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W. H. R.

Of the 2.

(O E C O N O M Y)

of

L O V E

a

Poetical Essay

by

D<sup>R</sup> ARMSTRONG.

*Insanire docet certa ratione modoque.*



A NEW EDITION.

*W. Hirst, York.*

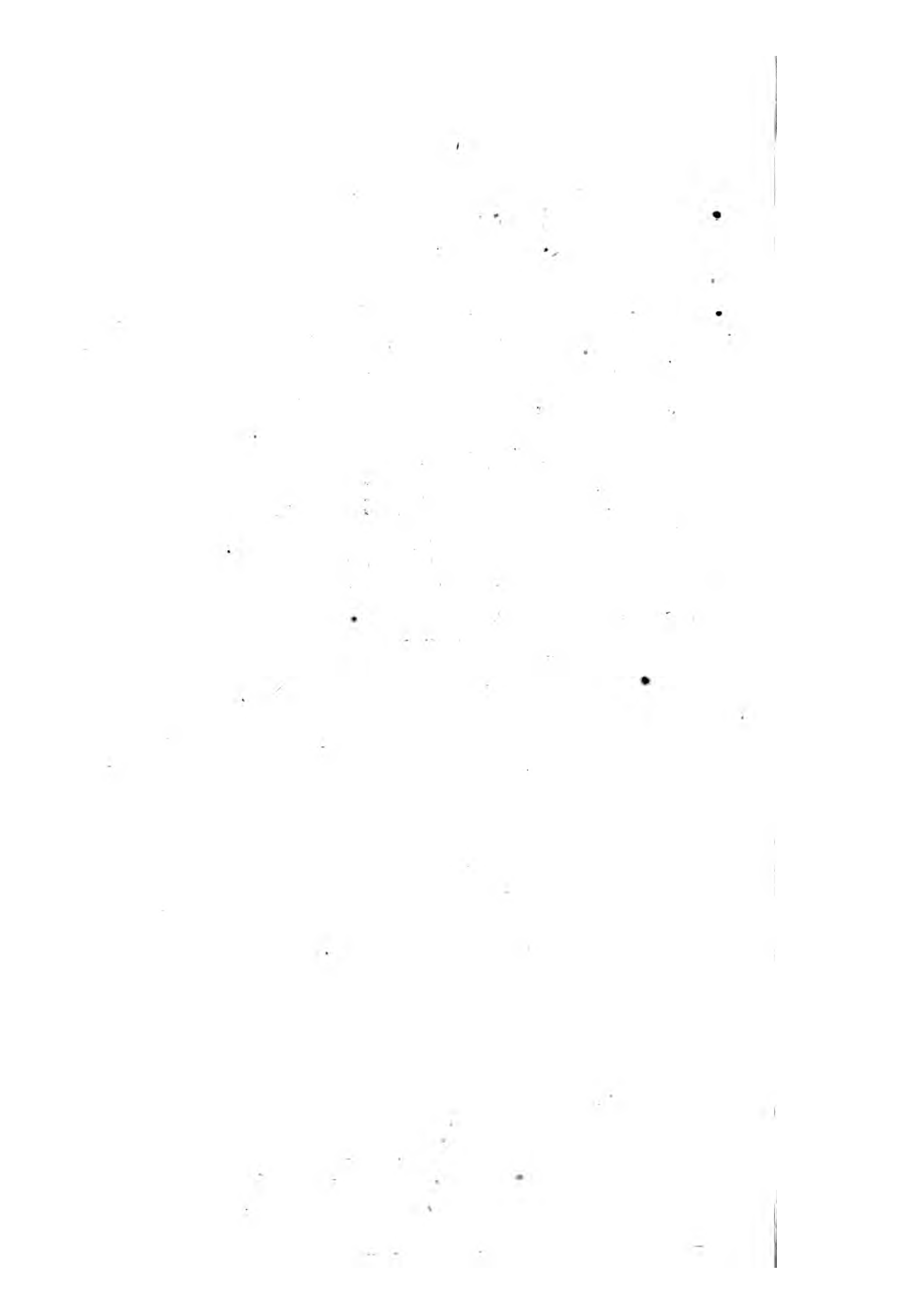


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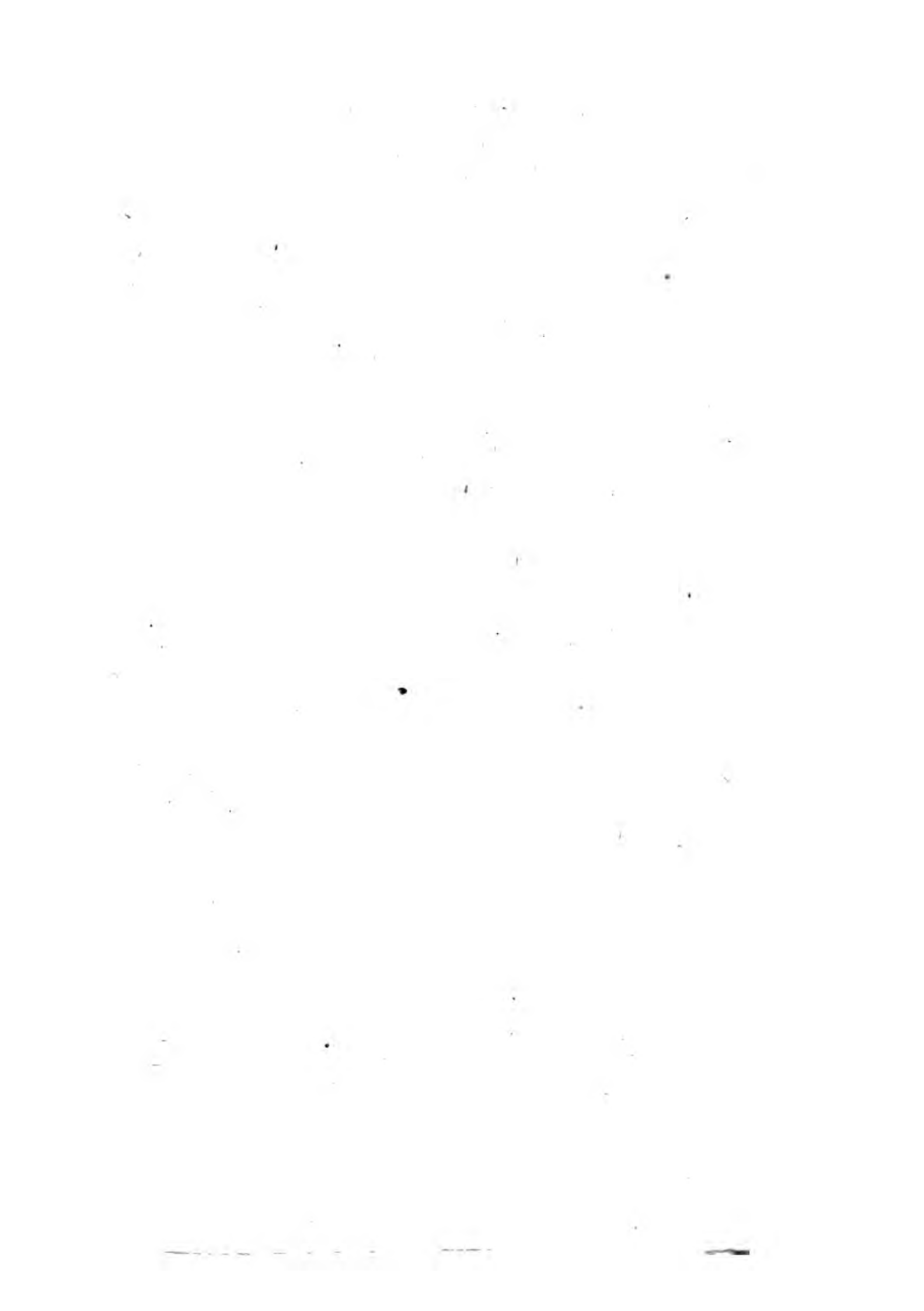
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THIS little juvenile Performance, was chiefly intended as a Parody upon some of the Didactick Poets; and that it might be still the more ludicrous, the Author in some places affected the stately language of Milton.

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THE  
ECONOMY  
OF  
LOVE.

---

THY bounties, LOVE, in thy soft raptures when  
Timeliest the melting pairs indulge, and how  
Best to improve the genial joy, how shun  
The snakes that under flow'ry pleasure lurk,  
I sing: if thou, fair CYTHEREA, deign 5  
Gracious to smile on my attempt. Though thou  
None of the muses nine, yet oft on thee  
The muses wait, oft gambol in thy train,

Though virgins. Come, nor leave thy BOY behind,  
 Blind but unerring archer. HYMEN, raise 10  
 Aloft thy sacred torch. Your gifts I sing.

