

**The art of preserving health; a poem. To which is prefixed a critical essay ...
/ by J. Aikin.**

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THE
ART
OF PRESERVING
HEALTH:
A POEM,
IN FOUR BOOKS.

First published in the year 1744.

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG, M.D.

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1805.



ART
OF
PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK I.

Air.

DAUGHTER of Pæon, queen of ev'ry joy,
Hygeia!* whose indulgent smile sustains
The various race luxuriant Nature pours,
And on th' immortal essences bestows
Immortal youth, auspicious, O descend, 5
Thou cheerful Guardian of the rolling year!
Whether thou wanton'st on the western gale
Or shak'st the rigid pinions of the north,
Diffusest life and vigour thro' the tracks
Of air, thro' earth and ocean's deep domain. 10

* Hygeia, the goddess of Health, was, according to the genealogy of the Heathen deities, the daughter of Æsculapius, who, as well as Apollo, was distinguished by the name of Pæon.

When thro' the blue serenity of heav'n
Thy pow'r approaches, all the wasteful host
Of Pain and Sickness, squalid and deform'd,
Confounded, sink into the loathsome gloom,
Where, in deep Erebus involv'd, the fiends 15
Grow more profane. Whatever shapes of death,
Shook from the hideous chambers of the globe,
Swarm thro' the shudd'ring air; whatever plagues
Or meagre Famine breeds, or with slow wings
Rise from the putrid wat'ry element, 20
The damp waste forest, motionless and rank,
That smothers earth and all the breathless winds,
Or the vile carnage of th' inhuman field;
Whatever baneful breathes the rotten south;
Whatever ills th' extremes, or sudden change, 25
Of cold and hot, or moist and dry, produce,—
They fly thy pure effulgence, they and all
The secret poisons of avenging Heav'n,
And all the pale tribes halting in the train
Of Vice and heedless Pleasure; or if aught 30
The comet's glare, amid the burning sky,
Mournful eclipse, or planets ill combin'd,
Portend disastrous to the vital world,
Thy salutary pow'r averts their rage,
Averts the gen'ral bane; and but for thee 35
Nature would sicken, Nature soon would die.

Without thy cheerful active energy
No rapture swells the breast, no poet sings,
No more the maids of Helicon delight.
Come then with me, O Goddess, heav'nly gay ! 40
Begin the song, and let it sweetly flow,
And let it wisely teach thy wholesome laws ;
“ How best the fickle fabric to support
“ Of mortal man ; in healthful body how
“ A healthful mind the longest to maintain.” 45
’Tis hard in such a strife of rules to choose
The best, and those of most extensive use ;
Harder in clear and animated song
Dry philosophic precepts to convey :
Yet with thy aid the secret wilds I trace 50
Of Nature, and with daring steps proceed
Thro’ paths the Muses never trod before.

Nor should I wander doubtful of my way,
Had I the lights of that sagacious mind
Which taught to check the pestilential fire 55
And quell the deadly Python of the Nile.
O thou belov’d by all the graceful arts,
Thou long the fav’rite of the Healing Pow’rs,
Indulge, O Mead ! a well-design’d Essay
Howe’er imperfect, and permit that I 60
My little knowledge with my country share,

Till you the rich Asclepian stores unlock,
And with new graces dignify the theme.

Ye who amid this fev'rish world would wear
A body free of pain, of cares a mind, 65
Fly the rank city, shun its turbid air,
Breathe not the chaos of eternal smoke
And volatile corruption, from the dead,
The dying, sick'ning, and the living world
Exhal'd, to sully Heav'n's transparent dome 70
With dim mortality. It is not Air
That from a thousand lungs reeks back to thine,
Sated with exhalations rank and fell,
The spoil of dunghills, and the putrid thaw
Of Nature, when from shape and texture she 75
Relapses into fighting elements ;
It is not Air, but floats a nauseous mass
Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things.
Much moisture hurts ; but here a sordid bath,
With oily rancour fraught, relaxes more 80
The solid frame than simple moisture can.
Besides, immur'd in many a sullen bay
That never felt the freshness of the breeze,
This slumb'ring deep remains, and ranker grows
With sickly rest ; and (tho' the lungs abhor 85
To drink the dun fuliginous abyss)

