THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH: A POEM.

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THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH: A POEM.

In FOUR BOOKS.

By JOHN ARMSTRONG, M. D.

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THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK I.

AIR.

DAUGHTER of Pæon, queen of every joy,
HYGEIA*; whoſe indulgent ſmile ſuſtains
The various race luxuriant nature pours,
And on th' immortal eſſences beſtows
Immortal youth; auſpicious, O deſcend! 5

* Hygeia the goddeſs of health, was, according to the genealogy of the heathen deities, the daughter of Eſculapius; who, as well as Apollo, was diſtinguiſhed by the name of Pæon.

Thou,

Thou, chearful guardian of the rolling year,
Whether thou wanton'ſt on the weſtern gale,
Or ſhak'ſt the rigid pinions of the north,
Diffuſeſt life and vigour thro' the tracts
Of air, thro' earth, and ocean's deep domain. 10
When thro' the blue ſerenity of heaven
Thy power approaches, all the waſteful hoſt
Of pain and ſickneſs, ſqualid and deform'd,
Confounded ſink into the loathſom gloom,
Where in deep Erebus involv'd the fiends 15
Grow more profane. Whatever ſhapes of death,
Shook from the hideous chambers of the globe,
Swarm thro' the ſhuddering air: whatever plagues
Or meagre famine breeds, or with ſlow wings
Riſe from the putrid watry element, 20
The damp waſte foreſt, motionleſs and rank,
That ſmothers earth and all the breathleſs winds,
Or the vile carnage of th' inhuman field;
Whatever baneful breathes the rotten ſouth;

Whatever ills th' extremes or ſudden change 25
Of cold and hot, or moiſt and dry produce;
They fly thy pure effulgence: they, and all
The ſecret poiſons of avenging heaven,
And all the pale tribes halting in the train
Of vice and heedleſs pleaſure: or if aught 30
The comet's glare amid the burning ſky,
Mournful eclipſe, or planets ill-combin'd,
Portend diſaſtrous to the vital world;
Thy ſalutary power averts their rage,
Averts the general bane: and but for thee 35
Nature would ſicken, nature ſoon would die.

Without thy chearful active energy
No rapture ſwells the breaſt, no poet ſings,
No more the maids of Helicon delight.
Come then with me, O Goddeſs heavenly-gay! 40
Begin the ſong; and let it ſweetly flow,
And let it wiſely teach thy wholeſom laws:

" How

" How beſt the fickle fabric to ſupport
" Of mortal man; in healthful body how
" A healthful mind the longeſt to maintain." 45
'Tis hard, in ſuch a ſtrife of rules, to chuſe
The beſt, and thoſe of moſt extenſive uſe;
Harder in clear and animated ſong
Dry philoſophic precepts to convey.
Yet with thy aid the ſecret wilds I trace 50
Of nature, and with daring ſteps proceed
Thro' paths the Muſes never trod before.

Nor ſhould I wander doubtful of my way,
Had I the lights of that ſagacious mind
Which taught to check the peſtilential fire, 55
And quell the dreaded Python of the Nile.
O Thou belov'd by all the graceful arts,
Thou long the fav'rite of the healing powers,
Indulge, O MEAD! a well-deſign'd eſſay,
Howe'er imperfect: and permit that I 60

My

My little knowledge with my country ſhare,
Till you the rich Aſclepian ſtores unlock,
And with new graces dignify the theme.

YE who amid this feveriſh world would wear
A body free of pain, of cares a mind, 65
Fly the rank city, ſhun its turbid air;
Breathe not the chaos of eternal ſmoke
And volatile corruption, from the dead,
The dying, ſickning, and the living world
Exhal'd, to ſully heaven's tranſparent dome 70
With dim mortality. It is not air
That from a thouſand lungs reeks back to thine,
Sated with exhalations rank and fell,
The ſpoil of dunghills, and the putrid thaw 75
Of nature; when from ſhape and texture ſhe
Relapſes into fighting elements:
It is not air, but floats a nauſeous maſs
Of all obſcene, corrupt, offenſive things.

Much moiſture hurts; but here a ſordid bath,
With oily rancor fraught, relaxes more 80
The ſolid frame than ſimple moiſture can.
Beſides, immur'd in many a ſullen bay
That never felt the freſhneſs of the breeze,
This ſlumb'ring deep remains, and ranker grows
With ſickly reſt: and (tho' the lungs abhor 85
To drink the dun fuliginous abyſs)
Did not the acid vigour of the mine,
Roll'd from ſo many thund'ring chimneys, tame
The putrid ſalts that overſwarm the ſky;
This cauſtic venom would perhaps corrode 90
Thoſe tender cells that draw the vital air,
In vain with all their unctuous rills bedew'd;
Or by the drunken venous tubes, that yawn
In countleſs pores o'er all the pervious ſkin,
Imbib'd, would poiſon the balſamic blood, 95
And rouſe the heart to every fever's rage.
While yet you breathe, away! the rural wilds

Invite;

Invite; the mountains call you, and the vales,
The woods, the ſtreams, and each ambroſial breeze
That fans the ever undulating ſky; 100
A kindly ſky! whoſe foſt'ring power regales
Man, beaſt, and all the vegetable reign.
Find then ſome woodland ſcene where nature ſmiles
Benign, where all her honeſt children thrive.
To us there wants not many a happy ſeat; 105
Look round the ſmiling land, ſuch numbers riſe
We hardly fix, bewilder'd in our choice.
See where enthron'd in adamantine ſtate,
Proud of her bards, imperial Windſor ſits;
There chuſe thy ſeat, in ſome aſpiring grove 110
Faſt by the ſlowly-winding Thames; or where
Broader ſhe laves fair Richmond's green retreats,
(Richmond that ſees an hundred villas riſe
Rural or gay.) O! from the ſummer's rage
O! wrap me in the friendly gloom that hides 115
Umbrageous Ham! But if the buſy town

Attract thee ſtill to toil for power or gold,
Sweetly thou mayſt thy vacant hours poſſeſs
In Hampſtead, courted by the weſtern wind;
Or Greenwich, waving o'er the winding flood; 120
Or loſe the world amid the ſylvan wilds
Of Dulwich, yet by barbarous arts unſpoil'd.
Green riſe the Kentiſh hills in chearful air:
But on the marſhy plains that Eſſex ſpreads
Build not, nor reſt too long thy wandering feet. 125
For on a ruſtic throne of dewy turf,
With baneful fogs her aching temples bound,
Quartana there preſides; a meagre fiend
Begot by Eurus, when his brutal force
Compreſs'd the ſlothful Naiad of the fens. 130
From ſuch a mixture ſprung this fitful peſt,
With feveriſh blaſts ſubdues the ſick'ning land:
Cold tremors come, and mighty love of reſt,
Convulſive yawnings, laſſitude, and pains
That ſting the burden'd brows, fatigue the loins, 135

And

And rack the joints, and every torpid limb;
Then parching heat ſucceeds, till copious ſweats
O'erflow; a ſhort relief from former ills.
Beneath repeated ſhocks the wretches pine;
The vigour ſinks, the habit melts away; 140
The chearful, pure and animated bloom
Dies from the face, with ſqualid atrophy
Devour'd, in ſallow melancholy clad.
And oft the ſorcereſs, in her ſated wrath,
Reſigns them to the furies of her train; 145
The bloated Hydrops, and the yellow fiend
Ting'd with her own accumulated gall.

In queſt of ſites, avoid the mournful plain
Where oſiers thrive, and trees that love the lake;
Where many lazy muddy rivers flow: 150
Nor for the wealth that all the Indies roll
Fix near the marſhy margin of the main.
For from the humid ſoil, and watry reign,

Eternal

Eternal vapours rise; the spungy air
For ever weeps; or, turgid with the weight 155
Of waters, pours a sounding deluge down.
Skies such as these let every mortal shun
Who dreads the dropsy, palsy, or the gout,
Tertian, corrosive scurvy, or moist catarrh;
Or any other injury that grows 160
From raw-spun fibres idle and unstrung,
Skin ill-perspiring, and the purple flood
In languid eddies loitering into phlegm.

Yet not alone from humid skies we pine;
For air may be too dry. The subtle heaven, 165
That winnows into dust the blasted downs,
Bare and extended wide without a stream,
Too fast imbibes th' attenuated lymph
Which, by the surface, from the blood exhales.
The lungs grow rigid, and with toil essay 170
Their flexible vibrations; or inflam'd,

Their

Their tender ever-moving ſtructure thaws.
Spoil'd of its limpid vehicle, the blood
A maſs of lees remains, a droſſy tide
That ſlow as Lethe wanders thro' the veins, 175
Unactive in the ſervices of life,
Unfit to lead its pitchy current thro'
The ſecret mazy channels of the brain.
The melancholic fiend, (that worſt deſpair
Of phyſic) hence the ruſt-complexion'd man 180
Purſues, whoſe blood is dry, whoſe fibres gain
Too ſtretch'd a tone: And hence in climes aduſt
So ſudden tumults ſeize the trembling nerves,
And burning fevers glow with double rage.

Fly, if you can, theſe violent extremes 185
Of air; the wholſome is nor moiſt nor dry.
But as the power of chuſing is deny'd
To half mankind, a further taſk enſues;
How beſt to mitigate theſe fell extremes,

How breathe unhurt the withering element, 190
Or hazy atmoſphere: Tho' cuſtom moulds
To every clime the ſoft Promethean clay;
And he who firſt the fogs of Eſſex breath'd
(So kind is native air) may in the fens
Of Eſſex from inveterate ills revive 195
At pure Montpelier or Bermuda caught.
But if the raw and oozy heaven offend;
Correct the ſoil, and dry the ſources up
Of watry exhalation; wide and deep
Conduct your trenches thro' the ſpouting bog; 200
Solicitous, with all your winding arts,
Betray th' unwilling lake into the ſtream;
And weed the foreſt, and invoke the winds
To break the toils where ſtrangled vapours lie;
Or thro' the thickets ſend the crackling flames. 205
Mean time, at home with chearful fires diſpel
The humid air: And let your table ſmoke
With ſolid roaſt or bak'd; or what the herds

Of

Of tamer breed ſupply; or what the wilds
Yield to the toilſom pleaſures of the chaſe. 210
Generous your wine, the boaſt of rip'ning years,
But frugal be your cups; the languid frame,
Vapid and ſunk from yeſterday's debauch,
Shrinks from the cold embrace of watry heavens.
But neither theſe, nor all Apollo's arts, 215
Diſarm the dangers of the dropping ſky,
Unleſs with exerciſe and manly toil
You brace your nerves, and ſpur the lagging blood.
The fat'ning clime let all the ſons of eaſe
Avoid; if Indolence would wiſh to live. 220
Go, yawn and loiter out the long ſlow year
In fairer ſkies. If droughty regions parch
The ſkin and lungs, and bake the thick'ning blood;
Deep in the waving foreſt chuſe your ſeat,
Where fuming trees refreſh the thirſty air; 225
And wake the fountains from their ſecret beds,
And into lakes dilate the running ſtream.

Here ſpread your gardens wide ; and let the cool,
The moiſt relaxing vegetable ſtore
Prevail in each repaſt : Your food ſupplied 230
By bleeding life, be gently waſted down,
By ſoft decoction and a mellowing heat,
To liquid balm ; or, if the ſolid maſs
You chuſe, tormented in the boiling wave ;
That thro' the thirſty channels of the blood 235
A ſmooth diluted chyle may ever flow.
The fragrant dairy from its cool receſs
Its nectar acid or benign will pour
To drown your thirſt ; or let the mantling bowl
Of keen Sherbet the fickle taſte relieve. 240
For with the viſcous blood the ſimple ſtream
Will hardly mingle ; and fermented cups
Oft diſſipate more moiſture than they give.
Yet when pale ſeaſons riſe, or winter rolls
His horrors o'er the world, thou may'ſt indulge 245
In feaſts more genial, and impatient broach

The

The mellow caſk. Then too the ſcourging air
Provokes to keener toils than ſultry droughts
Allow. But rarely we for drought blaſpheme.
Steep'd in continual rains, or with raw fogs 250
Bedew'd, our ſeaſons droop; incumbent ſtill
A ponderous heaven o'erwhelms the ſinking ſoul.
Lab'ring with ſtorms in heapy mountains riſe
Th' imbattled clouds, as if the Stygian ſhades
Had left the dungeon of eternal night; 255
Till black with thunder all the ſouth deſcends.
Scarce in a ſhowerleſs day the heavens indulge
Our melting clime; except the baleful eaſt
Withers the tender ſpring, and ſourly checks
The fancy of the year. Our fathers talk 260
Of ſummers, balmy airs, and ſkies ſerene.
Good heaven! for what unexpiated crimes
This diſmal change! The brooding elements
Do they, your powerful miniſters of wrath,
Prepare ſome fierce exterminating plague? 265

Or is it fix'd in the decrees above
That lofty Albion melt into the main?
Indulgent nature! O diſſolve this gloom!
Bind in eternal adamant the winds
That drown or wither: Give the genial weſt 270
To breathe, and in its turn the ſprightly north:
And may once more the circling ſeaſons rule
The year; not mix in every monſtrous day.