Ye youths and virgins, when your generous blood,  
 Has drunk the warmth of fifteen summers, now  
 The loves invite; now to new rapture wakes  
 The finish'd sense: while stung with keen desire 15  
 The madd'ning boy his bashful fetters bursts;  
 And, urg'd with secret flames, the riper maid,  
 Conscious and shy, betrays her smarting breast

Yet nature not in all her sons maintains  
 An equal progress. This with kindly warmth 20  
 Concocts to manly vigour straight; while that  
 Pines, crude and chill, and scarce at last attains  
 Imperfect life. Some slight their varnish'd steed,  
 And (wondrous instinct!) bent on manlier sport,  
 Cope with the maids. ALCIDES thus, they say, 25



Rose brawny from his cradle, while the snakes  
Hung hissing round him, horrible and fell,  
Sent by enrag'd SATURNIA to destroy  
Her rival's hope: the mighty infant grasp'd  
His speckled foes, and smiling dash'd them down 30  
To hell, their native clime; the spumy gore  
Bloted the frighted pavement. Early thus  
Was future chivalry presag'd.—Meantime  
Others slow ripen: men there are who scarce  
Feel the soft thrillings of untaught desire, 35  
While palid maids scarce ruminatè on man,  
Till twenty; well if then. It boots thee much  
To study the complexion, much the clime,  
And habitudes of life. Meanwhile with me  
Credit these figs. The boy may wrestle, when 40  
Night-working fancy steals him to the arms  
Of nymph oft wish'd awake, and, 'mid the rage  
Of the soft tumult, every turgid cell  
Spontaneous disembogues its lucid store,

Bland and of azure tinct. Nor envy thou  
 Waking fruition while such happy dreams 45  
 Visit thy slumbers; liveliest then the touch  
 Thrills to the brain, with all sensations else  
 Unshaken, uneduc'd. The maid demands  
 The dues of VENUS, when the parting breasts 50  
 Wanton exuberant and tempt the touch,  
 Plump'd with rich moisture from the finish'd growth  
 Redundant now: for late shooting tubes  
 Drank all the blood the toiling heart could pour,  
 Infatiate; now full grown, they crave no more 55  
 Than what repairs their daily waste. But still  
 There must be loss, nor does the superplus  
 Turn all to thrift. For from love's grotto now  
 Oozes the sanguine stream through many a rill,  
 Starting the simple lass, that anxious glows 60  
 Inward, till bold necessity o'ercomes  
 Her fond reluctant blushes to consult  
 Her nurse, well vers'd in mystic cases deep,

At christ'nings oft discuss'd: when warm'd with wine  
 The mellow matrons, by the midnight fire 65  
 Lewd ORGIES hold; while naked roams around,  
 His torch high-flaming from the spicy bowl,  
 Lust full of glee, and through each lab'ring breast  
 His sacred fury pours. The SIBYL solves  
 Sagely the alarming case.—The rising down 70  
 Then too begins to skirt the hallow'd bounds  
 Of VENUS' blest domain. In either sex  
 This sign obtains. For nature provident  
 Now when both sides stand equal for the fray,  
 This graceful armour spread; and, but for this, 75  
 Excoriate oft the tender parts would rue  
 The close encounter; now they fight secure  
 Thus harness'd, and sustain the mutual shock  
 Of war, unhurt, for many a well fought day.

But if to progeny thy views extend 80  
 Paternal, and the name of fire invites

Wouldst thou behold a thriving race furround  
 Thy spacious table ; shun the soft embrace  
 Emasculent, till twice ten years and more  
 Have steel'd thy nerves, and let the holy rite 85  
 License the blifs. Nor would I urge, precise,  
 A total abstinence ; this might unman  
 The genial organs, unemployed so long,  
 And quite extinguish the prolific flame,  
 Refrigerant. But riot oft unblam'd 90  
 On kisses, sweet repast, ambrosial joy !  
 Now press with gentle hand the gentle hand,  
 And, sighing, now the breasts, that to the touch  
 Heave amorous. Nor thou, fair maid, refuse  
 Indulgence, while thy paramour discreet 95  
 Aspires no farther : thus thou mayest expect  
 Treasure hereafter, when the bridegroom, warm,  
 Trembling with keen desire, profusely pours  
 The rich collection of enamour'd years,  
 Exhaustless, blessing all thy nuptial nights. 100

But, O my son, whether the generous care  
Of propagation, and domestic charge,  
Or soft encounter more attract, renounce  
The vice of monks recluse, the early bane  
Of rising manhood. Banish from thy shades 105  
Th' ungenerous, selfish, solitary joy.  
Hold, Saticide, thy hand! for thee alone  
Did nature form thee? for thy narrow self  
Grant thee the means of pleasure? dream'st thou so?  
That very self mistakes its wiser aim; 110  
Its finer sense ungratify'd, unpleas'd,  
But when from active soul to soul rebounds  
The swelling mingling tumult of delight.  
Hold yet again, ere idle callus wrap  
In sullen indolence th' astonish'd nerves; 115  
When thou mayst fret and tease thy sense in vain,  
And curse too late th' unwisely-wanton hours.  
Impious, forbear! thus the first general hail  
To disappoint, "increase and multiply!"