Did not the acid vigour of the mine,
Roll'd from so many thund'ring chimneys, tame
The putrid steams that overswarm the sky,
This caustic venom would perhaps corrode 90
Those tender cells that draw the vital Air,
In vain with all their unctuous rills bedew'd ;
Or, by the drunken venous tubes, that yawn
In countless pores o'er all the pervious skin,
Imbib'd, would poison the balsamic blood, 95
And rouse the heart to ev'ry fever's rage.
While yet you breathe, away ; the rural wilds
Invite, the mountains call you, and the vales,
The woods, the streams, and each ambrosial breeze
That fans the ever-undulating sky, 100
A kindly sky ! whose fost'ring pow'r regales
Man, beast, and all the vegetable reign.
Find then some woodland scene where Nature smiles
Benign, where all her honest children thrive.
To us there wants not many a happy seat : 105
Look round the smiling land, such numbers rise
We hardly fix, bewilder'd in our choice.
See where enthron'd in adamant state,
Proud of her bards, imperial Windsor sits ;
There choose thy seat, in some inspiring grove 110
Fast by the slowly winding Thames, or where,
Broader, she laves fair Richmond's green retreats,

(Richmond! that sees an hundred villas rise,
Rural or gay;) or, from the summer's rage,
O wrap me in the friendly gloom that hides 115
Umbrageous Ham!—But if the busy Town
Attract thee still, to toil for pow'r or gold,
Sweetly thou may'st thy vacant hours possess
In Hampstead, courted by the western wind,
Or Greenwich, waving o'er the winding flood, 120
Or lose the world amid the sylvan wilds
Of Dulwich, yet by barb'rous arts unspoil'd.
Green rise the Kentish hills in cheerful air;
But on the marshy plains that Lincoln spreads
Build not, nor rest too long thy wand'ring feet; 125
For, on a rustic throne of dewy turf,
With baneful fogs her aking temples bound,
Quartana there presides, a meagre fiend,
Begot by Eurus, when his brutal force
Compress'd the slothful Naiad of the Fens. 130
From such a mixture sprung, this fitful pest
With fev'rish blasts subdues the sick'ning land:
Cold tremors come, with mighty love of rest,
Convulsive yawnings, lassitude, and pains
That sting the burden'd brows, fatigue the loins, 135
And rack the joints and ev'ry torpid limb;
Then parching heat succeeds, till copious sweats
O'erflow,—a short relief from former ills:

Beneath repeated shocks the wretches pine ;
The vigour sinks, the habit melts away, 140
The cheerful, pure, and animated bloom
Dies from the face, with squalid Atrophy
Devour'd, in sallow melancholy clad,
And oft' the sorc'ress in her sated wrath
Resigns them to the Furies of her train, 145
The bloated Hydrops, and the yellow fiend
Ting'd with her own accumulated gall.

In quest of sites, avoid the mournful plain
Where osiers thrive, and trees that love the lake,
Where many lazy muddy rivers flow ; 150
Nor for the wealth that all the Indies roll
Fix near the marshy margin of the main ;
For from the humid soil and wat'ry reign
Eternal vapours rise ; the spongy air
For ever weeps, or, turgid with the weight 155
Of waters, pours a sounding deluge down.
Skies such as these let ev'ry mortal shun
Who dreads the dropsy, palsy, or the gout,
Tertian, corrosive scurvy, or moist catarrh,
Or any other injury that grows 160
From raw-spun fibres idle and unstrung,
Skin ill-perspiring, and the purple flood
In languid eddies loit'ring into phlegm.

Yet not alone from humid skies we pine ;
For Air may be too dry. The subtile heav'n, 165
That winnows into dust the blasted downs,
Bare and extended wide without a stream,
Too fast imbibes th' attenuated lymph
Which by the surface from the blood exhales ;
The lungs grow rigid, and with toil essay 170
Their flexible vibrations, or inflam'd
Their tender ever-moving structure thaws :
Spoil'd of its limpid vehicle, the blood
A mass of lees remains, a drossy tide
That slow as Lethe wanders thro' the veins, 175
Unactive in the services of life,
Unfit to lead its pitchy current thro'
The secret mazy channels of the brain :
The melancholic fiend (that worst despair
Of physic) hence the rust-complexion'd man 180
Pursues, whose blood is dry, whose fibres gain
Too stretch'd a tone ; and hence, in climes adust,
So sudden tumults seize the trembling nerves,
And burning fevers glow with double rage.

Fly if you can these violent extremes 185
Of Air ; the wholesome is nor moist nor dry.
But as the pow'r of choosing is deny'd
To half mankind, a further task ensues,

How best to mitigate these fell extremes,
How breathe unhurt the with'ring element, 190
Or hazy atmosphere: tho' custom moulds
To ev'ry clime the soft Promethean clay;
And he who first the fogs of Essex breath'd,
(So kind is native Air) may, in the Fens
Of Essex, from inveterate ills revive 195
At pure Montpelier or Bermuda caught.
But if the raw and oozy heav'n offend,
Correct the soil, and dry the sources up
Of wat'ry exhalation; wide and deep
Conduct your trenches thro' the quaking bog; 200
Solicitous with all your winding arts
Betray th' unwilling lake into the stream,
And weed the forest, and invoke the winds
To break the toils where strangled vapours lie,
Or thro' the thickets send the crackling flames: 205
Mean time, at home with cheerful fires dispel
The humid Air, and let your table smoke
With solid roast or bak'd, or what the herds
Of tamer breed supply, or what the wilds
Yield to the toilsome pleasures of the chase: 210
Gen'rous your wine, the boast of rip'ning years,
But frugal be your cups: the languid frame,
Vapid and sunk from yesterday's debauch,
Shrinks from the cold embrace of wat'ry heav'ns.