Mean time, the moiſt malignity to ſhun 274
Of burden'd ſkies; mark where the dry champain
Swells into chearful hills; where Marjoram
And Thyme, the love of bees, perfume the air;
And where the * Cynorrhodon with the roſe
For fragrance vies; for in the thirſty ſoil
Moſt fragrant breathe the aromatic tribes. 280
There bid thy roofs high on the baſking ſteep
Aſcend; there light thy hoſpitable fires.

* The wild roſe, or that which grows upon the wild briar.

And

And let them ſee the winter morn ariſe,
The ſummer evening bluſhing in the weſt;
While with umbrageous oaks the ridge behind 285
O'erhung, defends you from the bluſt'ring north,
And bleak affliction of the peeviſh eaſt.
O! when the growling winds contend, and all
The ſounding foreſt fluctuates in the ſtorm,
To ſink in warm repoſe, and hear the din 290
Howl o'er the ſteady battlements, delights
Above the luxury of vulgar ſleep.
The murmuring rivulet, and the hoarſer ſtrain
Of waters ruſhing o'er the ſlippery rocks,
Will nightly lull you to ambroſial reſt. 295
To pleaſe the fancy is no trifling good,
Where health is ſtudied; for whatever moves
The mind with calm delight, promotes the juſt
And natural movements of th' harmonious frame.
Beſides, the ſportive brook for ever ſhakes 300
The trembling air; that floats from hill to hill,

From vale to mountain, with inceſſant change
Of pureſt element, refreſhing ſtill
Your airy ſeat and uninfected Gods.
Chiefly for this I praiſe the man who builds 305
High on the breezy ridge, whoſe lofty ſides
Th' etherial deep with endleſs billows laves.
His purer manſion nor contagious years
Shall reach, nor deadly putrid airs annoy.

But may no fogs, from lake or fenny plain, 310
Involve my hill. And wherefoe'er you build,
Whether on ſun-burnt Epſom, or the plains
Waſh'd by the ſilent Lee; in Chelſea low,
Or high Blackheath with wintry winds aſſail'd;
Dry be your houſe: but airy more than warm. 315
Elſe every breath of ruder wind will ſtrike
Your tender body thro' with rapid pains;
Fierce coughs will teize you, hoarſeneſs bind your voice,

Or

Or moiſt Gravedo load your aching brows.
Theſe to defy, and all the fates that dwell
In cloiſter'd air tainted with ſteaming life,
Let lofty ceilings grace your ample rooms;
And ſtill at azure noontide may your dome
At every window drink the liquid ſky.

Need we the ſunny ſituation here, 325
And theatres open to the ſouth, commend?
Here, where the morning's miſty breath infeſts
More than the torrid noon? How ſickly grow,
How pale, the plants in thoſe ill-fated vales
That, circled round with the gigantic heap 330
Of mountains, never felt, nor ever hope
To feel, the genial vigor of the ſun!
While on the neighbouring hill the roſe inflames
The verdant ſpring; in virgin beauty blows
The tender lily, languiſhingly ſweet; 335
O'er every hedge the wanton woodbine roves,

And

And autumn ripens in the ſummer's ray.
Nor leſs the warmer living tribes demand
The foſt'ring ſun: whoſe energy divine
Dwells not in mortal fire; whoſe generous heat 340
Glows thro' the maſs of groſſer elements,
And kindles into life the pond'rous ſpheres.
Chear'd by thy kind invigorating warmth,
We court thy beams, great majeſty of day!
If not the ſoul, the regent of this world, 345
Firſt born of heaven, and only leſs than God!

THE

THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK II.

DIET.

THE

ART

OF PRESERVING

HEALTH.

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DIET.

ENOUGH of air. A desart subject now,
Rougher and wilder, rises to my sight.
A barren waste, where not a garland grows
To bind the muse's brow; not even a proud
Stupendous solitude frowns o'er the heath, 5
To rouse a noble horror in the soul:
But rugged paths fatigue, and error leads
Thro' endless labyrinths the devious feet.

Farewel, etherial fields! the humbler arts
Of life; the table, and the homely Gods, 10
Demand my ſong. Elyſian gales adieu!

The blood, the fountain whence the ſpirits flow,
The generous ſtream that waters every part,
And motion, vigor, and warm life conveys
To every particle that moves or lives; 15
This vital fluid, thro' unnumber'd tubes
Pour'd by the heart, and to the heart again
Refunded; ſcourg'd for ever round and round,
Enrag'd with heat and toil, at laſt forgets
Its balmy nature; virulent and thin 20
It grows; and now, but that a thouſand gates
Are open to its flight, it would deſtroy
The parts it cheriſh'd and repair'd before.
Beſides, the flexible and tender tubes
Melt in the mildeſt, moſt nectareous tide 25
That ripening nature rolls; as in the ſtream

Its

Its crumbling banks; but what the vital force
Of plaſtic fluids hourly batters down,
That very force, thoſe plaſtic particles
Rebuild: So mutable the ſtate of man. 30
For this the watchful appetite was giv'n,
Daily with freſh materials to repair
This unavoidable expence of life,
This neceſſary waſte of fleſh and blood.
Hence the concoctive powers, with various art, 35
Subdue the cruder aliments to chyle;
The chyle to blood; the foamy purple tide
To liquors, which thro' finer arteries
To different parts their winding courſe purſue;
To try new changes, and new forms put on, 40
Or for the public, or ſome private uſe.

Nothing ſo foreign but th' athletic hind
Can labour into blood. The hungry meal
Alone he fears, or aliments too thin;

By

By violent powers too eaſily ſubdu'd, 45
Too ſoon expell'd. His daily labour thaws,
To friendly chyle, the moſt rebellious maſs
That ſalt can harden, or the ſmoke of years;
Nor does his gorge the rancid bacon rue,
Nor that which Ceſtria ſends, tenacious paſte 50
Of ſolid milk. But ye of ſofter clay
Infirm and delicate! and ye who waſte
With pale and bloated ſloth the tedious day!
Avoid the ſtubborn aliment, avoid
The full repaſt; and let ſagacious age 55
Grow wiſer, leſſon'd by the dropping teeth.

Half ſubtiliz'd to chyle, the liquid food
Readieſt obeys th' aſſimilating powers;
And ſoon the tender vegetable maſs 59
Relents; and ſoon the young of thoſe that tread
The ſtedfaſt earth, or cleave the green abyſs,
Or pathleſs ſky. And if the Steer muſt fall,

In

In youth and vigor glorious let him die;
Nor ſtay till rigid age, or heavy ails,
Abſolve him ill-requited from the yoke. 65
Some with high forage, and luxuriant eaſe,
Indulge the veteran Ox; but wiſer thou,
From the bleak mountain or the barren downs,
Expect the flocks by frugal nature fed;
A race of purer blood, with exerciſe 70
Refin'd and ſcanty fare: For, old or young,
The ſtall'd are never healthy; nor the cramm'd.
Not all the culinary arts can tame,
To wholſome food, th' abominable growth
Of reſt and gluttony; the prudent taſte 75
Rejects like bane ſuch loathſome luſciouſneſs.
The languid ſtomach curſes even the pure
Delicious fat, and all the race of oil;
For more the oily aliments relax
Its feeble tone; and with the eager lymph 80
(Fond to incorporate with all it meets)

Coily

Coily they mix; and ſhun with ſlippery wiles
The wooed embrace. Th' irreſoluble oil,
So gentle late and blandiſhing, in floods
Of rancid bile o'erflows: What tumults hence, 85
What horrors riſe, were nauſeous to relate.
Chuſe leaner viands, ye of jovial make!
Chuſe ſober meals; and rouſe to active life
Your cumbrous clay; nor on th' enfeebling down,
Irreſolute, protract the morning hours. 90
But let the man, whoſe bones are thinly clad,
With chearful eaſe, and ſucculent repaſt
Improve his ſlender habit. Each extreme
From the bleſt mean of ſanity departs.

I could relate what table this demands, 95
Or that complexion; what the various powers
Of various foods: But fifty years would roll,
And fifty more, before the tale were done.
Beſides, there often lurks ſome nameleſs, ſtrange,

Peculiar

Peculiar thing; nor on the ſkin diſplay'd, 100
Felt in the pulſe, nor in the habit ſeen;
Which finds a poiſon in the food that moſt
The temp'rature affects. There are, whoſe blood
Impetuous rages thro' the turgid veins,
Who better bear the fiery fruits of Ind, 105
Than the moiſt Melon, or pale Cucumber.
Of chilly nature others fly the board
Supply'd with ſlaughter, and the vernal pow'rs
For cooler, kinder, ſuſtenance implore.
Some even the generous nutriment deteſt 110
Which, in the ſhell, the ſleeping Embryo rears.
Some, more unhappy ſtill, repent the gifts
Of Pales; ſoft, delicious, and benign:
The balmy quinteſcence of every flower,
And every grateful herb that decks the ſpring; 115
The foſt'ring dew of tender ſprouting life;
The beſt refection of declining age;
The kind reſtorative of thoſe who lie

Half-dead and panting, from the doubtful ſtrife
Of nature ſtruggling in the graſp of death. 120
Try all the bounties of this fertile globe,
There is not ſuch a ſalutary food,
As ſuits with every ſtomach. But (except,
Amid the mingled maſs of fiſh and fowl,
And boil'd and bak'd, you heſitate by which 125
You ſunk oppreſs'd, or whether not by all;)
Taught by experience ſoon you may diſcern
What pleaſes, what offends. Avoid the cates
That lull the ſicken'd appetite too long;
Or heave with feveriſh fluſhings all the face, 130
Burn in the palms, and parch the roughning tongue;
Or much diminiſh or too much increaſe
Th' expence which nature's wiſe œconomy,
Without or waſte or avarice, maintains.
Such cates abjur'd, let prouling hunger looſe, 135
And bid the curious palate roam at will;

They

They ſcarce can err amid the various ſtores
That burſt the teeming entrails of the world.

Led by ſagacious taſte, the ruthleſs king
Of beaſts on blood and ſlaughter only lives: 140
The tyger, form'd alike to cruel meals,
Would at the manger ſtarve: Of milder ſeeds,
The generous horſe to herbage and to grain
Confines his wiſh; tho' fabling Greece reſound
The Thracian ſteeds with human carnage wild. 145
Prompted by inſtinct's never-erring power,
Each creature knows its proper aliment;
But man, th' inhabitant of every clime,
With all the commoners of nature feeds.
Directed, bounded, by this pow'r within, 150
Their cravings are well-aim'd: Voluptuous man
Is by ſuperior faculties miſled;
Miſled from pleaſure even in queſt of joy.
Sated with nature's boons, what thouſands ſeek,

With diſhes tortur'd from their native taſte, 155
And mad variety, to ſpur beyond
Its wiſer will the jaded appetite!
Is this for pleaſure? Learn a juſter taſte;
And know, that temperance is true luxury.
Or is it pride? Purſue ſome nobler aim. 160
Diſmiſs your paraſites, who praiſe for hire;
And earn the fair eſteem of honeſt men,
Whoſe praiſe is fame. Form'd of ſuch clay as yours,
The ſick, the needy, ſhiver at your gates. 164
Even modeſt want may bleſs your hand unſeen,
Tho' huſh'd in patient wretchedneſs at home.
Is there no virgin, grac'd with every charm
But that which binds the mercenary vow?
No youth of genius, whoſe neglected bloom
Unfoſter'd ſickens in the barren ſhade? 170
No worthy man, by fortune's random blows,
Or by a heart too generous and humane,
Conſtrain'd to leave his happy natal ſeat,

And

And ſigh for wants more bitter than his own?
There are, while human miſeries abound, 175
A thouſand ways to waſte ſuperfluous wealth,
Without one fool or flatterer at your board,
Without one hour of ſickneſs or diſguſt.