To shed thy blossoms through the desert air, 120  
 And sow thy perish'd offspring in the winds.  
 Unhallow'd pastime!—though the factious chief  
 Oft brew hot insurrection, rather hie  
 To bagnio lewd, or tavern, nightly where  
 Venereal rights are done, from DRACO'S ken 125  
 Remote, and light of heaven (as erst retir'd  
 The heaving Gallic faints to the kind gloom  
 Of clift, or cave, or trusted barn, to hold  
 Forbidden sabbaths); rather visit thou  
 Those haunts of public lewdness; oft though there 130  
 Sore ills dismay. Purse or the golden pride  
 That decks thy finger, gorgeous with the spoils  
 Of MEXICO, PERU, and farthest IND,  
 Or watch, time measuring, oft subtracted fly  
 Sink in the dark profound. And oft, to crush 135  
 Thy slacken'd manhood, in the mid career  
 Of puissant deed, untimely rushes in  
 A forward boist'rous wight, and from thy arms

The passive spouse of all the town demands.  
 Him, hung'ring after gold, nor words can charm, 140  
 Nor more persuasive wine: thy gold must pay  
 The violation of the public bed;  
 Or braver steel must prove thy manly arm,  
 In dubious fight. Yet well if here could end  
 The mis'ry: worse perhaps ensues; a train 145  
 Of ills of tedious count and horrid name.  
 Such as of old distress'd the man else squar'd  
 To God's own heart, but that his wiles debauch'd  
 JERUSALEM's fair daughters to his flames;  
 Nor did he from the holy marriage-bed 150  
 Refrain his loose embraces, when the wife  
 Of wrong'd URIAS he seduced; nor stopt  
 Till murder crown'd his lust. Hence him the wrath  
 Of righteous Heaven, awaking, long pursu'd  
 With sore disease, and fill'd his loins with pain. 155  
 All day he roar'd, and all the tedious night  
 Bedew'd his couch with tears; and still his groans

Breathe musical in sacred song. What woes!  
 What pains he tried! but now this plague attacks  
 With double rancour, and severely marks 160  
 Modern offenders: sily undermines  
 The fame and nose, that by unseemly lapse  
 Awkward deforms the human face divine  
 With ghastly ruins. Though this breach, they say,  
 Nice TALLIACOTIUS' art, with substitute 165  
 From porter's borrow'd, or the callous breach  
 Of sedentary weaver, oft repair'd:  
 Precarious, for no sooner fate demands  
 The parent stock, than (pious sympathy!)  
 Revolts th' adopted nose.—Such ills attend 170  
 Obscene and bought embraces. Wiser thou,  
 Find some soft nymph, whom tender sympathy  
 Attracts to thee; while all her captives else,  
 Aw'd by majestic beauty, mourn aloof  
 Her charms, to them reserv'd, alone to thee 175  
 Discreetly lavish'd. Sacrifice to her



The precious hours, nor grudge with such a mate  
The summer's day to toy or winter's night.  
Now clasp with dying fondness in your arms  
Her yielding waist: now on her swelling breast 180  
Recline your cheek, with eager kisses press  
Her balmy lips, and drinking from her eyes  
Resistless love, the tender flame confess,  
Ineffable but by the murmuring voice  
Of genuine joy; then hug, and kiss again, 185  
Stretch'd on the genial couch, while joyful glows  
Thy manly pride, and throbbing with desire  
Pants furious, felt through all the obstacles  
That intervene: but love, whose fervid course  
Mountains nor seas oppose, can soon remove 190  
Barriers so flight. Then, when her lovely limbs,  
Oft lovely deem'd, far lovelier now beheld,  
Through all your trembling joints increase the flame;  
Forthwith discover to her dazzled sight  
The stately novelty, and to her hand 195

Usher the new acquaintance. She perhaps,  
Averse, will coldly chide, and half afraid,  
Blushing, half pleas'd, the tumid wonder view  
With neck retorted and oblique regard;  
Nor quite her curious eye indulging, nor 200  
Refraining quite. Perhaps when you attempt  
The sweet admission, toyful she resists  
With shy reluctance; nathless you pursue  
The soft attack, and warmly push the war,  
Till quite o'erpower'd with love, the melting maid  
Faintly opposes. On the brink at last 206  
Arriv'd of giddy rapture, plunge not in  
Precipitant, but spare a virgin's pain;  
Ah! spare a gentle virgin! spare yourself!  
Lest sanguine war love's tender rights profane 210  
With fierce dilaceration, and dire pangs,  
Reciprocal. Nor droop because the door  
Of bliss seems shut and barricado'd strong;  
But triumph rather in this faithful pledge

Of innocence and fair virginity 215  
 Inviolate. And hence the subtle wench,  
 Her maiden honours torn, in evil hour  
 Unseemly torn, and shrunk her virgin rose;  
 Studious how best the guilty wound to heal,  
 Her shame best palliate with fair outward shew, 220  
 Inward less strict, with painful hand collects  
 The fylvan store. The lover MYRTLE yields  
 Her styptic berries, and the horrid THORN  
 Its prune austere; in vain the CAPER hides  
 Its wandering roots; the mighty OAK himself, 225  
 Sole tyrant of the shade, that long had 'scap'd  
 The tanner's rage, spoil'd of his callous rhind,  
 Stands bleak and bare. These and a thousand more  
 Of humbler growth and far inferior name,  
 BISTORT, and DOCK, and that way-faring herb 230  
 PLANTAIN, her various forage, boil'd in wine  
 Yield their astringent force; a lotion prov'd  
 Thrice powerful to contract the shameful breach.