But neither these nor all Apollo's arts 215
Disarm the dangers of the dropping sky,
Unless with exercise and manly toil
You brace your nerves and spur the lagging blood.
The fatt'ning clime let all the sons of Ease
Avoid. If Indolence would wish to live, 220
Go yawn and loiter out the long slow year
In fairer skies. If drougthy regions parch
The skin and lungs, and bake the thick'ning blood,
Deep in the waving forest choose your seat,
Where fuming trees refresh the thirsty Air, 225
And wake the fountains from their secret beds,
And into lakes dilate the rapid stream.
Here spread your gardens wide, and let the cool
The moist relaxing vegetable store
Prevail in each repast; your food supply'd 230
By bleeding life be gently wasted down
By soft decoction and a mellowing heat
To liquid balm; or if the solid mass
You choose, tormented in the boiling wave,
That thro' the thirsty channels of the blood 235
A smooth diluted chyle may ever flow,
The fragrant dairy from its cool recess
Its nectar acid or benign will pour
To drown your thirst, or let the mantling bowl
Of keen sherbet the tickle taste relieve; 240

For with the viscous blood the simple stream
Will hardly mingle, and fermented cups
Oft' dissipate more moisture than they give.
Yet when pale seasons rise, or Winter rolls
His horrors o'er the world, thou may'st indulge 245
In feasts more genial, and impatient broach
The mellow cask: then too the scourging Air
Provokes to keener toils than sultry droughts
Allow: but rarely we such skies blaspheme:
Steep'd in continual rains, or with raw fogs 250
Bedew'd, our seasons droop; incumbent still
A pond'rous heav'n o'erwhelms the sinking soul:
Lab'ring with storms in heapy mountains rise
Th' embattled clouds, as if the Stygian shades
Had left the dungeon of eternal Night, 255
Till black with thunder all the south descends.
Scarce in a show'rless day the heav'ns indulge
Our melting clime, except the baleful east
Withers the tender spring and sourly checks
The fancy of the year. Our fathers talk 260
Of summers, balmy airs, and skies serene:
Good Heav'n! for what unexpiated crimes
This dismal change! The brooding elements,
Do they, your pow'rful ministers of wrath,
Prepare some fierce exterminating plague? 266
Or is it fix'd in the decrees above

That lofty Albion melt into the main?
Indulgent Nature! O dissolve this gloom!
Bind in eternal adamant the winds
That drown or wither, give the genial west 270
To breathe, and in its turn the sprightly north,
And may once more the circling seasons rule
The year, not mix in ev'ry monstrous day!

Mean time, the moist malignity to shun
Of burden'd skies, mark where the dry champaign
Swells into cheerful hills, where marjoram 276
And thyme, the love of bees, perfume the Air,
And where the cyaorrhodon* with the rose
For fragrance vies; for in the thirsty soil
Most fragrant breathe the aromatic tribes: 280
There bid thy roofs high on the basking steep
Ascend, there light thy hospitable fires,
And let them see the winter morn arise,
The summer ev'ning blushing in the west,
While with umbrageous oaks the ridge behind 285
O'erhung, defends you from the blust'ring north
And bleak affliction of the peevish east.
Or, when the growling winds contend, and all

* The wild rose, or that which grows on the common brier.

B. I. PRESERVING HEALTH. 17

The sounding forest fluctuates in the storm,
To sink in warm repose, and hear the din 290
Howl o'er the steady battlements, delights
Above the luxury of vulgar sleep !

The murm'ring rivulet, and the hoarser strain
Of waters rushing o'er the slipp'ry rocks,
Will nightly lull you to ambrosial rest. 295

To please the fancy is no trifling good
Where Health is study'd ; for whatever moves
The mind with calm delight, promotes the just
And nat'ral movements of th' harmonious frame.

Besides, the sportive brook for ever shakes 300

The trembling Air that floats from hill to hill,
From vale to mountain, with incessant change
Of purest element, refreshing still

Your airy seat and uninfected gods.

Chiefly for this I praise the man who builds 305

High on the breezy ridge, whose lofty sides
'Th' ethereal deep with endless billows chafes ;
His purer mansion, nor contagious years,
Shall reach, nor deadly putrid airs annoy.

