VIDA's ART of POETRY,

Translated into

ENGLISH VERSE,

By the Reverend

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To the Right Honourable

PHILIP,

EARL *Stanhope*, VISCOUNT *Mahon*, and BARON *Elvaston.*

THIS

TRANSLATION

OF

VIDA's ART *of* POETRY

Is Dedicated by

His LORDSHIP's

Humble Servant and

Chaplain,

CHRISTOPHER PITT.

VIDA's

Art of Poetry, &c.

Book I.

GIVE me ye ſacred muſes, to impart
The hidden ſecrets of your tuneful art;
Give me your awful myſteries to ſing,
Unlock, and open wide, your ſacred ſpring;
While from his infancy the *Bard* I lead,
And ſeat him on your mountain's lofty head;
Direct his courſe, and point him out the road
To ſing, in *Epick* ſtrains, an hero or a god.
WHAT youth, whoſe gen'rous boſom pants for praiſe,
Will dare with *me* to beat thoſe arduous ways?
O'er high *Parnaſſus'* painful ſteeps to go,
And leave the grov'ling multitude below:
Where the glad muſes ſing, and form the choir,
While bright *Apollo* ſtrikes the ſilver lyre.
Approach thou firſt, great *FRANCIS*, nor refuſe
To pay due honours to the ſacred muſe;

While

While *Gallia* waits for thy auſpicious reign,
'Till age compleats the monarch in the man;
Mean time the muſe may bring ſome ſmall relief,
To charm thy anguiſh, and ſuſpend thy grief;
While guilty fortune's ſtern decrees detain
Thee, and thy brother, in the realms of *Spain*;
Far, far tranſported from your native place,
Your country's, father's, and your friend's embrace!
Such are the terms the cruel fates impoſe
On your brave father, ſtruggling with his woes,
Theſe are their hard conditions: ---- They require
The ſons to purchaſe, and redeem the ſire.
But yet, brave youth, from grief, from tears abſtain,
Fate may relent, and heav'n grow mild again;
At laſt perhaps the glorious day may come,
The day that brings our royal exile home;
When, to thy native realms in peace reſtor'd,
The raviſh'd crowds ſhall hail their paſſing lord;
When each tranſported city ſhall rejoice,
And nations bleſs thee with a publick voice;
To the throng'd fanes the matrons ſhall repair;
Abſolve their vows; and breath their ſouls in pray'r.
'Till *then*, let ev'ry muſe engage thy love,
With me at large o'er high *Parnaſſus* rove,
Range ev'ry bow'r, and ſport in ev'ry grove.
Firſt then obſerve that *verſe* is ne'er confin'd
To one fixt meaſure, or determin'd kind;
Tho' at its birth it ſung the gods alone,
And then religion claim'd it for her own;
In ſacred verſe addreſt the deity,
And ſpoke a language worthy of the sky;
New themes ſucceeding bards began to chuſe,
And in a wider field engag'd the muſe;
The common bulk of ſubjects to rehearſe
In all the rich varieties of *verſe*.
Yet none of all with equal honours ſhine,
(But thoſe which celebrate the pow'rs divine,)
To thoſe exalted *meaſures* which declare,
The deeds of heroes, and the ſons of war.

From

From hence posterity the name bestow'd
On this rich present of the delphick god:
Fame, says *Phæmonoe* in this measure gave
Apollo's answers from the *Pythian* cave.

BUT e'er you write, consult your strength, and chuse
A theme proportion'd justly to your muse.
For tho' in chief these precepts are bestow'd
On *him*, who sings an hero or a god;
To other themes their gen'ral use extends,
And serves in diff'rent views to diff'rent ends.
Whether the lofty muse with tragick rage,
Would proudly stalk in buskins on the stage;
Or in soft elegies our pity move,
And show the youth in all the flames of love;
Or sing the shepherd's woes in humble strains,
And the low humours of contending swains;
These faithful rules shall guide the bard along
In every *measure*, *argument* and *song*.

BE sure, (whatever you propose to write,)
Let the chief motive be your own delight,
And well-weigh'd choice; --- A task injoyn'd refuse,
Unless a monarch should command your muse.
(If we may hope these golden times to see,
When bards become the care of majesty.)
Free and spontaneous the smooth numbers glide,
Where choice determines, and our wills preside;
But, at command, we toil with fruitless pain,
And drag th' involuntary load in vain.

NOR, at its birth, indulge your warm desire,
On the first glimm'ring of the sacred fire;
Defer the mighty task; and weigh your pow'r;
And every part in every view explore;
And let the theme in diff'rent prospects roll
Deep in your thoughts, and grow into the soul.

BUT e'er with sails unfurl'd you fly away,
And cleave the bosom of the boundless sea;
A fund of *words* and *images* prepare,
And lay the bright materials up with care,
Which, at due time, occasion may produce,
All rang'd in order for the poet's use.

Some

Some happy objects by meer chance are brought
From hidden causes to th' unconscious thought;
Which if once lost, we labour long in vain
To catch th' ideal fugitives again.
Nor must I fail their conduct to extol,
Who, when they lay the basis of the whole,
Explore the *antients* with a watchful eye,
Lay all their charms and elegancies by,
Then to their use the precious spoils apply.

AT first without the least restraint compose,
And mould the future *poem* into *prose*;
A full and proper series to maintain,
And draw the just connection in a chain;
By stated bounds your progress to controul,
To join the parts, and regulate the whole.

AND now 'tis time to spread the op'ning sails
Wide to the wanton winds, and flatt'ring gales;
'Tis time we now prescribe the genuine laws
To raise the beauteous fabrick with applause;
But first some method requisite appears
To form the boy; and mould his tender years.
In vain the bard the sacred wreath pursues,
Unless train'd up, and season'd to the muse.
Soon as the prattling innocent shall reach
To the first use and rudiments of speech,
Ev'n then, by *Helicon* he ought to rove,
Ev'n then the tuneful nine should win his love
By just degrees. ---- But make his guide your choice
For his chaste phrase, and elegance of voice;
That he at first successfully may teach
The methods, laws, and discipline of speech;
Lest the young charge, mistaking right and wrong,
With vicious habits prejudice his tongue,
Habits, whose subtle seeds may mock your art,
And spread the roots and poison thro' his heart.
Whence none shall move me to approve the wretch,
Who wildly born above the vulgar reach,
And big with vain pretences to impart
Vast shows of learning, and a depth of *art*,
For sense, th' impertinence of *terms* affords;
An idle cant of formidable *words*;

The

The pedant's pride, and the delight of Fools;
The vile disgrace, and lumber of the schools:
In vain the circling youths, a blooming throng,
Dwell on th' eternal jargon of his tongue.
Deluded Fools! ——— The same is their mistake,
Who at the limpid stream their thirst may slake,
Yet choose the tainted waters of the lake.
Let no such pest approach the blooming care,
Deprave his *style*, and violate his ear;
But far, oh far, to some remoter place
Drive the vile wretch to teach a barb'rous race.
NOW to the muse's stream the pupil bring,
To drink large draughts from the *Pierian* spring;
And from his birth the sacred bard adore,
Nurst by the nine, on *Mincio*'s flow'ry shore;
And ask the gods his numbers to inspire,
With like invention, majesty, and fire.
He reads *Ascanius*' deeds with equal flame,
And longs with *him* to run at nobler game.
For youths of ages past he makes his moan,
And learns to pity years so like his own,
Which with too swift, and too severe a doom,
The fate of war had hurry'd to the tomb.
His eyes, for *Pallas* and for *Lausus* flow,
Mourn with their fires, and weep another's woe.
But when *Euryalus*, in all his charms,
Is snatch'd by fate from his dear mother's arms,
And as he rolls in death, the purple flood
Streams out, and stains his snowy limbs with blood,
His soul the pangs of gen'rous sorrow pierce,
And a new tear steals out at ev'ry verse.
Mean time with bolder steps the youth proceeds,
And the *Greek* poets in succession reads;
Seasons to either tongue his tender ears;
Compares the heroes glorious characters;
Sees, how *Æneas* is himself alone,
The draught of *Peleus*' and *Laertes*' son;
How, by the poet's art, in *one*, conspire
Ulysses' conduct, and *Achilles*' fire.

BUT now, young bard, with ſtrict attention hear,
And drink my precepts in at either ear;
Since a vaſt crowd of poets you may find,
Both of the *Græcian* and *Auſonian* kind,
Learn hence what bards to quit or to purſue,
To ſhun the falſe, and to embrace the true;
Nor is it hard to cull each noble piece,
And point out ev'ry glorious ſon of *Greece*,
Above whoſe numbers *Homer* ſits on high,
And ſhines ſupreme in diſtant Majeſty;
Whom with a rev'rend eye the reſt regard,
And owe their raptures to the ſov'reign bard;
Thro' *him* the god their panting ſouls inſpires,
Swells every breaſt, and warms with all his fires.
Bleſt were the poets with the hallow'd rage,
Train'd up in *that*, and the ſucceeding age:
As to his time each poet nearer drew,
His ſpreading fame in juſt proportion grew.
By like degrees the next degen'rate race
Sunk from the height of honour to diſgrace.
And now the fame of *Greece* extinguiſh'd lies,
Her ancient *language* with her glory dies.
Her baniſh'd princes mourn their raviſh'd crowns,
Driv'n from their old hereditary thrones;
Her drooping natives rove o'er worlds unknown,
And weep their woes in regions not their own;
She feels thro' all her ſtates the dreadful blow,
And mourns the fury of a barb'rous foe.

BUT when our bards brought o'er th' *Aonian* maids,
From their own *Helicon*, to *Tyber's* ſhades;
When firſt they ſettled on *Heſperia's* plains,
Their numbers ran in rough unpoliſh'd ſtrains.
Void of the *Grecian* art their meaſures flow'd;
Pleas'd the wild ſatyrs, and the ſylvan crow'd.
Low ſhrubs, and lofty foreſts *whilom* rung,
With *uncouth* verſe, and antiquated ſong;
Nor yet old *Ennius* ſung in artleſs ſtrains,
Fights, arms, and hoſts embattled on the plains,
Who firſt aſpir'd to pluck the verdant crown
From *Grecian* heads, and fix it on his own.

New

New wonders the ſucceeding bards explore,
Which ſlept conceal'd in nature's womb before;
Her awful ſecrets the bold poet ſings,
And ſets to view the principles of *things*;
Each part was fair, and beautiful the whole,
And ev'ry line was nectar to the ſoul.
By ſuch degrees, the *verſe*, as ages roll'd,
Was ſtampt to form, and took the beauteous mould.
Auſonia's bards drew off from every part
The barb'rous dregs, and civiliz'd the art.
'Till like the day, all ſhining and ſerene,
That drives the clouds, and clears the gloomy ſcene,
Refines the air, and brightens up the skies,
See the majeſtick head of *Virgil* riſe;
Phœbus' undoubted ſon! ---- who clears the ruſt
From the great *Ancients*, and ſhakes off their duſt.
He on their works a nobler grace beſtow'd;
He thought, and ſpoke, in ev'ry word a god.
To grace this mighty bard, ye muſes, bring
Your choiceſt flow'rs, and rifle all the ſpring;
See! how the *Grecian* bards, at diſtance thrown,
With rev'rence bow to this diſtinguiſh'd ſon;
Immortal ſounds his golden lines impart,
And nought can match his *genius* but his *art*.
Ev'n *Greece* turns pale, and trembles at his fame,
Which ſhades the luſtre of her *Homer's* name.
'Twas *then Auſonia* ſaw her language riſe,
In all its ſtrength and glory, to the skies;
Such glory never could ſhe boaſt before,
Nor could ſucceeding poets make it more.
From that bleſt period the poetick ſtate
Ran down the precipice of time and fate;
Degen'rate ſouls ſucceed, a wretched train,
And her old fame at once drew back again.
One to his *genius* truſts, in ev'ry part,
And ſcorns the rules, and diſcipline of *art*.
While this, an empty tide of ſound affords,
And roars and thunders in a ſtorm of *words*.
Some, muſically dull, all methods try
To win the ear with *ſweet ſtupidity*;

Unruffled ſtrains for ſolid wit diſpenſe,
And give us *numbers*, when we call for *ſenſe*.
'Till from th' *Heſperian* plains and *Tyber* chas'd,
From *Rome* the baniſh'd ſiſters fled at laſt;
Driv'n by the barb'rous nations, who from far
Burſt into *Latium* with a tide of war.
Hence a vaſt change of their old manners ſprung,
And forc'd the ſlaves to ſpeak their maſter's tongue;
No honours now were paid the ſacred muſe,
But all were bent on mercenary views;
'Till *Latium* ſaw with joy th' *Aonian* train,
By the great *Medici*, reſtor'd again;
Th' illuſtrious *Medici*, of *Tuſcan* race,
Were born to cheriſh learning in diſgrace,
New life in ev'ry ſcience to beſtow,
And lull the cries of *Europe* in her woe.
With pity they beheld theſe turns of fate,
And prop'd the ruins of the *Grecian* ſtate;
For leſt her wit ſhould periſh with her fame,
Their care ſupported ſtill the *Argive* name,
They call'd th'aſpiring youths from diſtant parts,
To plant *Auſonia* with the *Grecian* arts;
To bask in eaſe, and ſcience to diffuſe,
And to reſtore the empire of the muſe;
They ſent to ravag'd provinces with care,
And cities waſted by the rage of war.
To buy the ancients works, of deathleſs fame,
And ſnatch th' immortal labours from the flame;
To which the foes had doom'd each glorious piece,
Who reign and lord it in the realms of *Greece*.
(But we, ye gods, would raiſe a foreign lord,
As yet untaught to ſheath the civil ſword;)
Thro' many a period *this* has been the fate,
And *this* the liſt of the poetick ſtate.
HENCE ſacred *Virgil* from thy ſoul adore
Above the reſt, and to thy utmoſt pow'r
Purſue the glorious paths he ſtruck before.
If he ſupplies not all your wants, peruſe
Th' immortal ſcenes of each *Auguſtine* muſe.