Beware of these, for in our dangerous days  
 Such counterfeits abound, whom next to know 235  
 Concerns. And here expect no dye of wound:  
 No wound is made: the corrugated parts,  
 With ill-diffembled virtue (though severe,  
 Not wrinkled into frowns when genuine most)  
 Relapse apace, and quit their borrow'd tone. 240  
 Yet judge with charity the varied work  
 Of nature's hand. Perhaps the purple stream,  
 Emollient bath, leaves flexible and lax  
 The parts it lately wash'd. But hapless he,  
 In nuptial night, on whom a horrid chasm 245  
 Yawns dreadful, waste and wild; like that thro' which  
 The wand'ring GREEK, and CYTHEREA'S SON,  
 Diving, explor'd hell's adamantine gates:  
 An unessential void; where neither love  
 Nor pleasure dwells, where warm creation dies 250  
 Starv'd in th' abortive gulph; the dire effects  
 Of use too frequent, or for love or gold.

Now hear me, lovers! ye whose roving hearts  
 No sacred nuptial chains have yet confin'd;  
 Attentive hear, and daily, nightly weigh 255  
 The counsels sage, which thro' my raptur'd breast,  
 To you th' auspicious heavenly muse conveys;  
 The muse, no soothing minister of vice;  
 Though now in sportive vein to youthful ears  
 She tunes her song, to give instruction grace. 260  
 Attend ye wise! no frantic Bacchanal,  
 No shameless bard of the licentious rout  
 Of flush'd SILENUS, sings.—What nature bids  
 Is good, is wise; and faultless we obey.  
 We must obey; howe'er hard stoick dreams 265  
 Of apathy, much vaunted, seldom prov'd:  
 For oft beneath the philosophic gloom  
 Sly LEWDNESS lurks, and oftener mazy GUILF,  
 That with well-mimick'd love th' unwary heart  
 Lures to its fate, and hails while it betrays! 270  
 There bloated PRIDE too dwells, and baneful HATE,

And dark REVENGE, than which a deadlier fiend  
 Ne'er pour'd its venom through a human breast;  
 Far hence be these; we now great NATURE'S power,  
 Mother of things, whose vast unbounded sway 275  
 From the deep center all around extends  
 Wide to the flaming barriers of the world.  
 We feel her power: we strive not to repress  
 (Vainly repress'd or to deformity)  
 Her lawful growth: ours be the task alone 280  
 To check her rude excrescences; to prune  
 Her wanton overgrowth; and where she sports  
 In shapes too wild, to lead her gently back,  
 With prudent hand, to better form and use.

For wisest ends this universal power 285  
 Gave appetites: from whose quick impulse life  
 Subsists; by which we only live; all life  
 Infid else, unactive, unenjoy'd.  
 Hence too this peopled earth; which, that extinct,

That flame for propagation, soon would roll 290  
A lifeless mass, and vainly cumber heaven.  
Then love of pleasure sways each heart, and we  
From that no more than from ourselves can fly.  
Blameless when govern'd well. But where it errs,  
Extravagant, and wildly leads to ill, 295  
Public or private; there its curbing power  
Cool reason must exert. — This lesson weigh,  
Ye tender pairs. Indulge your gentle flames,  
Each fondest wish, and bathe your souls in love.  
But let discretion guard the hour of bliss, 300  
Virtuous in pleasure. So you shall enjoy  
Pleasure unmix'd, and without thorn the rose.  
This caution scorn'd beware the event perverse:  
Expect, for pleasure, pain and sharp remorse;  
For love, aversion and each broken vow, 305  
The jest of fools, the pity of the wife.