But other ills th' ambiguous feaſt purſue,
Beſides provoking the laſcivious taſte. 180
Such various foods, tho' harmleſs each alone,
Each other violate; and oft we ſee
What ſtrife is brew'd, and what pernicious bane,
From combinations of innoxious things.
Th' unbounded taſte I mean not to confine 185
To hermit's diet, needleſsly ſevere.
But would you long the ſweets of health enjoy,
Or huſband pleaſure; at one impious meal
Exhauſt not half the bounties of the year,
Of every realm. It matters not mean while 190
How much to morrow differ from to day;

So

So far indulge: 'tis fit, beſides, that man,
To change obnoxious, be to change inur'd.
But ſtay the curious appetite, and taſte
With caution fruits you never tried before. 195
For want of uſe the kindeſt aliment
Sometimes offends; while cuſtom tames the rage
Of poiſon to mild amity with life.

So heav'n has form'd us to the general taſte
Of all its gifts; ſo cuſtom has improv'd 200
This bent of nature; that few ſimple foods,
Of all that earth, or air, or ocean yield,
But by exceſs offend. Beyond the ſenſe
Of light refection, at the genial board
Indulge not often; nor protract the feaſt 205
To dull ſatiety; till ſoft and ſlow
A drowzy death creeps on, th'expanſive ſoul
Oppreſs'd, and ſmother'd the celeſtial fire.
The ſtomach, urg'd beyond its active tone,

Hardly

Hardly to nutrimental chyle ſubdues 210
The ſofteſt food: unfiniſh'd and deprav'd,
The chyle, in all its future wand'rings, owns
Its turbid fountain; not by purer ſtreams
So to be clear'd, but foulneſs will remain.
To ſparkling wine what ferment can exalt 215
Th' unripen'd grape? Or what mechanic ſkill
From the crude ore can ſpin the ductile gold?
Groſs riot treaſures up a wealthy fund
Of plagues: but more immedicable ills
Attend the lean extreme. For phyſic knows 220
How to diſburden the too tumid veins,
Even how to ripen the half-labour'd blood;
But to unlock the elemental tubes,
Collaps'd and ſhrunk with long inanity,
And with balſamic nutriment repair 225
The dried and worn-out habit, were to bid
Old age grow green, and wear a ſecond ſpring;
Or the tall aſh, long raviſh'd from the ſoil,

Thro'

Thro' wither'd veins imbibe the vernal dew.
When hunger calls, obey; nor often wait 230
Till hunger ſharpen to corroſive pain:
For the keen appetite will feaſt beyond
What nature well can bear; and one extreme
Ne'er without danger meets its own reverſe.
Too greedily th' exhauſted veins abſorb 235
The recent chyle, and load enfeebled powers
Oft to th' extinction of the vital flame.
To the pale cities, by the firm-ſet ſiege
And famine humbled, may this verſe be borne;
And hear, ye hardieſt ſons that Albion breeds, 240
Long toſs'd and famiſh'd on the wintry main;
The war ſhook off, or hoſpitable ſhore
Attain'd, with temperance bear the ſhock of joy;
Nor crown with feſtive rites th' auſpicious day:
Such feaſt might prove more fatal than the waves,
Than war, or famine. While the vital fire 246
Burns feebly, heap not the green fuel on;

But prudently foment the wandering ſpark
With what the ſooneſt feels its kindred touch:
Be frugal ev'n of that: a little give 250
At firſt; that kindled, add a little more;
Till, by deliberate nouriſhing, the flame
Reviv'd, with all its wonted vigor glows.

But tho' the two (the full and the jejune)
Extremes have each their vice; it much avails 255
Ever with gentle tide to ebb and flow
From this to that: So nature learns to bear
Whatever chance or headlong appetite
May bring. Beſides, a meagre day ſubdues
The cruder clods by ſloth or luxury 260
Collected; and unloads the wheels of life.
Sometimes a coy averſion to the feaſt
Comes on, while yet no blacker omen lours;
Then is a time to ſhun the tempting board,
Were it your natal or your nuptial day. 265

Perhaps a faſt ſo ſeaſonable ſtarves
The latent ſeeds of woe, which rooted once
Might coſt you labour. But the day return'd
Of feſtal luxury, the wiſe indulge
Moſt in the tender vegetable breed : 270
Then chiefly when the ſummer's beams inflame
The brazen heavens ; or angry Syrius ſheds
A feveriſh taint thro' the ſtill gulph of air.
The moiſt cool viands then, and flowing cup
From the freſh dairy-virgin's liberal hand, 275
Will ſave your head from harm, tho' round the world
The dreaded * Cauſos roll his waſteful fires.
Pale humid Winter loves the generous board,
The meal more copious, and a warmer fare; 279
And longs, with old wood and old wine, to cheer
His quaking heart. The ſeaſons which divide
Th' empires of heat and cold; by neither claim'd,

* The burning fever.

Influenc'd

Influenc'd by both; a middle regimen
Impoſe. Thro' autumn's languiſhing domain
Deſcending, nature by degrees invites 285
To glowing luxury. But from the depth
Of winter, when th' invigorated year
Emerges; when Favonius fluſh'd with love,
Toyful and young, in every breeze deſcends
More warm and wanton on his kindling bride; 290
Then, ſhepherds, then begin to ſpare your flocks;
And learn, with wiſe humanity, to check
The luſt of blood. Now pregnant earth commits
A various offspring to th' indulgent sky:
Now bounteous nature feeds with laviſh hand 295
The prone creation; yields what once ſuffic'd
Their dainty ſovereign, when the world was young;
E're yet the barbarous thirſt of blood had ſeiz'd
The human breaſt. Each rolling month matures
The food that ſuits it moſt; ſo does each clime. 300

Far in the horrid realms of winter, where
Th'eſtabliſh'd ocean heaps a monſtrous waſte
Of ſhining rocks and mountains to the pole;
There lives a hardy race, whoſe plaineſt wants
Relentleſs earth, their cruel ſtep-mother, 305
Regards not. On the waſte of iron fields,
Untam'd, untractable, no harveſts wave:
Pomona hates them, and the clowniſh God
Who tends the garden. In this frozen world
Such cooling gifts were vain; a fitter meal 310
Is earn'd with eaſe; for here the fruitful ſpawn
Of Ocean ſwarms, and heaps their genial board
With generous fare and luxury profuſe.
Theſe are their bread, the only bread they know;
Theſe, and their willing ſlave the deer, that crops
The ſhrubby herbage on their meager hills. 316
Girt by the burning zone, not thus the ſouth
Her ſwarthy ſons, in either Ind, maintains:
Or thirſty Lybia; from whoſe fervid loins

The

The lion burſts, and every fiend that roams 320
Th' affrighted wilderneſs. The mountain herd,
Aduſt and dry, no ſweet repaſt affords;
Nor does the tepid main ſuch kinds produce,
So perfect, ſo delicious, as the ſtores
Of icy Zembla. Raſhly where the blood 325
Brews feveriſh frays; where ſcarce the tubes ſuſtain
Its tumid fervor and tempeſtuous courſe;
Kind nature tempts not to ſuch gifts as theſe.
But here in livid ripeneſs melts the grape;
Here, finiſh'd by invigorating ſuns, 330
Thro' the green ſhade the golden Orange glows;
Spontaneous here the turgid Melon yields
A generous pulp; the Coco ſwells on high
With milky riches; and in horrid mail
The ſoft Ananas wraps its tender ſweets. 335
Earth's vaunted progeny: In ruder air
Too coy to flouriſh, even too proud to live;
Or hardly rais'd by artificial fire

To

To vapid life. Here with a mother's ſmile
Glad Amalthea pours her copious horn. 340
Here buxom Ceres reigns: Th' autumnal ſea
In boundleſs billows fluctuates o'er their plains.
What ſuits the climate beſt, what ſuits the men,
Nature profuſes moſt, and moſt the taſte
Demands. The fountain, edg'd with racy wine 345
Or acid fruit, bedews their thirſty ſouls.
The breeze eternal breathing round their limbs
Supports in elſe intolerable air:
While the cool Palm, the Plantain, and the grove
That waves on gloomy Lebanon, aſſuage 350
The torrid hell that beams upon their heads.

Now come, ye Naiads, to the fountains lead;
Now let me wander thro' your gelid reign.
I burn to view th' enthuſiaſtic wilds
By mortal elſe untrod. I hear the din 355
Of waters thundering o'er the ruin'd cliffs.

With

With holy rev'rence I approach the rocks
Whence glide the ſtreams renown'd in ancient ſong.
Here from the deſart down the rumbling ſteep 359
Firſt ſprings the Nile; here burſts the ſounding Po
In angry waves; Euphrates hence devolves
A mighty flood to water half the Eaſt;
And there, in Gothic ſolitude reclin'd,
The chearleſs Tanais pours his hoary urn. 364
What ſolemn twilight! What ſtupendous ſhades
Enwrap theſe infant floods! Thro' every nerve
A ſacred horror thrills, a pleaſing fear
Glides o'er my frame. The foreſt deepens round;
And more gigantic ſtill th' impending trees 369
Stretch their extravagant arms athwart the gloom.
Are theſe the confines of ſome fairy world?
A land of Genii? Say, beyond theſe wilds
What unknown nations? If indeed beyond
Aught habitable lies. And whither leads,
To what ſtrange regions, or of bliſs or pain, 375

That

That ſubterraneous way? Propitious maids,
Conduct me, while with fearful ſteps I tread
This trembling ground. The taſk remains to ſing
Your gifts, (ſo Pæon, ſo the powers of health
Command) to praiſe your cryſtal element: 380
The chief ingredient in heaven's various works;
Whoſe flexible genius ſparkles in the gem,
Grows firm in oak, and fugitive in wine;
The vehicle, the ſource, of nutriment
And life, to all that vegitate or live. 385

O comfortable ſtreams! With eager lips
And trembling hand the languid thirſty quaff
New life in you; freſh vigor fills their veins.
No warmer cups the rural ages knew;
None warmer ſought the fires of human-kind. 390
Happy in temperate peace! Their equal days
Felt not th' alternate fits of feveriſh mirth,
And ſick dejection. Still ſerene and pleas'd,

They

They knew no pains but what the tender ſoul
With pleaſure yields to, and would ne'er forget.
Bleſt with divine immunity from ails, 396
Long centuries they liv'd; their only fate
Was ripe old age, and rather ſleep than death.
O! could thoſe worthies from the world of Gods
Return to viſit their degenerate ſons, 400
How would they ſcorn the joys of modern time,
With all our art and toil improv'd to pain!
Too happy they! But wealth brought luxury,
And luxury on ſloth begot diſeaſe.

Learn temperance, friends; and hear without diſdain 405
The choice of water. Thus the * Coan ſage
Opin'd, and thus the learn'd of every ſchool.
What leaſt of foreign principles partakes
Is beſt: The lighteſt then; what bears the touch

* Hippocrates.

Of fire the leaſt, and ſooneſt mounts in air; 410
The moſt inſipid; the moſt void of ſmell.
Such the rude mountain from his horrid ſides
Pours down; ſuch waters in the ſandy vale
For ever boil, alike of winter froſts
And ſummer's heat ſecure. The lucid ſtream, 415
O'er rocks reſounding, or for many a mile
Hurl'd down the pebbly channel, wholſome yields
And mellow draughts; except when winter thaws,
And half the mountains melt into the tide.
Tho' thirſt were ne'er ſo reſolute, avoid 420
The ſordid lake, and all ſuch drowſy floods
As fill from Lethe Belgia's ſlow canals;
(With reſt corrupt, with vegetation green;
Squalid with generation, and the birth
Of little monſters;) till the power of fire 425
Has from profane embraces diſengag'd
The violated lymph. The virgin ſtream
In boiling waſtes its finer ſoul in air.