There

There ſtop, ---- nor raſhly ſeek to know the reſt,
But drive the dire ambition from thy breaſt,
'Till riper years and Judgment form thy thoughts
To mark their beauties, and avoid their faults.
MEAN time, ye parents, with attention hear,
And thus advis'd exert your utmoſt care;
The blameleſs tutor from a thouſand chuſe,
One from his ſoul devoted to the muſe;
Who pleas'd the tender pupil to improve,
Regards, and loves him with a father's love.
Youth of it ſelf to num'rous ills betray'd,
Requires a prop, and wants a foreign aid;
Unleſs a Maſter's rules his mind incline
To love and cultivate the ſacred nine,
His thoughts a thouſand objects will employ,
And from *Parnaſſus* lead the wand'ring boy.
So truſts the ſwain, the ſaplings to the earth;
So hopes in time to ſee the ſprouting birth;
Againſt the winds defenſive props he forms,
To ſhield the future foreſt from the ſtorms,
That each imbolden'd plant at length may riſe
In verdant pride, and ſhoot into the skies.
BUT let the guide, if e'er he would improve
His charge, avoid his hate, and win his love;
Leſt in his rage wrong meaſures he may take,
And loath the muſes, for the teacher's ſake.
His ſoul then ſlacken'd from her native force,
Flags at the barrier, and forgets the courſe,
Curb in your wrath, nor fright the blooming crowd,
But ſcorn th' ungen'rous province of the rod;
Th' offended muſes never can ſuſtain
To hear the ſhriekings of the tender train,
But ſtung with grief and anguiſh hang behind;
Dampt is the ſprightly vigour of the mind.
The boy no daring images inſpire,
No bright *ideas* ſet his thoughts on fire;
He drags on heavily th' ungrateful load,
Grown obſtinately dull, and ſeaſon'd to the rod.
I know a pedant who to penance brought
His trembling pupils for the lighteſt fault;

His

His ſoul tranſported with a ſtorm of ire,
And all the rage that malice could inſpire;
By turns the tort'ring ſcourges we might hear,
By turns the ſhrieks of wretches ſtun'd the ear.
Still to my mind the dire ideas riſe,
When rage unuſual ſparkled in his eyes;
When with the dreadful ſcourge inſulting loud,
The tyrant terrify'd the blooming crowd;
A boy the faireſt of the frighted train,
Who yet ſcarce gave the promiſe of a man,
Ah, diſmal object! idly paſt the day,
In all the thoughtleſs innocence of play;
When lo! th' imperious wretch, inflam'd with rage,
Fierce, and regardleſs of his tender age,
With fury ſtorms; the fault his clamours urge;
His hand high-waving brandiſhes the ſcourge.
Tears, vows and pray'rs the tyrant's ears aſſail
In vain; ---- nor tears, nor vows, nor pray'rs prevail.
The trembling innocent, from deep deſpair,
Sicken'd, and breath'd his little ſoul in air.
For *him* old *Po*, beneath his poplars, mourns;
For *him* old *Serius* weeps from all his urns;
For *him* their tears the watry ſiſters ſhed,
Who lov'd him living, and deplor'd him dead.
The furious pedant, to reſtrain his rage,
Should mark th'example of a former age;
How fierce *Alcides*, warm'd with youthful ire,
Daſh'd on his maſter's front his vocal lyre.
But yet, ye youths, confeſs your maſter's ſway,
And their commands implicitly obey.

WHOEVER then this arduous task purſues,
To form the bard, and cultivate his muſe,
Let him by ſofter means, and milder ways,
Warm his ambition with the love of praiſe;
Soon as his precepts ſhall have won his heart,
And fann'd the riſing fire in ev'ry part,
Light is the task; ---- for then the eager boy
Purſues the voluntary toil with joy;
Diſdains th' inglorious indolence of reſt,
And feeds th' immortal ardour in his breaſt.

AND

AND here the common practice of the ſchools
By known experience juſtifies my rules,
The youths in ſocial ſtudies to engage;
For *then* the rivals burn with gen'rous rage,
Each ſoul the ſtings of emulation raiſe,
And ev'ry little boſom beats for praiſe.
But gifts propos'd will urge them beſt to riſe;
Fir'd at the glorious proſpect of a prize,
With noble jealouſie, the blooming bard
Reads, labours, glows and ſtrains for the reward,
Fears leſt his happy rival win the race,
And build a triumph on his own diſgrace.
BUT when once ſeaſon'd to the rage divine,
He loves and courts the raptures of the *nine*,
The ſenſe of glory, and the love of fame,
Serve but as ſecond motives to the flame;
The thrilling pleaſure all the bard ſubdues,
Lock'd in the ſtrict embraces of the muſe.
See! when harſh parents force the youth to quit,
For meaner arts, the dear delights of wit,
If e'er the wonted warmth his thoughts inſpire,
And with paſt pleaſures ſet his mind on fire;
How from his ſoul he longs, but longs in vain,
To haunt the groves, and purling ſtreams again:
No ſtern command of parents can controul,
No force can check the ſallies of his ſoul.
Thus ſome fleet courſer ſeaſon'd to the rein,
That ſpies his females on a diſtant plain,
And longs to act his pleaſures o'er again;
Fir'd with remembrance of his joys, he bounds,
He foams, and ſtrives to reach the well-known grounds;
The goring ſpurs his furious flames improve,
And rouze within him all the rage of love;
Ply'd with the ſcourge he ſtill neglects his haſte,
And moves reluctant, when he moves at laſt;
Looks often back; regrets the diſtant mare;
And neighs his paſſion to the dappled fair.
HOW oft the youth would long to change his fate,
Who high advanc'd to all the pomp of ſtate,

With

With grief his gawdy load of grandeur views,
Loſt at too high a diſtance from the muſe!
How oft he ſighs by warbling ſtreams to rove,
And quit the palace for the ſhady grove!
How oft in *Tyber*'s cold retreats to lye
Beneath the rigour of the watry sky;
And gladly ſtoop to cheerful poverty!
But yet how many curſe their fruitleſs toil,
Who turn and cultivate a barren ſoil?
This, e'er too late, the maſter may divine
By a ſure omen, and a certain ſign;
The hopeful youth, determin'd by his choice,
Works without precept, and prevents advice,
Conſults his teacher, plies his task with joy,
And a quick ſenſe of glory fires the boy.
He challenges the reſt, - - - - the conqueſt o'er,
He ſtruts away the victor of an hour.
Then vanquiſh'd in his turn, o'erwhelm'd with care,
He weeps, he pines, he ſickens with deſpair;
Nor looks his little rivals in the face,
But flies for ſhelter to ſome lonely place,
To hide his ſhame, and cover his diſgrace.
His maſter's frowns impatient to ſuſtain,
Strait he returns, and wins the day again.
This is the boy, his better fates deſign
To riſe the future darling of the nine;
For him the muſes weave the ſacred crown,
And bright *Apollo* claims him for his own.
Not the leaſt hope th' unactive youth can raiſe,
Dead to the proſpect, and the ſenſe of praiſe,
Who your juſt rules with dull attention hears,
Nor lends his underſtanding, but his ears.
Relolv'd his parts in indolence to keep,
He lulls his drowzy faculties aſleep;
The wretch your beſt endeavours will betray,
And the ſuperfl'ous care is thrown away.
I fear the bard who ripens e'er his prime;
For all productions there's a proper time.
Oh! may no apples in the ſpring appear,
Out-grow the ſeaſons, and prevent the year,

Nor

Nor mellow yet, till autumn ſtains the vine,
And the full preſſes foam with floods of wine.
Torn from the parent-tree too ſoon, they lie
Trod down by ev'ry ſwain that paſſes by.
NOR ſhould the youth too ſtrictly be confin'd,
'Tis ſometimes proper to unbend his mind;
When tir'd with ſtudy let him ſeek the plains,
And mark the homely humours of the ſwains;
Or pléas'd the toils to ſpread, or horns to wind,
Hunt the fleet mountain-goat, or foreſt-hind.
Mean time the youth, impatient that the day
Should paſs in pleaſures unimprov'd away,
Steals from the ſhouting crowd, and quits the plains,
To ſing the ſylvan gods in rural ſtrains:
Or calls the muſes to *Albunea*'s ſhades,
Courts, and enjoys the viſionary maids.
So labour'd fields with crops alternate bleſt,
By turns lie fallow, and indulge their reſt;
The ſwain contented, bids the hungry ſoil
Enjoy a ſweet viciſſitude from toil;
'Till earth renews her genial pow'rs to bear,
And pays his prudence with a bounteous year.
ON a ſtrict view your ſolid judgment frame,
Nor think that *genius* is in all the ſame;
How oft the youth who wants the ſacred fire,
Fondly miſtakes for *genius* his *deſire*;
Courts the coy muſes, tho' rejected ſtill,
Nor nature ſeconds his miſguided will;
He ſtrives, he toils, with unavailing care,
Nor heav'n relents, nor *Phœbus* hears his pray'r.
He with ſucceſs, perhaps, may plead a cauſe,
Shine at the bar, and flouriſh by the laws;
Perhaps diſcover nature's ſacred ſprings,
And bring to light th' originals of *things*:
But ſometimes *precept* will ſuch force impart,
That *nature* bends beneath the pow'r of *art*.
BESIDES, 'tis no light province to remove
From the raſh boy the fiery pangs of love;
'Till ripe in years, and more confirm'd in age,
He learns to bear the flames of *Cupid*'s rage;

Oft hidden fires on all his vitals prey,
Devour the youth, and melt his ſoul away
By ſlow degrees; ---- blot out his golden dreams,
The tuneful poets, and *Caſtalian* ſtreams;
Struck with a ſecret wound, he weeps and ſighs;
In ev'ry thought the darling phantoms riſe;
The fancy'd charmer ſwims before his ſight,
His theme all day, his viſion all the night:
The wand'ring object takes up all his care,
Nor can he quit th' imaginary fair.
Mean time his fire, unconſcious of his pain,
Applies the temper'd medicines in vain;
The plague, ſo deeply rooted in his heart,
Mocks ev'ry ſlight attempt of *Pæan's* art;
The flames of *Cupid* all his breaſt inſpire,
And in the lover's quench the poet's fire.

WHEN in his riper years, without controul,
The nine have took poſſeſſion of his ſoul;
When, ſacred to their god, the crown he wears,
To other authors let him bend his cares,
Conſult their ſtyles, examine ev'ry part,
And a new tincture take from ev'ry *art*.
Firſt ſtudy *Tully's* language and his ſenſe,
And range that boundleſs field of eloquence.
Tully, *Rome's* other glory, ſtill affords
The beſt *expreſſions* and the richeſt *words*;
As high o'er all in eloquence he ſtood,
As *Rome*, o'er all the nations ſhe ſubdu'd.
Let him read men and manners, and explore
The ſite and diſtances from ſhore to ſhore,
Then let him travel, or to maps repair,
And ſee imagin'd cities riſing there;
Range with his eyes the earth's fictitious ball,
And paſs o'er figur'd worlds that hang the wall.
Some in the bloody ſhock of arms appear,
To paint the native horrors of the war;
Thro' charging hoſts they ruſh, before they write,
And plunge in all the tumult of the fight.
But ſince our lives contracted in their date
By ſcanty bounds, and circumſcrib'd by fate,

Can

Can never launch thro' all the depths of arts,
Ye youths, touch only the material parts;
There ſtop your labour, there your ſearch controul,
And draw from thence a notion of the whole.
From diſtant climes when the rich merchants come,
To bring the wealth of foreign regions home,
Content the friendly havens to explore,
They only touch upon the winding ſhore;
Nor with vain labour wander up and down
To view the land, and viſit ev'ry town;
That would but call 'em from their former road,
To ſpend an age in baniſhment abroad;
Too late returning from the dang'rous main,
To ſee their countries and their friends again.

STILL be the ſacred poets your delight,
Read 'em by day, conſult 'em in the night;
From thoſe clear fountains all your raptures bring,
And draw for ever from the muſes ſpring;
But let your *ſubject* in your boſom roll,
Claim ev'ry thought, and draw in all the ſoul.
That conſtant object to your mind diſplay,
Your toil all night, your labour all the day.

I need not here the rules of verſe diſcloſe,
Nor how their various *meaſures* to diſpoſe,
The tutor here with eaſe his charge may guide
To *join* the *parts* and numbers, or *divide*.
Now let him words to ſtated laws ſubmit,
Or yoke to meaſures, or reduce to feet;
Now let him ſoftly to himſelf rehearſe,
His firſt attempts and rudiments of *verſe*;
Fix on thoſe rich expreſſions his regard,
To uſe made ſacred by ſome ancient bard;
Toſt by a diff'rent guſt of hopes and fears,
He begs of heav'n an hundred eyes and ears.
Now here, now there, coy nature he purſues,
And takes one *image* in a thouſand views.
He waits the happy minute that affords
The nobleſt *thoughts*, and moſt expreſſive *words*.
He brooks no dull delay, admits no reſt,
A tide of paſſions ſtruggles in his breaſt;

Round his dark ſoul no clear *ideas* play,
The moſt familiar objects glide away.
All fixt in thought, aſtoniſht he appears,
His ſoul examines, and conſults his ears,
And racks his faithleſs memory to find
Some traces faintly sketch'd upon his mind.
There he unlocks the glorious magazine,
And opens ev'ry faculty within,
Brings out with pride their intellectual ſpoils,
And with the noble treaſure crowns his toils;
And oft meer chance ſhall images diſplay,
That ſtrike his mind engag'd a diff'rent way.
Still he perſiſts, regrets no toil nor pain;
And ſtill the task, he try'd before in vain,
Plies with unweary'd diligence again.
For oft unmanagable thoughts appear,
That mock his labour, and delude his care;
Th' impatient bard, with all his nerves apply'd,
Tries all the avenues on ev'ry ſide;
Reſolv'd and bent the precipice to gain,
Tho' yet he labours at the rock in vain,
By his own ſtrength and heav'n, with conqueſt grac'd,
He wins th' important victory at laſt;
Stretch'd by his hands the vanquiſh'd monſter lies,
And the proud triumph lifts him to the skies.
But when ev'n *chance* and all his efforts fail,
Nor toils, nor vigilance, nor cares prevail;
His paſt attempts the boy in vain renews,
And waits the ſofter ſeaſons of the muſe;
He quits his work, throws by his fond deſires,
And from his task reluctantly retires.