But may no fogs from lake or fenny plain 310
Involve my hill ! and wheresoe'er you build,
Whether on sunburnt Epsom, or the plains
Wash'd by the silent Lee, in Chelsea low,

Or high Blackheath, with wintry winds assail'd,
Dry be your house, but airy more than warm, 315
Else ev'ry breath of ruder wind will strike
Your tender body thro' with rapid pains, [voice,
Fierce coughs will tease you, hoarseness bind your
Or moist gravedo load your aking brows.
These to defy, and all the fates that dwell 320
In cloister'd Air, tainted with steaming life,
Let lofty ceilings grace your ample rooms ;
And still at azure noontide may your dome
At ev'ry window drink the liquid sky.

Need we the sunny situation here, 325
And theatres open to the south commend,
Here where the Morning's misty breath infests
More than the torrid noon? How sickly grow,
How pale, the plants in those ill-fated vales
That, circled round with the gigantic heap 330
Of mountains, never felt, nor ever hope
To feel, the genial vigour of the sun!
While on the neighb'ring hill the rose inflames
The verdant spring, in virgin beauty blows
The tender lily languishingly sweet, 335
O'er ev'ry hedge the wanton woodbine roves,
And autumn ripens in the summer's ray.
Nor less the warmer living tribes demand

The fost'ring sun, whose energy divine
Dwells not in mortal fire, whose gen'rous heat 340
Glow thro' the mass of grosser elements,
And kindles into life the pond'rous spheres :
Cheer'd by thy kind invigorating warmth,
We court thy beams, great Majesty of Day !
If not the soul the regent of this world,
First-born of Heav'n, and only less than GOD ! 345

ART
OF
PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK II.

Diet.

ENOUGH of Air; a desert subject now,
Rougher and wilder, rises to my sight;
A barren waste, where not a garland grows
To bind the Muse's brow, not ev'n a proud
Stupendous solitude frowns o'er the heath 5
To rouse a noble horror in the soul,
But rugged paths fatigue, and Errour leads
Thro' endless labyrinths the devious feet.
Farewell ethereal Fields! the humbler arts
Of life, the Table, and the homely Gods, 10
Demand my song: Elysian Gales adieu!

The blood, the fountain whence the spirits flow,
The gen'rous stream that waters ev'ry part,
And motion, vigour, and warm life, conveys

To ev'ry particle that moves or lives ;

15

This vital fluid, thro' unnumber'd tubes

Pour'd by the heart, and to the heart again

Refunded, scourg'd for ever round and round,

Enrag'd with heat and toil, at last forgets

Its balmy nature; virulent and thin

20

It grows, and now, but that a thousand gates

Are open to its flight, it would destroy

The parts it cherish'd and repair'd before.

Besides, the flexible and tender tubes

Melt in the mildest most nectareous tide

25

That rip'ning Nature rolls, as in the stream

Its crumbling banks ; but what the vital force

Of plastic fluids hourly batters down,

That very force those plastic particles

Rebuild : so mutable the state of man !

30

For this the watchful appetite was giv'n,

Daily with fresh materials to repair

This unavoidable expence of life,

This necessary waste of flesh and blood :

Hence the concoctive pow'rs with various art

35

Subdue the cruder aliments to chyle,

The chyle to blood, the foamy purple tide

To liquors, which thro' finer arteries

To diff'rent parts their winding course pursue,

To try new changes and new forms put on, 40
Or for the public or some private use.

Nothing so foreign but th' athletic hind
Can labour into blood. The hungry meal
Alone he fears, or aliments too thin,
By violent pow'rs too easily subdu'd, 45
Too soon expell'd. His daily labour thaws
To friendly chyle the most rebellious mass
That salt can harden, or the smoke of years;
Nor does his gorge the lucious bacon rue,
Nor that which Cestria sends, tenacious paste, 50
Of solid milk. But ye of softer clay,
Infirm and delicate, and ye who waste
With pale and bloated sloth the tedious day,
Avoid the stubborn aliment, avoid
The full repast, and let sagacious Age 55
Grow wiser, lesson'd by the dropping teeth.

Half subtiliz'd to chyle, the liquid food
Readiest obeys th' assimilating pow'rs,
And soon the tender vegetable mass
Relents, and soon the young of those that tread 60
The stedfast earth, or cleave the green abyss,
Or pathless sky. And if the steer must fall,
In youth and sanguine vigour let him die.