Nothing

Nothing like ſimple element dilutes
The food, or gives the chyle ſo ſoon to flow. 430
But where the ſtomach, indolently given,
Toys with its duty, animate with wine
Th' inſipid ſtream: Tho' golden Ceres yields
A more voluptuous, a more ſprightly draught;
Perhaps more active. Wine unmix'd, and all 435
The gluey floods that from the vex'd abyſs
Of fermentation ſpring; with ſpirit fraught,
And furious with intoxicating fire;
Retard concoction, and preſerve unthaw'd
Th' embodied maſs. You ſee what countleſs years, 440
Embalm'd in fiery quinteſſence of wine,
The puny wonders of the reptile world,
The tender rudiments of life, the ſlim
Unrav'lings of minute anatomy,
Maintain their texture, and unchang'd remain! 445

We curſe not wine: The vile exceſs we blame;
More fruitful, than th' accumulated board,
Of pain and miſery. For the ſubtle draught
Faſter and ſurer ſwells the vital tide;
And with more active poiſon, than the floods 450
Of groſſer crudity convey, pervades
The far-remote meanders of our frame.
Ah! ſly deceiver! Branded o'er and o'er,
Yet ſtill believ'd! Exulting o'er the wreck
Of ſober Vows!—But the Parnaſſian maids 455
* Another time perhaps ſhall ſing the joys,
The fatal charms, the many woes of wine;
Perhaps its various tribes, and various powers.

Meantime, I would not always dread the bowl,
Nor every treſpaſs ſhun. The feveriſh ſtrife, 460
Rous'd by the rare debauch, ſubdues, expels
The loitering crudities, that burden life;

* See Book IV. from verſe 164 to ver. 218.

And,

And, like a torrent full and rapid, clears
Th' obſtructed tubes. Beſides, this reſtleſs world
Is full of chances, which by habit's power 465
To learn to bear is eaſier than to ſhun.
Ah! when ambition, meagre love of gold,
Or ſacred country calls, with mellowing wine
To moiſten well the thirſty ſuffrages;
Say how, unſeaſon'd to the midnight frays 470
Of Comus and his rout, wilt thou contend
With Centaurs long to hardy deeds inur'd?
Then learn to revel; but by ſlow degrees:
By ſlow degrees the liberal arts are won; 474
And Hercules grew ſtrong. But when you ſmooth
The brows of care, indulge your feſtive vein
In cups by well-inform'd experience found
The leaſt your bane; and only with your friends.
There are ſweet follies, frailties to be ſeen
By friends alone, and men of generous minds. 480

O!

O! ſeldom may the fated hours return
Of drinking deep! I would not daily taſte,
Except when life declines, even ſober cups.
Weak withering age no rigid law forbids, 484
With frugal nectar, ſmooth and ſlow with balm,
The ſapleſs habit daily to bedew,
And give the heſitating wheels of life
Gliblier to play. But youth has better joys;
And is it wiſe when youth with pleaſure flows,
To ſquander the reliefs of age and pain? 490

What dext'rous thouſands juſt within the goal
Of wild debauch direct their nightly courſe!
Perhaps no ſickly qualms bedim their days,
No morning admonitions ſhock the head.
But ah! what woes remain! Life rolls apace; 495
And that incurable diſeaſe old age,
In youthful bodies more ſeverely felt,
More ſternly active, ſhakes their blaſted prime:

Except

Except kind nature by ſome haſty blow
Prevent the lingering fates. For know, whate'er
Beyond its natural fervor hurries on 501
The ſanguine tide; whether the frequent bowl,
High-ſeaſon'd fare, or exerciſe to toil
Protracted; ſpurs to its laſt ſtage tir'd life,
And ſows the temples with untimely ſnow.
When life is new, the ductile fibres feel 505
The heart's increaſing force; and, day by day,
The growth advances; till the larger tubes,
Acquiring (from their * elemental veins,
Condens'd to ſolid chords) a firmer tone,

* In the human body, as well as in thoſe of other animals, the larger blood-veſſels are compoſed of ſmaller ones; which, by the violent motion and preſſure of the fluids in the large veſſels, loſe their cavities by degrees, and degenerate into impervious chords or fibres. In proportion as theſe ſmall veſſels become ſolid, the large muſt of courſe grow leſs extenſile, more rigid, and make a ſtronger reſiſtance to the action of the heart, and force of the blood. From this gradual condenſation of the ſmaller veſſels, and conſequent rigidity of the larger ones, the progreſs of the human body from infancy to old age is accounted for.

Suſtain,

Suſtain, and juſt ſuſtain, th' impetuous blood. 510
Here ſtops the growth. With overbearing pulſe
And preſſure, ſtill the great deſtroy the ſmall;
Still with the ruins of the ſmall grow ſtrong.
Life glows mean time, amid the grinding force
Of viſcous fluids and elaſtic tubes; 515
Its various functions vigorouſly are plied
By ſtrong machinery; and in ſolid health
The man confirm'd long triumphs o'er diſeaſe.
But the full ocean ebbs: There is a point,
By nature fix'd, whence life muſt downwards tend.
For ſtill the beating tide conſolidates 521
The ſtubborn veſſels, more reluctant ſtill
To the weak throbbings of th' enfeebled heart.
This languiſhing, theſe ſtrengthning by degrees
To hard unyielding unelaſtic bone, 525
Thro' tedious channels the congealing flood
Crawls lazily, and hardly wanders on;
It loiters ſtill: And now it ſtirs no more.

This is the period few attain; the death
Of nature: Thus (ſo heav'n ordain'd it) life 530
Deſtroys itſelf; and could theſe laws have chang'd,
Neſtor might now the fates of Troy relate;
And Homer live immortal as his ſong.

What does not fade? The tower that long had ſtood
The cruſh of thunder, and the warring winds, 535
Shook by the ſlow but ſure deſtroyer Time,
Now hangs in doubtful ruins o'er its baſe.
And flinty pyramids, and walls of braſs,
Deſcend; the Babylonian ſpires are ſunk;
Achaia, Rome, and Egypt moulder down. 540
Time ſhakes the ſtable tyranny of thrones,
And tottering empires ruſh by their own weight.
This huge rotundity we tread grows old;
And all thoſe worlds that roll around the ſun,
The ſun himſelf, ſhall die; and ancient Night 545

Again involve the desolate abyss:
Till the great FATHER thro' the lifeless gloom
Extend his arm to light another world,
And bid new planets roll by other laws.
For thro' the regions of unbounded space, 550
Where unconfin'd Omnipotence has room,
BEING, in various systems, fluctuates still
Between Creation and abhorr'd Decay;
It ever did; perhaps and ever will.
New worlds are still emerging from the deep; 555
The old descending, in their turns to rise.

THE

THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK III.

EXERCISE.

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THRO' various toils th' adventurous Muſe has paſt;
But half the toil, and more than half, remains.
Rude is her theme, and hardly fit for ſong;
Plain, and of little ornament; and I
But little practis'd in th' Aonian arts. 5
Yet not in vain ſuch labours have we tried,
If ought theſe lays the fickle health confirm.

To you, ye delicate, I write; for you
I tame my youth to philoſophic cares,
And grow ſtill paler by the midnight lamps. 10
Not to debilitate with timorous rules
A hardy frame; nor needleſly to brave
Unglorious dangers, proud of mortal ſtrength;
Is all the leſſon that in wholſome years
Concerns the ſtrong. His care were ill beſtow'd
Who would with warm effeminacy nurſe 16
The thriving oak, which on the mountain's brow
Bears all the blaſts that ſweep the wintry heav'n.

Behold the labourer of the glebe, who toils
In duſt, in rain, in cold and ſultry ſkies: 20
Save but the grain from mildews and the flood,
Nought anxious he what ſickly ſtars aſcend.
He knows no laws by Eſculapius given;
He ſtudies none. Yet him nor midnight fogs
Infeſt, nor thoſe envenom'd ſhafts that fly 25

When

When rabid Sirius fires th' autumnal noon.
His habit pure with plain and temperate meals,
Robust with labour, and by custom steel'd
To every casualty of varied life;
Serene he bears the peevish eastern blast, 30
And uninfected breathes the mortal South.

Such the reward of rude and sober life;
Of labour such. By health the peasant's toil
Is well repaid; if exercise were pain 34
Indeed, and temperance pain. By arts like these
Laconia nurs'd of old her hardy sons;
And Rome's unconquer'd legions urg'd their way,
Unhurt, thro' every toil in every clime.

Toil, and be strong. By toil the flaccid nerves
Grow firm, and gain a more compacted tone; 40
The greener juices are by toil subdu'd,
Mellow'd, and subtilis'd; the vapid old

Expell'd,

Expell'd, and all the rancor of the blood.
Come, my companions, ye who feel the charms
Of nature and the year; come, let us ſtray 45
Where chance or fancy leads our roving walk:
Come, while the ſoft voluptuous breezes fan
The fleecy heavens, enwrap the limbs in balm,
And ſhed a charming languor o'er the ſoul.
Nor when bright Winter ſows with prickly froſt
The vigorous ether, in unmanly warmth 51
Indulge at home; nor even when Eurus' blaſts
This way and that convolve the lab'ring woods.
My liberal walks, ſave when the ſkies in rain
Or fogs relent, no ſeaſon ſhould confine 55
Or to the cloiſter'd gallery or arcade.
Go, climb the mountain; from th'etherial ſource
Imbibe the recent gale. The chearful morn
Beams o'er the hills; go, mount th'exulting ſteed:
Already, ſee, the deep-mouth'd beagles catch 60
The tainted mazes; and, on eager ſport

Intent,

Intent, with emulous impatience try
Each doubtful track. Or, if a nobler prey
Delight you more, go chase the desperate deer;
And thro' its deepest solitudes awake 65
The vocal forest with the jovial horn.

But if the breathless chase o'er hill and dale
Exceed your strength; a sport of less fatigue,
Not less delightful, the prolific stream
Affords. The chrystal rivulet, that o'er 70
A stony channel rolls its rapid maze,
Swarms with the silver fry. Such, thro' the bounds
Of pastoral Stafford, runs the brawling Trent;
Such Eden, sprung from Cumbrian mountains; such
The Esk, o'erhung with woods; and such the stream 75
On whose Arcadian banks I first drew air,
Liddal; till now, except in Doric lays
Tun'd to her murmurs by her love-sick swains,

Unknown in ſong: Tho' not a purer ſtream,
Thro' meads more flow'ry, or more romantic groves, 80
Rolls toward the weſtern main. Hail ſacred flood!
May ſtill thy hoſpitable ſwains be bleſt
In rural innocence; thy mountains ſtill
Teem with the fleecy race; thy tuneful woods
For ever flouriſh; and thy vales look gay 85
With painted meadows, and the golden grain!
Oft, with thy blooming ſons, when life was new,
Sportive and petulant, and charm'd with toys,
In thy tranſparent eddies have I lav'd:
Oft trac'd with patient ſteps thy fairy banks, 90
With the well-imitated fly to hook
The eager trout, and with the ſlender line
And yielding rod ſollicit to the ſhore
The ſtruggling panting prey; while vernal clouds
And tepid gales obſcur'd the ruffled pool, 95
And from the deeps call'd forth the wanton ſwarms.