THUS o'er the fields the ſwain purſues his road,
Till ſtopt at length by ſome impervious flood,
That from a mountain's brow, o'er-charg'd with rains,
Burſts in a thund'ring tide, and foams along the plains;
With horror chill'd, he traverſes the ſhore,
Sees the waves riſe, and hears the torrent roar;
Then griev'd returns, or waits with vain delay,
Till the tumultuous deluge rolls away.

BUT

BUT in no *Iliad* let the youth engage
His tender years, and unexperienc'd age;
Let him by just degrees and steps proceed,
Sing with the swains, and tune the slender reed;
He with success an humbler theme may ply,
And, *Virgil*-like, immortalize a fly:
Or sing the mice, their battles and attacks,
Against the croaking natives of the lakes:
Or with what art her toils the spider sets,
And spins her filmy entrails into nets.

AND here embrace, ye teachers, this advice;
Not to be too inquisitively nice;
But till the soul enlarg'd in strength appears,
Indulge the boy, and spare his tender years,
'Till, to ripe judgment and experience brought,
Himself discerns and blushes at a fault;
For if the criticks eyes too strictly pierce,
To point each blemish out in every verse,
Void of all hope the stripling may depart,
And turn his *genius* to another *art*.
But if, resolv'd his darling faults to see,
A youth of *genius* should apply to *me*,
And court my elder Judgment to peruse
Th' imperfect labours of his infant muse;
I should not scruple, with a candid eye,
To read and praise his verses to the sky;
With seeming rapture on each line to pause,
And dwell on each expression with applause.
But when my praises had inflam'd his mind,
If some lame verse limp'd slowly up behind;
One that himself, unconscious, had not found,
By *numbers* charm'd, and led away by *sound*;
I should not fear to minister a prop,
And give him stronger feet to keep it up;
Teach it to run along more firm and sure;
Nor would I show the wound before the cure.

FOR what remains, the poet I enjoin
To form no glorious scheme, no great design,
'Till free from business he retires alone,
And flies the giddy tumult of the town;

Seeks

Seeks rural pleasures, and enjoys the glades,
And courts the thoughtful silence of the shades,
Where the fair dryads haunt their native woods
With all the orders of the sylvan gods.
Here in their soft retreats the poets lie,
Serene, and blest with chearful poverty;
No guilty schemes of wealth their souls molest,
No cares, no prospects discompose their rest;
No scenes of grandeur glitter in their view;
Here they the joys of innocence pursue,
And taste the pleasures of the happy *few*.
From a rock's entrails the barbarian sprung,
Who dares to violate the sacred throng
By deeds or words. - - - - The wretch by fury driv'n,
Assaults the darling colony of heav'n!
Some have look'd down, we know, with scornful eyes
On the bright muse who taught 'em how to rise,
And paid, when rais'd to grandeur, no regard,
From that high station, to the sacred bard.
Uninjur'd, mortals, let the poets lie,
Or dread th' impending vengeance of the sky;
The gods still listen'd to their constant pray'r,
And made the poets their peculiar care.
They, with contempt, on fortune's gifts look down,
And laugh at kings, who fill an envy'd throne.
Rais'd on the noble prospect of the mind,
From that proud eminence they view mankind
Lost in a cloud; they see them toil below,
All busie to promote their common woe.
Of guilt unconscious, with a steddy soul,
They see the lightnings flash, and hear the thunders roll.
When girt with terrors, heav'ns almighty sire
Launches his triple bolts, and forky fire,
When o'er high tow'rs the red destroyer plays,
And strikes the mountains with the pointed blaze,
Safe in their innocence, like gods, they rise,
And lift their souls serenely to the skies.
FLY ye profane; - - - - the sacred nine were giv'n
To bless these lower worlds by bounteous heav'n:

Of old, *Prometheus*, from the realms above,
Brought down these daughters of almighty *Jove*,
When to his native earth the robber came,
Charg'd with the plunder of ethereal flame.
As due compassion touch'd his gen'rous mind,
To see the savage state of human kind;
When led to range at large the bright abodes,
And share th' ambrosial banquets of the gods,
In many a whirl he saw *Olympus* driv'n,
And heard th' eternal harmony of heav'n.
Turn'd round and round the consort charm'd his ears,
With all the musick of the dancing spheres;
The sacred nine his wond'ring eyes behold,
As each her orb in just divisions roll'd;
The thief beholds them, with ambitious eyes,
And bent on fraud, be meditates the prize;
As the most noble gift he could bestow
(Next to the fire) on human race below:
At length th'immortals reconcil'd, resign'd
The fair celestial sisters to mankind.
Tho' bound to *Caucasus* with solid chains,
Th'aspiring robber groan'd in endless pains;
By which deter'd, for ages lay supine
The race of mortals, nor invok'd the *nine*,
'Till heav'n in *verse* shew'd man his future state,
And open'd ev'ry distant scene of fate.
First the great father of the gods above,
Sung in *Dodona*, and the *Lybian* grove;
Next to th' enquiring nations *Themis* gave
Her sacred answers from the *Phocian* cave;
Then *Phœbus* warn'd 'em, from the *Delphick* dome,
Of future times, and ages yet to come;
And rev'rend *Faunus* utter'd truths divine
To the first founders of the *Latian* line.
Next the great race of hallow'd prophets came,
With them the sybils of immortal fame,
Inspir'd with all the god, who rapt on high
With more than mortal rage, unbounded fly,
And range the dark recesses of the sky.

Next at their feasts, the people sung their lays,
(The same their prophets sung in former days)
Their theme an hero, and his deathless praise.

WHAT has to man of nobler worth been giv'n,
Than this the best and greatest gift of heav'n?
Whatever pow'r the glorious gift bestow'd;
We trace the certain footsteps of a god;
By thee inspir'd, the daring poet flies,
His soul mounts up, and tow'rs above the skies;
Thou art the source of pleasure, and we see
No joy, no transport, when debarr'd of thee.
Thy tuneful deity the feather'd throng
Confess in all the measure of their song.
Thy great commands the savages obey,
And every silent native of the sea:
Led by thy voice the starting rocks advance,
And list'ning forests mingle in the dance.
On thy sweet notes the damn'd rejoice to dwell,
Thy strains suspended all the din of hell;
Lull'd by the sound the furies rag'd no more,
And hell's infernal porter ceas'd to roar.
Thy pow'rs exalt us to the realms above,
To feast with gods, and fit the guests of *Jove*;
Thy sov'reign presence softens every grief,
And reconciles the bitter load of life;
Hail thou bright comfort of these low abodes!
Thou joy of men and darling of the gods!
As *Priest* and *Poet* in these humble lays,
I boldly labour to resound thy praise;
To hang thy shrines this gift I bring along,
And to thy altars guide the tender throng.

The End of the First BOOK.

VIDA's ART of POETRY,

Translated into

ENGLISH VERSE,

By the Reverend

Mr. CHRISTOPHER PITT, *A. M.*

Late FELLOW of *New-College* in *Oxford*, Rector of *Pimpern* in *Dorsetshire*, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable *PHILIP*, Earl *STANHOPE*, &c.

BOOK II.

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VIDA's

Art of Poetry, &c.

Book II.

ROCEED ye nine, descended from above,
Ye tuneful daughters of almighty *Jove*;
To teach the future age I hasten on,
And open ev'ry source of *Helicon*.
Your priest and bard with rage divine inspire,
While to your shrine I lead the blooming choir.
Hard was the way, and dubious, which we trod,
Now show, ye goddesses, a surer road;
Point out those paths, which you can find alone,
To all the world, but to your selves unknown;
Lo! all th' *Hesperian* youths with *me* implore
Your softer influence, and propitious pow'r,
Who, rang'd beneath my banners, boldly tread
Those arduous tracks, to reach your mountain's head;
New rules 'tis now my province to impart;
First to *invent*, and then *dispose* with art;

Each

Each a laborious task; but they who ſhare
Heav'ns kinder bounty, and peculiar care;
A glorious train of images may find,
Preventing hope, and crowding on the mind.
The other task to ſettle ev'ry part,
Depends on judgment, and the pow'rs of art;
From whence in chief the poet hopes to raiſe
His future glory, and immortal praiſe.
THIS, as a rule, the nobleſt bards eſteem,
To touch at firſt in gen'ral on the theme;
To hint at all the ſubject in a line;
And draw in miniature the whole deſign.
Nor in themſelves confide; but *next* implore
The timely aid of ſome celeſtial pow'r;
To guide your labours, and point out your road;
Chooſe, as you pleaſe, your tutelary god;
But ſtill invoke ſome guardian deity,
Some pow'r, to look auſpicious from the sky;
To nothing great ſhould mortals bend their care,
'Till *Jove* be ſolemnly addreſt in pray'r.
'Tis not enough to call for aid divine,
And court but once the favour of the nine;
When objects riſe, that mock your toil and pain,
Above the labour and the reach of man;
Then you may ſupplicate the bleſt abodes,
And ask the friendly ſuccour of the gods.
Shock not your reader, nor begin too fierce,
Nor ſwell and bluſter in a pomp of verſe;
At firſt all needleſs ornament remove,
To ſhun his prejudice, and win his love.
When you ſet out, you meet with moſt ſucceſs,
In plain *expreſſion*, and a modeſt dreſs.
For if too arrogant you vaunt your might,
You fall with greater ſcandal in the fight,
When on the niceſt point your fortune ſtands,
And all your courage, all your ſtrength demands.
With gradual *flights* ſurprize us as we read,
And let more glorious *images* ſucceed,
To wake our ſouls, to kindle our deſire
Still to read on, and fan the riſing fire.

But

But ne'er the *subject* of your wit proclaim
In its own colours, and its genuine name;
Let it by distant tokens be convey'd,
And wrapt in other *words*, and cover'd in their shade.
At last the subject from the friendly shrowd
Bursts out, and shines the brightest from the cloud;
Then the dissolving darkness breaks away,
And ev'ry object glares in open day.
And hence * *Ulysses'* toils were I to choose,
For the main theme that should employ my muse;
By his long labours of immortal fame,
I'd paint my heroe, but conceal his name;
As one, who lost at sea, had nations seen,
And mark'd their towns, their manners, and their men,
Since *Troy* was level'd to the dust by *Greece*;
'Till a few lines epitomiz'd the piece.

BUT study now what order to maintain,
To link the work in one continu'd chain,
That when the muse unravels all her scheme,
And at the proper time unfolds the theme;
Each part may find its own determin'd place,
Laid out with method, and dispos'd with grace;
That to the destin'd scope the piece may tend,
And keep one constant tenor to the end.
First to surprizing *novelties* inclin'd,
The bards some unexpected objects find,
To wake attention, and suspend the mind.
A cold dull order bravely they forsake;
Fixt and resolv'd the winding way to take,
They nobly deviate from the beaten track.
The poet marks th' occasion, as he sings,
To launch out boldly from the midst of *things*,
Where some distinguisht incident he views,
Some shining action that deserves a muse;
Thence by degrees the wond'ring reader brings
To trace the subject backward to its springs,
Lest at his ent'rance he should idly stay,
Shock'd at his toil, and dubious of his way;

* Vid. *Hom. Odyss.* Lib. 1.

For

For when set down so near the promis'd goal,
The flatt'ring prospect tempts and fires his soul;
Already past the treach'rous bounds appear,
Then most at distance, when they seem so near;
Far from his grasp the fleeting haven flies,
Courts his pursuit, but mocks his dazzled eyes;
The promis'd land which he with joy had spy'd,
Vast tracts of oceans from his reach divide;
Still must he backward steer his lengthen'd way,
And plough a wide interminable sea.
No skilful poet would his muse employ,
From *Paris'* vote to trace the fall of *Troy*,
Nor ev'ry deed of *Hector* to relate,
While his strong arm suspended *Ilium*'s fate;
Work for some annalists, some heavy fool,
Correctly dry, and regularly dull.
* Best near the end those dreadful scenes appear,
Wake *then*, and rouze the furies of the war.
But for his ravisht fair at first engage,
Peleides' soul in unrelenting rage.
Be this the cause that ev'ry *Phrygian* flood
Swells with red waves, and rolls a tide of blood;
That *Xanthus'* urns a purple deluge pour,
And the deep trenches float with human gore.
Nor former deeds in silence must we lose,
The league at *Aulis*, and the mutual vows,
The *Spartan* raging for his ravisht spouse;
The thousand ships, the woes which *Ilion* bore
From *Greece*, for nine revolving years before.
This † rule with judgment should the bard maintain,
Who brings *Laertes'* wand'ring son again,
From burning *Ilion* to his native reign.
Let him not launch from *Ida*'s strand his ships,
With his attendant friends into the deeps;
Nor stay to vanquish the *Ciconian* host;
But set him down, (his dear companion's lost,
With fair *Calypso* on th'*Ogygian* coast.

* See *Homer's Iliad*. † See his *Odyssey*.

