Prostitution.

——————— *Quis enim non vicus abundat*
Tristibus obscœnis? ——— Juv. sat. ii.

IN an age so strenuously inclined to improvements as the present, there is encouragement for throwing out hints and proposals that might tend to the emolument of society. With an eye to this purpose, and urged by the favourable reception well-meant endeavours ever meet with, I have turned my thoughts on the subject of a pernicious evil, which has too long infested our streets, to the detriment of health, life, and morality, with a view to remove it. The evil I mean (to make my preface short) is the open and public exercise of prostitution, an exercise productive of both a moral and a physical contagion, the one on the manners, and the other on the bodies of the people.

It will hardly be contended, that there is a possibility of stopping the spreading contagion by a radical cure, the prevention of fornication, which is the cause of it. The passion for sen-

ſual indulgence in this reſpect has been ever too rebellious to ſubmit to the controul of law. The legiſlators of every age and nation, from the remoteſt periods of antiquity, have deſpaired of ſubduing it entirely; and the beſt courſe many of them could take, before diſeaſe exiſted, was to licenſe it under certain regulalations, which were judged to introduce as few ill conſequences as a toleration of any kind would admit.

Were it in the power of legiſlature totally to put a ſtop to fornication, I grant it would be ſuch a benefit to a nation, as would amply repay the trouble attending the exertion of law againſt offenders. Matrimony, the ſource of population, which is a great concern of ſtate, ſuffers exceedingly from its prevalence among youth; who would engage in chaſter connexions, and become friends to their country, if they could be deprived of the company of women on any other conditions. Some there are who give it as their opinion, that a ſtricter ſearch after proſtitutes, and a ſeverer penalty inflicted on each party concerned, would prevent it: but, I believe, with little ground for their aſſertions. The beſt conſequences that would follow a prohibition of this kind, would be only a removal of the evil out of ſight, by forcing the delinquents to retreats, and perhaps a greater eagerneſs after a pleaſure they would eſteem the ſweeter becauſe it was forbid-

den

den them.* Besides that a strong check on the ungovernable luxuriancy of mankind might beget *a moral distortion.*

Taking it for granted (as I think we may) that an entire reformation in this particular is too great a blessing to be hoped for from human perverseness and frailty, the present train of ills merits the attention and redress of administration. To give a higher idea of the necessity of such a redress, we will cursorily survey the chief grounds of complaint.

The first grievance we will touch on is, the additional temptation men are exposed to from the public appearance of prostitutes in the streets and other places of resort, and the lures they openly spread for the unwary. A sight of such objects awakens a desire, which inattention, or other amusement, has laid asleep, and many are caught, who otherwise would have escaped. *Opportunity makes him a thief*, who without it had been honest. Scarce half the number of rakes, who now are their dupes, would be at the pains of searching for them. They see them at their elbow, are seized by surprise, and surrender at discretion.

A disease, which saps the foundation of health and life, is dispersed over the nation, whose very cure is the bane of strength. Young men, who are the ornament of the present, and

* Quicquid servatur cupimus magis, ipsaque furem
Cura vocat. —— Ov. amor. l. iii. el. 4.

ſhould conſtitute the ſupport of the ſucceeding, age, are the victims of its ravages, and not rarely pay the forfeit of their lives, as the dear purchaſe of their gratification. Nor does the evil reſt with them. The relics of diſeaſe and weakneſs are the inheritance of their children, inſtead of the wealth they have waſted; and the innocent ſuffer with the guilty, who deſerve not to ſhare in their ills, when as yet they have not partaken in their vices. It is true, poſterity has never conſulted the good of its anceſtry: yet we, if we are juſt, ſhall avoid entailing our own miſeries on thoſe who come after us, whether they have deſerved our favours or not, and not with ſurly wit demand, *What good has poſterity ever done us?* — *Let poſterity conſult for itſelf.*

The hiding-places of common proſtitutes are not confined to the purpoſes of forbidden love. They are nurſeries for every moral diſeaſe that can infect a nation. Debauchery is not the only vice they harbour: on the contrary, it is perhaps one of the moſt harmleſs and inconſiderable. Crimes of blacker die there find an aſylum. By public relations we are informed, that men are robbed, and murdered, by the abandoned retainers of thoſe odious retreats; and, by the loſſes they ſuſtain from their commerce among them, are tempted to replace their money by means which at laſt cover them with ſhame and ignominy. Idleneſs is a con-

ſtant

ſtant attendant at theſe deteſted cells; and it is an obſervation not leſs true than trite, that thoſe who are not well, are generally ill, employed. Vile as the characters of proſtitutes are, they are rendered worſe by the licentious ſtate of their proſtitution.

Another loſs to the community from the preſent mode, is that of labour. There are computed to be many thouſand idle profeſſors of proſtitution in the metropolis only, who are loſt to the ſtate, by not contributing their ſhare of induſtry to ſupply the ſeveral national wants. Such a number of perſons properly employed would be no inconſiderable acceſſion to any uſeful occupation they are capable of undertaking; and even a revenue might ariſe to the government, by way of tax on luxury, from the profits of their labour, and the hires of their proſtitution.

To enumerate all the evils that are conſequent on the preſent open and unregulated exerciſe of fornication, would be both unneceſſary and improper: unneceſſary, becauſe they are ſufficiently known to the generality of the world: and improper, as it would be to collect in a body a multitude of ſuch deſcriptions as would be an affront to decorum. It is enough that we are witneſſes of what is complained of nightly in the ſtreets, without painting the ſcenes afreſh, and ſtaining the leaves of a book with recapitulations of what miſchiefs are en-

gendered from the ſpawn of obſcenity. If the above are not ſubjects for complaint, what are all the natural evils of life, and at what ſhall we be concerned? Cuſtom familiarizes theſe things, it is true; and by means of it we overlook them: and ſo it will peſtilence and the ſword: they can only infect and deſtroy; and if that be a trifle, why complain of any thing?

Such being the inconveniences reſulting from unlicenſed proſtitution, it will, I truſt, be allowed there is great room for reforming it. The moſt natural method of effecting which purpoſe appears to be by the erection of public ſtews, ſubject to the inſpection and regulations of officers appointed by government; whoſe province ſhould be to prevent the incidental grievances accruing, which are above pointed out. The deſirable example has been ſet, (tho' not entirely on this plan,) by ſeveral ſtates, as Sparta, Rome, Leghorn, and others, by way of excluding greater evils.*

Indeed

* The Grecian ſtates lieenſed courtezans, (who were to wear a peculiar garment,) as a remedy againſt adultery. As matrimony is an inſtitution of ſociety founded on general utility, adultery and fornication come within the deſcription of vices; and though fornication be the more ſimple and innocent of thoſe two irregularities, it is yet to be deemed immoral; that commerce, in particular, with

Indeed we need not have travelled ſo far for examples: we read of public ſtews, on the Bank-Side, Southwark, which were licenſed by the biſhop of Wincheſter, and ſubject to regulations confirmed by parliament in the reign of Henry II. the articles of which are to be ſeen in *Stowe's Survey*. Four of the moſt remarkable orders are the following.

That no ſtew-holder ſhould keep any woman that HAD THE PERILOUS INFIRMITY OF BURNING.

That no ſingle woman, deſirous of forſaking her ſins, ſhould be *kept againſt her will.*

That with common women, which does not ſubſerve the cauſe of procreation. That our age is not more corrupt than ſome former ages, in this reſpect, may be concluded from the following words, which are to be found in Cicero's oration for M. Cœlius, and would ſcarce be uttered now by a rake in ſad ſobriety, much leſs from a *roſtrum*, except by an orator Henley, or a ſwine that had the gift of ſpeech. They are theſe. *Verum ſi quis eſt qui etiam meretriciis amoribus interdictum juventuti putet, eſt ille quidem valde ſeverus, negare non poſſum: ſed abhorret non modo ab hujus ſeculi licentia, verum etiam a majorum conſuetudine atque conceſſis: quando enim hoc non factum eſt? quando reprehenſum?* &c.

Were I to interpret the licence here granted into an encouragement of wantonneſs, I ſhould cenſure it as very bad politics; but if it was intended by way of anticipation againſt worſe, I could even adore it.

That no ſtew-holder ſhould receive a *nun*, or a *man's wife*.

That no man ſhould be *inticed* into any of theſe houſes; nor any ſingle woman take money for lying with a man, unleſs he lay all night. —

They were aboliſhed in the year 1546, by command of Henry VIII. that pattern of chaſtity and conſcientious advocate for wedded love!

I do not here intend (nor is it my province) to ſpecify the manner and particulars of the erection I recommend: that I leave for a more able projector; and content myſelf with barely repreſenting the want of it. It is, however, proper to take notice, that wherever ſuch an inſtitution receives the ſanction of law, the utmoſt care ſhould be taken to root out ſeminaries of unlicenſed courtezans, as a neglect of them would greatly impede the beſt endeavours to remove the grievance. Some vigilance muſt, in ſuch a caſe, be adopted, and JUSTICE, now too *blind*, open her eyes, and ſeek out in earneſt thoſe who tranſgreſs, if any met encouragement. The modeſt fair might then paſs along the ſtreets without having her ears aſſailed with ribaldry and filth, and eſcape the confuſion that now often tinges her cheek with a bluſh: and the unwary boy, who before thought no ill, avoid the ſnare the ſyren ſpreads for him, and not be inticed to ſquander away money, ſometimes not his own.

If

If it be objected, that the ſame difficulty of eradicating irregulars would afterward ſubſiſt as we now encounter, I take the liberty to deny it. Diſeaſe ſcares a little, though not ſo much as were to be wiſhed. Many of thoſe who are ſtrongly bent on ſatisfying their deſires, would be at ſmall pains to avoid the ſcourge, if they had it in their power, and of two evils embrace the leaſt. It would naturally follow from thence, that the exerciſe diſallowed would fall to decay, and the profeſſors of it diminiſh in number of courſe, without the aſſiſtance even of additional vigilance. At preſent no ſuch choice exiſts. Men muſt embrace both debauchery and diſeaſe, inſtead of only the former; by which the conſequences of their conduct are not confined to themſelves.

As the troúble attending a completion of the libertine's wiſh would be equally conſiderable, (and only the propagation of diſeaſe be taken away,) under ſuch an inſtitution, the cauſe of matrimony would not ſuffer. Matrimony was as much encouraged by the practice of the Greeks and Romans, when diſeaſe exiſted not, as now: and if that produces not, this deſtroys the race. By far the greater part of our youth (probably ſix out of ten, at the leaſt) indulge in illicit amours, under all the preſent diſadvantages attending their libertiniſm. I believe I have hardly exceeded the truth in my random calculation. If not, what a number of the human race muſt derive a weakneſs, the concomi-

tant

tant of diſeaſe, to the detriment of their ſpecies! and how few are deterred by an apprehenſion of the evils their profligacy entails on them! — They proceed in their career till they are weary of it, and then, by experience taught, have final recourſe to the arms of a lawful bride for that genuine ſatisfaction, and that feeling return of affection, they could not find in the venal embraces of a harlot.

To back all theſe endeavours, it would be no mean aſſiſtance if the means of ſupport for the unportioned fair could be multiplied, to engage the attention of ſuperfluous numbers. A prohibition of ſome employments for men, in favour of them, would ſurely be no hardſhip for the one, and might prove a relief to the other. The circle the latter move in is too contracted, and from the difficulties they have to ſtruggle with they are led to embrace their ſhame. The natural evils of life incidental to the human race fall more to the ſhare of that tender ſex than to the other. The laws of ſociety ſhould in pity favour them as much as poſſible.

As to the unhappy proſtitutes themſelves, it will naturally be obſerved, that they have been already viewed with the eye of pity, and afforded a comfortable retreat from their miſerable ſituation.* Much to the honour of thoſe who projected the erection, and contribute to the

* The Magdalene-houſe.

the ſupport of ſuch an aſylum, it muſt be allowed there is a retreat. But that does not come home to the point, nor is it ſufficient for the general good. If the unbridled paſſions of youth are too impetuous to bear the curb, there muſt neceſſarily exiſt ſome object of their deſire, which ſhould rather be whores than the wives of others; and if the infatuation of ſome haplefs females, who are inſenſible to the miſeries they court, or their inability from diſeaſe or other cauſes, incapacitates them from availing themſelves of this public indulgence, we may as well correct what appears not to admit of a cure, by abridging the train of conſequences, and (if that were feaſible) endeavouring to advance the ends of procreation.

The women in queſtion (I am aware) are ſeen in a light ſo odious by the ſtern part of the world, and particularly thoſe of their own ſex, that to plead for what might only ſeem a relief to them will be thought a crime: *Build not a houſe to hide their devoted heads*, they will ſay; *chaſtiſe them rather daily with ſcorpions*. But if, unlike robbers, they are neceſſary evils, and ſubſerve a cauſe, by pruning the dangerous luxuriancy of mankind; if ſome muſt be tolerated; humanity has other dictates in ſtore:

Chryſippus non dicet idem, nec mite Thaletis
Ingenium, dulcique ſenex vicinus Hymetto.

The

The miſerable in every ſtation are ſubjects that aſk our pity, not our hatred; and they are ſufficiently miſerable, both in ſituation and proſpect. They are enemies to themſelves more than to others. Deſpiſed and ſcorned by virtuous pride, hated and deteſted by rigid ſeverity, they wander about unpitied. The hoſpitable door which is open to virtuous poverty when covered with rags, is ſhut to them alone; and a priſon is the common aſylum their country affords them. Occupations which belong only to females, the effeminate manufacture and vending of their own ornaments and clothing, are uſurped by the other ſex, to their prejudice; and even opportunities of ſervitude under an imperious miſtreſs are not always to be found. To loſs of character (which perhaps was the forfeit of an unguarded moment) is added the loſs of every friend, and they are conſtrained to ſubmit to all the indignities and inſults which the brutality of the loweſt order in life is pleaſed to beſtow on them. They have puniſhment enough for their faults, both mental and corporal, if puniſhment in any ſhape would awake them to ſenſibility. The very horror an imprudent female is beheld with is the parent of deſpair to her, and the bane of her amendment. Pity be ſhed on the offender, when denied to the offence: the weakneſs, not the vice, beſpeaks it.

I fear,

I fear, were my project to come under public consideration, it would have much to combat with the prejudices of some who are contracted in their notions, and the interests of others, who with the worm subsist on destruction. Religion would be brought into a dispute, wherein it has no concern, tho' it never, that I knew, forbad a small evil when it excluded a greater, and always enjoins real goodness in preference to ostentation. That it would *seem* an encouragement of vice to erect a theatre, whereon to exhibit its scenes, is a plea which is only plausible, and reflects no honour on the understanding of him that makes it. We are not to be condemned, or to condemn, by appearances: the intention and consequences must stamp an estimate on the merit of a deed. If indeed a a public countenance of regulated fornication will be attended with insurmountable obstacles, or found not to accomplish the purpose of institution, no more can be urged in its behalf: but to object to it for reasons of superstition is weak indeed, and a disgrace to so sensible and enlightened an age as this.

The alarm that is raised by a bold innovation in time subsides; particularly if experience pronounces it salutary. Custom has reconciled people to a Magdalene-House and a Foundling-Hospital, though they gave so great offence at first. It has reconciled them even to an hospital for the cure of a disease the consequence

and

and ſcourge of vice. The ſame familiarity would favour the ſcheme in queſtion. What more diſmal, yet what more neceſſary, than the remedy for one under the influence of the hydrophobia? Death is his only releaſe: cruelty to him, if a cruelty; but mercy to numberleſs others, who without it might have been the devoted objects of his contagion.

Pope, ſpeaking of governments, has ſaid, 'What's beſt adminiſter'd is beſt.'—If the foreign inſtitutions, brought for examples, are not bleſt with deſired ſucceſs, it may reaſonably be attributed to want of care in conducting them, and not to a defect in the ſcheme itſelf. However, as I am not inclined to be ſyſtematical, if the utmoſt care will not ſubdue the Hydra, I am ready to give up the argument: I know there are more projectors than can be attended to, and more projects than are good.—— Now throw we a veil over the ſubject, and think of it no more.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIII.

ANCIENT AND MODERN VIRTUES COMPARED.

Fallit enim vitium ſpecie virtutis et umbra,
Cum ſit triſte habitu, vultuque et veſte ſevcrum.
JUVEN. ſat. xiv.

IT has been an almoſt univerſally received notion for ſome thouſand years, that the world increaſes in vice in proportion as it increaſes in age. This opinion is viſible among the Romans in their very language, which has an idiom implying the degeneracy. *Vir antiquus, a man of antiquity*, is uſed by them to ſignify *a man of probity*. Whether this ſentiment be well grounded, will appear from an examination of the modern with ancient characters of men who ſtill live in the hiſtorian's page. If it be juſt, it is enough to fright a man of common fortitude, as we muſt in a courſe of years degenerate into very devils. But we hope to prove, by way of conſolation, that there is only a fluctuation of virtues and vices; and that one virtue and one vice expels and ſucceeds another.

This

This inquiry has a near connexion with the queſtion, How far knowledge contributes to happineſs? and is partly reducible to it. A curſory glance on the ancients manners, in order to compare them with our own, will reflect a light on both theſe queries.

We cannot better direct our remarks, than to the actions of the greateſt and moſt abſolute men of former times, ſuch as, by their ſtations in life, were enabled to follow the full bent of their inclinations. If we do this, how much will the ancients ſuffer from a nice inſpection into the lives and morals of many of their kings and emperors! Had the monarchs of old Rome (the greateſt city and ſeat of empire of antiquity) combined to diſgrace the age they lived in, they could not well have more completely accompliſhed their purpoſe than they have done. The hiſtories of moſt of them contain ſuch extravagant examples of tyranny, cruelty, lawleſs luſt, injuſtice, and every vice that has deſerved a name, as would hardly be credited by one not verſed in the annals of that country. Subjects ſlaughtered for diverſion and envy, rapes and ſhameleſs abominations, violations of every law of man and humanity, gluttony and every exceſs, ſignalize the reigns of theſe monſters enthroned. The names of Nero, Caligula, Domitian, Vitellius, Heliogabalus, and ſome others that could be ſingled out, will juſtify our cenſures, and acquit us of the charge of calumny.

To

To particularize their flagitious actions would be unneceſſarily to invade the province of hiſtory, as few are ſo ignerant of the Roman records as to need it, though many will not rely on their own judgements, but content themſelves with opinions ready made for their uſe. We have, it muſt be allowed, modern examples of bad princes, who have brought diſhonour on royalty; but I much queſtion if the interval of time from Tiberius, down to the Thirty Tyrants, can be matched in any ſucceeding age, for infamous lives and actions of princes, by the accounts we have of them in Suetonius, Tacitus, and ſome other hiſtorians.

As to the vices of that age among private perſons, we may eaſily conceive to how great a pitch they had arrived, from the accounts of profligacy too glaringly painted by the honeſt indignation of Juvenal and ſome paſſages of Perſius, to have ſeen the light. In them we find ſuch enormities of the times expoſed, as geniuſes in vice might boaſt of;* ſuch as would ſignalize this or any other age of the world. Let the innocent reader rack his invention, and his conceptions will come ſhort of the originals.

The private hiſtory of Petronius, that pure writer of impurity, (as he has been ingeniouſly and properly ſtiled,) gives a fine opportunity of

* —— Ob magnitudinem infamiæ; cujus apud prodigos noviſſima voluptas eſt. TACIT. Annal.

of guessing at the spirit of the time in which he lived, under the auspices of Nero. Let him that has nursed up an opinion of the extraordinary purity and innocence of antiquity, consult this and the above quoted authors, and he will not stand aghast at any accounts he reads of our own English metropolis.

Luxury is the great basis of most modern vices. Gluttony was much indulged at Rome, as well as now. Their most polished authors talk of, and describe, good eating and drinking with such a goût as to make a hungry reader's mouth water. Their lampreys and other choice fish, their rare and far-fetched fowls, their sauces and pickles, are known to every one acquainted with their writings. With what satisfaction does the younger Pliny garnish a table in his epistles!

To talk of Roman elegance in dress might cause a modern beau to smile; but they had their ornaments of gold, and silver, and jewels, and even their peacock-feather suits, as well as we. The *ventus textilis*, the *linea nebula*, (linen so fine as to acquire those names,) may rival our boasted lawns.

Frauds were not unknown. The art of making their limbs look sore, by application of a corroding herb, to extort compassion, was used by beggars — a trick exquisite and refined! The delusive wiles of the priests and ministers of their gods are well exposed in the temporizing

and crafty humour of Tryphæna, at the temple of Priapus, on occasion of the death of the *sacred goose*. Cheats and thieves were known among them as well as now. Poisoning and stratagems to procure estates were not rare. Adultery had its examples in plenty: that piece of politeness was not left for modern invention. Villany in servants was so frequent, that *fur*, the old word used to distinguish that class, was afterwards restricted to signify *a thief*; a transition resembling that of our English word *knave*, which two hundred years ago meant *a servant*. It is tiresome to recapitulate every particular; that were to plunge into an ocean. There is no name for any vice in our language which cannot be expressed by a Roman word; and no vice which is not often mentioned by their authors. I mean not to assert that they were worse than in our age; but only that great degeneracy is a chimæra. If they talk not of telescopes, electricity, and gunpowder, they rival us in moral inventions.

Not entirely to rest our authorities on the Romans, we have no reason to adore the Greeks for their extraordinary purity. A bad man was not regarded by them with so much astonishment and dismay as a wild bull, or a two-headed monster. Such beings are mentioned as very common things. Diogenes, the cynic, used a lanthorn to find, what he could not by day-light, an honest man; and that the

greater part of men were bad, was the opinion of Bias. From the account of these venerable grey-beards one might conclude their contemporaries to have been worse than our own : We will pay them the negative compliment of being not much better. There are not such good private memoirs of dissolute persons to be found among their writings, as the Romans have left us, to disgrace their times. The biographical incidents respecting this nation are confined chiefly to virtuous men. Some bad characters are transmitted down to us, but they are such as are interwoven with general history. In other words, they have not a Juvenal or a Persius, a Petronius or a Horace, to expose their vices ; and Menander is lost. The principal satire against them is found in Aristophanes, who, it may be supposed, drew his pictures from real life. What abominable stuff has this writer called by the name of *comedies !* Such an author would be silenced now, as a subject of abhorrence. In short, Turkey is the seat of ancient Greece.

One of the best qualities the ancients could boast of, was, that they did not worry one another for religion, and honour their Maker by destroying his works. Socrates is a rare example of such a sacrifice ; and he would probably have escaped the rage of Anytus, Melitus, and the rest of his persecutors, if he had started his dæmon a little more prudently, and not

not made so violent a stir about some innocent doctrines, insipidly recorded by Xenophon in his Memorabilia, and idolized by Plato. It was, however, very cruel thus to have treated an honest phrenzy.