Form'd

Form'd on the Samian school, or those of Ind,
There are who think these pastimes scarce humane:
Yet in my mind (and not relentless I)
His life is pure that wears no fouler stains. 100
But if thro' genuine tenderness of heart,
Or secret want of relish for the game,
You shun the glories of the chace, nor care
To hunt the peopled stream; the garden yields
A soft amusement, a humane delight. 105
To raise th' insipid nature of the ground;
Or tame its savage genius to the grace
Of careless sweet rusticity, that seems
The amiable result of happy chance,
Is to create; and gives a god-like joy, 110
Which every year improves. Nor thou disdain
To check the lawless riot of the trees,
To plant the grove, or turn the barren mould.
O happy he! whom, when his years decline,
(His fortune and his fame by worthy means 115

Attain'd, and equal to his moderate mind;
His life approv'd by all the wiſe and good,
Even envied by the vain) the peaceful groves
Of Epicurus, from this ſtormy world,
Receive to reſt; of all ungrateful cares 120
Abſolv'd, and ſacred from the ſelfiſh crowd.
Happieſt of men! if the ſame ſoil invites
A choſen few, companions of his youth,
Once fellow-rakes perhaps, now rural friends;
With whom in eaſy commerce to purſue 125
Nature's free charms, and vie for ſylvan fame;
A fair ambition; void of ſtrife or guile,
Or jealouſy, or pain to be outdone.
Who plans th' enchanted garden, who directs
The viſto beſt, and beſt conducts the ſtream; 130
Whoſe groves the faſteſt thicken and aſcend;
Whom firſt the welcome ſpring ſalutes; who ſhews
The earlieſt bloom, the ſweeteſt proudeſt charms,
Of Flora; who beſt gives Pomona's juice

To

To match the sprightly genius of Champain. 135
Thrice happy days! in rural business past.
Blest winter nights! when, as the genial fire
Chears the wide hall, his cordial family
With soft domestic arts the hours beguile, 139
And pleasing talk that starts no timerous fame,
With witless wantoness to hunt it down:
Or thro' the fairy-land of tale or song
Delighted wander, in fictitious fates
Engag'd, and all that strikes humanity;
Till lost in fable, they the stealing hour 145
Of timely rest forget. Sometimes, at eve,
His neighbours lift the latch, and bless unbid
His festal roof; while, o'er the light repast,
And sprightly cups, they mix in social joy;
And, thro' the maze of conversation, trace 150
Whate'er amuses or improves the mind.
Sometimes at eve (for I delight to taste
The native zest and flavour of the fruit,

Where

Where ſenſe grows wild, and takes of no manure)
The decent, honeſt, chearful huſbandman 155
Should drown his labours in my friendly bowl;
And at my table find himſelf at home.

Whate'er you ſtudy, in whate'er you ſweat,
Indulge your taſte. Some love the manly foils;
The tennis ſome; and ſome the graceful dance. 160
Others, more hardy, range the purple heath,
Or naked ſtubble; where from field to field
The ſounding coveys urge their labouring flight;
Eager amid the riſing cloud to pour 164
The gun's unerring thunder; And there are
Whom ſtill the * meed of the green archer charms.
He chuſes beſt, whoſe labour entertains
His vacant fancy moſt: The toil you hate
Fatigues you ſoon, and ſcarce improves your limbs.

* This word is much uſed by ſome of the old Engliſh poets, and ſignifies *Reward* or *Prize*.

As

As beauty still has blemish; and the mind 170
The most accomplish'd its imperfect side;
Few bodies are there of that happy mould
But some one part is weaker than the rest:
The legs, perhaps, or arms refuse their load,
Or the chest labours. These assiduously, 175
But gently, in their proper arts employ'd,
Acquire a vigor and elastic spring
To which they were not born. But weaker parts
Abhor fatigue and violent discipline. 179

Begin with gentle toils; and, as your nerves
Grow firm, to hardier by just steps aspire.
The prudent, even in every moderate walk,
At first but saunter; and by slow degrees
Increase their pace. This doctrine of the wise
Well knows the master of the flying steed. 185
First from the goal the manag'd coursers play
On bended reins; as yet the skilful youth

Repreſs their foamy pride; but every breath
The race grows warmer, and the tempeſt ſwells;
Till all the fiery mettle has its way, 190
And the thick thunder hurries o'er the plain.
When all at once from indolence to toil
You ſpring, the fibres by the haſty ſhock
Are tir'd and crack'd, before their unctuous coats,
Compreſs'd, can pour the lubricating balm. 195
Beſides, collected in the paſſive veins,
The purple maſs a ſudden torrent rolls,
O'erpowers the heart, and deluges the lungs
With dangerous inundation: Oft the ſource
Of fatal woes; a cough that foams with blood,
Aſthma, and feller * Peripneumonie, 201
Or the ſlow minings of the hectic fire.

Th' athletic fool, to whom what heav'n deny'd
Of ſoul is well compenſated in limbs,

* The inflammation of the lungs.

Oft

Oft from his rage, or brainless frolic, feels 205
His vegetation and brute force decay.
The men of better clay and finer mould
Know nature, feel the human dignity;
And scorn to vie with oxen or with apes.
Pursued prolixly, even the gentlest toil 210
Is waste of health: Repose by small fatigue
Is earn'd; and (where your habit is not prone
To thaw) by the first moisture of the brows.
The fine and subtle spirits cost too much
To be profus'd, too much the roscid balm. 215
But when the hard varieties of life
You toil to learn; or try the dusty chace,
Or the warm deeds of some important day:
Hot from the field, indulge not yet your limbs
In wish'd repose, nor court the fanning gale, 220
Nor taste the spring. O! by the sacred tears
Of widows, orphans, mothers, sisters, sires,
Forbear! No other pestilence has driven

Such myriads o'er th' irremeable deep.
Why this ſo fatal, the ſagacious Muſe 225
Thro' nature's cunning labyrinths could trace:
But there are ſecrets which who knows not now,
Muſt, ere he reach them, climb the heapy Alps
Of ſcience; and devote ſeven years to toil.
Beſides, I would not ſtun your patient ears 230
With what it little boots you to attain.
He knows enough, the mariner, who knows
Where lurk the ſhelves, and where the whirlpools boil,
What ſigns portend the ſtorm: To ſubtler minds
He leaves to ſcan, from what myſterious cauſe 235
Charybdis rages in th' Ionian wave;
Whence thoſe impetuous currents in the main,
Which neither oar nor ſail can ſtem; and why
The roughning deep expects the ſtorm, as ſure
As red Orion mounts the ſhrowded heaven. 240

In

In ancient times, when Rome with Athens vied
For polish'd luxury and useful arts;
All hot and reeking from th' Olympic strife,
And warm Palestra, in the tepid bath 244
Th' athletic youth relax'd their weary'd limbs.
Soft oils bedew'd them, with the grateful pow'rs
Of Nard and Cassia fraught, to sooth and heal
The cherish'd nerves. Our less voluptuous clime
Not much invites us to such arts as these.
'Tis not for those, whom gelid skies embrace, 250
And chilling fogs; whose perspiration feels
Such frequent bars from Eurus and the North;
'Tis not for those to cultivate a skin
Too soft; or teach the recremental fume 254
Too fast to crowd thro' such precarious ways.
For thro' the small arterial mouths, that pierce
In endless millions the close-woven skin,
The baser fluids in a constant stream
Escape, and viewless melt into the winds.

While this eternal, this moſt copious waſte 260
Of blood degenerate into vapid brine,
Maintains its wonted meaſure; all the powers
Of health befriend you, all the wheels of life
With eaſe and pleaſure move: But this reſtrain'd
Or more or leſs, ſo more or leſs you feel 265
The functions labour. From this fatal ſource
What woes deſcend is never to be ſung.
To take their numbers, were to count the ſands
That ride in whirlwind the parch'd Lybian air;
Or waves that, when the bluſtering North embroils
The Baltic, thunder on the German ſhore. 271
Subject not then, by ſoft emollient arts,
This grand expence, on which your fates depend,
To every caprice of the ſky; nor thwart
The genius of your clime: For from the blood
Leaſt fickle riſe the recremental ſteams, 276
And leaſt obnoxious to the ſtyptic air,
Which breathe thro' ſtraiter and more callous pores.

The temper'd Scythian hence, half-naken treads
His boundless snows, nor rues th' inclement heaven;
And hence our painted ancestors defied 281
The East; nor curs'd, like us, their fickle sky.

The body moulded by the clime, indures
Th' Equator heats, or Hyperborean frost:
Except by habits foreign to its turn, 285
Unwise, you counteract its forming pow'r.
Rude at the first, the winter shocks you less
By long acquaintance: Study then your sky,
Form to its manners your obsequious frame,
And learn to suffer what you cannot shun. 290
Against the rigors of a damp cold heav'n
To fortify their bodies, some frequent
The gelid cistern; and, where nought forbids,
I praise their dauntless heart. A frame so steel'd
Dreads not the cough, nor those ungenial blasts,
That breathe the Tertian or fell Rheumatism; 296

The

The nerves ſo temper'd never quit their tone,
No chronic languors haunt ſuch hardy breaſts.
But all things have their bounds: And he who makes
By daily uſe the kindeſt regimen 300
Eſſential to his health, ſhould never mix
With human kind, nor art nor trade purſue.
He not the ſafe viciſſitudes of life
Without ſome ſhock endures; ill-fitted he 304
To want the known, or bear unuſual things.
Beſides, the powerful remedies of pain
(Since pain in ſpite of all our care will come)
Should never with your proſperous days of health
Grow too familiar: For by frequent uſe 309
The ſtrongeſt medicines loſe their healing power,
And even the ſureſt poiſons theirs to kill.

Let thoſe who from the frozen Arctos reach
Parch'd Mauritania, or the ſultry Weſt,
Or the wide flood that waters Indoſtan,

Plunge

Plunge thrice a day, and in the tepid wave 315
Untwist their stubborn pores; that full and free
Th' evaporation thro' the softned skin
May bear proportion to the swelling blood.
So shall they 'scape the fever's rapid flames;
So feel untainted the hot breath of hell. 320
With us, the man of no complaint demands
The warm ablution, just enough to clear
The sluices of the skin, enough to keep
The body sacred from indecent soil.
Still to be pure, even did it not conduce 325
(As much it does) to health, were greatly worth
Your daily pains. 'Tis this adorns the rich;
The want of this is poverty's worst woe:
With this external virtue, age maintains 329
A decent grace; without it, youth and charms
Are loathsome. This the skilful virgin knows:
So doubtless do your wives. For married sires,
As well as lovers, still pretend to taste;

Nor

Nor is it leſs (all prudent wives can tell)
To loſe a huſband's, than a lover's heart. 335

But now the hours and ſeaſons when to toil,
From foreign themes recall my wandering ſong.
Some labour faſting, or but ſlightly fed,
To lull the grinding ſtomach's hungry rage:
Where nature feeds too corpulent a frame 340
'Tis wiſely done. For while the thirſty veins,
Impatient of lean penury, devour
The treaſur'd oil, then is the happieſt time
To ſhake the lazy balſam from its cells.
Now while the ſtomach from the full repaſt 345
Subſides; but ere returning hunger gnaws;
Ye leaner habits give an hour to toil:
And ye whom no luxuriancy of growth
Oppreſſes yet, or threatens to oppreſs.
But from the recent meal no labours pleaſe, 350
Of limbs or mind. For now the cordial powers

Claim

Claim all the wandering spirits to a work
Of strong and subtle toil, and great event;
A work of time: and you may rue the day
You hurried, with ill-seasoned exercise, 355
A half concocted chyle into the blood.
The body overcharg'd with unctuous phlegm
Much toil demands: The lean elastic less.
While winter chills the blood, and binds the veins,
No labours are too hard: By those you 'scape
The slow diseases of the torpid year; 361
Endless to name; to one of which alone,
To that which tears the nerves, the toil of slaves
Is pleasure: Oh! from such inhuman pains
May all be free who merit not the wheel! 365
But from the burning Lion when the sun
Pours down his sultry wrath; now while the blood
Too much already maddens in the veins,
And all the finer fluids thro' the skin 369
Explore their flight; me, near the cool cascade

Reclin'd, or ſauntring in the lofty grove,
No needleſs ſlight occaſion ſhould engage
To pant and ſweat beneath the fiery noon.
Now the freſh morn alone and mellow eve
To ſhady walks and active rural ſports 375
Invite. But, while the chilling dews deſcend,
May nothing tempt you to the cold embrace
Of humid ſkies: Tho' 'tis no vulgar joy
To trace the horrors of the ſolemn wood,
While the ſoft evening ſaddens into night: 380
Tho' the ſweet poet of the vernal groves
Melts all the night in ſtrains of amorous woe.