Fr

From thence, a world of toils and dangers past,
Waft him to rich *Phæacia*'s realms at last.
There at the feast his wand'rings to relate,
His friends dire change, his own relentless fate.
But if the bard of former actions sings,
He wisely draws, from those remoter springs,
The present order, and the course of things.
As yet unfold th' *event* on no pretence,
'Tis your chief task to keep us in suspense.
Nor tell what * presents *Atreus*' son prepares,
To reconcile *Achilles* to the wars;
Or † by what god's auspicious conduct led,
From *Polyphemus*' den *Ulysses* fled.
Pleas'd with the toil, and on the prospect bent,
Our souls leap forward to the wisht event.
No call of nature can our search restrain,
And sleep, and thirst, and hunger plead in vain.
Glad we pursue the labour we embrac'd,
And leave reluctant, when we leave at last.
See! how the bard, triumphant in his art,
Sports with our passions, and commands the heart!
Now here, now there he turns the varying song,
And draws at will the captive soul along;
Fixt on the dark *event*, in ev'ry sense
We feel the pleasing anguish of suspense.
When ‡ *Homer* once has promis'd to rehearse
Bold *Paris*' fight, in many a sounding verse,
He soon perceives his reader's warm desire
Wrapt in th' *event*, and all his soul on fire;
Then he with art contrives some specious stay,
Before he tells the fortune of the day.
'Till *Helen* to the king and elders show,
From some tall tow'r, the leaders of the foe,
And name the heroes in the fields below.
‖ When chaste *Penelope*, to gain her end,
Invites her suitors the tough bow to bend;

* See *Iliad*. Lib. 19. † *Odyssey* 9. ‡ *Iliad* 3.
‖ *Odyssey* 21.

(Her

(Her nuptial bed, the victor's promis'd prize)
With what addreſs her various arts ſhe plies,
Skill'd in delays, and politickly ſlow,
To ſearch her treaſures for her hero's bow?
NONE lead the reader in the dark along
To the laſt goal that terminates the ſong;
Sometimes th' *event* muſt glance upon the ſight,
By a ſhort glimm'ring, and malignant light,
That ſhifts, and *juſt* diverſifies the night.
'Tis thus *Anchiſes* to his ſon relates
The various ſeries of his future fates;
For this the † prophets ſee on *Tyber*'s ſhore,
Wars, horrid wars, and *Latium* red with gore,
A new *Achilles* riſing to deſtroy,
With boundleſs rage, the poor remains of *Troy*;
But raiſe his mind with proſpects of ſucceſs,
And give the promiſe of a laſting peace.
This knew the hero, when he ſought the plains,
Sprung * from his ſhips, and charg'd th'embattled ſwains,
Hew'd down the *Latian* troops with matchleſs might,
(The firſt, auſpicious omen of the fight,)
And at one blow gigantick *Theron* kill'd,
Bold, but in vain, and foremoſt of the field.
Thus too ‡ *Patroclus* with his lateſt breath,
Foretold his unregarding victor's death;
His parting ſoul anticipates the blow
That waits on *Hector* from a greater foe.
Thou too, poor *Turnus*, long before thy doom,
Couldſt read thy end, and antedate a tomb,
When o'er thy head the baleful fury flew,
And in dire omens ſet thy fate to view;
A bird obſcene, ſhe flutter'd o'er the field,
And ſcream'd thy death, and beat thy ſounding ſhield.
For lo! the time, the fatal time is come,
Charg'd with thy death, and heavy with thy doom,
When *Turnus*, tho' in vain, ſhall rue the day,
Shall curſe the golden belt he bore away;

† Vid. *Æneid*, Lib. VI. v. 890. * *Æn.* III. v. 458.
‡ *Æneid*, Lib. I. v. 531.

Shall

Shall wish too late young *Pallas'* spoils unsought,
And mourn the conquest he so dearly bought.
Th' *event* should glimmer thro' its gloomy shrow'd,
Tho' yet confus'd and struggling in the cloud.
So, to the trav'ller, as he journeys on,
To reach the walls of some far distant town.
If, high in air, the dubious turrets rise,
Peep o'er the hills, and dance before his eyes;
Pleas'd the refreshing prospect to survey,
Each stride he lengthens, and beguiles the way.
More pleas'd, (the tempting scene in view) to go,
Than pensively to walk the gloomy vales below.

UNLESS the theme within your bosom roll,
Work in each thought, and run thro' all the soul;
Unless you alter with incessant pain,
Pull down and build the fabrick o'er again;
In vain, when rival-wits your wonder raise,
You'll strive to match those beauties which you praise.

TO one just scope with fixt design go on;
Let sov'reign reason dictate from her throne,
By what determin'd methods to advance,
But never trust to arbitrary chance.
Where chance presides, all *objects* wildly join'd,
Crowd on the reader, and distract his mind;
From *theme* to *theme* unwilling is he tost,
And in the dark variety is lost.
You see some bards, who bold excursions make,
In long *digressions*, from the beaten track,
And paint a wild unnecessary throng,
Of things and objects foreign to the song,
For new descriptions from the road depart,
Devoid of order, discipline and art.
So, many an anxious toil and danger past,
Some wretch returns from banishment at last,
With fond delay to range the shady wood,
Now here, now there, he wanders from the road;
From field to field, from stream to stream, he roves,
And courts the cooling shelter of the groves.

For why should * *Homer* deck the gorgeous car,
When our rais'd souls are eager for the war;
Or dwell on ev'ry wheel, when loud alarms,
And *Mars* in thunder, calls the hosts to arms;
When with his heroes we some † dastard find,
Of a vile aspect, and malignant mind,
His awkward figure is not worth our care,
His monstrous length of head, or want of hair.
Tho' the wretch goes with mountain shoulders by,
Short of a foot, or blinking in an eye,
Such trivial objects call us off too long
From the main drift, and tenor of the song.
‡ *Drances* appears a juster character,
In council bold, but cautious in the war;
Factious and loud the list'ning throng he draws,
And swells with wealth, and popular applause;
But what in our's would never find a place,
The bold *Greek* language may admit with grace.

WHY should I here the stratagems recite,
And the low tricks of ev'ry little wit:
Some out of time their stock of knowledge boast,
'Till in the pedant all the bard is lost.
Such without care their useless lumber place,
One black, confus'd and undigested mass;
With a wild heap encumbers ev'ry part,
Nor rang'd with grace, nor methodiz'd with art.
But *then* in chief, when things abstruse they teach,
Themes too abstracted for the vulgar reach;
The hidden nature of the deities;
The secret laws and motions of the skies;
Or from what dark original began
The fiery soul, and kindled up the man.
Oft they in odious instances engage,
And for *examples* ransack ev'ry age,
With ev'ry realm; no hero will they pass,
But act against the rules of *time* and *place*.

* Vid. *Homer's Iliad.* Lib. 5. v. 722. * Vid. *Il.* 2. v. 212. ‡ Vid. *Virg. Æneid.* Lib. 11. v. 336.

Avoid,

Avoid, ye youths, these practises, nor raise
Your swelling souls to such a thirst of praise.
Some bards of eminence there are, we own,
Who sing sometimes the journeys of the sun,
The rising stars, and labours of the moon:
What impulse bids the ocean rise and fall;
What motions shake, and rock the trembling ball,
Tho' foreign subjects had engag'd their care,
The rage, the din and thunder of the war,
Thro' the loud field, the genius of the earth;
Or precepts to improve the vegetable birth.
Yet 'tis But seldom, and when *time* and *place*
Require the thing, and reconcile to grace,
Those foreign objects necessary seem,
And flow, to all appearance, from the theme
With so much art, and well conceal'd; they please,
When wrought with skill, and introduc'd with ease.
Should not * *Anchises*, such occasion shown,
Resolve the questions of his god-like son?
If souls depriv'd of heav'ns fair light repair
Once more to day, and breathe the vital air?
Or if from high *Olympus* first they came,
Inspir'd with portions of ethereal flame,
Tho' here encumber'd with the mortal frame?
Tire not too long *one* subject when you write,
For 'tis variety that gives delight;
But when to *that* variety inclin'd,
You seek new objects to relieve the mind;
Be sure let nothing forc'd or labour'd seem,
But watch your time, and steal from off your theme.
Conceal with care, your longing to depart,
For art's chief glory 'tis, to cover art.
So † *Mulciber* in future ages skill'd,
Engrav'd *Rome's* glories on *Æneas'* shield,
On the bright orb her future fame enroll'd,
And with her triumphs charg'd the rising gold;
Here figur'd fights the blazing rounds adorn;
There his long line of heroes yet unborn.

* Vid. *Æneid.* Lib. 6. † *Æn.* Lib. 8. v. 266.

But if a * poet of *Ausonian* birth,
Describes the various kingdoms of the earth,
Wide interspersst, the *Medes* or swarthy *Moors*;
The diff'rent natures of their soils explores,
And paints the trees that bloom on *India*'s shores.
Of his own land regardless he appears,
Unless he praise *Ausonia* to the stars;
To all the rest his country he prefers,
And makes the woods of *Bactria* yield to her's:
With proud *Panchaia*, thro' the groves she boasts,
And breaths a cloud of incense from her coasts.
HEAR then, ye gen'rous youths, on this regard,
I should not blame the conduct of the bard,
Who in soft numbers, and a flowing strain,
Relieves and reconciles our ears again.
When I the various implements had sung
That to the fields, and rural trade belong,
In sweet harmonious measures would I tell
† How nature mourn'd when the great *Cæsar* fell.
When *Bacchus*' curling vines had grac'd my lays,
The rural pleasures next ‡ should share my praise.
The labour ended, and compleat the whole,
Some bards with pleasure wander round the goal,
The flights and sallies of the muse prolong,
And add new beauties to the finisht song;
Pleas'd with th'excursion of the charming strain,
We strive to quit the work, but strive in vain.
Thus, were the bees the subject of my muse,
Their laws, their natures and cœlestial dews;
Poor ‖ *Aristæus* should his fate disclose,
His mother's counsel should asswage his woes;
Old *Proteus* here should struggle in his chain,
There in soft verse the *Thracian* bards complain,
(As *Philomela* on a poplar's bough,
Bewails her young, melodious in her woe)
Pangæan steeps his sorrows should return,
And vocal *Thrace* with *Rhodope* should mourn,
And groaning *Hebras* weep from ev'ry urn.

* Vid. *Virg. Georg.* Lib. 2. v. 136. † *Ibid.* Lib. 1. v. 466.
‡ *Georg.* 8. Lib. 2. v. 45 ‖ *Ib.* 11. v. 317.

Thus

Thus too the poets, who the names declare,
Of kings and nations gath'ring to the war,
Sometimes diversifie the strain, and sing
The wond'rous change of the * *Ligurian* king.
While for his *Phaeton* his sorrows flow,
And his harmonious strains beguile his woe,
The snowy feathers steal o'er all the man,
And turn the poet to a tuneful swan.
Thus too † *Hippolitus* by *Diun's* care,
And *Pæan's* art returns to upper air.
The bards now paint the arms their heroes wield,
And each bold figure on the glitt'ring shield.
Fair ‡ *Aventinus*, fair *Alcides'* son,
Wore the proud trophy which his father won;
An hundred serpents o'er the buckler roll'd,
And *Hydra* hiss from all her heads in gold.
Now blooming *Tempe's* cool retreats they sing,
And now with flow'ry beauties paint the spring.
Now with a sylvan scene the floods they hide;
Or teach'd the fam'd *Eridanus* to glide;
Or sport on fabled *Achelous's* side.
Or hoary *Nereus'* num'rous race display,
The hundred azure sisters of the sea.
With them the nymphs that haunt their native woods,
And the long orders of the sylvan gods.

WITH gay descriptions sprinkle here and there,
Some grave instructive sentences with care,
That touch on life, some moral good pursue,
And give us virtue in a transient view;
Rules, which the future sire may make his own,
And point the golden precepts to his son.

SOMETIMES on little images to fall,
And thus illustrate *mighty* things by *small*;
And *that* with due success the poet dares,
When to the ‖ ants the *Phrygians* he compares,
Who leaving *Carthage* gather to the seas;
Or the laborious *Tyrians* to the ** bees.

* *Æn.* Lib. 10. v. 185. † *Ib.* L. 7. v. 756. ‡ *Ib.* v. 655. ‖ *Æn.* Lib. 9. v. 402. ** *Ib.* L. 1. v. 434.

But

But ſwarms of * flies; offenſive animals,
That buz inceſſant o'er the ſmoaking pails,
Are images too low to paint the hoſts,
That roll, and blacken o'er *Auſonia's* coaſts.
The lofty muſe who ſung the *Latian* war,
Would think ſuch trivial things beneath her care;
How from his majeſty would *Virgil* fall,
If *Turnus* ſcarce repell'd from *Illion's* wall,
Retiring grimly with a tardy pace,
Should then be figur'd by the patient † aſs,
Whom unregarded troops of boys ſurround,
While o'er his ſides their rattling ſtrokes reſound,
Slow he gives way, and crops the ſpringing grain:
Turns on each ſide, and ſtops to graze again;
In ev'ry point the thing is *juſt*, we know,
But then the image is it ſelf too low.
For *Turnus*, ſprung from ſuch a glorious race,
Diſdains the vile reſemblance of an aſs.
With better grace the ‡ lion you'll apply,
When wrath and courage both forbid to fly;
Tho' not ſufficient in himſelf alone
To fight a multitude oppos'd to one.

SINCE *fictions* are allow'd, be ſure, ye youths,
Your fictions wear at leaſt the air of truths.
When ‖ *Glaucus* meets *Tydides* on the plain,
Inflam'd with rage, and reeking from the ſlain;
Some think they could not paſs the time away,
In ſuch long narratives, and cool delay,
Amidſt the raging tumult of the day.
But yet we hear fierce *Diomed* relate,
The crime of bold *Lycurgus* and his fate;
And *Glaucus* talks of brave *Bellerophon*,
Doom'd for a lawleſs paſſion, not his own;
Sets forth the hero's great exploits to view,
How the bold chief the dire *Chimæra* ſlew,
The *Solymæan* hoſt, and *Amazonian* crew.