Nor stay till rigid age, or heavy ails,
Absolve him, ill-requited, from the yoke. 65
Some with high forage and luxuriant ease
Indulge the vet'ran ox; but, wiser thou,
From the bald mountain or the barren downs
Expect the flocks by frugal Nature fed,
A race of purer blood, with exercise 70
Refin'd and scanty fare; for, old or young,
The stall'd are never healthy, nor the cramm'd.
Not all the culinary arts can tame
To wholesome food th' abominable growth
Of rest and gluttony; the prudent taste 75
Rejects like bane such loathsome lusciousness;
The languid stomach curses ev'n the pure
Delicious fat, and all the race of oil;
For more the oily aliments relax
Its feeble tone, and with the eager lymph 80
(Fond to incorporate with all it meets)
Coyly they mix, and shun with slipp'ry wiles
The woo'd embrace. Th' irresoluble oil,
So gentle late and blandishing, in floods
Of rancid bile o'erflows: what tumults hence, 85
What horrors rise, were nauseous to relate.
Choose leaner viands, ye whose jovial make
Too fast the gummy nutriment imbibes;
Choose sober meals, and rouse to active life

Your cumbrous clay, nor on th' enfeebling down 90
Irresolute protract the morning hours :
But let the man whose bones are thinly clad,
With cheerful ease, and succulent repast,
Improve his habit if he can ; for each
Extreme departs from perfect sanity. 95

I could relate what table this demands
Or that complexion, what the various pow'rs
Of various foods ; but fifty years would roll
And fifty more before the tale were done.
Besides, there often lurks some nameless, strange, 100
Peculiar thing, nor on the skin display'd,
Felt in the pulse, nor in the habit seen,
Which finds a poison in the food that most
The temp'rature affects. There are whose blood
Impetuous rages thro' the turgid veins, 105
Who better bear the fiery fruits of Ind
Than the moist melon or pale cucumber :
Of chilly nature, others fly the board
Supply'd with slaughter, and the vernal pow'rs
For cooler kinder sustenance implore : 110
Some ev'n the gen'rous nutriment detest
Which in the shell the sleeping embryo rears ;
Some, more unhappy still, repent the gifts
Of Pales, soft, delicious, and benign,

The balmy quintessence of ev'ry flow'r, 115
And ev'ry grateful herb that decks the spring,
The fost'ring dew of tender sprouting life,
The best refection of declining age,
The kind restorative of those who lie
Half dead and panting, from the doubtful strife 120
Of nature struggling in the grasp of death.
Try all the bounties of this fertile globe,
There is not such a salutary food
As suits with ev'ry stomach : but (except
Amid the mingled mass of fish and fowl, 125
And boil'd and bak'd, you hesitate by which
You sunk oppress'd, or whether not by all)
Taught by experience, soon you may discern
What pleases, what offends. Avoid the cates
That lull the sicken'd appetite too long, 130
Or heave with fev'rish flushings all the face,
Burn in the palms, and parch the rough'ning tong
Or much diminish or too much increase
Th' expence which Nature's wise economy
Without or waste or avarice maintains. 135
Such cates abjur'd, let prowling Hunger loose,
And bid the curious palate roam at will ;
They scarce can err amid the various stores,
That burst the teeming entrails of the world.

Led by sagacious taste, the ruthless king 140
Of beasts on blood and slaughter only lives ;
The tiger, form'd alike to cruel meals,
Would at the manger starve ; of milder seeds
The gen'rous horse to herbage and to grain
Confines his wish, tho' fabling Greece resound 145
The Thracian steeds with human carnage wild.
Prompted by Instinct's never-erring pow'r,
Each creature knows its proper aliment ;
But man, th' inhabitant of ev'ry clime,
With all the commoners of Nature feeds. 150
Directed, bounded, by this pow'r within,
Their cravings are well aim'd. Voluptuous man
Is by superiour faculties misled,
Mislead from pleasure ev'n in quest of joy.
Sated with Nature's boons, what thousands seek, 155
With dishes tortur'd from their native taste
And mad variety, to spur beyond
Its wiser will the jaded appetite !
Is this for pleasure ? learn a juster taste,
And know that temp'rance is true luxury : 160
Or is it pride ? pursue some nobler aim ;
Dismiss your parasites who praise for hire,
And earn the fair esteem of honest men,
Whose praise is fame. Form'd of such clay as your's,
The sick, the needy, shiver at your gates ; 165

Ev'n modest Want may bless your hand unseen,
Tho' hush'd in patient wretchedness at home.
Is there no virgin, grac'd with ev'ry charm
But that which binds the mercenary vow?
No youth of genius, whose neglected bloom, 170
Unfoster'd, sickens in the barren shade?
Nor worthy man by Fortune's random blows,
Or by a heart too gen'rous and humane,
Constrain'd to leave his happy natal seat,
And sigh for wants more bitter than his own? 175
There are, while human miseries abound,
A thousand ways to waste superfluous wealth,
Without one fool or flatt'rer at your board,
Without one hour of sickness or disgust.