The ſhades deſcend, and midnight o'er the world
Expands her ſable wings. Great nature droops
Thro' all her works. Now happy he whoſe toil
Has o'er his languid powerleſs limbs diffus'd 386
A pleaſing laſſitude: He not in vain
Invokes the gentle deity of dreams.

His

His powers the most voluptuously dissolve
In soft repose: On him the balmy dews 390
Of sleep with double nutriment descend.
But would you sweetly waste the blank of night
In deep oblivion; or on fancy's wings
Visit the paradise of happy dreams,
And waken chearful as the lively morn; 395
Oppress not nature sinking down to rest
With feasts too late, too solid, or too full.
But be the first concoction half-matur'd,
Ere you to mighty indolence resign
Your passive faculties. He from the toils 400
And troubles of the day to heavier toil
Retires, whom trembling from the tower that rocks
Amid the clouds, or Calpe's hideous height,
The busy dæmons hurl, or in the main
O'erwhelm, or bury struggling under ground.
Not all a monarch's luxury the woes 406
Can counterpoise, of that most wretched man,

Whoſe nights are ſhaken with the frantic fits
Of wild Oreſtes; whoſe delirious brain, 409
Stung by the furies, works with poiſoned thought:
While pale and monſtrous painting ſhocks the ſoul;
And mangled conſciouſneſs bemoans itſelf
For ever torn; and chaos floating round.
What dreams preſage, what dangers theſe or thoſe
Portend to ſanity, tho' prudent ſeers 415
Reveal'd of old, and men of deathleſs fame;
We would not to the ſuperſtitious mind
Suggeſt new throbs, new vanities of fear.
'Tis ours to teach you from the peaceful night
To baniſh omens, and all reſtleſs woes. 420

In ſtudy ſome protract the ſilent hours,
Which others conſecrate to mirth and wine;
And ſleep till noon, and hardly live till night.
But ſurely this redeems not from the ſhades
One hour of life. Nor does it nought avail 425

What season you to drowsy Morpheus give
Of th' ever-varying circle of the day;
Or whether, thro' the tedious winter gloom,
You tempt the midnight or the morning damps.
The body, fresh and vigorous from repose, 430
Defies the early fogs: but, by the toils
Of wakeful day, exhausted and unstrung,
Weakly resists the night's unwholsome breath.
The grand discharge, th' effusion of the skin,
Slowly impair'd, the languid maladies 435
Creep on, and thro' the sick'ning functions steal.
So, when the chilling East invades the spring,
The delicate Narcissus pines away
In hectic languor; and a slow disease
Taints all the family of flowers, condemn'd 440
To cruel heav'ns. But why, already prone
To fade, should beauty cherish its own bane?
O shame! O pity! nipt with pale Quadrille,
And midnight cares, the bloom of Albion dies!

By

By toil ſubdu'd, the Warrior and the Hind 445
Sleep faſt and deep: their active functions ſoon
With generous ſtreams the ſubtle tubes ſupply;
And ſoon the tonic irritable nerves
Feel the freſh impulſe, and awake the ſoul.
The ſons of indolence, with long repoſe, 450
Grow torpid; and, with ſloweſt Lethe drunk,
Feebly and lingringly return to life,
Blunt every ſenſe, and powerleſs every limb.
Ye, prone to ſleep (whom ſleeping moſt annoys)
On the hard mattraſs or elaſtic couch 455
Extend your limbs, and wean yourſelves from ſloth;
Nor grudge the lean projector, of dry brain
And ſpringy nerves, the blandiſhments of down;
Nor envy while the buried bacchanal
Exhales his ſurfeit in prolixer dreams. 460

He without riot, in the balmy feaſt
Of life, the wants of nature has ſupplied

Who

Who rises cool, serene, and full of soul.
But pliant nature more or less demands,
As custom forms her; and all sudden change 465
She hates of habit, even from bad to good.
If faults in life, or new emergencies,
From habits urge you by long time confirm'd,
Slow may the change arrive, and stage by stage;
Slow as the shadow o'er the dial moves, 470
Slow as the stealing progress of the year.

Observe the circling year. How unperceiv'd
Her seasons change! Behold! by slow degrees,
Stern Winter tam'd into a ruder spring; 474
The ripen'd Spring a milder summer glows;
Departing Summer sheds Pomona's store;
And aged Autumn brews the winter-storm.
Slow as they come, these changes come not void
Of mortal shocks: The cold and torrid reigns,
The two great periods of th' important year, 480

Are

Are in their firſt approaches ſeldom ſafe:
Funereal Autumn all the ſickly dread,
And the black fates deform the lovely Spring.
He well advis'd, who taught our wiſer ſires
Early to borrow Muſcovy's warm ſpoils, 485
Ere the firſt froſt has touch'd the tender blade;
And late reſign them, tho' the wanton Spring
Should deck her charms with all her Siſter's rays.
For while the effluence of the ſkin maintains
Its native meaſure, the pleuritic Spring 490
Glides harmleſs by; and Autumn ſick to death
With ſallow Quartans, no contagion breathes.

I in prophetic numbers could unfold
The omens of the year: what ſeaſons teem
With what diſeaſes; what the humid South 495
Prepares, and what the Dæmon of the Eaſt:
But you perhaps refuſe the tedious ſong.
Beſides, whatever plagues in heat, or cold,

Or

Or drought, or moisture dwell, they hurt not you,
Skill'd to correct the vices of the sky, 500
And taught already how to each extream
To bend your life. But should the public bane
Infect you, or some trespass of your own,
Or flaw of nature hint mortality:
Soon as a not unpleasing horror glides 505
Along the spine, thro' all your torpid limbs;
When first the head throbs, or the stomach feels
A sickly load, a weary pain the loins;
Be Celsus call'd: The fates come rushing on;
The rapid fates admit of no delay. 510
While wilful you, and fatally secure,
Expect to morrow's more auspicious sun,
The growing pest, whose infancy was weak
And easy vanquish'd, with triumphant sway
O'erpow'rs your life. For want of timely care
Millions have died of medicable wounds. 515

Ah! in what perils is vain life engag'd!
What ſlight neglects, what trivial faults deſtroy
The hardieſt frame! Of indolence, of toil,
We die; of want, of ſuperfluity. 520
The all-ſurrounding heaven, the vital air,
Is big with death. And, tho' the putrid South
Be ſhut; tho' no convulſive agony
Shake, from the deep foundations of the world,
Th' impriſoned plagues; a ſecret venom oft
Corrupts the air, the water, and the land. 526
What livid deaths has ſad Byzantium ſeen!
How oft has Cairo, with a mother's woe,
Wept o'er her ſlaughter'd ſons, and lonely ſtreets!
Even Albion, girt with leſs malignant ſkies, 530
Albion the poiſon of the Gods has drunk,
And felt the ſting of monſters all her own.

Ere yet the fell Plantagenets had ſpent
Their ancient rage, at Boſworth's purple field;

While,

While, for which tyrant England should receive,
Her legions in incestuous murders mix'd, 536
And daily horrors; till the Fates were drunk
With kindred blood by kindred hands profus'd:
Another plague of more gygantic arm
Arose, a monster never known before 540
Rear'd from Cocytus its portentous head.
This rapid fury not, like other pests,
Pursued a gradual course, but in a day
Rush'd as a storm o'er half th' astonish'd isle,
And strew'd with sudden carcasses the land. 545

First thro' the shoulders, or whatever part
Was seiz'd the first, a fervid vapour sprung.
With rash combustion thence, the quivering spark
Shot to the heart, and kindled all within; 549
And soon the surface caught the spreading fires.
Thro' all the yielding pores the melted blood
Gush'd out in smoaky sweats; but nought assuag'd

The torrid heat within, nor aught reliev'd
The ſtomach's anguiſh. With inceſſant toil,
Deſperate of eaſe, impatient of their pain, 555
The toſs'd from ſide to ſide. In vain the ſtream
Ran full and clear, they burnt and thirſted ſtill.
The reſtleſs arteries with rapid blood
Beat ſtrong and frequent. Thick and pantingly
The breath was fetch'd, and with huge lab'rings heav'd. 560
At laſt a heavy pain oppreſs'd the head;
A wild delirium came; their weeping friends
Were ſtrangers now, and this no home of theirs.
Haraſs'd with toil on toil, the ſinking powers
Lay proſtrate and o'erthrown; a ponderous ſleep
Wrapt all the ſenſes up: They ſlept and died. 566

In ſome a gentle horror crept at firſt
O'er all the limbs; the fluices of the ſkin
With-held their moiſture; till by art provok'd

The

The sweats o'erflow'd; but in a clammy tide: 570
Now free and copious, now restrain'd and slow;
Of tinctures various, as the temperature
Had mix'd the blood; and rank with fetid steams:
As if the pent-up humors by delay 574
Were grown more fell, more putrid, and malign.
Here lay their hopes (tho' little hope remain'd)
With full effusion of perpetual sweats
To drive the venom out. And here the fates
Were kind, that long they linger'd not in pain.
For who surviv'd the sun's diurnal race 580
Rose from the dreary gates of hell redeem'd:
Some the sixth hour oppress'd, and some the third.

Of many thousands few untainted 'scap'd;
Of those infected fewer 'scap'd alive:
Of those who liv'd some felt a second blow; 585
And whom the second spar'd a third destroy'd.
Frantic with fear, they sought by flight to shun

The

The fierce contagion. O'er the mournful land
Th' infected city pour'd her hurrying ſwarms:
Rous'd by the flames that fir'd her ſeats around,
Th' infected country ruſh'd into the town. 591
Some, ſad at home, and in the deſart ſome,
Abjur'd the fatal commerce of mankind;
In vain: where'er they fled the Fates purſued.
Others, with hopes more ſpecious, croſs'd the main,
To ſeek protection in far-diſtant ſkies; 596
But none they found. It ſeem'd the general air
Was then at enmity with Engliſh blood.
For, but the race of England, all were ſafe
In foreign climes; nor did this Fury taſte 600
The foreign blood which Albion then contain'd.
Where ſhould they fly? The circumambient heaven
Involv'd them ſtill; and every breeze was bane.
Where find relief? The ſalutary art 604
Was mute; and, ſtartled at the new diſeaſe,

In fearful whispers hopeless omens gave.
To heaven with suppliant rites they sent their pray'rs;
Heav'n heard them not. Of every hope depriv'd;
Fatigu'd with vain resources; and subdued
With woes resistless and enfeebling fear; 610
Passive they sunk beneath the weighty blow.
Nothing but lamentable sounds was heard,
Nor ought was seen but ghastly views of death.
Infectious horror ran from face to face, 614
And pale despair. 'Twas all the business then
To tend the sick, and in their turns to die.
In heaps they fell: And oft one bed, they say,
The sickening, dying, and the dead contain'd.

Ye guardian Gods, on whom the Fates depend
Of tottering Albion! Ye eternal fires, 620
That lead thro' heav'n the wandering year! Ye powers,

That

That o'er th' incircling elements preſide!
May nothing worſe than what this age has ſeen
Arrive! Enough abroad, enough at home 624
Has Albion bled. Here a diſtemper'd heaven
Has thin'd her cities; from thoſe lofty cliffs
That awe proud Gaul, to Thule's wintry reign;
While in the Weſt, beyond th' Atlantic foam,
Her braveſt ſons, keen for the fight, have died
The death of cowards, and of common men; 630
Sunk void of wounds, and fall'n without renown.

But from theſe views the weeping Muſes turn,
And other themes invite my wandering ſong.

THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK IV.

The PASSIONS.

THE

ART

OF PRESERVING

HEALTH.

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The PASSIONS.

THE choice of aliment, the choice of air,
The uſe of toil and all external things,
Already ſung; it now remains to trace
What good, what evil from ourſelves proceeds:
And how the ſubtle principle within 5
Inſpires with health, or mines with ſtrange decay
The paſſive body. Ye poetic Shades,
That know the ſecrets of the world unſeen,

Aſſiſt my ſong! For, in a doubtful theme
Engag'd, I wander thro' myſterious ways. 10

There is, they ſay, (and I believe there is)
A ſpark within us of th' immortal fire,
That animates and moulds the groſſer frame;
And when the body ſinks, eſcapes to heaven,
Its native ſeat; and mixes with the Gods. 15
Mean while this heavenly particle pervades
The mortal elements; in every nerve
It thrills with pleaſure, or grows mad with pain.
And, in its ſecret conclave, as it feels
The body's woes and joys, this ruling power 20
Weilds at its will the dull material world,
And is the body's health or malady.