* *Iliad* Lib. 2. v. 469. † *Il.* L. 11. v. 557. ‡ *Æn.* L. 9 v. 792. ‖ *Il.* L. 6. v. 119.

For

For those surprizing *fictions* are design'd,
With their sweet falshoods to delight the mind;
The bards expect no credit should be giv'n
To the bare lye, tho' authoriz'd by heav'n,
Which oft with confidence they vent abroad,
Beneath the needful sanction of a god.
'Twas thus the * roasted heifers of the sun
Spoke o'er the fire, with accents not their own;
'Twas thus ‡ *Achilles'* steed his silence broke,
And † *Trojan* ships in human voices spoke;
As wrought by heav'n these wonders they relate,
All airy visions of the ivory gate.
SPEAK things but once if order be your care,
For more the cloy'd attention will not bear,
And tedious repetitions fire the ear,
In this we differ from the *Grecian* train,
Who ‖ *tell Atrides'* visions o'er again.
'Tis not enough with *them* to *tell* the cause,
Why great *Achilles* from the war withdraws,
Unless the ** weeping hero on the shore,
Tells his blue mother all we heard before.
So much on punctual niceties they stand,
That when their kings dispatch some high command,
All, word for word, th' †† embassadors rehearse,
In the same tenor of unvary'd verse.
Not so did ** *Venulus* from *Arpi* bring
The final answer of th' *Æolian* king.
LET others labour on a vast design,
A less, but polisht with due care, be thine.
To change its structure be your last delight,
Thus spend the day, and exercise the night.
Incessant in your toil, but if you choose
A larger field and subject for your muse;
If scanty limits should the theme confine,
Learn with just art to lengthen the design

* Vid. *Odyss.* Lib. 12. v. 395. ‡ *Ill.* L. 17. v. 496. † *Æneid.* L. 10. v. 228. ‖ Vid. *Iliad.* L. 2. ** *Ib.* L. 1. v. 370. †† *Ib.* L. 9. v. 264. ** *Æneid.* Lib. 11. v. 243.

Beyond

Beyond its native bounds, the roving mind
A thousand methods to this end may find;
Un-numbred *fictions* may with truths be join'd.
Nature supplies a fund of matter still;
Then cull the rich variety at will.
See how the * bard calls down th'embattled gods,
All rang'd in factions from the bright abodes;
Who fir'd with mutual hate their arms employ,
And in the field declare for *Greece* or *Troy*;
'Till *Jove* convenes a council to asswage
Their rising fury, and suspend their rage;
Tho' the blest gods, remov'd from human eyes,
Live in immortal ease within the distant skies.
And now th' infernal realm his theme he makes,
The reign of *Pluto*, the *Tartarean* lakes,
The furies dreadful with their curling snakes.
He gathers omens from each bird that flies,
And signs from ev'ry wing that beats the skies.
He now describes a banquet where the guest,
Prolongs with narratives the royal feast.
Or at the glorious hero's tomb we read,
Of games ordain'd in honour of the dead.
And oft for mercies in old times display'd
To their own gods their annual rites are paid.
For monstrous *Python* slain, their voices rise,
And lift the fame of *Phœbus* to the skies.
In hymns *Alcides*' labours they resound,
While *Cacus* lies extended on the ground,
Alternate sing the labours of his hands,
Enjoin'd by first *Eurysteus*' stern commands;
The den of *Cacus* crowns the grateful strain,
Where the grim monster breathes his flames in vain.
MARK how sometimes the bard without controul,
Exerts his fire, and pours forth all his soul,
His lines so daring, and his words so strong,
We see the subject figur'd in the song.

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* *All these particulars to the end of this paragraph, are taken from* Homer *and* Virgil.

When

When with the winds old * *Ocean* he deforms,
Or paints the rage and horrors of the ſtorms,
Or drives on pointed rocks the burſting ſhips,
Toſt on the *Euxine* or *Sicilian* deeps.
Or ſings the † plagues that blaſt the livid sky,
When beaſts by herds, and men by nations dye;
Or the fierce ‡ flames that out of *Ætna* riſe,
When from her mouth the burſting vapour flies,
And charg'd with ruin thunders to the skies.
While drifts of ſmoke in ſooty whirlwinds play,
And clouds of cinders ſtain the golden day.
See! as the poet ſounds the dire alarms,
Calls on the war, and ſets the hoſts in arms;
Squadrons on ſquadrons driv'n, confus'dly dye;
Grim *Mars* in all his terrors ſtrikes the eye;
More than deſcription riſing to the ſight,
Preſents the real horrors of the fight;
A new creation ſeems our praiſe to claim,
(Hence *Greece* derives the ſacred .*. poet's name;)
The dreadful clang of claſhing arms we hear;
The agonizing groan, the fruitleſs pray'r,
And ſhrieks of ſuppliants thicken on the ear.
Who, when he reads a ‖ city ſtorm'd, forbears
To feel her woes, and ſympathize in tears!
When o'er the palaces the flames aſpire
From wall to wall, and wrap the domes in fire.
The fire, with years and hoſtile rage oppreſt!
The ſtarting infant, clinging to the breaſt!
The trembling mother runs, with piercing cries
Thro' friends and foes, and ſhrieking rends the skies.
Dragg'd from the altar, the diſtracted fair,
Beats her white breaſt, and tears her golden hair.
Here in thick crowds the vanquiſht fly away,
There the proud victors heap the wealthy prey;
With rage relentleſs raviſh their abodes,
Nor ſpare the ſacred temples of the gods.
O'er the whole town they run with wild affright,
Tumultuous haſte, and violence of flight.

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* Vid. *Æneid.* Lib. 1. † *Ibid.* L. 3. v. 137. ‡ *Ib.* v. 571. .*. ἀπὸ ποιεῖν. ‖ Vid. *Æneid.* Lib. 2.

WHY ſhould I mention how our ſouls aſpire,
Loſt in the raptures of the ſacred fire?
For ev'n the ſoul not always holds the ſame,
But knows at diff'rent times, a diff'rent frame.
Whether with rolling ſeaſons ſhe complies,
Turns with the ſun, or changes with the skies.
Or thro' long toil, remiſſive of her fires,
Droops with the mortal frame her force inſpires.
Or that our minds alternately appear
Now bright with joy, and now o'er-caſt with care.
The gods, the gods much rather muſt ſupply
The glorious fires, they ſpeak the deity.
Then bleſt is *he* who waits th' auſpicious nod,
The warmth divine, and preſence of the god;
Who his ſuſpended labours can reſtain,
'Till heav'ns ſerene indulgence ſmile again.
But ſtrive, on no pretence, againſt your pow'r,
'Till time brings back the voluntary hour.
Sometimes their verdant honours leave the woods,
And their dry urns defraud the thirſty floods;
Nor rivers always a full channel yield,
Nor ſpring with flow'ry beauties paints the field;
The bards no leſs ſuch fickle changes find,
Dampt is the noble ardour of the mind;
Their wonted toil her weary'd pow'rs refuſe;
Their ſouls grow ſlack and languid to the muſe.
Deaf to their call, their efforts are withſtood;
Round their cold hearts congeals the freezing blood.
You'd think the muſes fled, the god no more
Would fire the boſom where he dwelt before;
How often, ah! how often, tho' in vain,
The poet would renew the wonted ſtrain!
Nor ſees the gods who thwart his fruitleſs care,
Nor angry heav'n relentleſs to his pray'r.
Some read the ancient bards, of deathleſs fame,
And from their raptures catch the noble flame;
By juſt degrees, they feed the glowing vein,
And all th'immortal ardour burns again
In its full light and heat; the ſun's bright ray,
Thus, (when the clouds diſperſe) reſtores the day:
Whence ſhot this ſudden flaſh that gilds the pole?
The god, the god comes ruſhing on his ſoul;

Fires

Fires with æthereal vigour ev'ry part;
Thro' ev'ry trembling limb he seems to dart,
Works in each vein, and swells his rising heart.
Deep in his breast the heav'nly tumult plays,
And sets his mounting spirits on a blaze.
Nor can the raging flames themselves contain,
For the whole god descends into the man.
He quits mortality; he knows no bounds;
But sings inspir'd in more than human sounds.
Nor from his breast can shake th'immortal load,
But pants and raves impatient of the god;
And rapt beyond himself admires the force
That drives him on, reluctant to the course.
He *calls* on *Phœbus* by the god oppress,
Who breathes excessive spirit in his breast;
No *force* of thirst or hunger can controul
The fierce, the ruling transport of his soul.
Oft in their sleep inflam'd with rage divine,
Some bards enjoy the visions of the nine;
Visions! themselves with due applause may crown,
And ev'n *Apollo* would not blush to own.
To such an height the god exalts the flame,
And so unbounded is their thirst of fame.
But here, ye youths, exert your timely care,
Nor trust th'ungovernable rage too far;
Use not your fortune, nor unfurl your sails,
Tho' *call'd*, tho' courted by the flatt'ring gales,
Refuse them still, and *call* your judgment in,
While the fierce god exults and reigns within;
To reason's standard be your thoughts confin'd,
Let *reason* rule the sallies of the mind.
Indulge your heat with conduct, and restrain,
Learn when to draw, and when to give the rein.
But always wait, 'till the warm raptures cease,
And lull the tumults of the soul to peace;
Then, nor 'till then, examine strictly o'er,
What your wild sallies might suggest before.
BE sure, from *nature* never to depart;
To copy *nature* is the task of *art*.
The noblest poets own her sov'reign sway,
And always follow where she leads the way.

From *her* the diff'rent *characters* they trace
That mark the human or the savage race,
Each various and distinct; in every stage
They paint mankind; their humours, sex and age;
They shew what manners the slow sage become,
What the brisk youth in all his sprightly Bloom.
In ev'ry *word* and sentiment explain,
How the proud monarch differs from the swain.
I nauseate all confounded characters,
Where young *Telemachus* too grave appears,
Or rev'rend *Nestor* acts beneath his years.
The poet suits his *speeches*, when he sings
To proper *persons*, and the state of *things*;
On each their just distinctions are bestow'd,
To mark a male, a female, or a god.
Thus when in * heav'n seditious tumults rise,
Amongst the radiant senate of the skies,
The sire of gods, and sov'reign of mankind,
In a few words unfolds his sacred mind:
Not so fair *Venus*, who at large replies,
And pities *Troy*, and counts her miseries
Woes undeserv'd; but with contention fir'd,
And with the spirit of revenge inspir'd,
Fierce *Juno* storms amidst the blest abodes,
And stuns with loud complaints the list'ning gods.
When youthful ‡ *Turnus* the stern combat claims,
His heart beats courage, and his soul's in flames,
Impell'd by rage, and bent to prove his might,
His *soul* springs forward, and prevents the fight;
Rouz'd to revenge, his kindling spirits glow,
Confirm his challenge, and provoke the foe,
The fugitive of *Troy*. - - - But while his rage
And youthful courage prompts him to engage;
On *Latium's* king incumbent it appears,
Grown old in prudence, piety and years,
To weigh events, and youthful heat assuage
With the cold caution, and the fears of age.
In *Dido's* various character is seen
The furious lover, and the gracious queen;

* Vid. *Æneid.* Lib. 10. ‡ *Æneid.* Lib. 12. ver. 9.

When

When *Troy*'s fam'd chief commanded from above,
Prepares to quit her kingdom, and her love,
She raves, she storms with unavailing care,
Grown wild with grief, and frantick with despair.
Thro' ev'ry street she flies, with anguish stung,
And broken accents flutter on her tongue;
Her words confus'd, and interrupted flow,
Speak and express the hurry of her woe.
Ah! how is *Dido*, in that *Dido* lost,
Who late receiv'd the *Trojans* on her coast,
And bad 'em banish grief, and share her throne,
Dismiss their fears, and think her realms their own.

NEXT the great orators consult, and thence
Draw all the moving turns of eloquence;
That * *Simon* may his *Phrygian* foes betray,
And lead the crowd, as fraud directs the way;
That wise † *Ulysses* may the *Greeks* detain,
While *Troy* yet stood, from meas'ring back the main.
Need I name ‡ *Nestor*, who could talk to peace,
With melting words, the factious kings of *Greece*;
Whose soft address their fury could controul,
Mould ev'ry passion, and subdue the soul!
These soothing arts to ‖ *Venus* sure were known,
To beg immortal arms, to grace her son.
Her injur'd spouse each thrilling word inspires,
With ev'ry pang of love to second her desires.
With nicest art the fair adult'ress draws
Her fond addresses from a distant cause;
And all her guileful accents are design'd
To catch his passions, and ensnare his mind.
'Tis hence the poet learns in ev'ry part,
To bend the soul, and give with wond'rous art,
A thousand diff'rent motions to the heart.
Hence, as his subject gay or sad appears,
He claims our joy, or triumphs in our tears.
Who, when he sees how ** *Orpheus*' sorrows flow,
Weeps not his tears, and answers woe for woe?
When he his dear *Euridice* deplores,
To the deaf rocks, and solitary shores;

* *Æneid*. Lib. 2. † *Iliad*. L. 2. ‡ *Ib*. L. 1. v. 246.
‖ *Æneid*. Lib. 8. v. 404. ** *Georg*. 4. v. 464.

With

With the soft harp the bard relieves his pain,
For *thee*, when morning dawns, prolongs the strain,
For *thee*, when *Phœbus* seeks the seas again.
Or when the young * *Euryalus* is kill'd,
And rolls in death along the bloody field;
Like some fair flow'r beneath the share he lies,
His head declin'd, and drooping as he dies,
The reader's soul is touch'd with gen'rous woe,
And longs to rush with *Nisus* on the foe;
He burns with friendly pity to the dead,
To raise the youth, and prop his sinking head;
And strives in vain to stop the gushing blood,
That stains his bosom with a purple flood.