Those crimes are to be deemed most flagitious which have the greatest tendency to destroy or hurt the human race. On this head, there are some heavy charges to be alleged against antiquity. War and ambition are too much indulged in our times, but they were still more unreasonably attended to in the earlier ages. Their hardier virtues were directed to this cruel purpose, even by some of their philosophers themselves. In pursuit of it they lost all regard to justice and humanity; and dignified their steadiness in this destructive trade by the comprehensive name of *virtue*. The poor victims of their fury had frequent cause to rue the consequences from want of generosity in the victors treatment. —— An extraordinary inclination to such violations as this will balance against numerous virtues; and the strictest private conduct among fellow-citizens will not atone for the ravages attending an invasion of others possessions. If softness and effeminacy degrade some modern characters, roughness and ferocity had likewise their faults. They have both their concomitant blemishes: but especially the latter, which distinguish brutes from men.

Two other accusations shall be brought against the ancients, one of them unknown to Europe now. The first is, their exposing their new-born babes to perish, when the father did not choose to educate them. This is so cruel a violation of the law of nature, that one would imagine none but savages could be guilty of, and those of the most barbarous sort. The last particular I shall urge, is, the manner in which many of them treated those fellow-creatures they were pleased to make their slaves, and their ungenerous desertion of them when worn out in their service. If not in our country, yet many who are the subjects of it in another continent, I am well aware, are not innocent of this charge; and I only exhibit it as a proof that this example of injustice is not of modern growth, and that the ancients infringed the natural law as well as we. The charge may appear trifling in the opinion of a planter, but it really is not so. Without the additional exercise of cruelty towards these slaves, the assumed dominion over them without their consent is unwarrantable. Every son of nature, from the moment of his birth, is entitled to freedom, as his natural inheritance. If his inclination, or interest, subject him to another, his master has his concurrence for the authority he is vested with, which he may exercise as long as is by stipulation agreed, but no longer: he is but a temporary servant,

and

and can demand back his liberty at pleasure. But absolute slavery can only be incurred by a delinquent, for the breach of some law of that society of which he professes himself a member, and whose protection he enjoys. This, and this only, is lawful slavery, which may yield a recompence for the losses of him that has been injured. Policy would prefer the infliction of this punishment to taking away a life that may be of service to the public. Death is insolvent: old Charon is the only gainer by it. To send a man into the other world for damage he has done in this is adding to the loss. Let him stay here and strain his nerves to repair it.

The limits of a chapter will not allow a more minute examination, and we must content ourselves with this general review from the accounts given by the writers of former times. In them we have abundant examples of every species of vice, if that will constitute them equally vicious with us: if not, I know not by what standard we are to ascertain the truth of the question in debate. Flattery itself, the varnish of vice, and bane of honesty, was not left for modern refinement. The basest characters of antiquity could find their panegyrists. Inventions in the arts have been more reserved for sagacious improvement than inventions in vice. Vice needs not much instruction: the scenes of many a single profligate present it in every form; and profligates have been the growth of all ages.

Professions of virtue, I grant, may have been more frequent in former times than now; but we are not thence to conclude that they had juster notions of it, or a larger share, than our contemporaries; but that they had more ostentation. Statelineſs and reſerve mark the characters of antiquity: impudence and freedom are the characteriſtic of the moderns. The former choſe rather to cloke their faults; the latter as readily expoſe them.

If we make this diſtinction, that the vices of the ancients were more from nature, and thoſe of the moderns rather the reſult of art, it will balance neither way; for if the enthuſiaſtic ſpirit of the former produced heroiſm in virtue, it likewiſe gave birth to heroiſm in vice. And if it be inſiſted on that mankind degenerates, it can only be attributed to the advancement of knowledge, as of pernicious tendency: but that is a conceſſion I ſhould make with regret. The doctrine of cauſe and effect (as there is an inſeparable connexion between them) is of ſervice in this and all other diſquiſitions. Though we were deprived of the aſſiſtance of records, we ſhould not be entirely incapacitated to form ſome juſt concluſions. Men had the ſame paſſions in former ages as at preſent: and the ſame degrees of learning or ignorance muſt have, *cæteris paribus*, the ſame influence at all times. Travel into an ignorant Engliſh county, and you are in the neareſt road to an-

cient

cient Greece and Rome, though you see not the temple of Diana, or the Capitol, before you.

A research into the remoter ages of antiquity, prior to Grecian and Roman splendor, is attended with insurmountable difficulties. Such fabulous accounts are interwoven with earlier annals as are an affront on common sense; and what are probable cannot be fully relied on, for more reasons than one. The more remote the period, the more ignorant the people, and the nearer their approach to brutes. The uncultivated and ruder nations have been much the same in every age of the world; and no argument can be drawn from any of them, of any moment in the present controversy. Their virtues and vices have been found nearly on a balance, such as nature has always laid the foundation for, and external accidents alone ripened into action.* It is more than probable that the barbarous ages in question were faithfully copied by the wild Indians, in the state wherein they were discovered by Americus and Columbus, by no means patterns for a race that has the privilege of reason.

Many have been much possessed with a great opinion of what is called *a state of nature*, without

* Πᾶσι γὰρ δοκεῖ ἑκάστα τῶν ἠθῶν ὑπάρχειν φύσει πως· καὶ γὰρ δικαίοι, καὶ σωφρονικοὶ, καὶ ἀνδρεῖοι, καὶ τ'ἄλλα ἔχομεν ἐυθὺς ἐκ γενετῆς· ἀλλὰ ὅμως ζητοῦμεν ἕτερόν τι, τὸ κυρίως ἀγαθὸν εἶναι. ARISTOT. Eth. lib. vi.

out refinement, imagining vices to be the work of time, and the ſimpler ages to have been patterns of purity, where law the public curb, and reaſon the private and familiar monitor, were not invited to check the unruly paſſions of nature: but this notion, upon examination, appears to be falſe and ideal. A ſtate of nature is a ſtate of war, confuſion, and anarchy. But for reaſon, tygers, lions, and wolves, had been men as well as we.

It has been the fate of the moſt celebrated nations, that are known, to experience a fluctuation of virtues and vices, of proſperity and adverſity, a revolution and return to their former condition, as Plutarch has long ſince obſerved, which, upon the whole, has worked but little change on the aggregate race of man. An irruption into England or France, by banditti of barbarians, would probably deprive their riſing generations of what advantages they have derived from two thouſand years, by the deſtruction of public records, the deſolation of war, the loſs of liberty, and the infection and tyranny of brutal manners. Rome and Greece are ſtanding and convincing monuments of ſuch a downfal.

Human nature has been in all ages a motley mixture of light and ſhade. The genius of ſcience has no choſen ſpot for perpetual reſidence: and however particular cauſes have generated particular virtues, peculiar vices have been

been ſeen in their train. A total and univerſal change in the character of man is a prodigy as little to be expected, as that a brute ſhould reaſon, or a fiſh ſhould fly; and though a few individuals may have been wrought on differently in different ages, men, collectively, ever have been, and ever will be, men. Antiquity may have been celebrated for their roughneſs, and the moderns for the ſofter refinements; yet, on the whole, their virtues and vices ſeem to have nearly counterpoiſed each other, and great preference allowed to the former can be looked on but as a fond partiality, fit only for a Lipſius to cheriſh, who hated every thing that was modern; and as very a folly as to be dying in love for Helen or Cleopatra, the former of which had only an apology for a noſe,* and the latter was a gypſy.

This general opinion of human degeneracy ſeems to have flowed partly from a natural partiality we all entertain for what is paſt and out of our reach; † and partly from tradition and

* It is related of this celebrated lady, (I hope my fair readers will not burſt with envy,) that ſhe was ſo extravagantly delicate, as to have only two holes, by way of noſtrils, in the room of that ugly prominence inferior beauties bear about them.

† Virtutem incolumem odimus;
Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi.

HORAT. l. iii. od. 23.

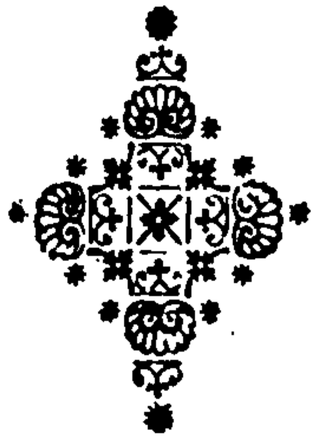
the fictions of the poets, ſuch as Heſiod and Ovid, who have beautifully ſung of the different ages. If we take notice of what ideas we have amuſed ourſelves with in the courſe of our own private lives, or make obſervation on thoſe who are advanced in years, we ſhall find very ſtrong, though ſecret, traces of a partiality for former times. Every ſucceeding ſtage of life ſuffers in our approbation when compared with that which went before, whether there be juſt cauſe for the preference given, or not. Aged people, in particular, are exceeding prone to extol what they ſaw and did in their youth, as more extraordinary and memorable than the actions and ſcenes exhibited by their riſing progeny. The focus of their minds, like that of their eyes, (to indulge a puerile compariſon) increaſes in diſtance by the accumulating flatneſs of their organs, by which they ſee things afar off in the moſt favourable light, and they need external aſſiſtance for their mental decays, as well as additional convexity from optics, to clear their viſual ray. The value of every action, the beauty of every ſcene, is exaggerated by length of time, and derives from it additional luſtre; a fortunate circumſtance for a Raphael, or an inferior maſter of Italy, whoſe colours and ſtrokes are found more beautiful for age; which is an advantage the works of Nature cannot boaſt of.

Such

Such prejudices are visible in the progress of public and private affairs, and the notions of men in both those respects are built on the same foundation. The humour is old, and has been noticed upwards of three thousand years ago. The Grecian Nestor, who lived three ages, if Fame and the poets are not given to lying, thought little of the heroes that accompanied him to the siege of Troy, when he compared them in his mind with those he knew when a stripling. An Ajax that could hurl a rock, a Stentor whose voice would have reached from the Grecian camp to either pole, a Diomede that wounded a goddess, and sent her wimpering away, and an Achilles who was so astonishingly spirited as to sit still in great wrath during the greatest part of the war, because they took his girl from him, were all nothing to their predecessors in heroism.

The last reason assigned for this prejudice, the fictions of the poets, founded on tradition, may to some appear insufficient to contribute to such an effect. But we are to consider what influence the poets had in former times. It is well known that their works were instrumental in forming schemes of religion, and that (particularly among the vulgar) the most ridiculous and absurd of their fables gained credit with the people. Poetry was esteemed sacred, and the poets, or bards, were accounted the am-

baſſadors of heaven. It is not, then, ſurpriſing that a prettily-fancied ſtory, of golden, ſilver, brazen, and iron ages, ſhould have been in ſome degree ſeriouſly received, eſpecially as it implied a more innocent ſtate, in which man was originally placed, in vindication of the divine Architect.



CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIV.

On conjectural Metaphysics.

—— Τοῖς δὲ φιλοσόφοις ποιεῖν μὴ ἀναπλάττειν καινὰ ὀνόματα, μηδὲ λήρειν περὶ ὧν οὐκ ἴσασιν. ——

Lucian. Dec. Bon. Fort. [Momus loq.]

— Οὐ γὰρ δυνατὸν τηλικοῦτον πήδημα πηδῆσαι τὰς ἡμετέρας ἐννοίας, ὡς παρισωθῆναι τῇ ἀξίᾳ τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν, ὃ λέγω καὶ ὑπερπῆδαι. Simplic. c. 38.

NEVER does a dwarf more naturally excite derision by his diminutive appearance than when he stands unhappily contrasted by the side of a giant. Had the frog in Æsop been content with the ordinary size of his brother frogs, without aspiring at the stature of an ox, he might not only have escaped the scorn attending on unsuccessful ambition, but have even deserved a compliment on his superiority over a fly for magnitude. — Not the sarcastic insult, but the salutary caution, contained in this fable, would I throw in the way of some philosophers; those, I mean, who trusting too much to the wings of their contemplation, fancy they can soar to heights beyond the reach of a son of Dædalus.

When

When men of genius and judgement exercise their talents in forming systems of morality, on the basis of justice, and on principles of general utility: when they amuse themselves with researches into the world of astronomy, and investigate the properties of motion, by mathematic aid: or when, in pursuit of knowledge, they dive into the bowels of the earth, and instruct themselves in the phænomena that are to be found in the province of natural history; they add to their stock of real knowledge, and are in a capacity to make advances in what they undertake for the subject of their inquiries. By these, and similar disquisitions, (which depend on certain and uncontrovertible principles, and are open to industry and experiment,) the cause of learning is served, man becomes actually wiser, and (which is a pleasure denied the ideal and brain-sick philosopher,) the inquirer is rewarded with satisfaction for his labours.

How much the reverse is the lot of those, who think they can reduce to system the uncertain and imaginary positions of metaphysics, which are advanced in the doctrine of first causes, of the essence of the Deity, and of the abstract properties of intelligence! If we examine the works of these airy adventurers, and place ourselves under their tuition and instruction, with a view to extend our views in the mental world, instead of meeting the expected lights we flatter ourselves will illuminate our paths,

paths, we are involved in contradictions, wilds, and intricacies, from which we would with pleasure retreat, could we discover the winding road again that led us astray. If a man has a ladder to assist him in mounting a height without it inaccessible, he is not the object of derision for attempting to scale it; but to lose his time and pains in a fruitless exploit is an example of Quixotism fit only for a wild metaphysician to engage in.

There are parts of metaphysics in which the deductions of reason and experience lend a clue to direct the curious enquirer; from which some actual information may be derived. Under this head may Locke's observations on the human understanding be considered; where he reasons of the generation and connexion of ideas, the propriety of conclusions drawn from given sensations, the impossibility of having any ideas without the previous action of the organs of the body,* and the like demonstrable doctrines, which

* That the mind of man, previous to the information of the senses, is a *tabula rasa*, a blank, without ideas, without knowledge, is a doctrine too well supported by this great master of reason to suffer a shock. It has been, notwithstanding, attacked, with arguments drawn from professor Saunderson, who excelled in the mathematics, and was acquainted with the properties of cones, cylinders, squares, circles, &c. though blind from a year old.

The

which are within the circle of man's capacity, and compose a system without chimæra and conjecture.

The following reply to Mr. Locke's opponent is submitted to the ingenious reader's judgement.

To the Author of the Royal Magazine.

SIR,

In your Magazine for August, 1760, we find some animadversions on Mr. Locke's hypothesis, that ideas arise only from sensation and reflection: which, he apprehends, is disproved in the person of professor Saunderson, who was blind from a twelvemonth old, and, according to him, incapable of being supplied by his senses at that time. But there are two reasons, I would insist on, which induce me to think his determination a little too precipitate.

First, then, it may be inquired, whether there be no connexion, similarity, or communication, between the senses, by which, upon defect of one of these direct vehicles of idea, another may, indirectly, in some measure, supply its place. To me it appears more than probable that there is. Feeling and tasting are esteemed different senses: yet I humbly conceive, that, if the latter were lost, the former might partly perform its office; and that the acrimonious pungency of salt to the taste may be distantly represented by its asperity to the touch. Add to this the pertinent conclusion of a Danish physician, [Hagerup,] who maintained, that a man might hear by means of his teeth, in the following

conjecture. Of a different kind are ſome doctrines, which have been dignified with the name of *ſcience*, a name applicable only to what is to be known by man —— Syſtematical poſitions of uncertainties are what I mean ſhould be rejected; arguments drawn from the futile circumſtances of humanity, and applied to illuſtrate the intentions, nature, and actions of deity; properties of knowable effects predicated of hidden cauſes, not cognizable by the moſt ſubtle examination, and farther perplexed the

lowing manner. If you ſtop your ears cloſe, and an iron bar be grated near you, the ſound is loſt; but if it be applied to the teeth, and touch them, the effect will be very ſenſible. This experiment, though it be not ſtrictly admitted, will illuſtrate the point in queſtion.

If the above reaſons are at all concluſive, as to me they appear to be, they will confirm, and be confirmed by, another conſideration, what additional help Saunderſon muſt have received from the circumſtance of his retaining his ſight a year after his birth: which is the ſecond argument I would offer, without the other to corroborate it, preferable to a rejection of ſo well-received an hypotheſis.

As to the concluſion, I heartily ſubſcribe to it — That the whole creation is a ſeries of wonders, above human comprehenſion: and that though the ſagacity of man has diſcovered that ſenſation is the fountain of ideas, yet how that ſenſation is performed, is a proceſs he is at a loſs to account for.

the more they are discussed. To dive into this conjectural part of metaphysics is but to reproach our reason with its weakness, and to court disappointment. The inexplicable maze, the apparent contradictions, in which our sagacity is lost when it would comprehend the secrets of superior wisdom should by this time have taught our men of learning that *there are some things above their capacity*, however they may flatter themselves with the extent of it. The best and most ingenious plan of theocracy that ever was published has its perplexities. It may be expected that some instance of this should be given. Instances are ready at hand, and easy to be produced. We will adduce a very familiar one. The established and much admired scheme of providence, as given by Pope in his Essay on Man, may seem to satisfy at first, but it is calculated only to amuse inattention. In this scheme we are told, that a provision by *general* laws cannot exclude *particular* evils; and that it thence necessarily follows, that some evils must be endured by the very nature of such a general constitution. But alas! how weak are our strongest reasonings! An unfortunate question here starts up, Why it should be the will of the Deity to act by general, in preference to particular, laws? Till such a query is satisfactorily answered, I cannot be of opinion that our imperfect systems of philosophy can account for every instance of Arimanian

leaven

leaven the univerſe preſents to us. When I am favoured with an unanſwerable ſolution of the difficulty, I ſhall think myſelf much wiſer than before, and proſtrate myſelf before the explainer as a ſuperior being. But it is not from metaphyſics I expect it. The light muſt proceed from that Fountain of intelligence which is entitled to our homage without the charge of idolatry. Muſt then the boaſted philoſopher be dumb? — Yes: he has but to lament his own littleneſs, and to make a merit of his modeſty. To ſearch farther into this ſecret were as vain and fruitleſs as reiterated attempts to ſee through a mill-ſtone, which cannot be effected by the help of our preſent optics. —— Some, more ſubtle and ingenious than their neighbours, as the eaſieſt way to explain the exiſtence of a God, deny it. This is indeed plunging into a river to eſcape a ſhower. An author who wrote about a century age, in his chapter of atheiſts, aſſerts, on the teſtimony of another, that there were computed to be fifty thouſand in the city of Paris only: I am ſorry to add, that, if his author aſſerted a truth, there was at leaſt the ſame number of fools. Atheiſm is the top of abſurdity. The doctrine of an *anima mundi*, or that man is a part of God, is infinitely wiſer than atheiſm. —— What greater difficulty is there in conceiving the exiſtence of a deity, than in conceiving our own exiſtence? We know that we exiſt: we ſee traces of wiſdom ſuperior to

our

our brighteſt intellects, inſtances of deſign we could never have deviſed, and yet ſome of our race have been weak enough to reject the poſitive evidence of their ſenſes, in favour of negative concluſions, contrary to the laws of both reaſon and juriſprudence.

Not to reſt on one example of difficulties that ſet our reaſon at defiance, we may aſk, Who, after all the arguments waſted on the ſubject, can digeſt the idea of creation in time, or exiſtence from eternity, when applied to viſible, tangible matter? An univerſal vacuum is the only poſſible idea man can form, as to conceive nothing is the eaſieſt conception; and even that is loaded with the embargo of ſpace, which is elegantly termed, the *ſenſorium* of God. Neither the ſagacious gloſs of a Newton, which leaves us the evidence of experience and our ſenſes, nor the ſubtleties of a Berkley, which put them to flight, can overleap that bourne of our underſtandings, which ſeparates deity from the encroachments of humanity.

There are many other points in this department of ſcience, which are thus involved in darkneſs, to extricate ourſelves from which we are quite at a loſs whether we ſhall throw by our ſenſes, or not; but theſe two ſhall ſuffice to ſhew that there are clouds that ſtill do, and ever will, obſcure the ſunſhine of metaphyſical philoſophy. The great ſecret that pallid looks and meagre face derive to the enquirer from theſe reveries, is only this, *that he*

knows

knows nothing of the matter. He finds, indeed, that he has travelled a great way, but has the mortification to be informed, that he is not a whit nearer the goal than when he at first set out. He is as much bewildered, with all his philosophy about him, as the man, who simply '*wondered how houses came at first.*'

What I have restrictively alleged against parts of this science has been comprehensively applied, by an illustrious writer, to the whole. 'As for metaphysics, they are a bubble of air. 'They are a country, in which a traveller is 'lost amongst precipices and abysses: and I am 'persuaded that Nature never intended us for 'her privy-councellors, but as ministers to exe-'cute her plans.' *

When our common experience, or when arguments that will not brook an objection, evince a truth, by the assistance of rational logic, our pains are well bestowed. The existence of a superior power, for example, is a thing so certain to an observer of his works, and, at the same time, a point of such moment to mankind, as to call aloud for the exercise of our mental faculties

* Pour la metaphyque, c'est —— un ballon enflé de vent. Quand on ne fait tant que de voyager dans ce-pays-là, on s'égare entre des precipices & des abymes: & je me persuade, que la Nature ne nous a point faits pour deviner ses *secrets*, mais pour co-operer au plan qu'elle s'est proposé d'executer. Fr. R. de P.

faculties to consider it. But it is not a consequence that man is either able or obliged to explain the nature of that Power so loudly proclaimed.* —— In the present sublunary scene of things there are certain conveniences and fitnesses, certain appearances and regularities, which flatter and amuse within the human sphere, but would become eccentric in an uncircumscribed orb. As well might we, like children, fancy that the great Author of all is clothed in robes of purple or scarlet, because they are beautiful colours, as apply our mean ideas for the measures and standards of his immensity.

To compare great things with small, we will, with some authors,† consider the human soul as an epitome of the deity, as it is the seat of intelligence, and the nearest pattern of him we can imagine. Yet how much at a loss are we to conceive the properties of this fragment of intelligence! It appears a task as arduous for the soul to dive into itself, as for a man to bear himself up into the air without external assistance. Surely, then, if we are unable to comprehend our own intellectual part, we must be in

* Tenuis enim natura deûm, longeque remota
Sensibus a nostris, animi vix mente videtur.
LUCRET. lib. v.