Be secret lovers. Let no dangerous spy  
 Catch your soft glances: as oblique they deal  
 Mutual contagion, darting all the soul  
 In missive love; nor hear your lab'ring sighs     310  
 But chiefly when the high-wrought rapture calls,  
 Impatient to soft deeds, then, then retire  
 From every mortal ken. The Sapiient King  
 (Whose loves who could defame?) in the mild gloom,  
 Deep in the center of his gardens, hid,     315  
 Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.  
 Find then some soft obscure retreat, untrod  
 By mortals, else, where thick-embowering shades  
 Condense to darkness and embrown the day;  
 There, safe from all profane access pursue     320  
 Love's bashful rites. For oft the curious eye  
 Of prying childhood, and the aspect malign,  
 Waning and wan, of virgin stale in years,  
 Shed baneful influence on the rites of love.  
 And thou, my son, when floods of mellowing wine



And social joys have loosen'd all thy breast; 326  
 When every secret gushes; this at least,  
 This one reserve, of love and bounteous charms  
 Of trusting beauty; venturing all for thee,  
 For thy delight her fortune and her fame; 330  
 For her thou nothing. Hold! ingrateful, hold  
 Thy wanton tongue! Leave to the last of fools,  
 Of villains! that ungen'rous vanity,  
 Cruel and base, to vaunt of secret joys;  
 Of joys on thee, so vaunting, ill bestow'd. 335  
 O dare not thus with mortal sting to wound  
 The tender hapless sex! Does thy vile breath  
 So blast my sister's or my daughter's fame,—  
 By Heav'n thou diest! thy treacherous blood alone  
 Can wash my honour clean. Prudent, meantime, 340  
 Ye generous maids, revenge your sex's wrong;  
 Let not the mean destroyer e'er approach  
 Your sacred charms. Now muster all your pride,  
 Contempt, and scorn, that, shot from beauty's eye,

Confounds the mighty impudent, and smites 345  
 The front unknown to shame. Trust not his vows,  
 His labour'd sighs, and well-dissembled tears,  
 Nor swell the triumph of known perjury.

Meanwhile, my son, if angry fate, or love  
 Grown indiscreet or loud LUCINA, tell 350  
 Th' important secret: is thy mate well form'd,  
 Virtuous, and equal for thy lawful bed,  
 Save her, I charge thee, from foul infamy,  
 And lonely shame: let wedlock's holy tie  
 Legitimate th' indissoluble flames. 355  
 If abject birth, dishonourable, and mind  
 Incultivate or vicious, to that height  
 Forbid her hopes to climb; at least secure  
 From penury her humble state, by thee  
 Else humbled more, and to necessity, 360  
 Stern foe to Virtue, Fame, and Life betray'd,  
 A helpless prey. O! let no parent's woe,

No plaints of trusting innocence, nor tears  
Of pining beauty, blast thy guilty joys.  
Shall she, so late the softener of thy life, 365  
Thy chief delight, whose melting essence oft  
Lay with thy melting essence kindly mix'd  
(As far as bodies or embodied souls  
Can mingle); she who deem'd thy vows sincere,  
Thy passion more than selfish, and thy love 370  
To her devoted, as was her's to thee;  
Shall she (O! cruel perfidy!) at last,  
When with her tainted name the winds grow sick,  
When envious prudery chides, affecting scorn  
Of natural joys, and they of public fame, 375  
Insulting, hail her sister; while each friend  
Disgusted flies; shall she not find in thee  
Unshaken amity? when to thy arms,  
Well-known, with wonted confidence she flies,  
To pour her sorrows forth, and sooth her cares, 380  
Shall she then find thy faithless heart from home,

From her estrang'd? at that disastrous hour  
 Wilt thou ungently spurn her from thy love?  
 To waste in sickly grief thy once-priz'd charms,  
 Forlorn to languish out her life, to lead 385  
 Despis'd, unwedded, her dishonour'd days?  
 Or, if her barren fortune, hard like thee,  
 Scowls meagre Want (whose iron empire Pride,  
 Reluctant, and her offspring Modesty,  
 Blushing at last obey) unskill'd in arts 390  
 Of mercenary VENUS, to increase  
 The rompish band, that, without pleasure lewd,  
 With deep-felt sorrow gay, through TRIVA'S reign  
 Nightly solicit lovers; oft repuls'd,  
 Oft, when invited to the barren toil, 395  
 Thankless deserted by their slippery loves!  
 Or to the salt of years, where tedious lust  
 Uncouth and monstrous creeps through freezing loins,  
 Patient submitted! to the boist'rous will  
 Of midnight ruffians! to abhorr'd disease, 400

Hourly expos'd, and DRACO's fiercer rage!  
 Spare, mighty DRACO! spare a hapless race,  
 By their own sex to wretchedness betray'd.  
 A woman bore thee; by each tender name  
 Of woman spare! hast thou or daughter fair, 405  
 Or sister? they, but for a happier birth,  
 The gift of fate, and honour's guardian, Pride  
 Early inspir'd, had swell'd the common stream.  
 While she whom now thy awful name difmays,  
 Portentous heard from far, with fortune's smiles 410  
 And fair example, might have grac'd thy bed,  
 A virtuous mate, in every charm complete.