BUT if the bard such images pursues,
That raise the blushes of the virgin-muse;
Let them be slightly touch'd, and ne'er express;
Give but an hint, and let us guess the rest.
If *Jove* commands the gath'ring storms to rise,
And with deep thunders rends the vaulted skies,
In the same cave together may be seen
The † *Trojan* hero, and the *Tyrian* queen;
The poet's modesty must add no more;
Enough, that earth had giv'n the sign before;
The conscious *Æther* was with flames o'erspread,
The nymphs ran shrieking round the mountain's head;
Nor let young *Troilus*, unhappy boy,
Meet fierce *Achilles* in the plains of *Troy*;
But shew th'unequal youth's untimely fall
To great *Æneas* on the *Tyrian* wall;
Supine and hanging from his empty ear,
Drag'd by his panting coursers thro' the war.
This, from *our* bright examples you may trace,
To write with judgment, decency and grace;
From others learn *invention* to increase,
And search in chief the glorious sons of *Greece*;
For her bright treasures *Argos'* realms explore,
Bring home triumphant all her gather'd store,
And with her spoils enrich the *Latian* shore,
Nor is the glory of *translation* less,
To give the *Grecian* bards a *Roman* dress,

* *Æneid.* 9. v. 433. † *Ibid.* 4. v. 165.

If *Phœbus'* gracious ſmiles the labour crown,
Than if ſome new invention were your own.
Mincio's and *Manto*'s glorious ſon behold;
Th'immortal *Virgil* ſheath'd in foreign gold,
Shines out unſham'd, and tow'rs above the reſt
In the rich ſpoils of godlike *Homer* dreſt.
Let *Greece* in triumph boaſt that ſhe imparts,
To *Latium*'s conqu'ring realms her glorious arts;
While *Latium*'s ſons improve her beſt deſigns,
'Till by degrees each poliſht labour ſhines;
While *Rome* advances *now* in arts, as far
Above all cities, as of old in war.

YE gods of *Rome*, ye guardian deities,
Who lift our nation's glory to the skies;
And thou, *Apollo*, the great ſource of *Troy*,
Let *Rome* at leaſt this ſingle palm enjoy,
To ſhine in arts ſupreme, as once in pow'r,
And teach the nations ſhe ſubdu'd before;
Since diſcord all *Auſonia*'s kings alarms,
And clouds the ancient glories of her arms.
In our own breaſts we ſheath the civil ſword,
Our country naked to a foreign lord;
Which lately proſtrate, ſtarted from deſpair,
Burn'd with new hopes, and arm'd her hands for war;
But arm'd in vain; - - - - thine inexorable heat
Of envious fortune, call'd her to her fate,
Inſatiate in her rage; her frowns oppoſe
The *Latian* fame, and heap up woes on woes.
Our dread alarms each foreign monarch took,
Thro' all their tribes the diſtant nations ſhook;
To earth's laſt bounds the fame of *Leo* runs,
Nile heard, and *Indus* trembled for his ſons.
Arabia heard the *Medicean* line,
The firſt of men, and ſprung from race divine.
The ſov'reign prieſt, and mitred king appears
With his lov'd *Julius* join'd, who kindly ſhares
The reins of empire, and the publick cares.
To break their country's chains, the gen'rous pair
Concert their ſchemes, and meditate the war.
On *Leo Europe's* monarchs turn their eyes,
On him alone the weſtern world relies;

And each bold chief attends his dread alarms,
While the proud crescent fades before his arms.
High on his splendid car, immortal *Rome*,
Thine eyes had seen the holy warrior come,
Lord of the vanquish'd world, in triumph home.
Thy streams, old *Tyber*, swell'd with conscious pride,
Had born thy kindred warrior down thy tide;
While crowded up in heaps thy waves admire
The captive nations, and their strange attire;
Behind his wheels march a numerous train
Of scepter'd slaves reluctant to the chain;
Forget their haughty threats, and boast in vain.
Tho' the proud foe, of *Jury's* realm possest,
Now spreads his wide dominion thro' the east;
Sees his dread standard there at large unfurl'd,
And grasps in thought the empire of the world;
And *now* (ye gods) increast in barb'rous pow'r,
His armies hover o'er th' *Hesperian* shore.
To see the passing pomp, the ravisht throng
Thro' ev'ry street should flow in tides along;
The sacred father, as the numbers roll'd,
Should his dear citizens again behold,
High o'er the shouting crowds enthron'd in gold;
Should shew the trophies of his glorious toils,
And hang the shrines with consecrated spoils.
Piles of *Barbarick* gold should glitter there,
The wealth of kingdoms, and the pomp of war;
But, by your crime, ye gods, our hopes are crost,
And those imaginary triumphs lost;
Interr'd with *Leo*, in one fatal hour,
Our prospects perish'd, as they liv'd before.

The End of the second Book.

VIDA's ART of POETRY,

Translated into

ENGLISH VERSE,

By the Reverend

Mr. CHRISTOPHER PITT, *A. M.*

Late FELLOW of *New-College* in *Oxford*, Rector of *Pimpern* in *Dorsetshire*, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable *PHILIP*, Earl *STANHOPE*, &c.

BOOK III.

DUBLIN:

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VIDA's Art of Poetry, &c.

Book III.

THAT *style*, what *language* ſuits the poet's lays,
To claim *Apollo*'s, and the muſes praiſe,
I now unfold, to this laſt bound I tend,
And ſee my promis'd labours at an end.
FIRST, then with care a juſt *expreſſion* chuſe,
Led by the kindindulgence of the muſe,
To dreſs up evr'y ſubject when you write,
And ſet all obſects in a proper light.
But leſt the diſtant prospect of the goal
Should damp your vigour, and your ſtrength controul,
Rouſe ev'ry pow'r, and call forth all the ſoul.
See! how the nine the panting youth invite,
With one loud voice to reach *Parnaſſus*' height;
See! how they hold aloft th'immortal crown,
To urge the courſe, and call the victor on;

See from the clouds each lavish goddess pours,
Full o'er thy head, a sudden spring of flow'rs,
And roses fall in odorif'rous show'rs,
Celestial scents, in balmy breezes fly,
And shed ambrosial spirits from the sky.

IN chief avoid *obscurity*, nor shroud
Your *thoughts* and dark *conceptions* in a cloud;
For * some we know affect to lose the light,
Lost in forc'd *figures*, and involv'd in night,
Studious and bent to shun the common way,
They skulk in darkness, and abhor the day.
Oh! may the sacred nine inspire my lays,
To shine with pride in their own native rays;
For this we need not importune the skies,
In our own pow'r and will the blessing lies.
Expression, boundless in extent displays,
A thousand forms, a thousand several ways,
In diff'rent hues from diff'rent quarters brought,
It makes unnumber'd dresses for a *thought*;
Such vast varieties of ways we find,
To paint *conception*, and unfold the mind.
If e'er you toil, but toil without success,
To give your *images* a shining dress,
Quit your pursuit, and chuse a diff'rent way,
'Till breaking forth the voluntary ray
Cuts the thick darkness, and lets down the day.

SINCE then a thousand forms you may pursue,
A thousand *figures* rising to the view,
Unless confin'd and streighten'd in your scheme,
With the short limits of a scanty theme,
From these to those with boundless freedom pass,
And to each *image* give a diff'rent face.
The readers hence a wond'rous pleasure find,
That charms the ear, and captivates the mind
In this the laws of nature we obey,
And act as her example points the way,
Which has on ev'ry diff'rent species thrown
A shape distinct, and figure of its own;

* *Persius* and *Lycophron*,

Man

Man differs from the beaſt that haunts the woods,
The bird from ev'ry native of the floods.
SEE how the poet baniſhes with grace
A native term to give a * ſtranger place;
From diff'rent images with juſt ſucceſs,
He cloaths his matter in the borrow'd dreſs,
The borrow'd dreſs the things themſelves admire,
And wonder whence they drew the ſtrange attire.
Proud of their raviſht ſpoils they now diſclaim
Their former colour, and their genuine name,
And in another garb more beauteous grown,
Prefer the foreign habit to their own.
Oft as he paints a battle on the plain,
The battle's imag'd by the roaring main;
Now he the fight a fiery deluge names,
That pours along the fields a flood of flames;
In airy *conflict*, now the winds appear,
Alarm the deeps, and *wage* the ſtormy *war*;
To the fierce *ſhock* th'*embattled* tempeſts pour,
Waves *charge* on waves; th'*encountring* billows *roar*.
Thus in a vary'd dreſs the ſubject ſhines,
By turns the objects ſhift their proper ſcenes;
From ſhape to ſhape alternately they run,
To borrow other's charms, and lend their own;
Pleas'd with the borrow'd charms, the readers find,
A crowd of diff'rent images combin'd
Riſe from a ſingle object to the mind.
So the pleas'd trav'ler from a mountain's brow,
Views the calm ſurface of the ſeas below;
Tho' wide beneath the floating ocean lies,
The firſt *immediate* object of his eyes,
He ſees the foreſts tremble from within,
And gliding meadows paint the deeps with green;
While to his eyes the fair deluſions paſs
In gay ſucceſſion, thro' the watry glaſs.
'Tis thus the bard diverſifies his ſong,
Now here, now there, he calls the ſoul along.

* *The Metaphor.*

The

The rich variety, he sets to sight,
Cloys not the mind, but adds to our delight.
Now with a frugal choice the bard affords
The strongest light, and energy of words;
While humble subjects, he contrives to raise
With borrow'd splendors, and a foreign blaze.
This, if on old tradition we rely,
Was once the current language of the sky;
Which first the muses brought to these abodes,
Who taught to men the secrets of the gods.
For in the court of *Jove* their choirs advance,
And sing alternate, as they lead the dance;
Mixt with the gods, they hear *Apollo*'s lyre;
And from high heav'n the panting bard inspire.
Nor bards alone, but other *writers* reach
This bold, this daring privilege of speech;
In chief, the orators to raise their sense,
In this strong *figure* dress their eloquence.
When with persuasive strokes they plead a cause,
And bridle vice, and vindicate the laws;
Or on the dreadful verge of death defend,
And snatch from fate a poor devoted friend.
Ev'n the rough hinds delight in such a strain,
When the *glad* harvest *waves* with *golden* grain,
And *thirsty* meadows *drink* the *pearly* rain;
On the *proud* vine her purple *gems* appear;
The *smiling* fields *rejoice*, and *hail* the *pregnant* year.
First from necessity the *figure* sprung
For things, that would not suit our scanty tongue,
When no true names were offer'd to the view,
Those they transferr'd that border'd on the true;
Thence by degrees the noble licence grew.
The bards those daring liberties embrac'd,
Thro' want at first, thro' luxury at last:
They now to alien things, at will, confirm
The borrow'd honours of a foreign term.
So man, at first, the ratt'ling storm to fly,
And the bleak horrors of the wintry sky.
Rais'd up a Roof of osiers o'er his head,
And clos'd with homely clay the slender shed.

Now,

Now, regal palaces, of wond'rous size,
With brazen beams, on *Parian* columns rise,
That heave the pompous fabrick to the skies.
But other writers sprinkle here and there
These bolder beauties, with a frugal care;
So vast a freedom is allow'd to none,
But suits the labours of the bard alone;
Who in the laws of *verse* himself restrains,
Ty'd up to time in voluntary chains.
Others, by no restraint or stop with-held,
May range the compass of a wider field;
The sacred poets, who their labours fill
With pleasing fictions, or with truths at will,
Their thoughts in bolder liberties express,
Which look more beauteous in a foreign dress.
To all, unusual colours they impart,
Nor blush, if e'er detected in their art.

‡ SOMETIMES beyond the bounds of truth they fly,
And boldly lift their subject to the sky;
When with tumultuous shouts the heav'ns rebound,
And all *Olympus* trembles with the sound.
Or with repeated accents they relate
The fall of *Troy*, and dwell upon her fate;
* Oh sire! oh country, once with glory crown'd!
Oh wretched race of *Priam*, once renown'd!
Oh *Jove!* see *Ilium* smoaking on the ground!

THEY now name *Ceres* for the golden grain,
Bacchus for wine, and *Neptune* for the main:
Or from the father's name point out the son;
Or for her people introduce a town:
So when alarm'd her natives dread their fates,
Pale *Africk* shakes, and trembles thro' her states;
And some by *Achelous*'s streams alone,
Comprise the floods of all the world in one.

† LO! now they start aside, and change the strain,
To fancy'd converse with an absent swain;

‡ The *Hyperbole*.

* *Hæc verba ex incerti nominis Poeta citat Cicero.*

† The *Apostrophe*.

To

To grots and caverns all their cares disclose,
Or tell the solitary rocks their woes;
To scenes inanimate proclaim their love,
Talk with an hill, or whisper to a grove.
On you they call, ye unattentive woods,
And wait an answer from your bord'ring floods.

* SOMETIMES they speak one thing, but leave behind
Another secret meaning in the mind.
A fair expression artfully dispense,
But use a word that clashes with the sense.
† Thus pious *Helen* stole the faithful sword,
While *Troy* was flaming, from her sleeping lord.
‡ So glorious *Drances* tow'r'd amid the plain,
And pil'd the camp with mountains of the slain;
Immortal trophies rais'd from squadrons kill'd,
And with vast spoils ennobled all the field.

‖ BUT now to mention farther I forbear,
With what strong charms they captivate the ear;
When the *same terms* they happily *repeat*,
The *same repeated* seem more soft and sweet.
This, ** were *Arcadia* judge, if *Pan* withstood,
Pan's judge *Arcadia* would condemn her god.