† Σὺ ἀπόσπασμα εἶ τοῦ Θεοῦ. ARRIAN. l. ii. c. 8.

in a perfect incapacity to settle the properties of supreme intelligence.*

If the truth were known, the doubts of many a simple atheist are to be attributed to nothing so much as to the imperfect systems formed on this subject, and set up as standard doctrine. Whereas, instead of describing what they could not comprehend, had our philosophers more insisted on the inexplicable nature of the Deity, and respectfully left it in that inaccessible and awful retreat wherein they found it, modesty would not have suffered these wavering minds to doubt of what is more out of the reach of their calculations than the unknown quantity in algebra, and not to be brought to light by the most subtle deductions. But weakly taking for granted, that the best systems of metaphysics that *had been* published were the best that *could be* formed, even by a being of superior sagacity, they rejected them all, together with the basis on which they stood, from motives of dissatisfaction.

This confidence in our own judgements is common to us with every creature. It is natural for us to think the conceptions we have formed perfectly adequate to truth: prejudice must appear under its colours, or it could not meet

Οὕτως οὐδὲ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαγγελίαν πληρῶσαι δυναμένοι, προσλαμβάνομεν τὴν τοῦ φιλοσόφου, τηλικοῦτο φορτίον, οἷον εἴ τις, δέκα λίτρας ἆραι μὴ δυνάμενος, τὸ τοῦ Αἴαντος λίθον βαστάζειν ἤθελεν. ARRIAN. l. ii. c. 2.

meet an asylum. The brute creation cherish some pecular notions, incident to their condition, and regulate their actions in conformity with those notions. Every idle conception of theirs they doubtless are as well satisfied with as we are with the sprightliest efforts of our boasted reason. They are guided by instinct, and the bias of some trifling circumstance, which together constitute a knowledge not capable of universal application, from the absurdity of the *data* they assume. From these brutes, with the learned Grotius, we will borrow a hint; and conclude, that as they cannot comprehend the nature of man, but, on the contrary, entertain ridiculous ideas of him, so neither ought we to be too forward in undertaking to unravel the mysteries of the Deity, who is infinitely more distant from us than we are from the brute creation.

Tho' the late lord Bolingbroke deserves the censor's lash for those parts of his works where he disturbs revelation, the pleasing shade he has thrown on nature, in other passages of his writings, by vindicating the conduct of the Deity from his necessary physical attributes only, (which are to be cautiously handled,) may be deemed beneficial to natural religion. That his lordship was an utter enemy to revelation, is most certain; but it does not appear that he had the smallest tincture of atheism. So far from it, that he has contributed to dispel that gloom

gloom that the ſuppoſed abſence of a deity would ſpread over the minds of men: and he is, upon the whole, the moſt chearful, if not the moſt temperate, deiſtical writer this nation has produced.

The whole of this diſpute brings to mind the ludicrous ſtory that is related of St. Baſil. Once on a time a conceited pretender to ſcience troubled that venerable father with vaunting boaſts, that he knew the nature of God. The good orthodox biſhop, to curb his vanity, inſtead of entering on a diſcuſſion of ſo abſtruſe a ſubject, began by examining him about humbler points, and puzzled him with three and twenty queſtions concerning the body of an ant. I fear this might have been the caſe of many a more ſkilful, and leſs vain, pretender than this empty man.

The words of Ovid will probably be quoted by ſome, as a ſhort and ſufficient anſwer to this whole chapter:

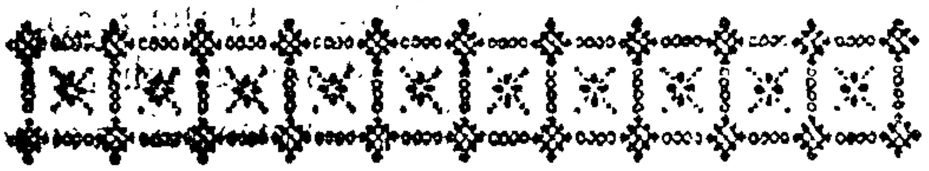
——————————— *Nec tam*
Turpe fuit vinci quam contendiſſe decorum eſt:

and urged as an apology for every the moſt extravagant exerciſe of curioſity. A thirſt after knowledge, and, in conſequence, every attempt to advance it, will my opponent urge, is laudable in the very intention of it. This ſhall be allowed. I profeſs myſelf as great an

 advocate

advocate for enquiry as any one; and only mean to insinuate that, as there are some things which elude human sagacity, it is the mark of a wise man not eternally to pursue what with equal pace flies before him, has fled before every one that has undertaken the chase, and has all the appearance of an endless repetition of the same delusion; and to warn men not to advance for certainty what, after all, may be but the creation of a fertile fancy; since, by separating doubtful positions from real knowledge, we as much serve the cause of the latter, as we mend our wheat by removing from it the tares that choke it.

CHAPTER



CHAPTER XV.

THE UNREASONABLE COMPLIMENTS PAID TO THE ANCIENTS FOR THEIR WORKS, EXEMPLIFIED IN HOMER.

——— ——— *Bonus dormitat Homerus.*

HORAT. de Art. Poet.

AMONG the accusations to be laid to the account of prejudice, the preference adjudged to the ancients for genius, as well as virtue, may make no inconsiderable figure. Their innocence, their courage, their skill in writing, have been extolled as superior to our modern accomplishments, and proposed as the proper standards by which those several excellences are to be estimated. This partiality is in no instance more notorious than in the character given to the ILIAD, which has been, by many succeeding writers, pronounced the most perfect piece of poetry that was ever penned. Him, therefore, we will fix on, to exemplify the effects of literary prejudice.

Few authors have received their laurels in their life-time: that compliment has been generally reserved for their statues. Possibly the world may have judged it preposterous to honour any one with an apotheosis before his death. Homer was once a ballad-singer; is now a bard. Shakespear lived a precarious hireling. Milton's divine poem lay long neglected, and was sold for a song. Otway lived and died in a corner. Cervantes passed his days in obscurity and poverty, a reproach to Spain. The first of English philosophers, the immortal Newton, needed the officious kindness of a Barrow to announce his merit. Praise is slower in its progress than censure, because retarded by the clog of envy and contention, which time alone, that subdues all things, can remove. The case is the same in the moral, as in the natural, world. The sun never exhibits so large a disk as when on the point of leaving our hemisphere.

In pitching on Homer, I will premise, that I have made him a representative, in general, of those authors who have acquired a prejudged hereditary admiration. It is not, in fact, Homer, so much as prejudice, that claims our censures, visible in many established opinions. His happiness, when he is considered as a complete epic poet, like that of many of the ancients, consists in coming first into the world. The eldest son in a family runs away with the patrimony,

patrimony, to the loſs of thoſe who have the misfortune to come later into the world; and the firſt-born authors have been favoured, by cuſtom, with the ſame privilege. But that is a precedent in literary laws not backed by reaſons ſo good as family ones.

Not in poetry alone; in painting and ſtatuary a fancied ſuperiority has been allowed the predeceſſors in thoſe arts. We will not deny their having ſuch fine performances among them as would have done honour to any age or nation; but to grant them the merit of excluſive excellence is injuſtice to their competitors for fame. Have not men the ſame hands as formerly, and more improvements in underſtanding? the ſame fingers and nerves, and more models to copy from? and are not thoſe arts as much cultivated as heretofore? To what charm then can this ſuperiority, or this prepoſſeſſion, be attributed? The works of a Reynolds, a Roubillac, a Caſali, and a Pine, ought to have baniſhed ſo ridiculous a prejudice.

The moſt tolerable and plauſible reaſons for a partiality for the old writers are drawn from a principle of tenderneſs. The infant ſtate of learning, it may be urged, ought to experience the ſame mild treatment which is ſhewn to infant babes. I ſhould allow the full extent of this plea in any caſe where a compariſon with others did not interfere, and conſider

them under all the disadvantages of inexperience. But the respect due to candor will oblige us to own, that it is as improper to set up such infant authors, with all their inaccuracies, for perfect models, as it would be to present a boy seven years old for a specimen of a perfect man. I know not in what light our critics of the male gender would view such a pattern, but I am very certain the ladies would reject it as a very insufficient one.

Many an old writer, who has deserved admiration for real beauties, has had his reputation sullied by those who applaud him for imaginary ones: by which, instead of his being indebted to his panegyrists for their praises, they have given occasion for doubts and censures where he least deserved them. This is a circumstance notoriously the case of a celebrated English dramatic poet. As if Shakespear had not interspersed beauties enough to merit our applause, his very faults have been erected into perfections, and idolized — A manner of expressing approbation designed indeed to serve the author, but really tending to injury him. The most effectual way to expose a lady that has her blemishes, is to extol her for a paragon of beauty. She would soon experience the bad consequences of the intemperate encomiums passed on her, in the merciless criticisms her envied representation raised. Not that I intend to insinuate a want of beauties in this ornament

of

of our country: he has too many ſhining excellencies to need a compliment on his puns, quaintneſſes, and other puerilities, found in his works. ——— Probably this indiſcrete zeal for favourite authors may have ſecretly induced ſo puny a critic as myſelf to have dealt, with a miſgiving heart and trembling hand, a few well-meant cenſures on the Grecian bard, which I would not for the world ſhould be conſtrued as the effects of envy, or a malevolent itch for detraction.

But to come to our purpoſe. I will begin by remarking, that my aim is only to direct the praiſe, that has been ſo profuſely laviſhed on this claſſic, to a proper object; to oppoſe the *genius of Homer* to the *perfection of the Iliad*: which I hope will bear the aſpect of good-nature and candor. That his genius was great, none but a Scaliger would deny, who ſacrificed the reputation of him and other poets at the ſhrine of his favourite Juvenal. Envy herſelf would ſcarcely have the effrontery to diſown that his pinions were formed to reach the very top of Parnaſſus; and that nothing but the iniquity of the time in which he lived retarded his flight. Where he does exert himſelf, (which is not ſeldom,) he is ſuperlatively lofty; his images are bold, and his expreſſion is admirable. Notwithſtanding, the ſame genius, which has inſpired him with the greateſt beauties, has likewiſe hurried him on to the groſſeſt abſurdities.

His rude maſſes of diamonds are intermixed with heaps of rubbiſh. It will be a diſtinct charge, not affecting his genius, to aſſert that he was deficient in judgement and choice, as there are many glaring proofs of it viſible throughout his poem. This accuſation is applicable to our Milton himſelf, (whoſe opportunities of improving on his predeceſſors were no inconſiderable advantages over them,) and therefore it ought not to ſurpriſe if Homer deſerved it. The Greek poet is fond of a ſimile to exceſs. He not only abounds in that figure, but often adopts compariſons ridiculous, improper, and mean. Sometimes his ſimilitude is leſs ſtriking than the thing or circumſtance compared — a fault that deſtroys the very intention of it, which is to paint in the moſt lively colours what we would repreſent. Provided the reſemblance be pretty or ſtriking, it matters not whether a ſublime or heavenly form be compared to a familiar or earthly one, or *vice verſa*; but there muſt be a vivacity in the ſimile: For example, we may compare the morning to a bluſhing maid, or a bluſhing maid to the morning, without an affront to either; but it would be an indignity to both to liken them to the red bricks of a houſe, or to a bunch of carrots. Homer, and many of the ancients beſides Homer, who dealt too largely in ſimiles, have been, at times, betrayed into like improprieties.

Another

Another principal objection to be alleged against the Iliad is, not only a nauseous sameness in the story, a perpetual kill, kill, kill, fight, fight, fight, in which all his heroes are equal to Mars, but likewise an eternal jingle of the same words: which fault is eminently conspicuous in the catalogue of the *black* ships destined for the expedition against Troy. It is to be supposed, that what the poet did in that particular he esteemed a beauty, and that, from a mistaken notion, he imagined his repetitions would grace his poem: which is a pity indeed, as a genius, like Homer's, might have suggested a variety of descriptions, had not his want of judgement misled him.

I am unwilling to animadvert on the absurdity of the fable, where the gods interpose in a most ridiculous manner in the affairs of his heroes, and are wounded by mortals, as I apprehend we are indebted to their visible presence for some of the most shining descriptions. It has been long since observed that Homer makes men of his gods, and gods of his men. It were to be wished too that he, as well as Milton, had less insisted on the penchant both those orders of beings had to filling their bellies, as it is a circumstance bringing with it the most humiliating ideas, and therefore judiciously censured by a modern critic.*

* See Dr. Newton's notes on Milton.

Among the beauties inſpired by the preſence of the gods may be numbered that celebrated paſſage noticed by Longinus and others, in the beginning of the twentieth book, where the divinities, enliſted on both ſides, aſſemble, to take part in the fight. What an awe does the poet there excite in the mind by the loftineſs and terror of his deſcription. Pluto himſelf did not ſtart with greater amaze at the tremendous concuſſion, cauſed by the deſcent of the immortals from Olympus, than will a reader wearied by a round of unvaried deſcription before, and unprepared for ſo grateful a change.

No want of genius has yet been, or ſhall at all be, imputed to Homer; only a want of variety in the Iliad. He has diſcovered an ability for changing his ſcenes; would he had oftener exerciſed that ability, for the relief of his readers. We find he could be ſoft and tender, as well as grand, when he pleaſed. His picture of the infant Aſtyanax, turning from his father Hector, on account of his grim appearance when in armour, is a proof of it. Such a trifling incident, ſimply deſcribed, has more real beauty in it than whole pages of pompous declamation.

The beginning of the poem is ſo eſteemed as to have been copied by Virgil, Tryphiodorus, Milton, and others, not to mention the imitations of other parts made by Calaber. They were all ſo much his admirers, as to draw from his

his fountain. The prayer of the venerable Chryses, priest of Apollo, to his god, his silent grief for the contumelious treatment of Agamemnon, and that chief's refusal to restore him his daughter Chryseis, are all naturally and affectingly described; and I cannot at all join in opinion with a late author, whose name, if published, has escaped my memory, when he asserts that the line expressing that silent grief of the old priest is the only good one in Homer; as that is doing him great injustice. The prediction of Priam, setting forth the calamities attending the downfal of Troy, is feeling and picturesque; it is misery arrayed in her sablest dress, and horror painted in ink.

On the other hand, I must beg to be excused if I cannot comprehend all the mysterious beauties and hidden excellencies, couched under particular lines and words, that some sharp-sighted critics have fathered on the innocent poet, where, God knows, he never dreamt of them himself. Some of the onomatopœias he, doubtless, intended, but the remark is not levelled at them; there are other discoveries which no reader who is not a wire drawing critic could ever have made. It is well known to have been the food of commentators to find out what no unbiassed person could see without their assistance. How nicely his annotators scanned and spelt every word he wrote, may be gathered from some of their observations. In the first

book there is an important discovery of Plutarch's, quoted by Dr. Clarke, at which a reader cannot withhold a smile: that grave old writer finds out a line containing all the grammatical parts of speech. Though I would not dogmatically pronounce, that he supposed this an excellence, I may safely say it is not at all unusual for an annotator to have called such a trifle a beauty in his favourite author. Of a piece with this remark is another, made (if my memory fail not) by the good archbishop of Thessalonica, the venerable Eustathius, on a line which begins with a monosyllable, that is followed by a dissyllable, and so increases in progression to the end. But that commentator is always a very loyal trumpeter of Homer's fame, if he is not always a very wise one: and where we can derive no critical instruction from his remarks, we may gather this moral truth, that young and old, simple and learned, have alike their rattle.

But one of the most insufferable of all discoveries, is that which would torture out a moral meaning, and precepts of virtue, from a poem which does not afford the least sanction for it. There is a possibility of being too sharp-sighted, as well as too blind. Because Homer had lost his sight, and could not see these wonders himself, his critics compassionately perform the kind office for him, and generously lend him the use of their optics, for the advantage of posterity.

It

It would have been ſurely an agreeable circumſtance for this old poet, could he have riſen from the dead, to be informed of many particulars in his own poem to which he was a ſtranger when alive; and to have thankfully acknowledged the great obligations he lay under to his ſeveral friends among his poſterity, who have been ſo officious in his behalf, as to have expoſed their own want of judgement in miſplaced and ill-judged encomiums, beſtowed on an author, for what he never did, or intended, in ſpite of truth, decency, and common ſenſe.

What fugitive remarks I have made (for I have intended no regular critique) are ſuch as reſult from my own private judgement, unbiaſſed by the fondneſs of commentators, or the carping criticiſm of profeſſed cavillers, thoſe worms of literature. From an impartial and general ſurvey, I am of opinion, that, under all the diſadvantages in which Homer laboured, his genius is deſervedly to be extolled; but that had a modern undertaken to write on the ſame ſubject, and acquitted himſelf in the ſame manner, (the memory of Homer being obliterated) his performance would have been eſteemed a ſtrange medley of genius and abſurdity, of beauty and deformity. Have we him not in Engliſh to advantage, his admirers will ſay? Has not Pope tranſlated him, and is he not liked in the dreſs that poet has clothed him in? — True, he has given him in Engliſh;

but

but he has polished him where he needed it, and faithfully represented his beauties. The bald and uncouth passages he has amended; and reinforced the whole with his own advantages of judgement, in such a manner as to have been complimented for excelling the original; which is rarely the case of a translator. — Had he rendered him more literally, by transfusing his faults, as copiously as his beauties, into the English edition, many passages, I fear, would have appeared, without design, burlesque on epic poetry.

I have neither attempted to observe on all his faults, nor to enumerate all his perfections: what I have taken notice of is in support of the view with which I set out, of condemning hereditary prejudice: in the prosecution of which design, I have been as free in my censures, as I have been frank in my acknowledgements of beauties. Candor is my idol: I still revere, as though it were never so new, that worn-out adage — *Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas.* It is almost with regret that I mention the blemishes of this venerable monument of antiquity; but truth is still more venerable. I could with pleasure hear an author again and again extol the genius of such a poet as Homer, if he would not insist on the perfection of his works. It is possible, nay, common, for a writer to have glaring faults, and yet at the same time possess extraordinary

dinary talents: the Greek and the English poet shall be both our vouchers for it, as that was literally their case. It is not at all astonishing, that at the remote period of antiquity in which Homer lived, when he had none of the advantages of criticism to correct his mistakes, he did not reach perfection in every point. He has, unassisted, better acquitted himself than could have been expected from the single abilities of one writer so ancient; and many of his brilliants are lost upon the sight, for want of being properly disposed and polished.

The Odyssey, which has been generally esteemed an inferior production, may so far be preferred to the Iliad, as it contains greater variety in fable and description. The scenes are different in different parts, and the mind is not so surfeited by a disgust which ever arises at want of change. And, in point of refinement, the Æneid has much the advantage of the Iliad, though it cannot be opposed to it for originality of genius. Notwithstanding, such is the praise due to judgement, (which is to be prized as a secondary or artificial genius,) that those fine thoughts, which Virgil has evidently stolen from Homer, are so extremely well dressed by his skill, that they are almost to be considered as his own, and none but a Momus would deny him his commendation for it. Imitators, by borrowing excellences, and throwing blemishes aside, (when we divest ourselves of prejudice against

against their servility,) run away with their share of praise. It is, in fact, extraordinary, that he should have played his part so very judiciously as we find him to have done. He may, in this respect, challenge a superiority over our Milton, who was posterior to him in time, and yet has more striking blemishes in his Paradise Lost, as well as more unmusical and harsh lines. This latter circumstance is perhaps chargeable to the excellence of the Roman language, which has dignity and softness combined, and is free from the many harsh and guttural words, such as *which*, *what*, *through*, &c. which disgrace our tongue. It ought, in my private opinion, to be preferred to the Greek itself, which is more licentious, rough, and boisterous, and (among the poets) loaded with an embargo of paltry monosyllables, expletives, and enclitics — Though I fear the resentment of some Hellenistic admirers for what I have advanced.

The very circumstance of the Æneid's superiority over Paradise Lost for correctness (I do not say for genius) is, if admitted, an additional argument to evince, that peculiar beauties are not confined to particular ages. Partial excellences, and universal perfection, are widely different, and there ought to be a greater distinction between them than is generally made. Had this been always the case, so many prejudices in favour of the ancients had not been propagated

propagated from age to age: judgement had not been oppoſed to genius, nor genius to judgement; but every author and every artiſt, every age and every nation, had enjoyed their ſhare of praiſe.

But to what a length has my journey into Greece led me! It is time to begin my return into my own country, leſt I weary my reader by dragging him ſo far from the place of his nativity, and detaining him there, contrary to the laws of juſtice, and his own inclination.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVI.

REFLECTIONS ON MATRIMONY.

Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain
But the destroyer, foe to God and man?

MILTON.

HUMAN perverseness, in courting infelicity, is visible in many particulars and situations; but the charge is to no condition more applicable than to the connubial state: a state which, at a distance, smiles on the lover, and promises blessings without limits; but, in the end, by overweaning expectation, by the frowns of Fortune, or by the ingenuity of a sour disposition, too frequently cheats him of the promised bliss, and even robs him of the last consolation, hope, 'which comes to all.'

With casuists, whether celibacy or wedlock be the happier state, has been as much the subject of enquiry as any point that was ever contested. To such questions it may, in general, be replied, that the human mind insensibly and gradually squares itself to, and familiarizes, every condition. If we desire a more particu-

lar

lar ſolution of the problem, the experience of two thouſand years has not framed a juſter than what Socrates has left behind him: which implies, that, for the generality, *which ever you do, whether you marry, or abſtain, you will repent.**

The attracting coyneſs of the female, (I muſt betray my ſex) ſingled out from the reſt of her companions, captivates the fond lover's heart, and he meaſures happineſs by the ſtandard of her charms: Nature inſidiouſly avails herſelf of the glow of youth, and the lovers are caught in her toils. Bliſs, contrary to other appearances, ſeems more conſiderable at a diſtance. The happineſs attending a completion of the lover's wiſh, if he is given to ſanguine expectation, proves, in proceſs of time, inadequate to the great conceptions he had formed, and his diſappointment diminiſhes his wiſhed felicity. That delicacy which at firſt allured him is gone. Familiarity breeds contempt. Under the roſe lurks the prickly thorn. Lovers dwindle, men into huſbands, women into wives. Theſe are the evils that await untutored minds.† When Nature is called on to anſwer all the demands of thoſe her greedy creditors, Hopes and

* Ἐρωτηθεὶς [Σωκράτης] πότερον γῆμαι, ἢ μὴ, ἔφη, Ὁ ἂν ἀυλῶν ποιήσῃς μεταγνώσῃ. DIOG. LAERT.

† Sperat infeſtis, metuit ſecundis,
Alteram ſortem, bene præparatum
Pectus. ——— HOR. lib. ii. od. 10.

and Wishes, she is constrained to own herself a bankrupt.

The celibate, alike unsatisfied with his situation, fancies, and with reason, that there are sweets in wedded love, which his solitary lot has deprived him of. He has no partner to share his bed and his thoughts: no bosom-friend in whom to repose his confidence. Unblessed with the chearing influence of that passion which is a refinement on friendship, he wanders about a vagabond without an owner, and feels the earth groan under him as a burden.