A pious duty next, neglected oft,  
 Demands my song. If from thy secret bed  
 Of luxury unbidden offspring rise, 415  
 Let them be kindly welcom'd to the day.  
 'Tis nature bids. To nature's sacred voice  
 Attend; and from the monster-breeding deep,

The ravag'd air, and howling wilderness,  
 Learn parent virtues. Shall the growling bear 420  
 Be more a fire than thou? an infant once,  
 Helpless and weak, but for paternal care,  
 Thou hadst not liv'd to propagate a race  
 To misery, to resign to step-dame fate  
 Perhaps a worthier offspring than thy fire 425  
 Tenderly rear'd. For from the stol'n embrace,  
 Untir'd with worn acquaintance, keenly urg'd,  
 Elate with gen'rous rapture, likeliest springs  
 The noblest breed, most animated, best.  
 What heroes hence have issued! what fam'd chiefs!  
 And demi-gods, of old! the stealth of love 431  
 Gave Greece her HERCULES, and mighty Rome  
 First rose beneath a random son of MARS.  
 Thy vigour too, the blossom of thy strength,  
 Reckless and wild profus'd, in dangerous days,  
 Or in the senate wife, and nobly warm 436  
 To public good, may save the rushing state;

Or, bold in arms, may roll her thunders forth  
 To shatter distant skies, and, rous'd to blood,  
 Usher the British Lion to the field. 440

Thy country claims thy care; nurse well her hopes,  
 And thine; nor thou her church's hungry wolves,  
 Hight OVERSEERS, with thy own children's gore  
 Sate, if rapine know satiety.

For bred to death, and of sagacious nose, 445

A prowling herd, lur'd with the recent smell  
 Of secret birth, their carnage sweet, or led  
 By infant wailings, querulous and shrill,  
 Beset thy frightened gates. These timely thou  
 Prevent, or mourn too late thy ravish'd gold 450  
 And captive son; to the street-dunning tribe  
 Of mendicants let out, fictitious badge  
 Of low distress: there to what life of pain  
 Led up who knows? to what disgraceful fate,  
 What gibbet, bred? or from his parent's arms, 455  
 With nurse unpitied, unbenign, exhib'd

To squallid lodge, to find in FAMINE'S cave  
 A ling'ring death; or by a deadlier hag,  
 Than her that rides the lab'ring night opprefs'd,  
 Untimely sink beneath a heavier fate. 460  
 While they, the sons of licens'd rapine, screen'd  
 Under the altar of the God of life  
 With murder stain'd, on what should raise thy son  
 Nightly regale, carnivorous; for them  
 The heifer bleeds, or for her slaughter'd young 465  
 Roams wild the woodland bounds; and what should now  
 To thy young hopes run soft in balmy rills  
 Lacteous, to them in deep OPORTO flows,  
 Or hot MADEIRA. Thus the sanguine feast  
 They crown, nor dread the cry of infant blood. 470

These precepts wisely keep, by these direct  
 Thy steps through pleasure's labyrinth. Unhurt  
 And unoffending, thus thy tutor'd feet  
 May tread the wilds of else delusive joy.



So Shall no forrows wound, no ruder cares 475  
 Disturb thy pleasures, no remorseful tears  
 Attend thy gay delight: nor sighs make way,  
 But such as heave the pleasure-burden'd breast,  
 As utter love, with speechless eloquence  
 Well understood; and breathe from foul to foul 480  
 The soft infection, fondly still receiv'd.  
 Almighty Love! O unexhausted source  
 Of universal joy! first principle  
 Of nature all-creating! harmony,  
 By which her mighty movements all are rul'd! 485  
 Soft tyrant of each element, whose sway  
 Resistless through the wilds of air is felt,  
 Through earth, and the deep empire of the main!  
 Thy willing slaves, we own thy gentle power,  
 In us supreme, with kind endearments rais'd 490  
 Above the merely sensual touch of brutes.  
 By thy soft charm the savage breast is tam'd,  
 The genius rais'd. Thy heavenly warmth inspires

Whate'er is noble, generous, or humane,  
 Or elegant; whate'er adorns the mind, 495  
 Graces or sweetens life: and without thee,  
 Nothing or gay or amiable appears.