BUT tho' our fond indulgence grants the muse,
A thousand liberties in diff'rent views;
When e'er you chuse an *image* to express
In foreign *terms*, and scorn the native dress,
Yet be discreet, nor strain the point too far,
Let the transition still unforc'd appear,
Nor e'er discover an excess of care;
For some we know with awkward violence
Distort the *subject*, and disjoint the *sense*;
Quite change the genuine figure, and deface
The native shape, with ev'ry living grace;
And force unwilling *objects* to put on
An alien face, and features not their own.

---

* The *Irony*. † *Æneid*. L. 6. ‡ See *Æn*. 11.
‖ The *Anaphora*. ** See *Virgil*. *Eclog*. 4.

A low conceit in diſproportion'd terms,
Is like a boy dreſs'd up in giants arms;
Blind to the truth, all reaſon they exceed,
* Who name a ſtall, the palace of the ſteed,
Or graſs the treſſes of great *Rhæa*'s head.
'Tis beſt ſometimes an image to expreſs
In its own colours, and its native dreſs.
The genuine words with happy care to uſe,
If nicely cull'd, and worthy of the muſe.
SOME things alternately compar'd are ſhown,
Both names ſtill true, and mutually their own;
But here the leaſt redundance you muſt ſhun;
Tell us in ſhort, from whence the hint you drew,
And ſet the whole compariſon to view;
Leſt, mindleſs of your firſt deſign, you ſeem
To lead the mind away, and rove from theme to theme.
BUT now purſue the method, that affords
The fitteſt *terms*, and wiſeſt choice of *words*.
Not all deſerve alike the ſame regard,
Nor ſuit the god-like labours of the bard;
For *words* as much may differ in degree,
As the moſt various kinds of poetry.
Tho' many a common *term* and *word* we find
Diſperſt, promiſcuouſly thro' ev'ry kind.
Thoſe that will never ſuit th'heroick rage,
Might grace the buskin, and become the ſtage;
Their large, their vaſt variety explore
With piercing eyes, and range the mighty ſtore.
From their deep fund the richeſt words unfold,
With niceſt care be each expreſſion cull'd,
To deck your numbers in the pureſt gold.
The vile, the dark degen'rate crowd refuſe,
And ſcorn a dreſs that would diſgrace the muſe.
Then to ſucceed your ſearch, purſue the road,
And beat the track the glorious antients trod.
To thoſe eternal monuments repair;
There read, and meditate for ever there,

* The *Catachreſis*.

If o'er the rest some mighty genius shines,
Mark the sweet charms, and vigour of his lines.
As far as *Phœbus* and the heav'nly pow'rs
Smile on your labours, make his *diction* your's.
Your style by *his* authentick standard frame,
Your voice, your habit, and address the same.
With him proceed to cull the rest; for there
A full reward will justify your care.
Examine all; and bring from all away,
Their various treasures, as a lawful prey.
Nor would I scruple, with a due regard,
To read sometimes a rude unpolish'd bard.
Among whose labours I may find a line,
Which from unsightly rust I may refine,
And, with a better grace, adopt it into mine.
How often may we see a troubled flood,
Stain'd with unsettled ooze, and rising mud?
Which, (if a well the bord'ring natives sink)
Supplies the thirsty multitude with drink.
The trickling stream by just degrees refines,
'Till in its course the limpid current shines;
And taught thro' secret labyrinths to flow,
Works itself clear among the sands below.
For nothing looks so gloomy, but will shine
From proper care, and timely discipline;
If, with due vigilance and conduct, wrought
Deep in the soul, it labours in the thought.
Hence on the *antients* we must rest alone,
And make their golden sentences our own.
To cull their best expressions claims our cares,
To form our *notions*, and our *styles* on theirs.
See how we bear away their precious spoils,
And with the glorious dress enrich our *styles*;
Their bright inventions for our use convey,
Bring all the spirit of their *words* away,
And make their *words* themselves our lawful prey.
Unsham'd in other colours to be shown,
We speak our thoughts in accents not our own.
But your design with modest caution weigh,
Steal with due care, and meditate the prey.

Invert

Invert the order of the words with art,
And change their former site in ev'ry part.
Thus win your readers, thus deceive with grace,
And let th'*expression* wear a diff'rent face;
Your self at last, the glorious labour done,
Will scarce discern his *diction* from your own.
Some, to appear of diffidence bereft,
Steal in broad-day, and glory in the theft;
When with just art, design and confidence,
On the same words they grant a diff'rent sense;
Preserve th'unvary'd terms and order too,
But change their former spirit for a new.
Or, with the sense of emulation bold,
With antient bards a glorious contest hold:
Their richest spoils triumphant they explore,
Which, rang'd with better grace, they varnish o'er,
And give them charms they never knew before.
So trees, that change their soils, more proudly rise,
And lift their spreading honours to the skies;
And, when transplanted, nobler Fruits produce,
Exalt their nature, and ferment their juice.
So *Troy*'s fam'd chief the *Asian* empire bore,
With better omens, to the *Latian* shore;
Tho' from the realm, O *Dido!* to the sea,
Call'd by the gods reluctantly away;
Nor the first nuptial pleasures could controul
The fixt, the stubborn purpose of his soul.
Unhappy queen! Thy woes suppress thy breath;
Thy cares pursu'd thee, and surviv'd in death.
Had not the *Dardan* fleet thy kingdom sought,
Thy life had shone unsully'd with a fault.

COME then, ye youths, and urge your gen'rous toils;
Come, strip the antients, and divide the spoils
Your hands have won ---- but shun the fault of such,
Who with fond rashness trust themselves too much,
For some, we know, who by their pride betray'd,
With vain contempt reject a foreign aid;
Who scorn those great examples to obey,
Nor follow where the antients point the way.

While from the theft their cautious hands refrain,
Vain are their fears; their superstition vain.
Nor *Phœbus'* smiles th'unhappy poet crown;
The fate of all his works prevents his own.
Himself his mould'ring monument survives,
And sees his labours perish while he lives:
His fame is more contracted than his span,
And the frail *Author* dies before the *Man*.
How would he wish the labour to forbear,
And follow other arts with more successful care?
I like a fair *allusion* cleanly wrought;
When the same *words* express a diff'rent *thought*.
And such a theft true criticks dare not blame,
Which late posterity shall crown with fame.
Void of all fear, of ev'ry doubt bereft,
I would not blush, but triumph in the theft.
Nor on the *Antients* for the whole rely,
The whole is more than all their works supply;
Some things your own invention must explore,
Some virgin *images* untouch'd before.
NEW *terms* no laws forbid us to induce,
To coin a word, and sanctify to use;
But yet admit no *words* into the song,
Unless they prove the stock from whence they sprung;
Point out their family; their kindred trace,
And set to view the series of their race;
But where you find your native tongue too poor,
Transport the riches of the *Grecian* store.
Inform the lump, and work it into grace,
And with new life inspire th'unwieldy mass;
'Till chang'd by discipline, the *word* puts on
A foreign nature, and forgets its own.
So *Latium's* language found a rich increase,
And grew and flourish'd from the wealth of *Greece*,
'Till use in time had rifled *Argos'* stores,
And brought all *Athens* to th'*Hesperian* shores.
How many words from rich *Mycenæ* come?
Of *Greek* extraction in the dress of *Rome*?
That live with ours, our rights and freedom claim,
Their nature diff'rent, but their looks the same;

Thro'

Thro' *Latium*'s realms, in *Latium*'s garb they go,
At once her ſtrangers, and her natives too.
Long has her poverty been fled, and long
With native riches has ſhe grac'd her tongue.
Nor ſearch the poet's only, but explore
Immortal *Tully*'s unexhauſted ſtore;
And other authors, born in happier days
Shall anſwer all your wants, and beautify your lays.
OFT, in old bards, a verſe above the reſt
Shines, in *Barbarick* ſpoils and trophies dreſt;
Thus *Gaul*, her victor's triumph to compleat,
Supplies thoſe words that paint her own defeat;
And vanquiſh'd *Macedon*, to tell her doom,
Gives up her language with her arms to *Rome*.
Then, can we fear with groundleſs diffidence
A want of words that ſhall expreſs our ſenſe?
BUT if compell'd by want, you may produce
And bring an antiquated word in uſe;
A word *earſt* well receiv'd in days of *Yore*,
A word our old forefathers us'd before:
O'er ages paſt, the daring bard may climb,
Nathleſs, and *maugre* the dark walks of time.
Well pleas'd the reader's wonder to engage,
He brings our grandſires habit on the ſtage,
And garbs that *whilom* grac'd an *uncouth* age.
Yet muſt not ſuch appear in ev'ry place;
When rang'd too thick, the poem they diſgrace.
Since of new *words* ſuch numbers you command,
Deal out the old ones with a ſparing hand.
* When e'er your *images* can lay no claim
To a fixt term, and want a certain name;
To paint one thing, the licens'd bard affords
A pompous circle, and a crowd of words.
TWO plighted *words*, in one with grace appear,
When they with eaſe glide ſmoothly o'er the ear.
Two may embrace at once, but ſeldom more,
No verſe can bear the mingled ſhape of four;
Nor triple monſters dwell on *Latium*'s ſhore.

* *The* Periphraſis.

When

When mixt with ſmooth, theſe harſher ſtrains are found,
We ſtart with horror at the frightful ſound;
The *Grecian* bards, in whom ſuch freedoms pleaſe,
May match with more ſucceſs ſuch words at theſe;
Heap hills on hills, and bid the ſtructure riſe,
'Till the vaſt pile of mountains prop the skies.

WHAT words *ſoever* of vaſt bulk we view,
One of leſs ſize may ſometimes ſplit in two;
Sometimes we *ſep'rate* from the whole a part,
And prune the more luxuriant limbs with art.
Thus when the names of heroes we declare,
Names, whoſe unpoliſht ſounds offend the ear,
We add, or lop ſome branches which abound,
Till the harſh accents are with ſmoothneſs crown'd
That mellows ev'ry word, and ſoftens ev'ry ſound.
By ſuch an happy change, *Sicharbas* came
To ſink his roughneſs in *Sichæus'* name.
Hence would I rather chooſe thoſe dire alarms
Of vaſt *Enceladus*, and heav'n in arms,
And the fierce *Titan's* battles to rehearſe,
Harmonious names, that glide into the *verſe*;
Than count the rough, the barb'rous nations o'er,
Which *Rome* ſubdu'd of old from ſhore to ſhore.

LET *things* ſubmit to *words* on no pretence,
But make your words ſubſervient to your ſenſe.
Not for their ſake admit a ſingle line,
But what contributes to your main deſign.
Thro' ev'ry part moſt diligently pierce,
And weigh the ſound and ſenſe of ev'ry verſe.
Unleſs your ſtricteſt caution you diſplay,
Some words may lead the heedleſs bard away;
Steal from their duty, and deſert their poſt,
And skulk in darkneſs, indolently loſt;
Or while their proper parts their fellows ply,
Contribute nought but ſound and harmony.
This to prevent, conſult your *words*; and know
How far their ſtrength, extent and nature go.
To all their charges, and their labours fit,
To all, their ſeveral provinces of wit.

Without

Without this care, the poem will abound
With empty noiſe, and impotence of ſound;
Unmeaning terms will crowd in ev'ry part,
Delude the ear, but never reach the heart,
Yet would I ſometimes venture to diſperſe
Some words, whoſe ſplendor ſhould adorn my verſe;
(Words, that to wit and thought have no pretence,
And rather vehicles of *ſound* than *ſenſe*;)
Till in the gorgeous dreſs the lines appear,
And court with gentle harmony the ear.
Nor with too fond a care ſuch words purſue,
They meet your ſight, and riſe in ev'ry view.
Oft, from its chains the ſhackled verſe unlooſe,
And give it liberty to walk in proſe;
Renew the poem with unweary'd pain,
Bind and cement the ſhatter'd parts again;
The lurking faults and errors you may ſee,
When the words run unmanacled and feed.

ATTEND, young bard, and liſten while I ſing;
Lo! I unlock the muſes ſacred ſpring,
Lo! *Phœbus* calls thee to his inmoſt ſhrine;
Hark! in one common voice, the tuneful nine
Invite and court thee to the rites divine.
When firſt to man the privilege was giv'n,
To hold by verſe an intercourſe with heav'n,
Unwilling that th'immortal art ſhould lye,
Cheap, and expos'd to ev'ry vulgar eye,
Great *Jove*, to drive away the grov'ling crowd,
To narrow bounds confin'd the glorious road,
For more exalted ſpirits to purſue,
And left it open to the ſacred *few*.
For many a painful task, in ev'ry part,
Claims all the poet's vigilance and art.
'Tis not enough his verſes to compleat,
In meaſure, numbers, or determin'd feet;
Or render *things*, by clear *expreſſion* bright,
And ſet each *object* in a proper light.
To all, proportion'd *terms* he muſt diſpenſe,
And make the *ſound* a picture of the *ſenſe*;

The

The correſpondent *words* exactly frame,
The looks, the features and the mien the ſame:
His *thoughts* the bard muſt ſuitably expreſs,
Each in a diff'rent face, and diff'rent dreſs.
Leſt in unvary'd looks the crowd be ſhown,
And the whole multitude appear as one.
With rapid feet and wings, without delay,
This ſwiftly flies, and ſmoothly skims away:
That, vaſt of ſize, his limbs huge, broad and ſtrong,
Moves pond'rous, and ſcarce drags his bulk along.
This, blooms with youth and beauty in his face,
And *Venus* breaths on ev'ry limb a grace:
That, of rude form, his uncouth members ſhows,
Looks horrible, and frowns with his rough brows:
His monſtrous tail in many a fold and wind,
Voluminous and vaſt, curls *up* behind:
At once the image and the lines appear
Rude to the eye, and frightful to the ear,
Nor are thoſe figures giv'n, without a cauſe,
But fix'd and ſettled by determin'd laws;
All claim and wear, as their deſerts are known,
A voice, a face, and habit of their own.
* Lo! when the ſailors ſteer the pond'rous ſhips,
And plough, with brazen beaks, the foamy deeps,
Incumbent on the main that roars around;
Beneath their lab'ring oars the waves reſound
The prows wide-ecchoing thro' the dark profound:
To the loud call each diſtant rock replies,
Toſt by the ſtorm the tow'ring ſurges riſe;
While the hoarſe ocean beats the ſounding ſhore,
Daſht from the ſtrand, the flying waters roar,
Flaſh at the ſhock, and gath'ring in an heap.
The liquid mountains riſe, and over-hang the deep.
See thro' her ſhores *Trinacria's* realms rebound.
Starting and trembling at the bellowing ſound;
High-bounding o'er the waves the mountains ride,
And claſh with floating mountains on the tide.