But whether or not marriage be a point of indifference in the mind of an individual, the promotion of it is certainly of great moment as a concern of state, and even when considered in a moral light, and on those accounts merits the attention of the public, as well as of individuals. Every one that does not, when opportunity allows him, contribute his mite to the general cause, robs the state of members, and the universe of beings. He lives on the common stock, and meanly refuses to enhance its riches.

A great cause for this desertion is the blindness of Fortune in conferring her favours. On the laborious and needy man, who is not unnerved by luxury, she frequently bestows children without number, and from him who rolls in wealth withholds even an heir to his possessions, because, as a celebrated physician has observed,

ſerved, he waters his plants with ſpices. To remedy this unequal diſtribution is the buſineſs of legiſlature. The example was long ago ſet by the Romans, in a diſtribution of a ſtated ſum for a more than equal burden of children, and recommendations to imitate that example have been urged by ſeveral writers. A fund ought, in juſtice, to be eſtabliſhed for the aſſiſtance of thoſe needy members who have been too ſucceſsful in their labours for the public good; to which every one, and in particular thoſe who are ſingle, ſhould be obliged to contribute. The burden would then be divided.

This might be a ſtate remedy to render the condition of marriage more comfortable, which is all that laws can do. The counter-part to public endeavours after this end, is a readineſs in thoſe who have given the mutual pledge of affection to exert their good-nature, and ſtrive to pleaſe the partners of their hearts. But that diſpoſition is not ſo general as were to be wiſhed. It is found to be the principal employment of many an ill-mated pair to labour to diſturb each other's repoſe, by way of qualifying what they eſteem a bitter potion. Where friends and neighbours, brothers and ſiſters, would agree, huſband and wife are ſeen at variance.

But perhaps a ſprightly intermixture of gay reflexion may relieve the reader's mind: it is not the genius of the age to be wedded to dull morality.

morality. On the ſubject of matrimony there is a little poem, ſo replete with beautiful turns, brilliant thoughts, and pertinent reflections, that I would even labour to introduce it, in ſpite of the critic's laſh, and in contempt of propriety; and, rather than not revive the memory of it, force it on the reader, if it has eſcaped his notice. Were I to reveal a ſecret, I would own that I choſe to deſcant on the ſubject for the ſake of my author's beauties. The poem has been ſome years made public, amongſt others, though it has not been noticed according to its merit, perhaps on account of the pious character of the author, whoſe ſeat allotted him on Parnaſſus has not been conſpicuous or elevated, however well he has acquitted himſelf in the little piece I am about to ſubjoin. Now, Proteus-like, will I change the form I at firſt aſſumed, and take on me that of a ſcholiaſt. —— That nothing may be loſt, we will begin with the exordium, though it contains no moral ſentiment for the purpoſe of information.

Say, mighty LOVE, and teach my ſong
To whom thy ſweeteſt joys belong;
And who the happy pairs,
Whoſe yielding hearts and joining hands
Find bleſſings twiſted with their bands,
To ſoften all their cares?

After

After this invocation our author proceeds to enumerate the ſeveral evils that await unpromiſing choices; and begins with the moſt common error, want of reflection.

Not the wild herd of nymphs and ſwains
That, thoughtleſs, fly into the chains,
As cuſtom leads the way.
If there be bliſs without deſign,
Ivies and oaks may grow and twine,
And be as bleſt as they.

This is a picture of the greater part of marriages in general. It is notorious that many young pairs are influenced by no motive but that of opportunity. A frequenting the ſame company, a next-door reſidence, or any the moſt trivial circumſtance, has laid the foundation of numberleſs alliances, without any other choice than that of either rejecting or embracing the matrimonial ſtate. A *man*, or a *woman*, in theſe caſes, is the object of wiſhes, not a *faithful partner*. The happineſs attending ſuch a combination muſt, in courſe, be merely caſual.

Not ſordid ſouls of earthly mould,
Who, drawn by kindred charms of gold,
To dull embraces move.
So two rich mountains of Peru
May ruſh to wealthy marriage too,
And make a world of love.

The

The marrying gold, instead of a human being, has been long the subject of satire, and in all probability will long continue so. Husbands and wives buy each other by weight, as they would the basest commodities. —But if our adventurer pays his devotion to the god Plutus alone, he must not expect that Venus will hear his petitions in his stead, and shower her blessings on the worshipper of another deity. The ingeniously ludicrous idea my author has given of this choice deserves a plaudit.

Not the mad tribe which lust inspires
With wanton flames : those raging fires
The purer bliss destroy.
On Ætna's top let furies wed,
And sheets of light'ning dress the bed,
T'improve the burning joy.

This is a satire on those whose amours can boast no mixture of sentiment; a circumstance that levels a man with the brutes. —— Happiness does not result from unholy fires; a purer flame alone can produce it. But as the profaneness against the divinity of Love here censured brings with it indelicate ideas, we will cut our comment short, and proceed to descant on the contrary extreme of insensibility. ——— *Procul, O procul, este, profani.*

Not

Not the dull pairs, whose marble forms
None of the melting passions warms,
Can mingle hearts and hands.
Logs of green wood that quench the coals
Are married just like Stoic souls,
With oziers for their bands.

However we may condemn brutality, some hidden share of sensual desire is mixed up in our leaven, to warm the heart. The delicate glow of benevolence, which is found in pure love, atones for, and supersedes, every admixture of indelicacy which too analytical an inspection presents to the mind. Man is neither a brute, nor a spirit; but a compound of both.

Not minds of melancholy strain,
Still silent, or that still complain,
Can the dear bondage bless.
As well may heav'nly concerts spring
From two old lutes with ne'er a string,
Or none beside the bass.

The dismal gloom of mind is not a proper seat for love, though it is actually a serious passion. Silent sorrow, and silent joy, can have only an external resemblance. Melancholy, like the sickly jaundice, spreads an unpleasing veil over every joy, and damps the nobler passions of the heart. The querulous notes of

fretfulneſs are diſcord in love, and muſt not be joined in a concert which breathes harmonious accents. Plaintive ſtrains ſuit only the hapleſs lover, whoſe deſires are as yet unbleſt.

Nor can the ſoft enchantments hold
Two jarring ſouls of angry mould,
The rugged and the keen.
Samſon's young foxes might as well
In bonds of chearful wedlock dwell,
With firebrands ty'd between.

Common life too frequently preſents this ſcene to our obſervation. Rather than overlook trifling failures, or foibles, in each other's conduct, the ill-natured pair are wont to put the moſt unfavourable conſtruction on every incident. Such tempers deſerve not happineſs, nor ever find it, whether they wear the chains, or not. Every condition of life teems with mortifications and diſappointments to thoſe who purſue the means of finding them; and it is not juſt that matrimony ſhould bear a reproach which is due to ſour diſpoſitions alone.

Nor let the cruel fetters bind
A gentle to a ſavage mind:
Love abhors the ſight.
Looſe the fierce tyger from the deer;
For native rage and native fear
Riſe and forbid delight.

This

This cruel ſcene, too, is exhibited on the ſtage of life, to the diſgrace of human nature. That gentleneſs ſhould be the prey of ferocity is indeed a reproach to a being that is privileged with reaſon; but it wants not its examples. Such a conduct ſuits only brutes; and is not entirely repreſented by them, ſince their cruelty extends not to their own ſpecies; much leſs is it exerciſed towards each other by the different ſexes. The males, in particular, are obſerved to be very tender in their treatment of the females. What pity, that man ſhould need a leſſon from a brute! ——— The poet proceeds to tell who are the happy pairs, that wear ſilken chains for marriage-bands.

Two kindeſt ſouls alone muſt meet:
'Tis friendſhip makes the bondage ſweet,
And feeds their mutual loves.
Bright Venus in her rolling throne
Is drawn by gentleſt birds alone;
And Cupids yoke the doves.

In the preceding image the poet deſcribes bleſſings which might awake Envy herſelf. If bliſs ever falls to the lot of mortals, the ſtate here deſcribed bids the faireſt to beſtow it, as the moſt pleaſing circumſtance of the moſt pleaſing paſſion. When the pleaſures of ſenſe are approved by mental ſatisfaction, the joy

is complete, and needs only that ſtability and conſtant zeſt of which the tranſports of human nature are altogether incapable. But if, through the envious machinations of time, the happy pairs afterward fall off from the glow of happineſs that ſmiled on their early ſpring, it muſt not be counted a default peculiar to wedlock, but a blemiſh in the general conſtitution of nature.

It is this ungrateful reverſe that ſcares away the cautious adventurer from courting the nuptial tie: 'I will not build my hopes on the 'firſt flattering ſcenes of ſuch a ſtate, (he cries) 'I will take into the account, love grown cold, 'the cares of a family, and other contingent 'embargos.' ——— There is reaſon in all this; but not reaſon enough. Every pleaſure, as well as love, will have an end; and it would too partial a privilege for this firſt of delights to boaſt an excluſive immortality: flights and falls are conſtant companions. But it is bad policy to reject a pleaſure becauſe it will not laſt for ever, except ſome ſingularly diſmal ſcene is ſeen in the rear; as that were a reaſon to wiſh away exiſtence itſelf. It is, however, prudent to be aware of, and to guard againſt, ſuch a defection, becauſe diſappointment is a mortifying predicament. It is good for men to have ſo much inſight into nature as not to incur the danger of a diſagreeable ſurprize. There are numberleſs innocent enjoyments to ſweeten the cares of life;

life; but we do well ever to bear in our minds the fluctuation that necessarily attends them. Happy are they who preserve their serenity in the midst of storms, and can smile at the little spites of Fortune.

Dr. Young has said, (perhaps not justly,) that bliss 'is a tenor, not a start' A tenor admits not variety, to awake the sleeping senses. There is something tedious and lethargic in such a state; and it is not to be wished that we could discard even the evils of life, on the dear condition of losing its transports with them. There is very little wisdom, or cunning, displayed in endeavours to extirpate those amiable passions which are the sources of pleasure. What does it signify what are the causes of pleasure, provided they be innocent? and where is the advantage of foregoing them, whether they are lasting or not? —— When love between the sexes is gone, there may still remain the affection of friends, and some tender pledges to revive and perpetuate the memory of it. The concomitant troubles of every condition grow familiar and vanish, by time, as well as the enjoyments; and the advantages we leave behind by a change of situation are magnified by fancy, in proportion as we retreat from them. If we travel never so far in our speculations, by a necessary revolution, we return to that maxim we left behind us, *that time levels distinctions.* — Nature seems to delight in circles.

We will conclude with a remark on choice in our connexions. —— Three principal views in contracting alliances are, beauty, money, and temper: *which* to chuſe is the problem. If there are men (for men have the privilege of making the overture) of colder complexion, who can content themſelves with the laſt of theſe views, ſweetneſs of temper, they have at leaſt little to fear from diſappointment. One ſmile from beauty, it is true, puts all our philoſophy to flight; but the charms of it are too exquiſite to delight for ever. Riches, too, grow cheap by poſſeſſion, and it matters little whether they are a dower on both ſides, provided one of the parties is bleſt with them, to ſmoothe the road of life. The ſweets of temper are permanent: they are riches inexhauſtible. But neither riches, nor beauty, nor temper, can ſubdue an invincible prepoſſeſſion; and ſtrong peculiarity of diſpoſition ſilences general rules. A maggot, they ſay, is the ſweeteſt bit in a nut. —— *Chooſe which you will, you are liable to repent.* Happieſt he who can graſp them all.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVII.

REFLEXIONS ON CRUELTY.

Quam male consuescit, quam se parat ille cruori,
Impius, humano, vituli qui guttura cultro
Rumpit, et immotas *præbet mugitibus aures !*
OVID. Met. XV. 463.

IT is related of a certain Persian monarch, who was suspicious of human frailty, that he assigned it as the particular business of one of his officers to remind him every day that he was but a man. A memento of this kind, on the subject of cruelty, as it is continually exercised, is equally seasonable and necessary. However stale the subject, and however trite reflections on it may appear, yet such is its atrocity, and so frequent are the examples of it, to awake the sympathy of nature, that a repeated abhorrence of it, far from disgusting, must soothe and console every breast that is not steeled by brutality or custom. It is a theme that ought to be repeated till the practice of it is lost in precepts.

It may be obſerved of crimes, in general, againſt the perſons or intereſts of our brother tenants of the earth, that the great circumſtance which conſtitutes them crimes is the pain, or loſs, in ſome form or other, which they occaſion thoſe the offending party has injured. Is one man hurt by another in his perſon, the harm he receives comes under the notion of pain. Does he ſuffer by ſlander and calumny, the injury he ſuſtains is alſo pain, the mind the ſeat of it.* Every ſpecies of injury that can be named terminates in pain. To be the author of pain to another is to exerciſe cruelty. Cruelty, in conſequence, (without the ſophiſtry of logic) is the eſſence of crimes; and in proportion as it is cruelty in the higheſt or loweſt degree, it is the greateſt or leaſt of crimes.

To inveigh againſt cruelty to our own ſpecies is, we will hope, utterly needleſs, as that is univerſally eſteemed a crime: for though there have been infernals in the human form, who have taken delight in this moſt unnatural of all diſpoſitions, yet an abhorrence of it is too general to require a particular cenſure. But man is not the only creature that came forth from the hands of the univerſal Parent. The ſame benign Being that created him, formed alſo the race of brutes, and endued them with

* Ξίφος τιτρώσκει σῶμα, τὸν δὲ νοῦν λόγος.

Anon. ap. Poet. minor.

with ſenſations of pleaſure and pain, as well as man. His care is extended to them equally with the nobleſt of his works. He has provided them food and clothing, for remedies againſt cold and want: and the arms he has given them are a tacit indication that they are not made to ſuffer. It is a more unnatural action to injure a being of our own ſpecies, but it is not more cruel, than to harm a brute. The ſame pain is ſomewhere ſuſtained, and creation equally groans, be man or beaſt its ſubject. It ſignifies little but to the ſufferer who is the ſufferer. There is but one Parent of all, and it is immaterial which of his works we violate.

Whether or not Nature deſigned the brute creation for the food of man, has been an inquiry ſuggeſted by tenderneſs. Every thing conſidered, it appears more than probable ſhe did, for the following reaſons: the practice is univerſal throughout the whole creation: as animals have no anticipating forethought, the term of their ſuffering is limited to the moment of loſing their life: * and, thirdly, provided needleſs cruelty be not inflicted, it is not vaſtly material whether they linger under the conflicts of nature, or ſpeedily loſe their exiſtence by

 the

* The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reaſon, would he ſkip and play?
Pleas'd to the laſt, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand juſt rais'd to ſhed his blood.
Eſſay on Man, ep. 1.

the hand of man. But whether this be the case or not, certainly, after they have clothed us with their wool, and fed us with their milk, it is indeed the act of a heart more than barbarian to aggravate their sufferings with the smallest addition of unnecessary cruelty, when their life is going to be poured forth, to support the life of man. He that can augment their pains when this their last, their greatest, instance of service is at hand, by supplying our wants, and administering to our luxury, even in death,* is a blot in the productions of nature, and a reproach to humanity.

That needless torment inflicted on these poor animals is not rare, every day's observation will inform us. The ministers of slaughter are continually exhibiting scenes of cruelty in the streets. Not content with exercising their despicable power over them, in compliance with the iniquity of the times, they wantonly beat and bruise, teaze and scare them, that a sense of their approaching misery may be awakened, and they *may feel themselves die*, as an imperial monster expressed himself.—Is crime ideal? or is cruelty not a crime? Is man a being of exquisite sensibility, and are brutes but posts? — But we will hope, for the credit of the human race, that

* Quid meruistis, oves, placidum pecus? &c.
Quid meruere boves, animal sine fraude dolisque,
Innocuum, simplex, natum tolerare labores? &c.
OVID. Metam.

that ſuch wantonneſs is to be attributed to want of thought, or to a point of curioſity, to obſerve the effects of their cruelty on the ſuffering animal. Either motive is at beſt a lame excuſe, and will not diminiſh one jot of the pain inflicted; but they are both more tolerable than genuine cruelty, for cruelty's ſake. Ignorance and inattention are not the worſt of pleas for an offence; but they are poor balm for bleeding wounds and ſores.

It is worthy of notice, that many, who are ſcrupulous of their conduct in general reſpects, are betrayed into this vice, and inſenſible of the guilt of it, as well as the lawleſs rabble. Some there are who ſuperſtitiouſly regard the the moſt ſlight and inſignificant ceremonies of religion, and violate its greateſt moral duty, by a breach of the firſt law of nature, tenderneſs to the beings around them. This is a true criterion of a narrow ſoul, which knows no law but that of inſtinct or cuſtom. Would it be believed, (but whether it be credited, or not, it is equally a truth,) that there have been profeſſors of more than ordinary ſanctity, who, when reproached for cruelty to a beaſt without a cauſe, have alleged in excuſe that the beaſt was a vermine, and not a Chriſtian? or will it not be thought that the beaſt which ſuffered was the better Chriſtian of the two?

Counterfeit goodneſs has been too much obtruded on the world for real, and ſupplanted

it. Men have made virtues out of the baſeſt materials, and neglected their trueſt eſſence: hypocriſy and cruelty have been known to uſurp the ſeat of ſincerity and univerſal benevolence. It is nothing uncommon to ſee worthleſs miſcreants make a point of not burning a ſcrap of paper with the name of God inſcribed on it, and craſing from their hearts every law he has engraven there by his finger.

The name of blaſphemy raiſes a horror where acts of atrocious cruelty would not be regarded, though really to blaſpheme is almoſt an impoſſibility for any one but an idiot. Idle words have been termed blaſphemy againſt a Being that is not capable of ſuffering, where nothing more than an offence to man could ever be intended by them. The heart of man, is not, cannot be, ſo vile as to blaſpheme. Acquit him of lunacy, and you acquit him of blaſphemy. If there be blaſphemy, it conſiſts in action. God is paſſible only in his creatures.

Cuſtom bears down all reſiſtence like a torrent: its influence is unbounded. To cuſtom and a familiarity with cruelty muſt be attributed the reigning indifference for it: on which account an abhorrence of it ſhould be the leſſon of earlieſt youth. Such a leſſon comprizes a more extenſive circle of morality than appears to ſuperficial obſervation. Brutes would not be the only objects of its chearing influence: man would ſhare it in a variety of forms. An abhor-

rence

rence of cruelty is a firm foundation for numberlefs virtues, whofe connection with it is too remote to be readily feen.

Hiftory informs us that cruelty to animals was more than barely cenfured in Greece. The court of Areopagus expelled one of its members for inhumanly denying fhelter in his bofom to a bird that fought an afylum there from the talons of its purfuer — a little circumftance big with fentiment and humanity. Even laws were enacted to punifh cruel treatment of them, greatly to the credit of the legiflators who compofed them. Were it eafy to imitate them, and enforce fuch laws, the example well deferves attention. But I fear the only law of fufficient vigour to work a prevention muft be contained in early impreffions on minds that are as yet unformed, by a reprefentation of it in all its blacknefs.

Particular arguments againft cruelty are almoft an infult on a reader's feelings. The firft and greateft argument has its refidence in the breaft, and needs not the pomp of rhetoric to enforce it, being dictated by the filent voice of Nature. The tender cries of pain are her eloquent diffuafives from cruelty; and he that is infenfible to their power deferves not the name of a man. He renounces his privilege of fuperiority which the exercife of virtue alone can confer, and is himfelf become a tyger, though he retain the human form.

Many

Many there are who cannot feel the weight of this silent argument. To such must be repeated in words, the injustice, meanness, and atrocity of this vice.

It is unjust, as we have no right to make any being whatever, whether man or beast, unhappy. Beasts, as well as men, while they live, have an indisputable title to that share of felicity which Nature has reached forth to them and tacitly allowed them. To deprive them of this, is to rob them of their due: it is a violation of her law, and an act of injustice that no argument can vindicate. If we can avail ourselves of the superior strength of some of them, in labouring and carrying burdens, the smallest return we can make is to treat them with humanity. We are, in some measure, obliged to them for their labour, and gratitude may be urged as a plea for tenderness in our treatment of them. They are joint-tenants with us of this capacious globe, and have a title to the grass of the [illegible] for their support, without incurring a debt to man for food. It is provided for them as much as any of the necessaries of life are bestowed on us: it will also grow up spontaneously for their use, without the aid of cultivation. Hence we have no claim at all on them, but are (if I am allowed the expression) in their debt for the services they render us.

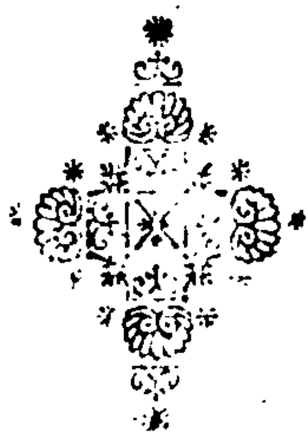
Cruelty

Cruelty is mean, becauſe the produce of a narrow mind. Men are cruel where there is an incapacity of returning the injury. To do an injury only becauſe they have power to do it, is a breach of generoſity that marks a daſtard ſoul: it is exerciſing a contemptible tyranny over an inferior which is the reverſe of greatneſs. It argues a weakneſs to be ſo intoxicated with a ſmall degree of power, as to betray the little command they have over their paſſions and actions. To injure a man is unnatural; to injure a brute is ungenerous. The inability of a brute to foil the ſuperior cunning of man is an additional argument for treating it with tenderneſs. It is doubly a crime to hurt the innocent and defenceleſs; a breach of generoſity and of humanity. True magnanimity is never tinctured with cruelty, nor can be found in company with it. The moſt generous and noble-ſpirited commander is ever the moſt compaſſionate to the yielding foe.

Cruelty is an atrocious crime, as (to ſpeak comprehenſively) it is the baſis of all crimes. The breaſt that is untinctured with cruelty is prepared for every virtue: and the heart that cheriſhes it is a ſeat for every vice. There is no violation greater, becauſe there is no injury that is not reducible to it. All that is deſirable in life, and worthy our thoughts, is virtue and pleaſure; and all we have to ſhun is vice and pain. To inflict pain is conſequently to thwart the

the buſineſs of life, and to defeat the end of exiſtence.

What has been advanced will to ſome, whoſe minds are moulded by cuſtom, not refined by ſentiment, be regarded as the idle declamation of a ſchool: but every word is regiſtered in the court of Reaſon. Cuſtom is variable, and has authorized the moſt flagitious crimes: reaſon is uniform and ever the ſame; the patron of ſubſtantial virtue, and unmaſker of fantaſtic form.



CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVIII.

SCATTERED REMARKS ON THE SCIENCES.

Ὥσπερ γὰρ τὴν μέλιτταν ὁρῶμεν ἐφ' ἅπαντα μὲν τὰ βλαστήματα καθιζάνουσαν, ἀφ' ἑκάστου δὲ τὰ χρήσιμα λαμβάνουσαν, οὕτω χρὴ καὶ τοὺς παιδείας ὀρεγομένους μηδενὸς μὲν ἀπείρως ἔχειν, πανταχόθεν δὲ τὰ χρήσιμα συλλέγειν. ISOCRATES.

THE example of a bee, which does not confine itself to any one particular flower, but indiscriminately extracts its honey from them all, is well applied by one of the most sensible, and least whimsical, of all the Greek moralists, to pursuits after knowledge; in which he recommends variety, in imitation of the little industrious animal. The advice is by no means contemptible, as a moderate knowledge of the sciences in general is more ornamental and useful than a perfect acquaintance with any single branch, to the total exclusion of the rest. Nothing is better calculated to eradicate private prejudices than a general view; nor is any thing more apt to engender them than a peculiar attachment. Every science has some excellence to recommend it, but the mind ought not to be wedded to one alone.

The

The ſtudy of the MATHEMATICS is a fine field to expatiate in, for the enlargement of ideas. An acquaintance with this ſcience (the aſtronomic part in particular) reſembles a voyage into another world. It furniſhes ideas ſo eccentric from the common circle of underſtanding, as to impart to a ſtudent therein, as it were, a ſecond ſoul. To vulgar minds the earth we inhabit ſeems the principal ſpot on which the Deity has beſtowed his care; and the tenants of it the only beings to whom he has communicated life. The ſun and moon appear their lamps alone, and the ſtars the twinkling ornaments to the dome of their habitation. Aſtronomy baniſhes ſuch confined and ſelfiſh notions. The mathematician diſcovers ſyſtem upon ſyſtem, and world upon world. With reaſon for his guide, he naturally concludes that the glittering ſtars his ſimple neighbour fondly imagines to belong to this globe of earth, are nothing to us, but that they are the ſouls and centers of other ſyſtems, to give light, and heat, and vegetation, and motion, to animals, and plants, and trees, in other ſpheres. He meaſures the diſtances of the heavenly bodies, and aſcertains their magnitudes and revolutions, (which bear a proportion to their diſtances,) by operations demonſtrable to attention, but out of the reach of common apprehenſion. By the doctrine of parallax (a doctrine that may be conceived by a traveller, who ſees hills, and

and trees, and houſes, keep pace with, or recede from, him, as he paſſes along, according to their different diſtances) he is informed of the ſecrets of other worlds. In a word, he has the laws of the celeſtial choir expoſed before him, nor ſtops his reſearches till he arrives at the origin of motion in the ſeveral ſyſtems, the great *arcanum* of aſtronomy, which, with its wonderful preſervation, he in vain ſtretches his thoughts to account for from mathematical aſſumptions, and is forced to reſolve into the immediate agency of divine power. Every part of this ſcience merits the attention of a philoſopher, for its certainty and curious diſcoveries. It was an ill-judged compliment, both to mathematics and to our nation, paid by Pruſſia's monarch, when he ſaid he left the ſcience to a *rêve-creux d'Anglois, ſome empty dreamer of an Engliſhman.* He little cared for the height of mount St. Catherine* in the moon, becauſe he could not make a rampart of it againſt the enemy; and as little for the extraordinary ſtature of an ordinary-ſized inhabitant of the planet Jupiter,* diſcovered by arguments on the pupil of his eye, becauſe he could not procure a regiment of them to ſend againſt the Auſtrians. He keeps himſelf, he tells his correſpondent Voltaire, in the ſame letter, to the planet he inhabits: he does well, if ſo it pleaſes him; and

* See an account of theſe pretty fancies in Chambers's Dictionary.

and he will do ſtill better if he always ſupports the rights of his crown with as little deſtruction to the inhabitants of that planet as poſſible ——— We have ſeen what progreſs the mathematician makes in other worlds; now turn we to the reverſe of his character, and view how well he acquits himſelf in this. A mere mathematician is a being, perhaps, one of the moſt inſipid and comic in life. Abſorbed in his one ſtudy, he ſlights and neglects every other, as beneath the dignity of his favourite ſcience and his own regard. His converſation is unentertaining and diſagreeable; his deportment uncouth and ſingular. The elegances of life, ever the criterion of taſte, are conſidered by him as gew-gaws, unworthy the attention of one whoſe views are elevated among the ſtars. Roughneſs and peeviſhneſs are the clothing of his mind, and an antique garb, which Hipparchus and Ptolemy themſelves might have worn, is the covering of his body. How unadviſed is exceſs! how weak and flimſy is man! It has been obſerved of the great Newton himſelf, who could not be eſteemed a mere mathematician, that he was ſo bigotted to his favourite ſcience, as to deſpiſe lighter amuſements. It is well known he expreſſed a contempt for a conteſt about a Latin comedy, and a ſurpriſe that men of education ſhould make a ſtir about an *old play*. A later mathematician, far his inferior in genius, and ſcarcely tinctured with claſſic lore, was heard to drop

drop more contemptuous expreſſions about that ſtudy. Mathematics, he ſaid, was the only ſcience worth regarding. As to Latin and Greek, any blockhead might learn them; for that he himſelf knew a boy that perfectly underſtood Homer when but eight years old ——— So might any one have underſtood mathematics at the ſame age, by help of a peculiar turn of mind; and if our mathematician ſpoke the truth, it was more than he himſelf underſtood at four times the age of the boy in queſtion. — Such prejudices diſgrace the acquiſitions of men of ſcience. It were better they could condeſcend to play with children and their toys, than to have contracted ſuch ſtatelineſs.

The ſtudy of the LANGUAGES comes more within the circle of common life than the mathematics, though it be certainly an inferior purſuit. Learning words, as it has been called, may be looked on as trifling and pedantic, but it has its excellence, as being a good exerciſe of the ideas, a ſpecies of metaphyſics, and the foundation of the Belles Lettres. No great progreſs in polite literature can be made without it. The different manner of arranging ideas at different times and in different nations, the variety of dreſſes they wear in different minds, are a kind of *mental maſquerade*, of ſervice in ſpeculation. The more lights we view our ſubjects in, the clearer are our conceptions of them; the more languages we acquire, the more

more lights we are enabled to view them in. To taſte the beauties of fancy, in perfection, in poetical and rhetorical ornaments of writing, a knowledge of language is neceſſary; a view which is nearly connected with real taſte, and no mean accompliſhment to a gentleman. It is likewiſe worthy obſervation, that thoſe who are ignorant of every tongue but their own cannot well expreſs themſelves in their own. Confined to their native manner, they are excluded from the benefit of choice in words, and in the arrangement and diſpoſition of thoſe words. There are certain energetic modes of expreſſion, certain beauties of ſound, and certain tranſpoſitions of words, peculiar to every nation, the ſpirit of which may be ſometimes happily tranſfuſed into foreign tongues, and add to them grace, power, and an air of novelty, to enliven an attention that is dead to common ſounds and vulgar ideas. The principal exception that has been made on this head, is too great a reverence for the *learned languages*, as they are generally called, which have been complimented, together with their authors, as complete ſtandards for modern imitation. It is true they had their Horace and their Cicero, genius and judgement, correctneſs and elegance, combined, in a few of their writers: but if we take a general view of the ancients, candor will oblige us to confeſs, that there has been too great a partiality ſhewn them, ſince every ſpe-

cies

cies of good writing among them can be contrasted with performances at least equally good amongst us, and the arts are in much greater perfection. However, their reverences ought not to be robbed of the praise that is due to undoubted originality, which they may certainly challenge as their right, and that respect which is paid to masters and teachers. A greater share of commendation cannot be given them on account of the original nonsense and unmeaning passages dispersed among their beauties. The principal reason why they may crave our attention is, that they are curious monuments of antiquity, and display a diversity of manners, notions, and thoughts, from what we now experience; a contrast with which, as it suggests a comparative judgement, exercises and assists the understanding. —— We may, it is allowed, read them in English; but translations greatly strip them of their originality.

Music, though it cannot be said to inform the mind, is an amiable and engaging accomplishment. The influence it has on the soul is a powerful magic charm, with no visible cause for its operation. It is a curious phænomenon, that a sound should tune and harmonize the affections, as the artist does his instrument, which strikingly illustrates the intimate connexion of soul and body, of the organ of hearing and the seat of intelligence. The placid benevolence, the extatic glow, which different notes inspire,

inſpire, extend even to a moral effect, which is more ſtrongly felt by experience, than deſcribed by words. Endued with ſuch enchanting powers, no wonder an extraordinary attachment to it has bewitched ſome of its profeſſors, and robbed them of half their ſenſes. Saul's madneſs, as we read, was cured by muſic: madneſs ariſing from muſic has no ſuch cure: more muſic to a mind diſeaſed with it would reſemble the additional adminiſtration of wine to one already intoxicated ——— Muſic may be a great ornament to a man; but many of its profeſſors are no ornament to muſic: thoſe I mean who chuſe for their motto, *Vox et præterea nihil.*

Poetry is another ſcience, or art, which is apt to lead aſtray, from the paths of common ſenſe and common propriety, thoſe who dedicate too large a portion of time to the muſes: Inſpiration and madneſs are eſteemed congenial. But, ſmitten with the excellence of his favourite metaphyſics, Locke ſeems to have ſhewn himſelf too great a foe to this harmleſs paſtime, in his remarks on education. If it be allowed that an excluſive attention to it inſpires its devotees with wild caprices; metaphyſics have done the ſame. All that was neceſſary to be obſerved, is, that extremes are dangerous. Its wanderings apart, we will venture to pronounce it a delicate, agreeable, and liberal accompliſhment. For the ſake of imitative beauty in morality,

rality, every ſpecies of ornament merits cultivation. A mind that is adorned with beautiful, congruous, and harmonious ideas, will, it may be preſumed, be beſt prepared for moral beauty and order. The external ornaments of dreſs itſelf, which have a leſs intimate connexion with mental endowments, are a ſort of diſtant memento to the wearer to conſult propriety and decorum in his actions. No decoration of art or ſcience is ill-beſtowed to adorn human nature. Like the rich ore, it contains much hidden worth; but it requires ſkill and care to cultivate it. It muſt be purified and refined by ſentiment, and ſtamped into price by virtue. — Dr. Langhorne has an appoſite and elegant paſſage (which has been judiciouſly ſelected by the critics) on the ſubject of poetical follies, warmly inveighing againſt reflections on thoſe human frailties which are the reſult of genius: the good-natured reader will review it with pleaſure and ſatisfaction. Speaking of Mr. Collins, an unfortunate poet, he makes the following remarks. 'The enthuſiaſm of poetry, 'like that of religion, has frequently a power-'ful influence on the conduct of life; and ei-'ther throws it into the retreat of uniform ob-'ſcurity, or marks it with irregularities that 'lead to miſery and diſquiet. The gifts of ima-'gination bring the heavieſt taſk on the vigi-'lance of reaſon; and to bear thoſe faculties 'with unerring rectitude, or invariable pro-

'priety, requires a degree of firmneſs and of 'cool attention, which does not always attend 'the higher gifts of the mind. Yet, difficult 'as Nature herſelf ſeems to have rendered the 'taſk of regularity to genius, it is the ſupreme 'conſolation of *dulneſs* and of *folly* to point, 'with Gothic triumph, to thoſe exceſſes which 'are the overflowings of faculties they never 'enjoyed. Perfectly unconſcious that they are 'indebted to their ſtupidity for the conſiſtency of 'their conduct, they plume themſelves on an 'imaginary virtue, which has its origin in what 'is really their diſgrace. —— Let ſuch, if ſuch 'dare approach the ſhrine of COLLINS, with-'draw to a reſpectful diſtance; and, ſhould 'they behold the ruins of genius, or the weak-'neſs of an exalted mind, let them be taught 'to lament that Nature has left the nobleſt of 'her works imperfect.' ——— Were there no reaſon in what the doctor has here advanced, the quotation is to be admired for its ſpirit and elegance: but there is likewiſe a deal of juſtice in his remarks. Nevertheleſs, ſince the world is, in general, more inclined to cenſure than praiſe, it is the part of prudence to guard againſt that intemperance in mental purſuits which may expoſe the ſtudent to the hazard of a mercileſs reception, or throw him on a precarious generoſity he may not hope to find. We all of us need the advice of a Mentor in our turns.

HISTORY

HISTORY and ETHICS, which are collateral branches, the one relating what man is, the other teaching what he ought to be, cannot be ſaid to diſtort from the paths of propriety, at the ſame time that they afford much inſtruction. Hiſtory promotes the knowledge of human nature in a particular manner, and ethics enlarge the ideas and refine the mind. Under this head, ſenſible, ingenious novels, which are founded in nature, well deſerve to be ranked. They are improvements on common life and common ſenſe, and to the generality more amuſing than true hiſtory, the author having it in his power to make his characters as various and as entertaining as he pleaſes, provided he keep to real life, without an impeachment of his judgement. Many novels are juſtly cenſured, as turning the brains of weak readers with idle romantic notions, fitted for ſome fairy land, but not current in that we inhabit: but theſe are not what I mean. The novels of Le Sage, Fielding, and Smollett, are not liable to this objection: in them the pencil of nature and dictates of prudence are united. —— The moſt ignorant goſſip that lives, one that cannot read, has ſome ſhare of hiſtory and ethics to inform her mind. In her daily converſe with her companions ſhe hears lectures of biography and morality, to inſtruct her in the manners of the world, and reaps ſome benefit from her intercourſe with them, though ſhe has

not the ability of always forming just conclusions. Yet, uninformed as she is, what advantage has she over those who are banished from human society! A wild youth of the woods, could he understand her observations and her stories, would admire her as a prodigy.— Mathematics, and music, and poetry, however agreeable in themselves, may with more propriety be omitted than history and ethics, as less necessary to a man of the world, and more productive of extravagations.

NATURAL HISTORY is a very improving branch of philosophy, which gives a high idea of the works of nature and its author, and deserving of cultivation for its usefulness; but it has been generally deemed a dry study, (to use a common expression,) which men of brilliant parts, of wit, or elegance in taste, are not particularly captivated with. It has a tendency (like the mathematics) to render its devotees singular, dull, and philosophic; which is not admired by the general taste. It is good, in pursuits of so grave a kind, to counteract their influence on the temper by an intermixture of more sprightly and chearful amusements, the enlivening sallies of company and conversation, and the literary productions of wit and humour. An attachment to a favourite study insensibly steals on the student. He is lead away a captive before he is aware that he is even in danger of a surprise.

PHYSIC

PHYSIC and physicians have undergone, from different pens, both praise and censure. Wit and pleasantry have been passed on the science from earliest times,* as if it tended rather to amuse than cure. If we take a middle road in this debate, I am of opinion, we shall not stray widely from the truth, by neither attributing to it a magic power of triumphing over nature and her laws, and rescuing a subject from the arms of death when the stamina of life are wasted and broken, as some have done, nor, with others, denying it to possess any virtue at all. A supposition that it has no efficacy may thus be answered. Are there not drugs which contain properties so strong as to stop the current of life? have not poisons this efficacy? Why then, from the same principles, may we not grant a power in other medicines of assisting nature and healing? I know that it is as much more difficult to cure than kill, as it is to make than to destroy; but difficulty does not imply impossibility. Disorders that are merely local, where a general weakness of the patient is not found, to counteract the physician's endeavours, are particularly a proper subject for physic. A trifling obstruction, or a trifling infirmity, of a very inconsiderable portion of the human system, like a defect in one single tooth in one of the wheels of a watch or clock, may be sufficient to cause a

* —— Medicus enim nihil aliud est quam animi consolatio. Ap. PETRON.

general ſtagnation of motion, where the ſkill of an artiſt would re-communicate freſh life and vigour to the whole machine. But a proper conduct of the non-naturals (abſurdly ſo called, as my friend Triſtram obſerves) is a point more eſſential to health, and an improper conduct of them more deſtructive of it, than any influence derived from medicine. Trees and plants go through the buſineſs of vegetation with fewer maladies than man, becauſe they are not endued with *reaſon, to lead them aſtray*, or otherwiſe, becauſe they deviate not from the principles on which they are conſtructed. They have their diſeaſes, but not in ſuch abundance as the human race. ——— What odium is thrown on the ſcience, is brought on it by the extreme fancifulneſs of valetudinarians. Every malady they read of, by an attention to ſyſtem, they are apt to think they themſelves labour under; and every remedy they hear of they imagine will work a miracle.

Though the ſciences themſelves have nothing exceptionable in them, many of the profeſſors of them, by their ſeveral follies of intemperance and caprice, have brought a kind of odium and diſgrace on them to vulgar minds, which ſhould not, in juſtice, diſhonour the cauſe of learning. Theſe diſadvantages are particularly obſerved to accrue from an excluſive attention to the converſation of the dead, and a want of general taſte. There are coquets in literature.

In

In purſuit of higher endowments, men of letters have been ſeen to ſet aſide all regard to common propriety, and to acquire particularities in manners and converſation, which expoſe them to the ridicule of ignorance. This very age has given us an eminent inſtance of ſuch an unfortunate metamorphoſis; a learned, ſubtle, and ingenious philoſopher, (my reader will eaſily gueſs whom I intend,) who has dedicated his life to the acquiſition of knowledge, and ſtored his mind with whims in as great abundance as new ſterling ideas; one who has conducted his readers along the paths of knowledge, and has himſelf, like the verieſt child, needed the tuition of a gouvernante in the common affairs of life; a man who has ſtudied himſelf into a million of oddities; fancies the whole world in a plot againſt him; ſhuns human converſe, and flies to wilds and mountains; and, what is worſe than all, has acquired, with ſome, the character of a miſanthropiſt. Such a farrago of knowledge is a greater misfortune to the poſſeſſor than the ſimplicity of nature and primitive ignorance.

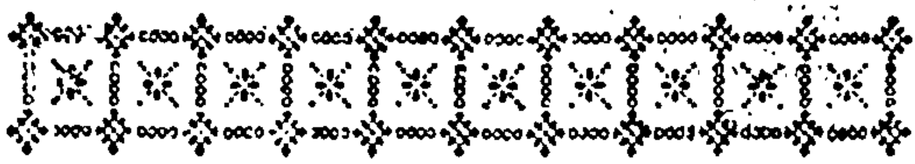
' Not the manners only, but likewiſe the look and geſtures of a man, are affected by the habit of the mind. The condition of a ſervant (I do not mean thoſe pampered footmen who are ſmiled on by their indulgent miſtreſſes) contracts the muſcles to humble look and ſhrinking ſervility, and chills the genial current of the

blood. The young nobleman has a generous and pleasing impudence in his countenance, a gaiety which proclaims no care within, and (till he is wasted by nocturnal revels) a sleek and untarnished face. The miser wears a mask of caution, watches your every motion, and slinks about as if he had a thousand thieves in ambush for his treasure. The peasant presents an uniform dulness, his face inclining to the earth he cultivates: in the one face he has from Nature, (for art lends others a variety,) you see all the simplicity of our forefathers who lived on acorns. The student, amongst the numerous variety of character, has his turn of mind externally expressed, a peculiar badge conferred on him by the Muses, to mark him for their own: gravity in aspect, solemnity of air, extreme confidence or extreme timidity, absence of thought, a load of politeness or none at all, inattention to the *minutiæ* of life and behaviour, great loquacity or total silence, and a singular result of the whole, frequently tinctured with some philosophy of dress, an uncouth or slovenly coat, the livery of the Muses.

Were all men philosophers, or were there no such thing as general taste, these foibles would be immaterial. But the scholar is to take notice that he has not the privilege of other culprits when arraigned, a trial by his peers: his judges and jury are composed of *the many*, who make no allowance for scholastic whim, and will not compile

pile a ſpecial code of laws to try a particular ſet of men.

Knowledge is, or ought to be, an ornament; but if common propriety is the price that is paid for it, it will, by the world, be deemed, at beſt, but an exchange not worth the trouble of making it. Notwithſtanding, it argues a want of judgement to attribute that as a fault to learning which is chargeable only to human weakneſs; and none but a ſimple man will ſhelter his contempt for erudition under ſo pitiful a pretext.



CHAPTER XIX.

WORLDLY ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF VIRTUE.

(A LAY SERMON,

The Authorities from heathen Divines.)

——— Μηδέποτε μηδὲν αἰσχρὸν ποιήσας, ἐλπίζε λήσειν· κἂν γὰρ ἂν τοὺς ἄλλους λάθῃς, σεαυτῷ γε συνειδήσεις.

Isoc. ad Demonic.

Ampliat ætatis ſpatium ſibi vir bonus : hoc eſt
Vivere bis, vitâ poſſe priore frui.

MART.

THAT ſelf-love is the great ſpring of human actions, is an axiom almoſt too ſtale to ſuffer a repetition. That that ſelf-love is found to operate in purſuits of pleaſure, in the common idea of that word, is another truth confirmed by experience. And that one ſtate, by the influence of time, is not happier than another, is a third poſition; on which, as proper baſes, ſhall be conſtructed the ſubject of the following chapter. On theſe three worldly principles, which come home to the moſt ſordidly ſelfiſh of human beings, may integrity be enforced, without recourſe to the diſregarded doctrines

doctrines of *duty* and *command.* Fear is the principle that many moralists have endeavoured to work on; but custom has rendered that motive indifferent.

Though, to a man of the world, it be a hard lesson to learn, to embrace virtue as a Stoic, merely because it is virtue, when it clashes with interest, yet to love it as an Epicurean, for the pleasure it is capable of producing, is no airy notion. It is a motive that has been felt by many noble minds, and may be the reward of others, who will be at some small pains, with the assistance of reflection, to acquire that amiable disposition.

Worldly happiness may be fairly pleaded in the cause of virtue; and that is a consideration that should be of force with a villain. The reflexion of innocence throws a pleasing shade on every scene. The acquisition of wealth and other courted objects is by no means followed by so great felicity as the griping fancy imagines, even when procured by honourable methods; much less can it command satisfaction when it is the fruit of dishonesty. Those overweening notions are engendered by prejudice, which experience and a general survey will banish. When the high opinion a knave has conceived of riches begins to abate, by that satiety which is the concomitant of possession, he will have calmness of mind and leisure to pon-

der on the means whereby he has amaſſed them.* Under ſuch a ſituation integrity has charms more ſterling than gold.