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

Of ev'ry realm. It matters not meanwhile
How much to-morrow differ from to-day ;
So far indulge : 'tis fit besides that man,
'To change obnoxious, be to change inur'd :
But stay the curious appetite, and taste 195
With caution fruits you never try'd before :
For want of use the kindest aliment
Sometimes offends, while custom tames the rage
Of poison to mild amity with life.

So Heav'n has form'd us to the gen'ral taste 200
Of all its gifts, so custom has improv'd
This bent of Nature, that few simple foods
Of all that earth, or air, or ocean, yield,
But by excess offend. Beyond the sense
Of light refection, at the genial board 205
Indulge not often, nor protract the feast
To dull satiety, till soft and slow
A drowsy death creeps on, th' expansive soul
Oppress'd and smother'd the celestial fire.
The stomach, urg'd beyond its active tone, 210
Hardly to nutrimental chyle subdues
The softest food ; unfinish'd and deprav'd,
The chyle in all its future wand'rings owns
Its turbid fountain, nor by purer streams
So to be clear'd but foulness will remain. 215

To sparkling wine what ferment can exalt
Th' unripen'd grape? or what mechanic skill
From the crude ore can spin the ductile gold?

Gross riot treasures up a wealthy fund
Of plagues; but more immedicable ills 220
Attend the lean extreme; for physic knows
How to disburden the too tumid veins,
Ev'n how to ripen the half-labour'd blood;
But to unlock the elemental tubes,
Collaps'd and shrunk with long inanity, 225
And with balsamic nutriment repair
The dry'd and worn-out habit, were to bid
Old age grow green and wear a second spring,
Or the tall ash, long ravish'd from the soil,
Thro' wither'd veins imbibe the vernal dew. 230
When hunger calls, obey; nor often wait
Till hunger sharpen to corrosive pain;
For the keen appetite will feast beyond
What nature well can bear, and one extreme
Ne'er without danger meets its own reverse. 235
Too greedily th' exhausted veins absorb
The recent chyle, and load enfeebled pow'rs
Oft' to th' extinction of the vital flame.
To the pale cities by the firm-set siege
And famine humbled may this verse be borne; 240
And hear, ye hardiest Sons that Albion breeds,

Long toss'd and famish'd on the wintry main !
The war shook off, or hospitable shore
Attain'd, with temp'rance bear the shock of joy,
Nor crown with festive rites th' auspicious day ; 245
Such feast might prove more fatal than the waves,
Than war or famine. While the vital fire
Burns feebly, heap not the green fuel on,
But prudently foment the wand'ring spark
With what the soonest feeds its kindred touch : 250
Be frugal ev'n of that ; a little give
At first, that kindled add a little more,
Till, by delib'rate nourishing, the flame
Reviv'd with all its wonted vigour glows.

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

Perhaps a fast so seasonable, starves
The latent seeds of wo, which rooted once
Might cost you labour : but the day return'd
Of festal luxury, the wise indulge 270
Most in the tender vegetable breed ;
Then chiefly when the summer beams inflame
The brazen heav'ns, or angry Sirius sheds
A fev'rish taint thro' the still gulf of air ;
The moist cool viands then, and flowing cup 275
From the fresh dairy-virgin's lib'ral hand,
Will save your head from harm tho' round the world
The dreaded causos * roll his wasteful fires.
Pale humid Winter loves the gen'rous board,
The meal more copious, and a warmer fare, 280
And longs with old wood and old wine to cheer
His quaking heart. The seasons which divide
Th' empires of heat and cold, by neither claim'd,
Influenc'd by both, a middle regimen
Impose. Thro' autumn's languishing domain 285
Descending Nature by degrees invites
To glowing luxury ; but from the depth
Of winter, when th' invigorated year
Emerges, when Favonius, flush'd with love,
Toyful and young, in ev'ry breeze descends 290

* The burning fever.

More warm and wanton on his kindling bride,
 Then, Shepherds ! then begin to spare your flocks,
 And learn with wise humanity to check
 The lust of blood. Now pregnant earth commits
 A various offspring to th' indulgent sky, 295
 Now bounteous Nature feeds with lavish hand
 The prone creation, yields what once suffic'd
 Their dainty sov'reign when the world was young,
 Ere yet the barb'rous thirst of blood had seiz'd
 The human breast.—Each rolling month matures
 The food that suits it most ; so does each clime. 301