Yet not to Love (thus polishing the soul,  
 Thus charming; though of every finer breast  
 The sovereign joy), yet not to Love alone 500  
 Yield languid all your hours. The self-same cates  
 Still offer'd, soon the appetite offend;  
 The most delicious soonest. Other joys,  
 Other pursuits, their equal share demand  
 Of cultivation. These with kindly change 505  
 Will cheer your sweetly-varied days; from these  
 With quicker sense you shall and firmer nerves  
 Return to Love, when Love again invites.  
 Be those the least neglected which inform  
 With virtue, sense, and elegance, the mind: 510  
 Those what before was amiable improve,

And lend to Love new grace and dignity.  
Life too has ferious cares, which madly scorn'd  
The means of pleasure melt.—And age will come,  
When Love, alas! the flower of human joys, 515  
Must shrink in horrid frost. O hapless he!  
Thrice hapless then! whose only joy was that:  
Whose young defires tumultuous fill engage  
To weild a load of unobedient limbs,  
With vain attempt. Him the inclement power 520  
Of craving impotence, to fonder toys  
Than other dotage knows, or easy-dup'd  
Credulity can well believe, incites.  
Him all the Nymphs despise, and the young Loves  
With leering scorn behold; while vigorous heat 525  
Has fled his shaken limbs, surviving still  
In his green fancy. Thence what desperate toil  
By flagellation, and the rage of blows,  
To rouse the VENUS loitering in his veins!  
Fruitless, for VENUS unsolicited 530

The kindest smiles, abhorring painful rites.

Cease, reverend fathers! from those youthful sports

Retire, before unfinish'd feats betray

Your slacken'd nerves. The hoary years, design'd

For wisdom, for sedate philosophy, 535

And contemplation, ill agree with love.

Cheerful retire: nor grudge in peevish laws,

Like envious monitors, the sprightly joys

Of lusty youth. You had your genial time

Of pleasure;—ours is on the rapid wing! 540

And you whose youthful blood impetuous rolls,

With generous spirits fraught and kindly balm,

Husband your vigour well; if aught or health,

Or offspring numerous, beautiful, and strong,

Or pleasure weigh. For from the trite embrace

Follow faint relaxation, strength impair'd, 545

Disgust, and mutual apathy, Love's bane.

Some boast, I know, their vigour to renew,

And keen desire, by food restorative,  
 Or pharmacy more noxious. ORCHIS hence, 550  
 Lascivious bulb, SATYRION better nam'd;  
 And that maritime, which the sea-born Queen  
 Feeds with her native spume, ERYNGO, mild;  
 BOLETUS, fam'd among the fungous tribe;  
 And fell CANTHARIDES; in various forms 555  
 Are us'd. But what ensues? Diseases more  
 Than ever burden'd AUSTER's drooping wings.  
 Cold TREMORS, SPASMS and CEPHALÆAS dire  
 Eternal flux of nature's balmy dew,  
 TABES, and gaunt MARASMUS, hideous loss 560  
 Of godlike reason, and the imprison'd rage  
 Of fierce LIPYRIA, whose collected fires  
 The vitals only seize. Or if the sons  
 Of jaded luxury those plagues escape,  
 They waste their melting youth, and bring grey hairs  
 Before their time, grey hairs and idle years. 566  
 Leave Nature to herself, nor covet more

Than Nature gives, that but to real wants  
Each well-conducted appetite provokes.

But chiefly thee, fair nymph, behoves to know 570  
That love and joy, when in their prime, must fear  
Decay, the fate of all created things.  
Be frugal then; the coyly-yielded kifs  
Charms most, and gives the most sincere delight.  
Cheapness offends; hence on the harlot's lip 575  
No rapture hangs, however fair she seem,  
However form'd for love and amorous play.  
Hail MODESTY! fair female honour, hail!  
Beauty's chief ornament, without whose charm  
Beauty disgusts; or gives but vulgar joys. 580  
Thou giv'st the smile its grace; the heighten'd kifs  
Its balmy essence sweet! and, but for thee,  
The very raptures of the lawful bed  
Were outrage and foul riot, rites obscene!  
Celestial maid! be it lawful that with lips 585

Profane I name thee, and in wanton song.  
 But in these vicious days great Nature's laws  
 Are spurn'd; eternal VIRTUE, which nor time  
 Nor place can change, nor custom changing all,  
 Is mock'd to scorn; and lewed ABUSE instead, 590  
 Daughter of night, her shameless revels hold  
 O'er half the globe, while the chaste face of day  
 Eclipses at her rites. For man with man,  
 And man with woman (monstrous to relate!)  
 Leaving the natural road, themselves debase 595  
 With deeds unseemly, and dishonour foul.  
 BRITONS, for shame! be male and female still.  
 Banish this foreign vice; it grows not here;  
 It dies neglected; and in clime so chaste  
 Cannot but by forc'd cultivation thrive. 600  
 So cultivated swells the more our shame,  
 The more our guilt. And shall not greater guilt  
 Meet greater punishment and heavier doom:  
 Not lighter for delay. Did JUSTICE spare

The men of SODOM erst? like us they finn'd, 605

Like us they sought the paths of monstrous joy;

Till, urg'd to wrath at last, all-patient Heaven

Descending wrapt them in sulphureous storm.

And where proud palaces appear'd, the haunts

Of luxury, now sleeps a fullen pool: 610

Vengeful memorial of Almighty ire,

Against the sons of lewdness exercis'd!

THE END.