The definition of a man of honour, given by a writer who had a fine taſte for moral beauty, ſhall ſerve as the touchſtone for uprightneſs; and he that can ſtand that teſt has reaſon to congratulate himſelf on his character. 'Were it in the power of a good man, ſays my 'author, with only a ſnap of his finger, to in-'trude his name into the teſtament of a dying 'rich man, to the excluſion of his lawful 'heir, he would abhor the deed, though aſſured 'no mortal could diſcover it.'†

The compact of ſociety, the engagement we all virtually enter into when we profeſs ourſelves members of the community, is equally binding, whether a violation of it can be known or not. This criterion of an honeſt man, that he preſerves his integrity when out of the reach of obſervation, does honour to him that can claim it, and no one is ſtrictly ſo who is not diſtinguiſhed by it. It is a generous and amiable qualification, which is never found but in company with greatneſs of ſoul. In ſuch a man there

* Magne Pater divum, ſævos punire tyrannos
Haud alia ratione velis, cum dira libido
Noverit ingenium, ferventi tincta veneno,
Virtutem ut videant, intabeſcantque relicta.
PERSIUS, ſat. ii.

† CIC. Off. 3.

there is a satisfaction unknown to the fraudulent, unjust, and oppressive part of the world, who wallow in wealth which is the purchase of their crimes, and cannot taste the pleasures of innocence. To merit felicity, to a delicate mind, is, in fact, to enjoy it.*

That we are guilty of no act of injustice through fear of the laws, or dread of reproach, is a mean consideration, very low in the scale of virtues: yet the major part of mankind are wrought on by no nobler motive. The pride of virtue is at a loss whether to censure the ignoble minds which answer such a description as this, or to look down on them with pity or contempt. They are certainly not to be envied. Human merit is, at best, but a pitiful commodity; but they cannot veil themselves with even the shadow of it: and pain and uneasiness must accompany a conduct which is but the offspring of constraint.

What a pleasing circumstance, what a genuine joy, exceeding what a corrupt mind will count a joy, must have attended the compliment paid to that Grecian, who had acquired such confidence among his fellow-citizens by his uniform and unshaken integrity, as to have the keys of the city entrusted to his honour, without the usual demand of an oath, to secure his fidelity! He might have had a more lucrative,

* Est enim demum vera felicitas felicitate dignum videri. PLIN. paneg.

lucrative, he could not have a more exquiſite, reward. The conſideration of ſuch a requital is generally looked on as romantic, but it is actually glorious. The ſacrifice of vicious inclination is much more noble than libations of blood at the altar of Bellona, which have purchaſed, too cheaply, wreaths of laurel, to adorn the head of many a victor. The reward of virtue is too often adjudged to the patrons of vice, to the detriment of virtue's cauſe.

This reward lies more particularly within the reach of perſons in eminent ſtations and employments. If men act for rewards, they have the faireſt opportunities of enjoying them under the moſt delicious forms. The ſmalleſt ſervices of a great man to a ſtate are received with ſuch expreſſions of honour and reſpect as millions of annual income will not procure. Expreſſions of homage are a principal object of riches, and the upright ſtateſman has them in abundance, his elevated ſtation placing him in the moſt conſpicuous view. When Sir Robert Walpole aſſerted that every one has his price, he uttered a truth; and the queſtion is, in what that price ſhould conſiſt: a more valuable bribe exiſts not than the external applauſes of a nation, and the internal approbation of the heart. Extreme poverty has warped a ſtubborn integrity from noble reſolutions, by a conflict which calls forth the tears of humanity: it has incited to actions, for which the agent

condemned

condemned himſelf whilſt he yielded up his conſent: but that is not the caſe with the great. Suppoſing that, by fraud and peculation, a miniſter can increaſe his income of ten thouſand a year to twenty or thirty thouſand, is the ſurplus an equivalent for loſs of integrity? —— He will be more reſpected with five thouſands a year, and a reputation unſullied, than with ten times that income, and loſs of his honour. The name of a Cheſterfield carries renown into retreat. —— But corrupt miniſters know how to ſmile at ſcholaſtic notions, and to ſtop the mouth of the pedant ſcribbler with a dinner.

If there are minds which cannot take delight in the applauſes of conſciouſneſs, they are tarniſhed and corrupt: that confeſſion does little honour to him that makes it. Reflexions on this head may to ſome be hateful as death; but they will be ſo to thoſe only whoſe virtue is at the loweſt ebb.

General depravity doubtleſs occaſions a greater indifference for the cauſe of virtue, by a diſcouraging ſcene of corruption, than would otherwiſe have ſubſiſted. Men are greatly animated by example, as we ſee in inſtances of fortitude, whoſe influence is a perfect contagion: they would be virtuous where they are not, were virtue ſmiled on by public countenance. In their preſent ſituation they are of opinion they may as well go down with the common ſtream, as approve themſelves the faultleſs

monſters

monſters of nature. But this peeviſhneſs is a moral diſeaſe, not to be admired or indulged: there is the greater opportunity of winning the prize of glory when there are but few competitors, than when a whole multitude contend for it. There have been heroes in vice, who have plumed themſelves on unexampled acts of villany; why ſhould there not be heroes in a more noble cauſe? Were real virtue in due eſtimation, were the exerciſe of it properly encouraged, the poſſeſſion of it would not be ſuperſeded by ſordid conſiderations: duty and delight would center in one. That is to probe the wound to the bottom. Where merit is duly rewarded, God is worſhipped in his works.

From a curſory ſurvey of the moral world, with a moderate ſhare of good-nature for our guide, did not experience evince the contrary, one would be led to imagine that few among us, who are not apparently under the influence of very cogent and extraordinary impulſes, could coolly and deliberately be guilty of a flagrant breach of juſtice or humanity. If things are ſeen as they are; if virtue and vice are placed in a true and conſpicuous light, and men of delicate feelings are ſet up for judges, the former has ſo much the advantage, as muſt attach them to her cauſe.

The picture of moral beauty is finely drawn by the prince of eloquence. 'No animal beſide 'man (ſays that elegant writer) is charmed 'with the beauty, grace, and harmony of ma-

'terial

'terial objects. A representation of which, 'being transplanted from the eyes of the body 'to those of the mind, constitutes a higher taste 'for moral beauty, grace, and harmony, and 'forbids a violation of them in deed or intention. 'The result of this forms that Virtue which 'is in question; which is intrinsically noble 'though it were not ennobled, and commend-'able, though by none commended. You see, 'as it were, a resemblance of this beauty: but 'could it be gazed on by the eyes of flesh, it 'would, as Plato says, excite wondrous love 'for wisdom.' *

This idea of the beauty of virtue is not altogether chimerical: we have a resemblance of it.

* ——— Itaque eorum ipsorum, quæ aspectu sentiuntur, nullum aliud animal [præter hominem] pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium, sentit. Quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem, in consiliis factisque conservandum putat, cavetque ne quid indecore effœminateve faciat; tum in omnibus et opinionibus et factis ne quid libidinose aut faciat aut cogitet. Quibus ex rebus conflatur et efficitur id, quod quærimus, honestum: quod etiamsi nobilitatum non sit, tamen honestum sit; quodque vere dicemus, etiamsi a nullo laudetur, laudabile esse natura. Formam quidem ipsam ——— et tanquam faciem honesti vides; quæ, si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores, ut ait Plato, excitaret sapientiæ. De Officiis, lib i.

it in the amiable appearance of infants. In them we behold, as it were, innocence imperſonated and viſible to our external ſight. They ſhew us geſtures and looks full of the harmleſs ſimplicity of nature, untinctured with the fraud and baſeneſs which ſordid intereſt and villanous deſign have diſperſed through the world. In their countenances no cruelty and murders are pictured, no baſeneſs and guile, to ſurpriſe unwarineſs. What nature ſimply rehearſes they repeat, nor dreſs her dictates in the diſguiſe of art. In ſuch a view the moſt abandoned wretch muſt find a pleaſure. Virtue and innocence ever wear the faireſt form: all the ſophiſtry of villany, and ſelf-perſuaſion uſed by a knave to ſmother and ſtifle his feelings, cannot ſo far blind him, as that he ſhall be unable to ſee their beauty in others. There are ſeeds of virtue in every human breaſt, ſown there by the Author of exiſtence, which will diſplay themſelves when wayward intereſt does not check them.

I have choſen the rather to inſiſt on the pleaſure of virtue, as that carries more conviction with it than the rigour of duty. Epicurus has more diſciples than Zeno. Pleaſure is the grand movement of all our actions; every thing we do is reducible to that one general ſpring. And if it be urged that what we think a pleaſure is a pleaſure, whether it be laudable or not, it may with truth be replied, that virtue is capable of yielding that pleaſure, as there

have

have been many examples of it. It appears a Herculean task to shake off vicious habits; but a little resolution and labour will effect great and unhoped for changes in temper and inclination:* and, when once good habits are adopted, the way, that before seemed rigid and thorny, becomes easy and familiar. By custom men have rolled naked in burning sands and in snow, without shrinking from the pain. By custom the wives of Indians have been animated to throw themselves into the flaming pile of their deceased husbands without revolting at the ideas of tortures and death. The same custom would avail in a nobler cause. Men have been exalted into gods; and men have sunk into brutes and devils. The philosophy of Newton is as true of the moral, as it is of the natural, world: the tempers of men are as differently modified as the atoms of matter. — If we love virtue as far as it is agreeable, we shall love it as we ought, provided only we make it as agreeable as possible.

Though

* Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitescere possit,
Si modo culturæ patientem commodet aurem.
HOR. lib. i. epist. 1.

Τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἱδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν
Ἀθάνατοι, μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐς αὐτὴν
Καὶ τρηχὺς τοπρῶτον· ἐπὴν δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηαι
Ῥηϊδίη δ' ἤπειτα πέλει, χαλεπή περ ἐοῦσα.
HESIOD. Op. et D. lib. i.

Though the delicacy of men, in general, does not rise so high, as that a consciousness of honour will procure them satisfaction, if they reap not the fruits of external approbation, yet prudence will suggest to them how hazardous a step they take when they trust to the uncertainty of concealment. If sagacity be adopted by one party to hide a base action, the same sagacity will assist another in finding it out. The object of fame is missed. Very few, I am inclined to think, gain the reputation of virtue when they have it not. Mens characters are generally known: and the world are always more disposed to find out faults than perfections; darkness, by the enchantments of envy, being more visible than light. The knave may spread the veil of night over his actions, and assume the mask of sanctity;

——— *Sed luna videt, sed sidera testes*
Intendunt oculos. ———

The most artful dissimulation will not always and every where avail. Internal and external punishment seldom fails to follow the detested deed when the dictates of the heart are rebelliously slighted. The baser passions will, when they subside, give way to Reason, who will be heard in some succeeding calm. Though her voice be gentle and mild, it is distinct and commanding, and will, like a nightly vision, attend

tend the villain in his ſlumbers, and haunt him in his bed. The ſtings of remorſe are not to be deſpiſed.* And ſhame and infamy will add weight to its ſtripes.

That a man has no conſcience at all in his actions; that, by a continued career in the paths of villany, he is become ſo callous and deaf to its reproaches, as to have loſt the pain that accompanies ſenſibility; may by ſome be thought a valuable acquiſition: but inſenſibility alone can pronounce ſuch a ſentence: nature and reaſon, our faithful monitors, combine to reverſe it. We may aſk, with a ſenſible prelate, 'Is a man who ſleeps on a precipice in leſs danger becauſe he ſleeps?' ——— Inſenſibility is no deſirable accompliſhment; it will only render a man more contemptible in the eyes of others, who are more expert in unmaſking their neighbours vices than they are in diſcovering their own.

If we view Virtue as fataliſts, (for I will allow the advocates for vice no hole to creep out at,) ſhe is the ſame charming object, the only fair miſtreſs of the mind: mental reproach is what the rankeſt fataliſt cannot eſcape when he offends:

* Nolite enim putare, P. C. ut in ſcena videtis, homines conſceleratos impulſu deorum terreri furiarum tædis ardentibus: ſua quemque fraus, ſuum facinus, ſuum ſcelus, ſua audacia, de ſanitate ac mente deturbat. Hæ ſunt impiorum furiæ, hæ flammæ, hæ faces. Cic. orat. in Piſ.

offends: the reproof of the heart is the juſtice and philoſophy of nature. If we view her as the advocates of freedom, ſhe can plead merit as well as ſatisfaction. If we view her with the eye of religion, we embrace her as recommended by ſilent commands from heaven. Behold her as we will, ſhe can ever plead general utility. Her cauſe is the cauſe of all. We ſhould join to fight for her as we would in defence of our city when beſieged by the enemy. She is the Palladium of the general good.

But ſtop, fond moraliſt, and unbend your brow. —— By virtue is here intended, chearful, ſmiling virtue; not Stoical inſenſibility, nor monkiſh ſeverity. I have never yet been able to diſcover the merit of ſelf-denial in innocent wants, or the great reaſon to boaſt of not obeying the voice of Nature, which ſhe utters to all: of making virtues of celibacy, faſting, and mortification. Why to ſnatch from another the bleſſings of life ſhould be eſteemed a violation, and to ſnatch them from ourſelves ſhould be counted a virtue, I cannot divine. Sectaries never more diſgrace their ſeveral cauſes than when they inſiſt on trifles for virtues. Good ſenſe the moſt valuable ideal, and good-nature the moſt amiable moral, philoſophy, are more beneficial to the world than all the pomp of ſyſtem: and neither good ſenſe, nor good-nature, will patronize needleſs ſeverity.

Virtue

Virtue ſhould not be pictured like a fury, with ſnakes for her hair, and a Gorgon's head. Were ſhe preſented in her native charms, men might court her as the miſtreſs of their hearts, who captivates powerfully, becauſe ſhe captivates pleaſantly. There are evils in life (I again repeat it) ſufficient for the moſt greedy ſearcher after them; and it is not requiſite that more be added to the number.

Pleaſure, as pleaſure, is not to be condemned; but only guilty pleaſure: ſuch as injures another is unjuſt; ſuch as hurts ourſelves is imprudent. When there is no reaſon to be alleged againſt a pleaſure, there is always one for it — *T'enjoy is to obey*, and the only foundation for gratitude. Is it conſonant with reaſon, or is it conſiſtent with equity, that morality ſhould enjoin it as a duty to heap worldly felicity on others, and bid us deny it to ourſelves? This is a method of ſcaling heaven as ridiculous as that of the monks, who endeavoured to purchaſe it by flagellation; and a ſecond wild attempt to heap mount Oſſa on Pelion, in order to reach it. Needleſsly to puniſh in one moment of duration, to reward in another, is ſimple œconomy.

Pleaſure and virtue are the duties of life, and the objects of exiſtence: virtue for the benefit of others, and pleaſure for our own. The profuſion of nature is loſt where not enjoyed; and prudence is the ſtandard of that enjoyment. When licentiouſneſs is diſſuaded by reaſon, its arguments are in the cogent forms of injuſtice,

injuſtice, diſeaſe, want, miſery, and death. The moſt durable fruition of pleaſure is that which is regulated by moderation; for if evils are the fruit of gratification, we cannot be ſaid to enjoy.

Unmeaning precepts have been a great cauſe for ſlighting thoſe which are actually beneficial. When men find falſe alarms, with the ſhepherd in the fable, they are apt to ſuſpect every outcry: and where monkeys are miſtaken for men, men may be miſtaken for monkeys.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XX.

WHETHER EXTRAORDINARY MENTAL ACQUISITIONS BE CONDUCIVE TO VIRTUE.

Etiam illud adjungo, ſæpius ad laudem atque virtutem naturam ſine doctrina, quam ſine natura valuiſſe doctrinam. CIC. pro Archia poet.

HOW far learning has contributed to the cauſe of virtue; whether it has at all contributed to it; or whether it has not, in many inſtances, been even prejudicial to it; are queſtions that have been ſtarted, time immemorial, and which are left undecided. To add to the number of the diſputants who have entered the liſts in this controverſy, may, by ſome, be thought an unneceſſary addition to the general confuſion of opinions; but as what will be hereafter obſerved will not be profeſſedly and abſolutely in ſupport of any of theſe opinions, inſtead of increaſing party-rage, it may, perhaps, prove my good fortune to be conſidered in the light of a mediator.

In this dispute, as well as in most others, the antagonists on either side the question advance more than truth will warrant, through their zeal to approve the justice of their opinions. Among the panegyrists of learning, especially, the greater part are blinded by the secret love they themselves bear to it, from an experience of the benefits of improvement they have derived from it. Of all the passions in the world there is not a more regular or constant one than the passion for study, in those who have chanced to incline that serious way. The passion of love, (which is perhaps the wildest in human nature) however strong under the particular circumstances that at first gives it birth, by a change in the age or situation of the lover, is often entirely lost and forgotten; and, with respect to this affection of the mind, a man is, as Sir Thomas Browne in general observes, a different person in the different stages of life. But the calmer amusements of learning are of such a nature as equally to engage the vivacity of youth and the severity of age. It is not, then, surprising, that a pursuit, which has universally obtained, should have so dazzled the eyes of its friends, as to have rendered them blind to every evil it might introduce, and to have fixed them unshaken advocates in its cause. The partizans on the side of learning, being men of learning, are *ipso facto* enlisted under its banner, and defend but their own province

vince by their vindication of it. All that they advance may possibly come from the heart; but they must, by the very nature of their circumstances, be prejudiced in its favour. Nor is this humour confined to men of learning: we are all of us partial to our predominant amusement.

The assertors of the opposite opinion are of the unlettered sort, and (it is obvious to suppose) influenced in their sentiments by observing the want of principle and honour in many who have shone in the literary world. They have seen, too often, a great understanding, and a corrupt heart, united in the same person; and have thence, naturally enough, concluded, that they are but casually connected. Upon an impartial examination, we must admit the position on which they build as founded in fact. To go no farther back, the name of Bacon is unquestionably great in the republic of letters; he was, as it were, the dawn of philosophy and science; but silence is the best friend to the fame of his virtues: his understanding was indeed comprehensive, but his inglorious connivance at corruption in some measure justified the poet when he called him, 'The greatest and 'the meanest of mankind.' *

 We

* I may be censured by some, as Pope has been before me, for bearing so hard on this ornament of philosophy, as to have quoted him for an example of

We have, within our memory, another very singular, and somewhat different, instance, to prove that the acquisition of learning has been no impregnable fence against the basest villany. Eugene Aram, the schoolmaster of Knaresborough, was a man of uncommon learning; he was a proficient in natural philosophy and the mathematics; was master of the ancient and modern languages; and had compiled part of a Celtic dictionary, which, but for his crimes, he might have lived to finish, for the benefit of the learned. Adorned with these

mental

of vice; but really corruption in a judge (which he afterwards confessed, with shame, that he was consenting to) is a very capital fault. He significantly expressed the occasion of his disgrace, when he said to his vicious dependants, (whose corruptions he winked at,) when they respectfully rose from their chairs on his entrance into the room where they were sitting, 'Sit still, my masters; 'your rising has been the cause of my fall.' —— It is urged in his favour, that his connivance was rather the result of carelessness and inattention, than of evil design; a plea that alleviates the offence, but not excuses it. There are faults and crimes of omission, as well as of commission. And if we, as moralists, after the example of K. James, make allowances for his frailties, in consideration of his mental endowments, and remit of our severities towards him, we cannot do so as casuists in this contest: for if learning was the cause of this irregularity of conduct, it would be an absurdity to attribute the effect to any thing else.

mental accomplishments, would any one have imagined that he could have been an accomplice, deliberately, for the sake of money, in a most treacherous murder? — He was. Houseman and he, in the year 1745, persuaded one Daniel Clarke to borrow valuable effects, to a considerable amount, on false pretences; and when he had them in his possession, and was proceeding on his way, these perfidious villains set on him, killed him, buried his body in a cave, called St. Roberts's cave, and seized the booty. — By circumstantial evidence, gathered from words inadvertently dropped by Houseman, they were both sentenced to die in 1759. He composed a subtle defence, insinuating the danger of circumstantial evidence, but to no purpose, as the presumption was too strong against him; and when he knew his doom, he wrote a treatise in defence of suicide, and tried to bleed to death; but the executioner anticipating his endeavours, he fell an extraordinary victim to the laws of his country. —— Such a villain as this would bring disgrace on any society, or communion, or science, of which he was a member or professor; but may we not conjecture that, by his immoderate study, he had contracted a species of insanity? for how shall madness be defined, and by what is it bounded? True, he reflected dishonour on learning; but he is a rare example of so nefarious

a crime in a ſcholar, and he muſt from nature have inherited an exceedingly vicious heart.

On the characters of ſuch men, as are above-mentioned, are reflections againſt learning founded by the common ſort: but it is inconcluſive to draw inferences from individuals to the detriment of knowledge, when thoſe individuals may ſo eaſily be contraſted, in the learned world, with characters diſtinguiſhed for virtue. The reſpectable names of Boyle and Newton are as great ornaments to the cauſe of virtue as the others were the contrary. Their lives were unvaried ſcenes of innocence and purity; their actions were as amiable as their knowledge was extenſive. So that, if we reſt on theſe ſingle examples, (as more on either ſide might be named,) by the very laws of arithmetic, objections drop, and are ſilenced. It is indeed highly probable, that the principles of theſe men, who have been cited as general repreſentatives, might have reſulted from a combination of circumſtances; which is generally the caſe. Hiſtorians (who are ſometimes given to ſlander and innuendo) ſay, that Bacon was a ſtateſman; that he lived within the contagion of a court: but they merit rebuke for ſaucily reflecting on their ſuperiors.

In making a proper eſtimate, it muſt likewiſe be conſidered, that the world, in ſettling the merits of this queſtion, are apt to direct their views to eminent objects, to geniuſes in learning:

learning: we ourſelves have done the ſame. But geniuſes are noted for their irregularities; like comets, they move in eccentric orbits, and are as likely to wander in the paths of vice, as to be found in the regions of heroic virtue. When a wheel has loſt its ſituation on the axis, it is not known what direction it will take. It flies off in a tangent, the inclination of which is purely caſual.