By its own toil the groſs corporeal frame
Fatigues, extenuates, or deſtroys itſelf:
Nor leſs the labours of the mind corrode 25

The

The ſolid fabric. For by ſubtle parts,
And viewleſs atoms, ſecret Nature moves
The mighty wheels of this ſtupendous world.
By ſubtle fluids pour'd thro' ſubtle tubes
The natural, vital, functions are perform'd. 30
By theſe the ſtubborn aliments are tam'd;
The toiling heart diſtributes life and ſtrength;
Theſe the ſtill-crumbling frame rebuild; and theſe
Are loſt in thinking, and diſſolve in air.

But 'tis not Thought (for ſtill the ſoul's employ'd) 35
'Tis painful thinking that corrodes our clay.
All day the vacant eye without fatigue
Strays o'er the heaven and earth; but long intent
On microſcopic arts its vigor fails.
Juſt ſo the mind, with various thought amus'd,
Nor aches itſelf, nor gives the body pain. 41
But anxious Study, Diſcontent, and Care,

Love without hope, and Hate without revenge,
And Fear, and Jealouſy, fatigue the ſoul,
Engroſs the ſubtle miniſters of life, 45
And ſpoil the lab'ring functions of their ſhare.
Hence the lean gloom that Melancholy wears;
The Lover's paleneſs; and the ſallow hue
Of Envy, Jealouſy; the meagre ſtare
Of ſore Revenge: The canker'd body hence 50
Betrays each fretful motion of the mind.

The ſtrong-built pedant; who both night and day
Feeds on the coarſeſt fare the ſchools beſtow,
And crudely fattens at groſs Burman's ſtall; 54
O'erwhelm'd with phlegm lies in a dropſy drown'd,
Or ſinks in lethargy before his time.
With uſeful ſtudies you, and arts that pleaſe
Employ your mind, amuſe, but not fatigue.
Peace to each drowſy metaphyſic ſage!

And

And ever may the German folio's reſt! 60
Yet ſome there are, even of elaſtic parts,
Whom ſtrong and obſtinate ambition leads
Thro' all the rugged roads of barren lore,
And gives to reliſh what their generous taſte
Would elſe refuſe. But may nor thirſt of fame 65
Nor love of knowledge urge you to fatigue
With conſtant drudgery the liberal ſoul.
Toy with your books: and, as the various fits
Of humour ſeize you, from Philoſophy
To Fable ſhift; from ſerious Antonine 70
To Rabelais' ravings, and from proſe to ſong.

While reading pleaſes, but no longer, read;
And read aloud reſounding Homer's ſtrain,
And weild the thunder of Demoſthenes.
The cheſt ſo exercis'd improves its ſtrength; 75
And quick vibrations thro' the bowels drive
The reſtleſs blood, which in unactive days

Would

Would loiter elſe thro' unelaſtic tubes.
Deem it not trifling while I recommend
What poſture ſuits: To ſtand and ſit by turns, 80
As nature prompts, is beſt. But o'er your leaves
To lean for ever, cramps the vital parts,
And robs the fine machinery of its play.

'Tis the great art of life to manage well
The reſtleſs mind. For ever on purſuit 85
Of knowledge bent it ſtarves the groſſer powers.
Quite unemploy'd, againſt its own repoſe
It turns its fatal edge, and ſharper pangs
Than what the body knows embitter life.
Chiefly where Solitude, ſad nurſe of care, 90
To ſickly muſing gives the penſive mind.
There madneſs enters; and the dim-ey'd Fiend,
Sour Melancholy, night and day provokes
Her own eternal wound. The ſun grows pale;
A mournful viſionary light o'erſpreads 95

The

The chearful face of nature: earth becomes
A dreary deſart, and heaven frowns above.
Then various ſhapes of curs'd illuſion riſe;
Whate'er the wretched fears, creating Fear
Forms out of nothing; and with monſters teems
Unknown in hell. The proſtrate ſoul beneath 101
A load of huge imagination heaves.
And all the horrors that the guilty feel,
With anxious flutterings wake the guiltleſs breaſt.

Such phantoms Pride in ſolitary ſcenes, 105
Or Fear, on delicate Self-love creates.
From other cares abſolv'd, the buſy mind
Finds in yourſelf a theme to pore upon;
It finds you miſerable, or makes you ſo.
For while yourſelf you anxiouſly explore, 110
Timorous Self-love, with ſick'ning Fancy's aid,
Preſents the danger that you dread the moſt,
And ever galls you in your tender part.

Hence ſome for love, and ſome for jealouſy,
For grim religion ſome, and ſome for pride, 115
Have loſt their reaſon: ſome for fear of want
Want all their lives; and others every day
For fear of dying ſuffer worſe than death.
Ah! from your boſoms baniſh, if you can,
Thoſe fatal gueſts: and firſt the Demon Fear;
That trembles at impoſſible events, 121
Leſt aged Atlas ſhould reſign his load
And heaven's eternal battlements ruſh down.
Is there an evil worſe than fear itſelf?
And what avails it that indulgent heaven 125
From mortal eyes has wrapt the woes to come,
If we, ingenious to torment ourſelves,
Grow pale at hideous fictions of our own?
Enjoy the preſent; nor with needleſs cares,
Of what may ſpring from blind Misfortune's
womb, 130
Appal the ſureſt hour that life beſtows.

Serene,

Serene, and maſter of yourſelf, prepare
For what may come; and leave the reſt to heaven.

Oft from the body, by long ails miſtun'd,
Theſe evils ſprung, the moſt important health, 135
That of the mind, deſtroy: And when the mind
They firſt invade, the conſcious body ſoon
In ſympathetic languiſhment declines.
Theſe chronic paſſions, while from real woes
They riſe, and yet without the body's fault 140
Infeſt the ſoul, admit one only cure;
Diverſion, hurry, and a reſtleſs life.
Vain are the conſolations of the wiſe,
In vain your friends would reaſon down your pain.
Oh ye whoſe ſoul's relentleſs love has tam'd 145
To ſoft diſtreſs, or friends untimely ſlain!
Court not the luxury of tender thought:
Nor deem it impious to forget thoſe pains

That hurt the living, nought avail the dead.
Go, ſoft enthuſiaſt! quit the cypreſs groves, 150
Nor to the rivulet's lonely moanings tune
Your ſad complaint. Go, ſeek the chearful haunts
Of men, and mingle with the buſtling croud;
Lay ſchemes for wealth, or power, or fame, the wiſh 154
Of nobler minds, and puſh them night and day.
Or join the caravan in queſt of ſcenes
New to your eyes, and ſhifting every hour;
Beyond the Alps, beyond the Appennines.
Or, more advent'rous, ruſh into the field 159
Where war grows hot; and, raging thro' the ſky,
The lofty trumpet ſwells the maddening ſoul:
And in the hardy camp and toilſome march
Forget all ſofter and leſs manly cares.

But moſt too paſſive, when the blood runs low,
Too weakly indolent to ſtrive with pain, 165

And

And bravely by reſiſting conquer Fate,
Try Circe's arts; and in the tempting bowl
Of poiſon'd Nectar ſweet oblivion drink.
Struck by the powerful charm, the gloom diſſolves
In empty air; Elyſium opens round. 170
A pleaſing phrenzy buoys the lighten'd ſoul,
And ſanguine hopes diſpel your fleeting care;
And what was difficult, and what was dire,
Yields to your proweſs and ſuperior ſtars:
The happieſt you, of all that e'er were mad, 175
Or are, or ſhall be, could this folly laſt.
But ſoon your heaven is gone; a heavier gloom
Shuts o'er your head: and, as the thundering
ſtream,
Swoln o'er its banks with ſudden mountain rain,
Sinks from its tumult to a ſilent brook; 180
So, when the frantic raptures in your breaſt
Subſide, you languiſh into mortal man;
You ſleep, and waking find yourſelf undone.

For

For prodigal of life in one rash night 184
You lavish'd more than might support three days.
A heavy morning comes; your cares return
With ten-fold rage. An anxious stomach well
May be endur'd; so may the throbbing head:
But such a dim delirium, such a dream,
Involves you; such a dastardly despair 190
Unmans your soul, as madd'ning Pentheus felt
When, baited round Citheron's cruel sides,
He saw two suns, and double Thebes ascend.
You curse the sluggish Port; you curse the wretch,
The felon, with unnatural mixture first 195
Who dar'd to violate the virgin wine.
Or on the fugitive Champain you pour
A thousand curses; for to heav'n your soul
It rapt, to plunge you deeper in despair.
Perhaps you rue even that divinest gift, 200
The gay, serene, good-natur'd Burgundy,
Or the fresh fragrant vintage of the Rhine:

And

And wiſh that heaven from mortals had withheld
The grape, and all intoxicating bowls.

Beſides, it wounds you ſore to recollect 205
What follies in your looſe unguarded hour
Eſcap'd. By one irrevocable word,
Perhaps that meant no harm, you loſe a friend.
Or in the rage of wine your haſty hand
Performs a deed to haunt you to your grave. 210
Add that your means, your health, your parts decay;
Your friends avoid you; brutiſhly transform'd
They hardly know you; or if one remains
To wiſh you well, he wiſhes you in heaven.
Deſpis'd, unwept you fall; who might have left
A ſacred, cheriſh'd, ſadly-pleaſing name; 216
A name ſtill to be utter'd with a ſigh.
Your laſt ungraceful ſcene has quite effac'd
All ſenſe and memory of your former worth.

How to live happieſt; how avoid the pains,
The diſappointments, and diſguſts of thoſe 221
Who would in pleaſure all their hours employ;
The precepts here of a divine old man
I could recite. Tho' old, he ſtill retain'd
His manly ſenſe, and energy of mind. 225
Virtuous and wiſe he was, but not ſevere;
He ſtill remember'd that he once was young;
His eaſy preſence check'd no decent joy.
Him even the diſſolute admir'd; for he
A graceful looſeneſs when he pleas'd put on, 230
And laughing cou'd inſtruct. Much had he read,
Much more had ſeen; he ſtudied from the life,
And in th' original perus'd mankind.

Vers'd in the woes and vanities of life,
He pitied man: And much he pitied thoſe 235
Whom falſely-ſmiling fate has curs'd with means
To diſſipate their days in queſt of joy.

Our

Our aim is Happineſs; 'tis yours, 'tis mine,
He ſaid, 'tis the purſuit of all that live:
Yet few attain it, if 'twas e'er attain'd. 240
But they the wideſt wander from the mark,
Who thro' the flow'ry paths of ſaunt'ring Joy
Seek this coy Goddeſs; that from ſtage to ſtage
Invites us ſtill, but ſhifts as we purſue.
For, not to name the pains that pleaſure brings
To counterpoiſe itſelf, relentleſs Fate 246
Forbids that we thro' gay voluptuous wilds
Should ever roam: And were the Fates more kind
Our narrow luxuries would ſoon be ſtale.
Were theſe exhauſtleſs, Nature would grow ſick,
And, cloy'd with pleaſure, ſqueamiſhly complain
That all was vanity, and life a dream.
Let nature reſt: Be buſy for yourſelf,
And for your friend; be buſy even in vain,
Rather than teize her ſated appetites. 255
Who never faſts no banquet e'er enjoys;

Who never toils or watches never ſleeps.
Let nature reſt: And when the taſte of joy
Grows keen, indulge; but ſhun ſatiety.

'Tis not for mortals always to be bleſt. 260
But him the leaſt the dull or painful hours
Of life oppreſs, whom ſober Senſe conducts
And Virtue, thro' this labyrinth we tread.
Virtue and Senſe I mean not to disjoin;
Virtue and Senſe are one; and, truſt me, he 265
Who has not virtue is not truly wiſe.
Virtue (for mere Good-nature is a fool)
Is ſenſe and ſpirit, with humanity:
'Tis ſometimes angry, and its frown confounds;
'Tis even vindictive, but in vengeance juſt. 270
Knaves fain would laugh at it; ſome great ones dare;
But at his heart the moſt undaunted ſon
Of fortune dreads its name and awful charms.