Far in the horrid realms of Winter, where
 Th' establish'd ocean heaps a monstrous waste
 Of shining rocks and mountains to the pole,
 There lives a hardy race, whose plainest wants 305
 Relentless earth, their cruel stepmother,
 Regards not. On the waste of iron fields
 Untam'd, intractable, no harvests wave ;
 Pomona hates them, and the clownish god
 Who tends the garden. In this frozen world 310
 Such cooling gifts were vain ; a fitter meal
 Is earn'd with ease, for here the fruitful spawn
 Of Ocean swarms, and heaps their genial board
 With gen'rous fare and luxury profuse. 314
 These are their bread, the only bread they know,
 These and their willing slave the deer, that crops

The shrubby herbage on their meagre hills.
Girt by the burning zone not thus the South
Her swarthy sons in either Ind maintains,
Or thrifty Libya, from whose fervid loins 320
The lion bursts, and ev'ry fiend that roams
Th' affrighted wilderness. The mountain herd,
Aust and dry, no sweet repast affords,
Nor does the tepid main such kinds produce,
So perfect, so delicious, as the shoals 325
Of icy Zembla. Rashly where the blood
Brews fev'rish frays, where scarce the tubes sustain
Its tumid fervour and tempestuous course,
Kind Nature tempts not to such gifts as these :
But here in livid ripeness melts the grape, 330
Here, finish'd by invigorating suns,
Thro' the green shade the golden orange glows ;
Spontaneous here the turgid melon yields
A gen'rous pulp, the coco swells on high
With milky riches, and in horrid mail 335
The crisp anana wraps its poignant sweets ;—
Earth's vaunted progeny ! in ruder air
Too coy to flourish, ev'n too proud to live,
Or hardly rais'd by artificial fire
To vapid life : here with a mother's smile 340
Glad Amalthea pours her copious horn ;
Here buxom Ceres reigns ; th' autumnal sea

In boundless billows fluctuates o'er their plains :
What suits the climate best, what suits the men,
Nature profuses most, and most the taste 345
Demands. The fountain edg'd with racy wine
Or acid fruit bedews their thirsty souls ;
The breeze eternal breathing round their limbs
Supports in else intolerable air,
While the cool palm, the plantain, and the grove
That waves on gloomy Lebanon, assuage 351
The torrid hell that beams upon their heads.

Now come, ye Naiads ! to the fountains lead ;
Now let me wander thro' your gelid reign ;
I burn to view th' enthusiastic wilds 355
By mortal else untrod. I hear the din
Of waters thund'ring o'er the ruin'd cliffs ;
With holy rev'rence I approach the rocks
Whence glide the streams renown'd in ancient song.
Here from the desert down the rumbling steep 360
First springs the Nile, here bursts the sounding Po
In angry waves, Euphrates hence devolves
A mighty flood to water half the east ;
And there, in Gothic solitude reclin'd,
The cheerless Tanais pours his hoary urn. 365
What solemn twilight ! what stupendous shades
Inwrap these infant floods ! thro' ev'ry nerve

A sacred horror thrills, a pleasing fear
Glides o'er my frame. The forest deepens round,
And more gigantic still the impending trees 370
Stretch their extravagant arms athwart the gloom!
Are these the confines of some Fairy world,
A land of Genii? Say beyond these wilds
What unknown nations? if indeed beyond
Aught habitable lies; and whither leads, 375
To what strange regions or of bliss or pain,
That subterraneous way? Propitious Maids!
Conduct me, while with fearful steps I tread
This trembling ground. The task remains to sing
Your gifts, (so Pæon, so the Pow'rs of Health 380
Command) to praise your crystal element,
The chief ingredient in Heav'n's various works,
Whose flexile genius sparkles in the gem,
Grows firm in oak, and fugitive in wine,
The vehicle, the source, of nutriment 385
And life to all that vegetate or live.

O comfortable Streams! with eager lips
And trembling hand the languid thirsty quaff
New life in you; fresh vigour fills their veins.
No warmer cups the rural ages knew, 390
None warmer sought the sires of humankind:
Happy in temp'rate peace, their equal days

Felt not th' alternate fits of fev'rish mirth
And sick dejection : still serene and pleas'd,
They knew no pains but what the tender soul 395
With pleasure yields to and would ne'er forget :
Blest with divine immunity from ails
Long centuries they liv'd ; their only fate
Was ripe old age, and rather sleep than death.
Oh! could those worthies from the world of gods
Return to visit their degen'rate sons, 401
How would they scorn the joys of modern time,
With all our art and toil improv'd to pain !
Too happy they! but wealth brought luxury,
And luxury on sloth begot disease. 405

Learn temp'rance, Friends ! and hear without disdain
The choice of water. Thus the Coan sage*
Opin'd, and thus the learn'd of ev'ry school:
What least of foreign principles partakes
Is best ; the lightest then what bears the touch 410
Of fire the least, and soonest mounts in air ;
The most insipid the most void of smell.
Such the rude mountain from his horrid sides
Pours down, such waters in the sandy vale
For ever boil, alike of winter frosts 415

* Hippocrates.