While we deal thus in retale we are overmatched by Juſtin the hiſtorian, who has dealt his examples more plentifully, and drawn his concluſion from the character of a whole nation. He ſeems to have been poſſeſſed with a great opinion of the virtue of the uninformed Scythians of his time, when, ſpeaking of them, he obſerves, that 'it is worthy of remark that 'they poſſeſſed by nature, and ignorance of 'vice, good qualities which all the learning 'and wiſdom of Greece did not produce; and 'that a compariſon between them redounded to 'the diſcredit of the latter.'* Granting this ancient the credit of a well-informed hiſtorian, it muſt be conſidered as a moral phæ-

* Admirabile videatur hoc illis [Scythis] naturam dare, quod Græci longa ſapientium doctrina præceptiſque philoſophorum conſequi nequeunt, cultoſque mores incultæ barbariæ collatione ſuperari. Tanto plus in illis proficit vitiorum ignoratio, quam in his cognitio virtutis. —— Lib. ii. cap. 3.

nomenon that a race of barbarians, as the Scythians were, ſhould approve themſelves the prodigies of virtue he has repreſented them to be, and muſt have ariſen from other circumſtances in conjunction with their ignorance; and, till he could evince that education would have introduced vice amongſt them, and baniſhed their virtues, what he has advanced in favour of ignorance will not amount to a proof, when we find his repreſentation of them ſo diſſimilar to the accounts that are given of moſt other uncultivated nations. But theſe marvellous people exiſt no more, and we muſt number them with the apocrypha.

Upon the niceſt examination, I am of opinion, we ſhall find that, upon the whole, learning has not injured the cauſe of virtue, nor ſo greatly ſerved it as a good man might have wiſhed and expected. It is to be regarded rather in the light of phyſic than in any other, in which univerſal noſtrums are derided by the moſt intelligent practitioners. What medicines might prove ſerviceable under a relaxation of the ſolids would be prejudicial in a conſtipation: what may cure the toothache would not cure the palſy: and what may correct the conſtitution of one man, may be uſeleſs, or prejudicial, to that of another. There are peculiarities in the conſtruction and ſtate of different bodies which call for different methods of treatment: there are obſtructions phyſic

may

may remove, and there are ſituations in which it might be noxious. Changes may be wrought by its influence, but miracles are not to be expected from it. The notion of a panacea is idle and romantic, and nature is often ſtubborn, perverſe, and refractory. Such is the caſe of the human body, and ſimilar to it is that of the mind. There are certain habits of vice, certain natural evil propenſities, which mental reflexion may, and often does, correct. A more than ordinary ſhare of ſome luxurious and noxious paſſions is, in general, a promiſing object for the exerciſe of reaſon, and ſeems to beſpeak ſucceſs. We have ſeen the happy effects of it in ſeveral fundamental points of morality, and will content ourſelves with one very ſtriking example of it. Cruelty is a vice to which the illiterate vulgar are greatly addicted, as we may obſerve in their treatment of animals, thoſe particularly which are marked for the victims of ſlaughter. But it is obſervable, that men of letters (ſome to ſuperſtition) are particularly cautious how they violate one of the moſt poſitive precepts of humanity. And if this were the only leſſon enforced by ſtudy, (which it really is not) it would deſerve to be ſupported for the ſake of ſo amiable a diſpoſition. It is a buſineſs befitting a God to communicate happineſs to, and ward off miſery from, the beings he has created.

By a misapplication of knowledge, which has redounded to its discredit, there have been men who, instead of correcting a small natural bias in favour of vice, have acquired, by education, greater boldness and intrepidity in their vicious career; tinctured by that sophistry which would subvert the fundamental principles of morality, in representing the distinctions of virtue and vice as mere scholastic inventions, as vague and uncertain phantoms, calculated only to amuse the weakness of those who regard them. A complete knave, it is said, must have abilities. What a pity that such men should ever have disgraced the exercise of reason, and have obliged us to confess that the cultivation of the mind may, with some, be followed by greater ills than the simplicity of ignorance would ever have produced!

A principal evil immoderate study has certainly given rise to, is, an inattention in many men of learning to social and domestic duties, which are ingredients necessary for the happiness of others, though they did not esteem them essential to their own. The tempers of some have been rendered so sower and indifferent, as to make them insensible to the calls of Nature,* the

* The celebrated Pascal, it is said, had acquired the disagreeable habit of indifference here animadverted on; which he displayed in an unkind disregard of his sister. The reason assigned for it was, that he disapproved of doating on, or attaching

the tender ties of paternal and conjugal affection, and the grateful communications of friendship; as if it were the business of life, and the intent of existence, that habits acquired should eraze the ground-plot of Nature, contravene her endeavours, and disconcert her plans. But I will no longer hold up to view the unfavourable side of the picture, which resembles not the good-natured and judicious patron of learning, lest I should seem, contrary to my inclination, to have approved myself its foe; but will, in vindication of it, take notice, that the race of cynics, by that spirit of freedom, good-sense, and familiarity, which daily gain ground, is constantly on the decline; and that such is my good opinion of mankind, that if moral philosophy and nature go hand in hand, we shall have no cause to wish the absence of the former.

By my idea of knowledge, through this whole chapter, I would be interpreted to mean a distinguished share of it. Some knowledge and exercise of reason is necessary to make a difference between men and brutes; and the question intended is, whether more than ordinary acquisitions of it are entitled to the encomiums or censure bestowed by different opinions. By my idea of the moral philo-

ing himself to, any thing worldly. — *La belle pensée!* A most excellent consideration this! proving, to satisfaction, that prodigies of learning and genius are not always prodigies of common sense.

ſophy I admire, I would be underſtood to mean only that philoſophy which has common ſenſe, the beſt foundation for ſuch knowledge, for its baſis; but a ſmall portion of which has gone to the compoſition of many ſyſtems which have been promulgated at different periods of time: and ſure I am, that, had the ridiculous and unamiable perſons, who are exhibited as patterns of vice and irregularity by hiſtorians, poſſeſſed a moderate ſhare of this uſeful qualification, they never would have been the perpetrators of many of thoſe extravagant and villanous actions which have coloured the features of character in the annals of mankind.

What has been obſerved in the foregoing chapter, as it favours the cauſe of learning, will, with its friends, ſuffer a repetition. Suppoſing a man, by attention to moral ſtudy, has acquired the higheſt ſenſe of virtue, and a reſolution to follow its dictates, he is in ſome meaſure obſtructed in the extraordinary exertion of it, by having a world of knaves, leſs diſpoſed to favour its cauſe, to combat with. If he does not partly coincide with common cuſtoms, he is bereft of his ſhare of the comforts of life. To enjoy an equality with others, he is conſtrained ſo far to act in concert with them, as not to exhibit himſelf a prodigy of diſintereſtedneſs. This is one of the conſequences of Fortune's blindneſs, who has as much miſchief to anſwer for as the devil himſelf,

ſelf, however ſhe may complain, in the fable, of the unjuſt accuſations that are pronounced againſt her.

The conceſſion of the almoſt indifferent tendency of extraordinary knowledge, in general, may furniſh an objection againſt the exerciſe of the mind, as uſeleſs labour. But a diſtinction is here to be made. There are good, and there are bad reaſonings, falſe and true. In ranging the garden of knowledge men bring home weeds as well as flowers; which is not the caſe with ſkilful botaniſts: and it does not follow from their making no difference between good and bad, that there is really no diſtinction. Blindneſs and perverſeneſs are no proofs of the non-exiſtence of light and rectitude. And if an incorrigibly bad diſpoſition loſes its timidity by ſophiſtical concluſions, a well-meaning erroneous one will be corrected,* and a good one will certainly be confirmed, by candid reflection, and attention to juſt and ſenſible argumentation.

* Τὸ γὰρ ἀποστῆναι χαλεπὸν
Φύσεος ἣν ἔχει τὶς ἀεί·
Καί τοι πολλοὶ ταῦτ' ἔπαθον·
Εὐήθεις γνώμαις ἑτέρων,
Μεταβάλλοντο τὸς τρόπους.
ARISTOPH. Veſpæ.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXI.

On Haughtiness.

Sequi enim gloria, non appeti, debet : nec, si casu aliquo non sequatur, idcirco, quia gloriam non meruit, minus pulchrum est. Plin. epist. lib. i. ep. 8.

THE foundation of discontent in many situations of life, is, a comparison in the mind of the humble station of one with the exalted condition of another. This is its original source, which, in the present constitution of affairs, admits not a remedy. Not so the aggravating cause of this discontent, the pains which proud superiors take to make their inferiors more sensible of their inferiority. That is an evil which lies at the door of individuals, and claims their redress, by smoothing the inequalities of Fortune.

If we view the subject with a philosophic eye, there is abundant reason for caution against arrogance, in the slightness of that casualty which has unmeritedly given to many a distinguished share in the possessions and blessings of life. By the natural right of mankind, no one

one can claim a more than equal portion with others. No ſuch partiality exiſts in a ſtate of nature: the laws of ſociety alone can confer the diſtinction. Let the ſupercilious man weigh this accidental difference, this paper-wall between his title to what he poſſeſſes and the pretenſions of his poor dependant, and he will find cauſe to ſtifle his pride and check his contumely.

By the conſtitutions of ſtate, and general conſent, the point of right is fixed and certain. By many, property has been acquired by induſtry and toil. We all agree to preſerve this right; and, in return, expect the protection of the general body to confirm to us what has fallen to our ſeveral ſhares. As members of ſociety, we are under an obligation, virtually equivalent to an oath, not to violate the rules of this diſpenſation; and an infringement of them is pronounced equally criminal with a tranſgreſſion of natural obligation.

Such are the different views of human affairs, under the different conſtitutions of Nature and ſociety. Notwithſtanding this change, by univerſal concurrence introduced, it can never be deemed the part of a generous mind ſo far to ſtretch an accidental advantage, as wantonly to be the author of unmerited pain to another. In conferring a diſtinction on individuals, ſociety never intended to beſtow a liberty of diſplaying haughtineſs and inſolence. Though

ſubordination

ſubordination is an eſtabliſhed law of ſociety, and though the different endeavours of different men are marked by diſtinctions in the favours of Fortune, it betrays a want of generoſity, and the impotence of a little mind, in a perſon of elevated ſtation, to triumph over the inferiority of others, as over the arrogance of a defeated foe.

That ſubordination requires and implies diſtinction is without diſpute. State and pomp are properly connected with magiſtracy and authority, as mechanical engines for lifting them above the encroachments and impertince of the unmannered vulgar. Little minds need ſuch inſtruments of awe; and the lower order of people, particularly of this kingdom, will run riot, even in the preſence of dignity and ſplendor. The more civilized themſelves are ſtruck with the pageantry they behold, and derive from it additional reverence. And where integrity is joined to greatneſs, theſe honours are, in every reſpect, well conferred.

In the private concerns of great men the caſe is in ſome meaſure reverſed. It is not abſolutely neceſſary to transfer all that ſtatelineſs to their own particular intercourſe with their inferiors. It may appear paradoxical, but it is literally true, that fewer airs will ſerve the turn of a nobleman, in private life, than need be aſſumed by a mechanic. His rank alone will extort the reſpect which is paid him, and

there

there is little danger of an encroachment on his due. The mechanic, on the other hand, feels himſelf under the neceſſity of adopting ſome appearances of conſequence, or he would dwindle into nothing, and become a cypher in the world.

Condeſcenſion, when found in company with greatneſs, inſtead of diminiſhing aught from the latter, gives to it an acceſſion of luſtre. Nothing more exalts than humility. This is another paradox, founded in truth, and worthy attention. Affability in a nobleman will purchaſe him more eſteem than his coronet, and not take a jot from his dignity. Reſpect is more chearfully paid to a humble man than it is to the proud. *Oderint dum metuant*, was the ſaying of a haughty emperor; but it is a maxim that will never be admired by him that is ſtudious of real honour.

Prudence ſuggeſts the advantages reſulting from condeſcenſion. The affected reſpect which is paid to ſtately diſtance is neither ſo ſterling nor ſo glorious as that which is the fruit of humility. Though the laws reſtrain the ſallies of inſolence and inſult towards perſons of rank from their inferiors, no law on earth can produce that genuine reverence which comes from the heart. Chains, that bow down the body, are no fetters for the mind, and till that is ſubdued the triumph is incomplete. This is only a conſequence of the moderation with which

a great

a great man bears his exalted ſtation, and the ſole honour that redounds to the man, the common homage being yielded only to his rank, and not belonging to his perſon:

Nam genus, et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipſi,
Vix ea noſtra voco. ———

There is double glory in enjoying a bleſſing which is the produce of our own endeavours or merit; and it is not known, till a man is inveſted with honour, whether he deſerves it. If there be an inſuperable deſire of admiration, let the object of it be properly fixed, and the virtues of good-nature, integrity, and condeſcenſion, be ſignalized in queſt of it.

The old obſervation, that inſolence is a foible peculiar to upſtarts,* is an inducement that naturally leads to explode it. Thoſe who have been a long time great, or can count a numerous train of illuſtrious anceſtry, are habituated to grandeur; it ſits eaſily on them, and they are not poſſeſſed with the notion of it, as if it were new to them. Pride ſhould conſider this as a mortifying and diſcouraging reflection. The obſervation ſeldom fails of being quoted, when occaſion prompts, and the application of it is familiar to the loweſt capacity,

* ——— Ex inſolentia, quibus nova bona fortuna ſit, impotentes lætitia inſanire. Liv. dec. 3. l. 10.

city, the maxim is so universally propagated. But the same pride that fills a man with an opinion of his own consequence, rarely deigns to listen to the promised advantages of condescension.

Vanity and haughtiness are different, though they spring from the same source. The one is at most but a folly, whilst the other may be construed into a vice. The sallies of the former will excite only a smile, where the exertion of the latter will wound sensibility. Vanity is an involuntary giddiness of the mind, which every one has not firmness sufficient to guard against; haughtiness is an insolent effort of that vanity, which ripens into action. Vanity will allow another his due; haughtiness is solely occupied in erecting its own consequence on the ruins of others.

That pride is an indication of a narrow soul, is confirmed by the same argument that has been used on the subject of revenge. Those minds which honest Juvenal has noticed as most addicted to the latter passion, and which he has, without ceremony, called *little minds*, are likewise most prone to pride. The learned reader will know whom I mean if he remembers the thirteenth satire of that author, which is one of his finest, if not his finest; and if he does not, I will not tell him. ——— Where the judgement is weak, the affections

of

of the mind are ſtrong. The weakeſt eyes are moſt dazzled by the ſplendor of the ſun: the weakeſt minds are moſt intoxicated by pomp and pageantry. But if we cannot help thinking too highly of our dignity, it is impolitic to betray the nothingneſs of our thoughts, and to expoſe ourſelves as the marks for ridicule, hatred, and mortification.

To overrate our conſequence, and exact more than ordinary ſubmiſſion, proves on many occaſions not only unſucceſsful, but often a ſhameful defeat of our proud intentions, and a ſtinging reverſe. Genuine greatneſs will force mens homage in ſpite of themſelves, without the aid of ſuperciliouſneſs. But if men plume themſelves on imaginary conſequence, and then command a gaping tribe to humble themſelves before them, inſtead of receiving a hearty reſpect, (which is alone to be prized) they may be amuſed with an appearance of homage, but they will be ſecretly deſpiſed and made a common ſport. An eminent example of the folly of this deſpicable ſuperciliouſneſs is ſeen in the perſons of the Turkiſh ſultans. Their ſublime highneſſes bedizen themſelves in all the ſplendor of the eaſt; ranſack language and thought for ſwelling names and titles; talk and write as pompouſly as if they were deſcended from the ſun; look on themſelves as far above the common race of monarchs; and vouchſafe not to ſend ambaſſadors to many powerful

powerful sovereign princes, in every thing but savage glare above them, for fear of resigning a share of their dignity. But is there a respectable nobleman in any of the polished courts of Europe that does not from his soul despise the arrogance, conceit, and ignorance of these empty apologies for greatness? or is there a sensible man of a lower degree who can think they may claim even the name of *gentlemen?* They fight their battles with overgrown armies, and are generally defeated. They carry their riches and magnificence to camp with them, to enhance the enemy's spoil, and have it taken from them. They send deputies to a polite European court, to be instructed in the art of nonsense, and are laughed at for their simplicity.* In a word, all their swelling

* The occurrence here alluded to is very recent; most probably the reader recollects it, if he has attended to the public news-papers. Some little time since the grand-signior sent a deputation to the court of France, to request them to commission an able person, or persons, to instruct his people in the science of *astrology*. The answer given was, that the science was grown into disrepute with men of sense and learning, as altogether absurd and ridiculous, and therefore not worth being known. Wherupon, a little wiser than when they left their country, they returned to acquaint their master with the news, fully satisfied. This incident, in conjunction

ling language, all their ſtately diſtance, and all their haughtineſs, will not ſcreen them from contempt, becauſe they merit not admiration.

If it were granted that they ſo far hit their aim, as to attract the wonder of ſimplicity, is that a glory when they are deſpiſed by every poliſhed nation around them? It is as contemptible a preeminence as to aſſume a dominion over birds, beaſts, and fiſhes, and to be proud of it; and nearly reſembles that which was ſaid to have been the deliberate choice of the tyrant Dionyſius, who, when expelled from his tyranny over men, was glad to be king over boys.

But, to return again to private life. I love that temper which, while it has ſenſibility to feel the mortification of inferiority, has, at the ſame time, the equity not to indulge in exultation in its turn. There is ſomething both juſt and generous in ſuch a humour; ſomething deſerving of praiſe from morality, and of commendation from a ſpirit of conſcious dignity.

As long as there is ſuch a baſe principle in Nature as ingratitude, (and ingratitude, amongſt her variety of productions will never be extinct,)

conjunction with the curious manifeſto publiſhed by the Porte, to juſtify their rupture with the czarina, muſt give an exalted idea of that monarch, (and his ſubjects) who aſſumes, beſides that of unrivalled greatneſs, the attribute of extraordinary wiſdom.

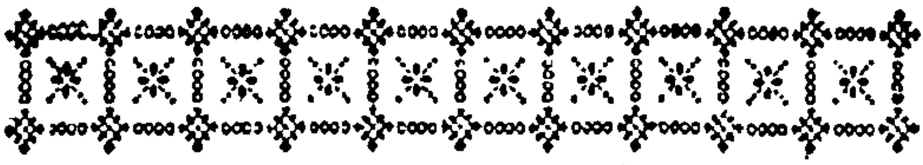
extinct,) good-nature, on the one part, may, at times, be subject to the impertinent mockeries of an insolent, on the other, as harmless flies are the prey of venomous spiders. Miscreants, capable of such ingratitude, were intended for slaves, if slavery is lawful. To offer an injury unprovoked is an example of baseness, in every instance; but to requite good with evil is diabolical. This notwithstanding, it is easily discernible when condescension may safely display itself without becoming a prey. If an inferior humbles himself at his patron's feet, it is not the part of greatness to trample on his neck who is already prostrate; but it is the temper of meanness and beggarly arrogance to do so. When Sapores the Persian carried away captive the emperor Valerian, he triumphed over him by making him his footstool when he mounted his horse:* but his triumph had been greater if he had received him with the honours of a prince. He might then have totally disarmed him.

I will conclude with observing, that it is not the aim of this chapter to assert, that kings and beggars, noble and ignoble, should herd in common together, as if there were no distinction. That is incompatible with the established nature

* Not content with this savage treatment of his illustrious prisoner, he is said at last to have ordered him to be flead alive and rubbed with salt. ——— 'What havock does ambition make!'

nature of ſubordination; and even with the idea of friendſhip, in a great degree, which is never ſo firmly compacted as when ſubſiſting between equals. Similarity of circumſtances is the moſt proper baſis for harmony: intereſts, views, and notions in ſuch caſe accord with, and cement, each other. Experience tells us that one order of men retreats from the next beneath in proportion as the latter purſues, ever in chace, like the ſpokes of a wheel, but never overtaking. The great approve not a cloſe connexion with their inferiors from their heart, becauſe they may be loſers, can hardly gain, from ſuch intercourſe. It is therefore wiſeſt to court the alliance of equals, without baniſhing affability from a caſual commerce with inferiors.

CHAPTER



CHAPTER XXII.

THE CHEMISTRY OF MORALITY.

Diligenter intuere has nænias.
PHÆDR. lib. iv. prol.

IT has been noticed, and represented as a proof of curious œconomy, that, amidst the astonishing variety of the works of nature, there is a wonderful uniformity. Things and subjects, which, to a cursory view, appear not to have the least connexion, are, by a nicer inspection, found to coincide in many particulars and properties. We will endeavour to illustrate this truth, by bringing together and comparing two subjects, apparently heterogeneous; chemical lessons and productions, and causes and effects of virtues and vices: and by metaphorically deriving, from the former, hints and applications of service in the latter.

The chemistry of morality may raise a smile; perhaps, a scoff: but stop, pert railer, and withhold a while your taunts: you are yourself a mineral, and you are a vegetable; and may be considered in either capacity. —— There

 will

will be this advantage if man be considered as a mineral, that a wider field presents itself for observation, as the skill of an artist is most required and exerted in that department of natural history, nature leaving more to perfect therein than in the botanic world. To mineralogy we therefore chiefly confine our thoughts, and, as well as indifferent chemists can acquit themselves, we will strive to allegorize the science of man, in a few leading and detached observations, and to cement that and chemistry together; a process beset with fewer difficulties than the art of uniting two congenial bodies, iron and gold.

Man is, in very fact, to be regarded in the light of a mineral. From the hand of Nature he comes forth rude, unformed, mysterious, wild, and, perchance, unprofitable, or dangerous, inclosing within, poison, pain, and death. Like a mineral, too, he contains treasure, antidotes, health, and physic. Merely because the mineral is dug up rude, or useless, it is not thrown aside by the ingenious artist. He works and purges, transmutes and separates, compounds and decompounds, till, out of a chaotic mass, he draws a regular, pure, and valuable substance. ——— The natural state of man is an equally strange jumble of confusion. Finding him born with vague, irregular, and noxious inclinations, the moral chemist regulates and corrects, purifies and changes,

changes, his native features, and, out of the unmeaning mafs, makes up a noble being, a valuable member of fociety, and a good man. But if his labour is fruitlefs, by the mifcarriage of his procefs, and his fubject proves refractory, he is, by general confent, recommitted to the earth, like the refufe of metal, to fructify the foil afrefh, and produce thofe qualities which were vainly expected ; and the earth generates new feeds of treafure from the dregs and corruption of what was before rejected as worthlefs.

As the limits of our book will not allow us tediouffy to fpin out the allegory, by purfuing all the operations of chemiftry, we will be particular only on the great procefles of *feparation* or *refinement*, and *extraction of effences*.

Refinement and diftillation confift in diffevering the effence from the dregs, the fpirit from the caput mortuum. Cinnabar contains a hidden portion of mercury, but it is loft upon us if we ufe not the means of feparation. Inftead of a fhining ftream of running metal, the fulphur with which it is joined gives it the appearance of a ftagnant fluggifh lump, beautiful indeed to the eye, but devoid of motion and activity. Experiment only would have evinced that out of this red lump of inert matter a portion of rich flowing metal could be extracted, white as purity. As in this mineral, fo in man, the virtues are choked up and loft in dregs,

and can only be called out by art and diligence. Education is that refinement in the moral world, without which man is but a brute or a ſavage. By education his dregs and droſs are purged away, which deformed his nature, and he becomes a man.