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* *Moſt of theſe examples are drawn word for word from* Virgil.

But

But when blue *Neptune* from his car ſurveys,
And calms at one regard the raging ſeas;
Stretcht like a peaceful lake the deep ſubſides,
And the pitch'd veſſel o'er the ſurface glides.
The poet's art and conduct we admire,
When angry *Vulcan* rolls a flood of fire;
When on the groves and fields the deluge preys,
And wraps the *crackling ſtubble* in the blaze.
Nor leſs our pleaſure, when the flame divides,
And climbs aſpiring round the cauldron's ſides;
From the dark bottom work the waters up,
Swell, boil and *hiſs*, and *bubble* to the top.
Thus in ſmooth lines, ſmooth ſubjects we rehearſe,
But the * rough rock requires as rough a *verſe*.
If gay the ſubject, gay muſt be the ſong;
And the briſk numbers quickly glide along:
When the fields flouriſh; or the skies unfold
Swift from the flying hinge their gates of gold.
If ſad the theme, then each grave line moves ſlow,
The mournful Numbers languiſhingly flow,
And drag, and labour with a weight of woe;
If e'er the boding bird of night, who mourns
O'er ruins, deſolation, graves and urns,
With piercing ſtreams the darkneſs ſhould invade,
And break the ſilence of the diſmal ſhade.
When things are ſmall, the terms ſhould ſtill be ſo,
For low words pleaſe us, when the theme is low.
But when ſome giant, horrible and grim,
Enormous in his gate, and vaſt in ev'ry limb,
Stalks tow'ring on; the ſwelling words muſt riſe
In juſt proportion to the monſter's ſize.
If ſome large weight his huge arms ſtrive to ſhove,
The verſe too labours; the throng'd words ſcarce move,
When each ſtiff clod beneath the pond'rous plough,
Crumbles and breaks; th'encumber'd lines march ſlow.
Nor leſs; when pilots catch the friendly gales,
Unfurl their ſhrowds, and hoiſt the *wide-ſtretcht* ſails.

* ——— *Sonat hæc de nare canina*
Littera. ——— Vid. Perſium.

But if the poem ſuffers from delay,
Let the lines fly precipitate away.
And when the viper iſſues from the brake;
Be quick; with ſtones, and brands, and fire, attack
His riſing creſt, and drive the ſerpent back.
When night deſcends; or ſtun'd by num'rous ſtrokes,
And groaning, to the earth drops the vaſt ox;
The line too ſinks with correſpondent ſound,
Flat with the ſteer, and headlong to the ground.
When the wild waves ſubſide, and tempeſts ceaſe,
And huſh the roarings of the ſea to peace;
So oft we ſee the interrupted ſtrain
Stopt in the midſt, - - - and with the ſilent main,
Pauſe for a ſpace - - - at laſt it glides again.
When *Priam* ſtrains his aged arm, to throw
His unavailing jav'lin at the foe;
(His blood congeal'd, and ev'ry nerve unſtrung,)
Then with the theme complies the artful ſong;
Like him, the ſolitary numbers flow
Weak, trembling, melancholly, ſtiff and ſlow.
Not ſo young *Pyrrhus*, who with rapid force
Beats down embattled armies in his courſe,
The raging youth on trembling *Ilion* falls,
Burſts her ſtrong gates, and ſhakes her lofty walls;
Provokes his flying courſer to his ſpeed,
In full career to charge the warlike ſteed;
He piles the field with mountains of the ſlain;
He *pours*, he *ſtorms*, he *thunders* thro' the plain.
In this the poet's juſteſt conduct lies,
When with his various ſubjects he complies,
To ſink with judgment, and with judgment riſe.
We ſee him now, remiſſive of his force,
Glide with a low, and inoffenſive courſe;
Stript of the gawdy dreſs of words he goes;
And ſcarcely lifts the *poem* up from *proſe*:
And now he brings with looſen'd reins along
All in a full career the boundleſs ſong;
In wide array luxuriantly he pours
A crowd of words, and opens all his ſtores:

The lavish eloquence redundant flows,
Thick as the fleeces of the winter-snows.
When *Jove* invests the naked *Alps*, and sheds
The silent tempest on their hoary heads,
Sometimes the god-like fury he restrains,
Checks his impetuous speed, and draws the reins;
Balanc'd and pois'd, he neither sinks nor soars,
But plows the midmost space, and steers between the shores,
And shaves the confines; — till, all dangers past,
He shoots with joy into the port at last.

FOR what remains unsung; I now declare
What claims the poet's last and strictest care.
When, all adventures past, his labours tend
In one continu'd order to their end;
When the proud victor on his conquest smiles,
And safe enjoys the triumphs of his toils;
Let him by timely diffidence be aw'd,
Nor trust too soon th'unpolish'd piece abroad.
Oh! may his rash ambition ne'er inflame
His breast, with such a dang'rous thirst of fame.
But let the terror of disgrace controul
The warm, the partial fondness of his soul;
And force the bard to throw his passion by,
Nor view his off-spring with a parent's eye;
Till his affections are by justice crost,
And all the father in the judge is lost.
He seeks his friends, nor trusts himself alone,
But asks their judgment, and resigns his own;
Begs them, with urgent pray'rs, to be sincere,
Just and exact, and rigidly severe;
Due verdict to pronounce on every thought,
Nor spare the slightest shadow of a fault;
But, bent against himself, and strictly nice,
He thanks each critick that detects a vice;
Tho' charg'd with what his judgment can defend,
He joins the partial sentence of his friend.
The piece thrown by; the bard again reviews
The long-forgotten labours of his muse:

Lo! on all ſides far diff'rent objects riſe,
And a new proſpect ſtrikes his wond'ring eyes.
Warm from the brain, the *lines* his love engroſt,
Now in themſelves their former ſelves are loſt.
Now his own labours he begins to blame,
And bluſhing reads them with regret and ſhame.
He loaths the piece; condemns it; nor can find
The genuine ſtamp, and image of his mind.
This *thought* and that, indigant he rejects;
When moſt ſecure, ſome danger he ſuſpects;
Anxious he adds, and trembling he corrects.
With kind ſeverities, and timely art,
Lops the luxuriant growth of ev'ry part,
Prunes the ſuperfluous boughs, that wildly ſtray,
And cuts the rank redundancies away.
Thus arm'd with proper diſcipline he ſtands,
By day, by night, applies his healing hands.
From ev'ry line to wipe out ev'ry blot,
Till the whole piece is guiltleſs of a fault.
Hard is the task, but needful, if your aim
Tends to the proſpect of immortal fame.
If ſome unfiniſht numbers limp behind,
When the warm poet rages unconfin'd,
Then when his ſwift invention ſcorns to ſtay,
By a full tide of genius whirl'd away;
He brings the ſov'reign cure their failings claim,
Confirms the ſickly, and ſupports the lame.
Oft as the ſeaſons roll, renew thy pain,
And bring thy poem to the teſt again.
In diff'rent lights th'*expreſſion* muſt be rang'd,
The garb and colours of the *words* be chang'd.
With endleſs care thy watchful eyes muſt pierce,
And mark the parts diſtinct of ev'ry verſe.
In this perſiſt; for oft' one day denies
The kind aſſiſtance which the next ſupplies;
As oft', without your vigilance and care,
Some faults detected by themſelves appear,
And now a thouſand errors you explore,
That lay involv'd in mantling clouds before.

Oft'

Oft to improve his muſe, the bard ſhould try,
By turns, the temper of a diff'rent sky.
For thus his *genius* takes a diff'rent face
From each reſpective *genius* of a place.
The ſoul too varies; and the bard may find
A thouſand diff'rent motions in his mind.
New gleams of light will ev'ry moment riſe,
While from each part the ſcatt'ring darkneſs flies,
And, as he alters what appears amiſs,
He adds new flow'rs to beautifie the piece.
But here, ev'n *here*, avoid th'extream of ſuch,
Who with exceſs of care correct too much;
Whoſe barb'rous hands no calls of pity bound,
While with th'infected parts they cut the ſound,
And make the cure more dang'rous than the wound.
Till, all the blood and ſpirits drain'd away,
The body ſickens, and the parts decay;
The native beauties die; the limbs appear
Seam'd and deform'd with one continu'd ſcar.
No fix'd determin'd number will I ſet;
But when ſome years the labour ſhall compleat,
Reflect on life; and, mindful of thy ſpan,
Whoſe ſcanty limit bounds the days of man,
Wide o'er the ſpacious world, without delay,
Permit the finiſh't Piece to take its way;
Till all mankind admires the heav'nly ſong,
The theme of ev'ry hand and ev'ry tongue;
See! thy pleas'd friends thy ſpreading glory draws,
Each with his voice to ſwell the vaſt applauſe;
The vaſt applauſe ſhall reach the ſtarry frame,
No years, no ages ſhall obſcure thy fame,
And earth's laſt ends ſhall hear thy darling name.
Shall we then doubt to ſcorn all worldly views,
And not prefer the raptures of the muſe! (obey
THRICE happy bards! who, taught by Heav'n,
Theſe rules, and follow where they lead the way;
And hear the faithful precepts I beſtow'd,
Inſpir'd with rage divine, and lab'ring with the god.
But art alone, and human means muſt fail,
Nor theſe inſtructive precepts will prevail,

Unleſs

Unless the gods their present aid supply,
And look with kind indulgence from the sky.
I only pointed out the paths, that lead
The panting youth to steep *Parnassus'* head;
And show'd the tuneful muses from afar,
Mixt in a solemn choir and dancing there.
Thither forbidden by the fates to go,
I sink and grovel in the world below.
Deter'd by them, in vain I labour up,
And stretch these hands to grasp the distant top.
Enough for me, at distance if I view
Some bard, some happier bard the path pursue;
Who, taught by me to reach *Parnassus'* crown,
Mounts up, and calls his slow companions on.
But yet these rules, perhaps these humble lays,
May claim a title to a share of praise;
When, in a crowd, the gath'ring youths shall hear
My voice, and precepts with a willing ear;
Close in a ring shall press the list'ning throng,
And learn from me to regulate their song.
Then, if the pitying Fates prolong my breath,
And from my youth avert the dart of death;
Whene'er I sink in life's declining stage,
Trembling and fainting on the verge of age,
To help their wearied master shall they run,
And lend their friendly hands to guide him on;
Thro' blooming groves his tardy progress wait,
And set him gently down at *Phœbus'* gate,
The while he sings before the hallow'd shrine,
The sacred poets, and the tuneful nine.
Here then in *Roman* numbers will we rise,
And lift the fame of *Virgil* to the skies;
Ausonia's pride and boast, who brings along
Strength to my lines, and spirit to my song:
First how the mighty bard transported o'er
The sacred muses from th'*Aonian* shore;
Led the fair sisters to th'*Hesperian* plains;
And sung in *Roman* towns the *Grecian* strains;
How in his youth to woods and groves he fled,
And sweetly tun'd the soft *Sicilian* reed;

Next,

Next, how in pity to th' *Ausonian* swains,
He rais'd to heav'n the honours of the plains;
Rapt in *Triptolemus* his car on high,
He scatter'd peace and plenty from the sky:
Fir'd with his country's fame, with loud alarms,
At last he rous'd all *Latium* up to arms;
In just array the *Phrygian* troops bestow'd,
And spoke the voice and language of a god.
Father of verse, from thee our honours spring;
See! from all parts, our bards attend their king;
Beneath thy banners rang'd, thy fame increase,
And rear proud trophies from the spoils of *Greece*.
Low, in *Elyzium*'s vales, her tuneful throng
Bow to thy laurels, and adore thy song:
On *thee*, on *thee*, thy country turns her eyes;
On thee, the fame of all her bards relies:
They crowd to thee, and court thy aid divine;
(For all their honours but depend on thine,)
Taught from the womb thy numbers to rehearse,
And sip the balmy sweets of ev'ry *verse*.
Unrival'd bard! all ages shall decree
The first unenvy'd palm of fame to thee;
Thrice happy bard! thy boundless glory flies,
Where never mortal must attempt to rise;
Such heav'nly numbers in thy song we hear,
And more than human accents charm the ear!
To thee, his darling, *Phœbus*' hands impart
His soul, his genius, and immortal art.
What help or merit in these rules are shown,
The youth must owe to *thee*, and *thee* alone.
The youth, whose wand'ring feet with care I led
Aloft, o'er steep *Parnassus*' sacred head:
Taught from thy great example to explore
Those arduous paths, which thou hast trod before.
Hail, pride of *Italy*! thy country's grace!
Hail, glorious light of all the tuneful race!
For *thee*, we weave the crown, and altars raise;
For *thee*, with incense bid the temples blaze;
Our solemn hymns shall still resound thy praise.

Hail

Hail holy bard, and boundless in renown!
Thy fame, dependent on thy self alone,
Requires no song, no numbers but thy own.
Look down propitious, and my thoughts inspire;
Warm my chaft bosom with thy sacred fire!
Let all thy flames with all their raptures roll
Deep in my breast, and kindle all my soul.

THE END.

HE END.