To

To nobleſt uſes this determines wealth;
This is the ſolid pomp of proſperous days; 275
The peace and ſhelter of adverſity.
And if you pant for glory, build your fame
On this foundation, which the ſecret ſhock
Defies of Envy and all-ſapping Time.
The gawdy gloſs of Fortune only ſtrikes
The vulgar eye: The ſuffrage of the wiſe,
The praiſe that's worth ambition, is attain'd 280
By Senſe alone, and dignity of mind.

Virtue, the ſtrength and beauty of the ſoul,
Is the beſt gift of heaven: a happineſs
That even above the ſmiles and frowns of fate
Exalts great Nature's favourites: a wealth 285
That ne'er encumbers, nor to baſer hands
Can be transferr'd: it is the only good
Man juſtly boaſts of, or can call his own.
Riches are oft by guilt and baſeneſs earn'd;

Or dealt by chance, to ſhield a lucky knave, 290
Or throw a cruel ſun-ſhine on a fool.
But for one end, one much-neglected uſe,
Are riches worth your care: (for Nature's wants
Are few, and without opulence ſupplied.)
This noble end is, to produce the Soul; 295
To ſhew the virtues in their faireſt light;
To make Humanity the Miniſter
Of bounteous Providence; and teach the Breaſt
That generous luxury the Gods enjoy.

Thus, in his graver vein, the friendly Sage 300
Sometimes declaim'd. Of Right and Wrong he taught
Truths as refin'd as ever Athens heard;
And (ſtrange to tell!) he practis'd what he preach'd.
Skill'd in the Paſſions, how to check their ſway
He knew, as far as Reaſon can controul 305
The lawleſs Powers. But other cares are mine:

Form'd in the ſchool of Pæon, I relate
What Paſſions hurt the body, what improve:
Avoid them, or invite them, as you may.

Know then, whatever chearful and ſerene 310
Supports the mind, ſupports the body too.
Hence the moſt vital movement mortals feel
Is Hope; the balm and life-blood of the ſoul.
It pleaſes, and it laſts. Indulgent heaven
Sent down the kind deluſion, thro' the paths 315
Of rugged life to lead us patient on;
And make our happieſt ſtate no tedious thing.
Our greateſt good, and what we leaſt can ſpare,
Is Hope; the laſt of all our evils, Fear.

But there are Paſſions grateful to the breaſt, 320
And yet no friends to Life; perhaps they pleaſe
Or to exceſs, and diſſipate the ſoul;
Or while they pleaſe, torment. The ſtubborn Clown,

The

The ill-tam'd Ruffian, and pale Uſurer,
(If Love's omnipotence ſuch hearts can mould)
May ſafely mellow into love; and grow 326
Refin'd, humane, and generous, if they can.
Love in ſuch boſoms never to a fault
Or pains or pleaſes. But ye finer Souls,
Form'd to ſoft luxury, and prompt to thrill 330
With all the tumults, all the joys and pains,
That beauty gives; with caution and reſerve
Indulge the ſweet deſtroyer of repoſe,
Nor court too much the Queen of charming cares.
For, while the cheriſh'd poiſon in your breaſt 335
Ferments and maddens; ſick with jealouſy,
Abſence, diſtruſt, or even with anxious joy,
The wholſome appetites and powers of life
Diſſolve in languor. The coy ſtomach loaths
The genial board: Your chearful days are gone:
The generous bloom that flush'd your cheeks is
fled. 341

To

To ſighs devoted and to tender pains,
Penſive you ſit, or ſolitary ſtray,
And waſte your youth in muſing. Muſing firſt
Toy'd into care your unſuſpecting heart: 345
It found a liking there, a ſportful fire,
And that fomented into ſerious love;
Which muſing daily ſtrengthens and improves
Thro' all the heights of fondneſs and romance:
And you're undone, the fatal ſhaft has ſped, 350
If once you doubt whether you love or no.
The body waſtes away; th' infected mind,
Diſſolv'd in female tenderneſs, forgets
Each manly virtue, and grows dead to fame.
Sweet heaven from ſuch intoxicating charms 355
Defend all worthy breaſts! Not that I deem
Love always dangerous, always to be ſhun'd.
Love well repaid, and not too weakly ſunk
In wanton and unmanly tenderneſs,
Adds bloom to Health; o'er every virtue ſheds 360

A gay, humane, and amiable grace,
And brightens all the ornaments of man.
But fruitleſs, hopeleſs, diſappointed, rack'd
With Jealouſy, fatigued with hope and fear,
Too ſerious, or too languiſhingly fond, 365
Unnerves the body and unmans the ſoul.
And ſome have died for Love; and ſome run mad;
And ſome with deſperate hand themſelves have ſlain.

Some to extinguiſh, others to prevent,
A mad devotion to one dangerous Fair, 370
Court all they meet; in hopes to diſſipate
The cares of Love amongſt a hundred Brides.
Th' event is doubtful: for there are who find
A cure in this; there are who find it not.
'Tis no relief, alas! it rather galls 375
The wound to thoſe who are ſincerely ſick.
For while from feveriſh and tumultuous joys
The nerves grow languid and the ſoul ſubſides;

The

The tender Fancy ſmarts with every ſting;
And what was Love before is Madneſs now.
Is health your care, or luxury your aim, 381
Be temperate ſtill: When Nature bids obey;
Her wild impatient ſallies bear no curb.
But when the prurient habit of delight,
Or looſe Imagination ſpurs you on 385
To deeds above your ſtrength, impute it not
To Nature: Nature all compulſion hates.
Ah! let nor luxury nor vain renown
Urge you to feats you well might ſleep without;
To make what ſhould be rapture a fatigue, 390
A tedious taſk; nor in the wanton arms
Of twining Laïs melt your manhood down.
For from the colliquation of ſoft joys
How chang'd you riſe! the ghoſt of what you was!
Languid, and melancholy, and gaunt, and wan;
Your veins exhauſted, and your nerves unſtrung.
Spoil'd of its balm and ſprightly zeſt, the blood

Grows vapid phlegm; along the tender nerves
(To each ſlight impulſe tremblingly awake)
A ſubtle Fiend that mimics all the plagues 400
Rapid and reſtleſs ſprings from part to part.
The blooming honours of your youth are fallen;
Your vigour pines; your vital powers decay;
Diſeaſes haunt you; and untimely Age
Creeps on, unſocial, impotent, and lewd. 405
Infatuate, impious, epicure! to waſte
The ſtores of pleaſure, chearfulneſs, and health!
Infatuate all who make delight their trade,
And coy perdition every hour purſue.

Who pines with Love, or in laſcivious flames
Conſumes, is with his own conſent undone: 411
He chuſes to be wretched, to be mad;
And warn'd proceeds and wilful to his fate.
But there's a Paſſion, whoſe tempeſtuous ſway
Tears up each virtue planted in the breaſt, 415

And

And ſhakes to ruins proud philoſophy.
For pale and trembling Anger ruſhes in,
With fault'ring ſpeech, and eyes that wildly ſtare;
Fierce as the Tyger, madder than the ſeas,
Deſperate, and arm'd with more than human
ſtrength. 420
How ſoon the calm, humane, and poliſh'd man
Forgets compunction, and ſtarts up a fiend!
Who pines in Love, or waſtes with ſilent Cares,
Envy, or Ignominy, or tender Grief,
Slowly deſcends and ling'ring to the ſhades. 425
But he whom Anger ſtings, drops, if he dies,
At once, and ruſhes apoplectic down;
Or a fierce fever hurries him to hell.
For, as the Body thro' unnumber'd ſtrings
Reverberates each vibration of the Soul; 430
As is the Paſſion, ſuch is ſtill the Pain
The Body feels; or chronic, or acute.
And oft a ſudden ſtorm at once o'erpowers

The Life, or gives your Reaſon to the winds.
Such fates attend the raſh alarm of Fear, 435
And ſudden Grief, and Rage, and ſudden Joy.

There are, mean time, to whom the boiſt'rous fit
Is Health, and only fills the ſails of life.
For where the Mind a torpid winter leads
Wrapt in a Body corpulent and cold, 440
And each clogg'd function lazily moves on;
A generous ſally ſpurns the incumbent load,
Unlocks the breaſt, and gives a cordial glow.
But if your wrathful blood is apt to boil,
Or are your nerves too irritably ſtrung; 445
Wave all Diſpute; be cautious if you joke;
Keep Lent for ever; and forſwear the Bowl.
For one raſh moment ſends you to the ſhades,
Or ſhatters every hopeful Scheme of life,
And gives to horror all your days to come. 450

Fate, arm'd with thunder, fire, and every plague
That ruins, tortures, or diſtracts mankind,
And makes the happy wretched in an hour,
O'erwhelms you not with woes ſo horrible 454
As your own Wrath, nor gives more ſudden blows.

While Choler works, good Friend, you may be wrong;
Diſtruſt yourſelf, and ſleep before you fight.
'Tis not too late to morrow to be brave;
If Honour bids, to morrow kill or die.
But calm advice againſt a raging fit 460
Avails too little; and it tries the power
Of all that ever taught in Proſe or Song,
To tame the Fiend that ſleeps a gentle Lamb,
And wakes a Lion. Unprovok'd and calm,
You reaſon well, ſee as you ought to ſee, 465
And wonder at the madneſs of mankind:
Seiz'd with the common rage, you ſoon forget

The

The ſpeculations of your wiſer hours.
Beſet with Furies of all deadly ſhapes,
Fierce and inſidious, violent and ſlow; 470
With all that urge or lure us on to Fate;
What refuge ſhall we ſeek? what arms prepare?
Where Reaſon proves too weak, or void of wiles,
To cope with ſubtle or impetuous Powers,
I would invoke new Paſſions to your aid: 475
With Indignation would extinguiſh Fear,
With Fear or generous Pity vanquiſh Rage,
And Love with Pride; and force to force oppoſe.

There is a Charm: a Power that ſways the breaſt;
Bids every Paſſion revel or be ſtill; 480
Inſpires with Rage, or all your Cares diſſolves;
Can ſooth Diſtraction, and almoſt Deſpair.
That Power is Muſic: Far beyond the ſtretch
Of thoſe unmeaning warblers on our ſtage;

Thoſe

Thoſe clumſy Heroes, thoſe fat-headed Gods,
Who move no Paſſion juſtly but Contempt: 486
Who, like our dancers (light indeed and ſtrong!)
Do wond'rous feats, but never heard of grace.
The fault is ours; we bear thoſe monſtrous arts,
Good Heaven! we praiſe them: we, with loudeſt peals, 490
Applaud the fool that higheſt lifts his heels;
And, with inſipid ſhew of rapture, die
Of ideot notes, impertinently long.
But he the Muſe's laurel juſtly ſhares,
A Poet he, and touch'd with Heaven's own fire;
Who, with bold rage or ſolemn pomp of ſounds,
Inflames, exalts, and raviſhes the ſoul; 497
Now tender, plaintive, ſweet almoſt to pain,
In Love diſſolves you; now in ſprightly ſtrains
Breathes a gay rapture thro' your thrilling breaſt;
Or melts the heart with airs divinely ſad;
Or wakes to horror the tremendous ſtrings.

Such

Such was the bard, whoſe heavenly ſtrains of old
Appeas'd the fiend of melancholy Saul.
Such was, if old and heathen fame ſay true, 505
The man who bade the Theban domes aſcend,
And tam'd the ſavage Nations with his ſong;
And ſuch the Thracian, whoſe harmonious lyre,
Tun'd to ſoft woe, made all the mountains weep;
Sooth'd even th' inexorable powers of Hell, 510
And half redeem'd his loſt Eurydice.
Muſic exalts each Joy, allays each Grief,
Expels Diſeaſes, ſoftens every Pain,
Subdues the rage of Poiſon, and the Plague; 515
And hence the wiſe of ancient days ador'd
One Power of Phyſic, Melody, and Song.

The E N D.

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