There have been found veins of ſtreaming purity, as we read in the accounts of the quickſilver mines of Friuli in Hungary, unmixed with heterogeneous dregs; but ſuch prizes are eſteemed as rare. Hiſtory tells us of wedges of ſolid and almoſt pure gold, found by the Spaniards, and ſent as a preſent to the monarch who ſwayed the ſceptre at the diſcovery of the new world, to ſhew what riches they were become maſters of; but they are noted as prodigies: and hiſtory records virtue found among the unpoliſhed race of ſavages; but it is unſafe to truſt to the hopes of ſuch phænomena. There have been tempers of ſo amiable and well-diſpoſed a turn, as ſcarcely to need the officious aid of moral precepts: but if Nature does at times amuſe us with her prodigies of goodneſs, ſhe wills that we deem them a favour, not ordinarily to be aſked of her, or expected.

Different men are different minerals, and call for a diverſity of treatment when we form them individually. Judgement is indiſpenſibly requiſite in our proceſſes, without which we only gain a caput mortuum, or a poiſon. A general

rule

rule invariably applied is abſurd. Butter will melt by the ſide of a fire, and recover its conſiſtence in the cold. Salt is diſſolved by water, but dried and hardened by heat.

Much emphaſis is to be laid on the neceſſity of perfectly underſtanding our ſubject and its properties; on finding out its foibles and its excellences. When we have attained a knowledge of them, we tread on certain ground, and are enabled to proceed with a proſpect of ſucceſs. Then we are to correct nature by choſen methods, judiciouſly and with diſcernment; to counteract vicious inclinations, and confirm good propenſities; to curb unruly tranſports, and give ſtrength to languor and weakneſs.

In compounding, the ſkill of an artiſt is eminently concerned. Wicked ſophiſtry thrown in the way of pliant ſimplicity has wrought as diſmal effects as a conjunction of mercury with a ſalt, innocent in themſelves when ſeparate. The momentum of the former is harmleſs, by reaſon of the roundneſs of its conſtituent parts; and the ſtimulating qualities of the latter are of no avail, if without the momentum of the mercury: but they are armed with dreadful ſhafts by an unadviſed combination. A ſuſceptibility of miſchief by nature muſt not receive the power of it from art. Pour not wine on weakneſs, nor put fire in the hands of madmen and infants.

In extracting eſſences a regular heat muſt be kept up. Exceſſive or unguided blaſts will waſte the ſpirits, will ſet the whole in a furious blaze. On man pour not your influence unskilfully and inordinately. Lead him gently by the hand, and cautiouſly proceed in treating him. Suit your precepts, your corrections, your rewards, to his humour, to his patience, to his deſerts.

When the utmoſt care and ſkill are adopted, when means, in all human probability adequate to the end propoſed, are uſed, then the default lies not at the artiſt's door. The ſubject of his labour muſt be naturally exceeding worthleſs if ſo much care will not avail: but ſuch ſubjects there are, and ſuch there ever will be, both in the moral and in the natural world, as long as men continue to be men, and minerals to be minerals. Some extraordinary difficulties are ſurmountable by the adoption of extraordinary diligence and ſagacity. It is the peculiar buſineſs of ſkill and attention to ſubdue difficulties and break through obſtructions. The worſe a patient is, the more praiſe redounds to the phyſician that cures him.

The virtues of a nation more depend on the ſuperintendants of it than on individuals. Men, from the poliſhed Europeans to the American ſavages, from the moſt barbarous ages to the preſent enlightened time, have been all compoſed of the ſame numerical clay; law and cultivation

tivation having made the principal diſtinction between them. Of the ſame fleſh and blood the glorious Antonine and the infamous Nero were made. The one was a model of virtue, by obedience to its precepts; the other a proverb of villany, by a lawleſs obſequiouſneſs to his baſeſt paſſions. This truth is peculiarly exemplified in the ſurpriſing influence company and connexions have on the manners and diſpoſitions of men, which are almoſt invariably modified by the neareſt patterns. But the caſe of governors and their people is nearly the ſame with that of workmen and their tools and materials, which are often complained of when nothing but their own ignorance or careleſſneſs merits the blame.

In the natural world, the greateſt extracter of eſſences is fire: in the moral world, that fire is repreſented by REWARDS. Virtue is an elixir, hid in the ſecret receſſes of the heart, to be called forth by help of this moral fire. If we expect ſucceſs to crown our labours, we muſt proceed in conformity to the rules of art. Minerals demand the aſſiſtance of fire to be advanced into metals; men need encouragement to perfect them. It is the buſineſs of prudence cloſely to purſue Nature in all her windings; to read the pages of her book; to borrow from her hints; and to obey her mandates. She is the beſt inſtructor, and never miſleads but when ſhe is miſinterpreted. Taught by her, we

learn, that weeds only will flourish spontaneously: flowers and fruit ask our care. The most valued flowers die away if they are not cautiously tended; and fruits grow acid if not engrafted.

Rewards and pleasure are causes: virtue and the general good are effects. Dissever them, and the chain of events is broken. Virtue must either be a pleasure, or it must meet encouragement, otherwise it ceases to exist. By nature a few are virtuous, but they are exceedingly scarce: by proper cultivation we have a plentiful harvest to reward our toil. Villains are virtuous when hired in the cause; and honesty is corrupted by an enormous bribe.

Reward consists not only in pecuniary gratification; it has a more extensive latitude, and is seen in a thousand forms. A man of honour is rewarded when a villain is punished, because he escapes that punishment. He is rewarded when he is honoured and distinguished: and he is rewarded when he escapes reproach. Through these, and a variety of other channels, may a recompence be conveyed by the skilful exertion of justice. Occasion prompts what may be done, and sagacity conceives the hint. In a judicious application of a few simple truths resides the skill of a legislator; and without a knowledge of them he is bewildered in his office, and gropes unguided in the dark.

Each

Each ſucceeding race of man is by nature but a repetition of the ſame eternally revolving ſcenes. If nations are wiſely modified by thoſe who preſide over them, their virtue, like pure and ſhining metal, will reflect a ſplendor on the moral chemiſts. If they are committed to the care of inſufficiency or knavery, they will do no honour to their ſuperiors.

Read the hiſtory of every ſtate and nation that has enjoyed exiſtence, and we find law and legiſlature, miſrule and anarchy, to have been the priſtine ſources of order and diſorder. To look for virtue from any thing but its cauſe, is to look for fire in the ſea. Every imaginable diſtinction ought to be ſhewn to its friends, or Aſtræa will never reſide amongſt us. In vain we implore the preſence of that amiable goddeſs, if we prepare not for her a place fit for her reception.

When once the manners of a nation begin to be improved, the work advances in a triplicate ratio, by the power of example. The burden, that before reſted on the baſis of reward, is eaſed by this ſecond ſtrenuous advocate in the cauſe. Men are aſhamed of being virtuous alone, becauſe it looks like puritaniſm and ſuperſtition: they love to have companions to keep them in countenance, and diveſt them of the appearance of ſingularity. So that, in this caſe, as in many others, well to begin the work is ſtrictly half the completion of it. To

the force of example muſt be chiefly attributed those repeated acts of fortitude in war ſignalized by the Romans. A few leading men among them at firſt exerted their proweſs againſt their enemies the Sabines, the Gauls, and ſome other nations, in defence of their doubtful ſituation, and their leading examples were copied by the whole race of their emulous poſterity, who found courage and victory leagued in common together.

From the loins of this hardy race, by the corruption of tyrant emperors, and a contagious commerce with foreign ſubjects, ſprang the effeminate muſical Italians, the very antitheſis of their warlike progenitors: the former were animated by the trumpet of war; the latter die away at *the laſcivious pleaſing of a lute.* Themſelves, unman'd, are deſcribed in the ſoftened accents of their caſtrated language, which loſt its nerves when they loſt their freedom and ſpirit, as if the organs of ſpeech were new-modelled with their manners. But the ſame influence of cauſe, that Italianized Romans, would, reverſed, in proceſs of time, Romanize Italians.— Not that I have loſt ſight of the charge exhibited, in a former chapter, againſt the abuſe of this fortitude; which, regulated by juſtice, is ſublimate dulcified, but, without that curb, a ſword in the hand of a maniac, and a violent poiſon.

In

In the foregoing conſiderations is implied the important truſt committed to princes and magiſtrates; which is nothing leſs than the general good of their ſubjects, and the vicegerency of heaven on earth. The original ſource of virtues is to be traced up to the throne; from whence, in rivulets, it flows, or ought to flow, through all the inferior channels of legiſlation. Individuals, their ſubjects, have little elſe to conſult, in compariſon to them, beſides their private concerns; but they have the burden of Atlas reſting on their ſhoulders.

By way of compenſation for theſe expected ſervices, honours were invented, to ſtimulate their endeavours, and bribe them to a faithful diſcharge of their ſeveral duties. Riches and ſplendor are only the hires of their office, not intended as baubles and toys, to amuſe and divert the great babies of a nation. On the head of a uſeleſs monarch the crown is but a tinſel cap; his ſword is a foil; his ſceptre a cat-ſtick; and his globe a tennis-ball.

Arduous as is the undertaking of theſe heroic repreſentatives of mankind, it has been generally conſidered as their principal department, to provide for their own ambition, their own pleaſures, their own caprices; and to leave the reins of government to the guidance of their moſt dextrous paraſites. It has been treaſured up as a ſacred maxim, though a ſolœ-

cism in common sense, that a whole nation was intended for the use of one paramount, and not that that one paramount is only the head steward of a nation. It is, it must be owned, an impossibility to please every one; but it too frequently falls out, that these stewards please none but themselves, or those whose private views will not permit them to be displeased, because they are greater gainers by a fair face than they would have been by their frowns; which is the reverse of the undertakers case in *The Funeral.*

It was not for negligence and inattention to his duty that Antoninus was almost adored; that Titus was called, *The Delight of mankind*; and that Alfred of England, and Henry IV. of France, acquired the surname of *Great.* They signalized their virtue as the price for the sceptter they swayed, and confirmed their right to it by the prudent exercise of their power. In considering themselves as princes, they did not forget that their subjects were little princes under them, whose welfare was to be consulted as well as their own, from which it was inseparable.

Heads of families and instructors are kings in an inferior capacity, and preside over little communities. 'Tis theirs to mould the tender mind; to dissever the metal from the dross; to root up the weeds from among the flowers. Every superior is, in his department, the chemist of virtue and the public good, and has an additional

ditional truſt repoſed in him, the due execution of which is a debt incurred to thoſe over whom he preſides; and as far as he acquits himſelf well he is the treaſure of a nation.

The department of individuals is to ſelect able and upright magiſtrates and ſtewards to compoſe the council of a kingdom, and reform abuſes. If inſufficient repreſentatives are fixed on without choice, their conſtituents muſt lament without pity. If a due repreſentation is made, there will be no room for repentance.

One individual, it is true, has but one voice; but that is no reaſon why he ſhould proſtitute it in favour of a knave that will abuſe his truſt: the nation is compoſed of individuals, and may be ruined or exalted by their concurrent ſuffrages. And if, at the inſtigation of private views, ſimple people receive a niggardly pittance for the ſale of their liberty and the remote ſhare they have in the legiſlature, they pay dearly for their paltry bargain in the injury that accrues to the nation collectively from their perjured votes. It is a humour truly idiotic, that men will murmur at the meaſures of an adminiſtration, and, with the ſame breath, give their ſuffrages to ſtrengthen the authority of the men they complain of. By the excellent conſtitution of this country, the public welfare, and the redreſs of grievances, are veſted in private hands when they agree in ſupport of the inveſtiture.

To ſum up the tenor of this chapter in brief, and not farther to declame, theſe important truths ſhould be remembered as reverently as the laſt words of a departing ſoul; that man is a MINERAL; that governors are CHEMISTS; and that virtue is an ELIXIR.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXIII, AND LAST.

ON PREJUDICE.

Ὁ δὲ νόος, ἐπ' ἄκρας τᾶς κορυφᾶς τοῦ σώματος ἱδρύμενος, καὶ ἔχων περιαυγέα καὶ διαυγέα τὰν ἔποψιν, μαστεύεται τὰν τῶν ὄντων φρόνασιν· καὶ τοῦτ' ἔργον ἐντὶ αὐτῷ κατὰ φύσιν, τὸ, μαρεισάμενον καὶ κλησάμενον, ἀκολουθῆσαι τοῖς βελτίοσιν αὐτῷ καὶ τιμιωτάτοις. THEAG. Pythag.

I Have chosen to close this volume with strictures on the subject of prejudice, by way of anticipation against surprise at any freedoms I may be thought to have taken with common and received opinions; as well as because prejudice is the greatest obstruction to real knowledge that ever spread a veil over it. The first step to virtue, say moralists, is to divest ourselves of vice: and, by parity of reasoning, the leading effort to adorn the mind is to purge it of prejudice, which, like slime, muddles the transparent fountain of truth.

The consequences of prejudice would not be of such moment were they confined to opinion; but daily observation teaches that the practice of men is under the immediate and powerful

powerful direction of its influence, and often diſtorted from the paths of rectitude by obſequious attention to its dictates. The ghoſts of thouſands, ſent untimely to their graves, riſe up in judgement againſt it.

In points of moment prejudices are followed by the worſt of conſequences to peace and harmony. Few are ſatisfied with being alone under the tyranny of falſe opinions, without endeavouring to enſlave others and confine them with the ſame ſhackles themſelves have ſubmitted to wear. Men look with envy and hatred on the retainers to different ſentiments, and conſider their diſſent from them as a reproach, and a contempt to their judgement and perſons. Hence ariſe, eſpecially in the political world, bickerings and animoſity, rancor and bloodſhed, with every evil that the malice of a little mind can invent. From individuals the rage extends to numerous parties, and whole communities are forced, by dint of tyranny, to enliſt in the cauſe. It is a diverting ſpectacle to ſee oppoſite ſets of two-legged wolves, at a country election, foaming and worrying one another, they know not why, in defence of repreſentatives, who are regaled by their ſimplicity, and purpoſe to ſell them at the earlieſt market.

True friendſhip and harmony can ſubſiſt only where there is nearly an uniformity of opinions; and uniformity of opinion cannot ſafely be conſtructed on any other baſis than that of general

neral truths, which continue invariably the ſame.

Prejudice and error, it muſt be owned, have united companions in a cauſe, and been productive of hearty friendſhip, on ſome occaſions, equally with truth itſelf; but they are uncertain foundations to truſt to, perpetually changing as tempers change. The vulgar, who are confined by the ſtrongeſt fetters of prejudice, are eternally jarring, in conſequence of their blindneſs, which ſuffers them to diſquiet one another, in obedience to every tranſport of paſſion. Men, whoſe underſtandings are refined, on the other hand, happily coincide, by a certain ſympathy, in their opinions, and live in harmony. The general views they have of things ſuperſede particular errors, which are the ſeeds of diſſenſion, and conjointly operate to univerſal peace.

I would not have it ſuppoſed I mean to ſay, that all men of ſenſe agree in every particular. Such a harmony is utterly incompatible with human nature, and would terminate in a general ſtagnation. Of the millions that inhabit our globe, there are not any two who completely reſemble each other; nor ſhould we wiſh for ſuch an univerſality. A variety of views and objects, a variety of offices and occupations, a variety of odours and ſavours, a variety of pleaſures and amuſements, call for a variety of taſtes, tempers, and choices, or the bounty of Nature is loſt. Muſt the ſprightly Mira pine

for

for a gallant because Eugenius loves a melting maid? or must the languishing Delia die unblest because Florio is taken with brilliant charms? The queen of beauty answers, No: her decree is, that Mira should be happy in the possession of Florio, and Delia be the choice of her Eugenius: that both the pairs should live in harmony as friends, and differ only about the object of their love.

Reason will not evince that what is agreeable to the palate of one, must likewise please the taste of another. The pores and particles of our organs are variously disposed and constructed, and produce not in every one the same flavour: the tempers of men are different, and are differently affected by objects in themselves the same. Brutus might sacrifice a bosom-friend to the public, and assassinate Cæsar, whilst another, warmed with the feeling of a friend, could not resign up his private affection after all his struggles of mind to deliver his country. We pardon, nay, love them both for their virtues, as much as we should condemn them both if they consented to the usurper's tyranny without the dictates of friendship. Primary and leading truths are not subject to variation,* in polished minds, as dependent on eternal and unalterable principles. To injure another without

* Sic enim est faciendum, ut contra naturam universam nihil contendamus; ea tamen conservata, propriam naturam sequamur. CICERO.

out a cauſe cannot be juſtified by the moſt ſubtle ſophiſtry, or the moſt eloquent harangue. Reaſon condemns it on certain *data*, admitted by every one exempt from prejudice. And if we allow, with Pope, that there are but few *certain truths* in the world, we cannot ſo far vindicate Pyrrhoniſm, as to grant that there are none at all.

Prejudice is the more dangerous, as it bears the ſemblance of truth, being juſt concluſions from falſe premiſes, and is on that account with more difficulty avoided. An open foe is leſs to be dreaded than a ſecret flattering enemy, becauſe we are aware of him: and it may even be queſtioned if the votaries of prejudice are not more convinced of the reality of thoſe abſurdities they entertain, than the moſt rational philoſopher is of any general truth he believes. Narrow minds are ever obſtinate in their opinions: clear underſtandings are more diffident in deciding, better acquainted with the apiſh chicanery of error, and more open to conviction when afforded them.

There is no bound ſet to this ape of truth. To what lengths has not prejudice led men? Abſurdities, that brutes would be ſhocked at, have been believed by men. Onions and crocodiles have been adored as gods. The moſt exalted nonſenſe of the wildeſt genius has been, by the power of prejudice, received with the honours of truth, and propagated.

When

When we ſee a lunatic, with all his wildneſs about him, we are naturally led to afford him our pity. The diſeaſe of mind he labours under is regarded as one of the greateſt evils that can befal a human being: the tendereſt concern is expreſſed in endeavours to recal his fugitive ſenſes, and phyſic aid is applied to for relief. But prejudice, which is a partial lunacy, is nurſed and cheriſhed. No pity is afforded to this ſpecies of inſanity; no cure is ſought for one agitated by this demon of abſurdity: he is not eſteemed a demoniac, though his madneſs extends to the ſubverſion of unity, friendſhip, and peace.

If we nicely examine the matter, we ſhall find that the greater part of received notions are not the reſult of reflexion, but that they are derived by patrimonial inheritance. Prejudices deſcend, like eſtates, from father to ſon; and the latter ſeems to think this part of his inheritance a neceſſary article of his father's will, which muſt not be reverſed, on pain of his loſing the other legacies included in the teſtament.

Not that it is proper for every one to ſet himſelf up for a thinker, in oppoſition to wiſer heads, or on points he is not a judge of. It is no more the buſineſs of ſome to make their own opinions than it is to make their own cloaths: all are not fit for thinkers, and all are not fit for taylors. A milkmaid that would

wrangle

wrangle with Newton about the origin of colours, would do well to dispose of her wares. Though the liquid she deals in is always white, it will not be expected of her to account for this accidental quality, as philosophers themselves have disputed whether the rays of light are most reflected from large or from small pores, from the particles or from the vacuities of matter.*

I would only urge, as many a simple man has done before me, that we should not embrace a sentiment for sterling because our grandmothers did so, when indisputable arguments are brought to contradict it. Many a man, to whom Nature has imparted a bountiful share of good sense, has had that blessing miserably lost on him, by servilely adhering to the dogmas of others, less distinguished for understanding than himself. To have an opinion backed by another is unquestionably one argument that may be alleged in favour of that opinion: but before it be set down for sterling, by a man of moderate discernment, it ought to be examined on principles of reason, particularly if controverted. Every absurdity of heathen mythology, every deceit of monkish superstition, but for reflection, had been received at this day, and acknowledged for divine.

Prejudices

* See Voltaire's remarks on Newton's elements of optics.

Prejudices are implanted in the tender minds of youth as early as they are capable of ideas. When under the care of their nurſes, they are taught to believe in ghoſts, hobgoblins, and witches: and when that ſtage of life is ſucceeded by the next, they are inſtructed to deſpiſe and hate the members of a different communion, and the natives of a different country. Thus prejudice being ſucked in, as it were, with their mothers milk, it is not ſubject of wonder that it grows up with them. A boy, that is ſtrongly poſſeſſed of the notion of ſprites and apparitions, will dread the dark, in ſpite of his reaſon, when grown a man.

As one idea of genuine knowledge ſuggeſts another, ſo one falſe conception is engendered from the ſpawn of another. Erroneous maxims in one point are proper foundations for a million more. The concatenation of our reaſonings may as well be rendered ſubſervient to the purpoſes of error, as become ſteps to ſublimer truths. Falſe notions are, then, to be avoided with redoubled precaution for the train of abſurdities, which (inſeparable companions as Bardolph, Nim, and Piſtol,) cloſely purſue each others heel. It is more prudent to combat a ſingle foe, than, by loſing time, to allow him opportunity to convene a hoſt to his aſſiſtance.

The meanneſs of prejudice, were there no evils ariſing from it, ſhould lead to avoid it.

Every

Every narrow notion, a man of little mind betrays to a perſon of ſenſe, is regarded by the latter as the boundary of his underſtanding, planted there by his niggardly Genius, and purchaſes his contempt; or elſe his pity, which is nearly-allied to his contempt. His pride ought, in ſuch a caſe, to receive an alarm, and excite to a removal of the cauſe of his diſgrace. I know not whether the character of a fool is not more diſliked than that of a knave, by the iniquity of the times; however the latter, from numberleſs conſiderations, ſhould meet the ſcorn.

Reflections like theſe are obvious to the loweſt capacity. No one in his ſenſes will go about to contradict what has been in this chapter aſſerted, and yet all of us, in ſome inſtances or other, have need of ſuch advice. The cap fits the greater half of the world; but who will own and wear it? Few are found ſo candid. This very blind partiality to ourſelves s the grand prejudice that rivets and confirms ll our other prejudices: till men are perſuaded hat they can be in the wrong, they never will be at the pains of informing themſelves n what they err. Every one is to himſelf a world, an univerſal mind, and a judge ſupreme, with whom reſides the laſt appeal · and at the tribunal of each individual's opinion muſt all other men, and their actions, fall proſtrate, to

receive

receive their ſentence. We all propoſe ourſelves as patterns and teachers, but refuſe to ſubmit to the example or judgement of any one: we all, like dictators, aſſume ſovereignty in deciſion, and in private indulge the pride, vanity, and arrogance, which are diſplayed in a more public manner by an

AUTHOR.

The END.

5 JY 62