And Summer's heat secure. The crystal stream
 Thro' rocks resounding, or for many a mile
 O'er the chaf'd pebbles hurled, yields wholesome, pure,
 And mellow draughts, except when winter thaws,
 And half the mountains melt into the tide. 420
 Tho' thirst were e'er so resolute, avoid
 The sordid lake, and all such drowsy floods
 As fill, from Lethe, Belgia's slow canals,
 (With rest corrupt, with vegetation green,
 Squalid with generation and the birth 425
 Of little monsters) till the pow'r of fire
 Has from profane embraces disengag'd
 The violated lymph. The virgin stream
 In boiling wastes its finer soul in air.

Nothing like simple element dilutes 430
 The food, or gives the chyle so soon to flow:
 But where the stomach, indolent and cold,
 Toys with its duty, animate with wine
 Th' insipid stream, tho' golden Ceres yields
 A more voluptuous a more sprightly draught, 435
 Perhaps more active: wine unmix'd, and all
 The gluy floods that from the vex'd abyss
 Of fermentation spring, with spirit fraught,
 And furious with intoxicating fire,
 Retar'd concoction, and preserve unthaw'd 440

Th' embody'd mass. You see what countless years,
 Embalm'd in fiery quintessence of wine,
 The punny wonders of the reptile world,
 The tender rudiments of life, the slim
 Unravellings of minute anatomy, 445
 Maintain their texture, and unchang'd remain.

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

Mean time I would not always dread the bowl,
 Nor ev'ry trespass shun. The fev'rish strife, 461
 Rous'd by the rare debauch, subdues, expels,

The loit'ring crudities that burden life,
And, like a torrent full and rapid, clears
Th' obstructed tubes. Besides, this restless world
Is full of chances, which by habit's pow'r 466
To learn to bear is easier than to shun.
Ah! when ambition, meagre love of gold,
Or sacred country, calls with mellowing wine
To moisten well the thirsty suffrages, 470
Say how, unseason'd to the midnight frays
Of Comus and his route, wilt thou contend
With Centaurs long to hardy deeds inur'd!
Then learn to revel, but by slow degrees;
By slow degrees the lib'ral arts are won 475
And Hercules grew strong. But when you smooth
The brows of Care, indulge your festive vein
In cups by well-inform'd experience found
The least your bane, and only with your friends:
There are sweet follies, frailties, to be seen 480
By friends alone and men of gen'rous minds.

Oh seldom may the fated hours return
Of drinking deep! I would not daily taste,
Except when life declines, ev'n sober cups.
Weak with'ring Age no rigid law forbids 485
With frugal nectar smooth and slow, with balm,
The sapless habit daily to bedew,

And give the hesitating wheels of life
Gliblier to play: but youth has better joys;
And is it wise, when youth with pleasure flows, 490
To squander the reliefs of age and pain?

What dext'rous thousands just within the goal!
Of wild debauch direct their nightly course!
Perhaps no sickly qualms bedim their days,
No morning admonitions shock the head; 495
But ah what woes remain! life rolls apace,
And that incurable disease old age,
In youthful bodies more severely felt,
More sternly active, shakes their blasted prime,
Except kind Nature by some hasty blow 500
Prevent the ling'ring Fates: For know, whate'er
Beyond its natural fervour hurries on
The sanguine tide, whether the frequent bowl,
High-season'd fare, or exercise to toil
Protracted, spurs to its last stage tir'd life, 505
And sows the temples with untimely snow.
When life is new the ductile fibres feel
The heart's increasing force, and day by day
The growth advances, till the larger tubes
Acquiring (from their* elemental veins 510

* In the human body, as well as in those of other

Condens'd to solid chords) a firmer tone,
Sustain, and just sustain, th' impetuous blood:
Here stops the growth. With overbearing pulse
And pressure still the great destroy the small,
Still with the ruins of the small grow strong: 515
Life glows mean time amid the grinding force
Of viscuous fluids and elastic tubes;
Its various functions vig'rously are ply'd
By strong machin'ry, and in solid Health
The man confirm'd long triumphs o'er disease. 520
But the full ocean ebbs: there is a point
By Nature fix'd when life must downward tend;
For still the beating tide consolidates
The stubborn vessels, more reluctant still
To the weak throbs of th' ill-supported heart: 525
This languishing, these strength'ning by degrees
To hard unyielding unelastic bone,

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

Thro' tedious channels the congealing flood
Crawls lazily, and hardly wanders on ;
It loiters still, and now it stirs no more. 530
This is the period few attain, the death
Of Nature. Thus (so Heav'n ordain'd it) life
Destroys itself ; and could these laws have chang'd,
Nestor might now the fates of Troy relate,
And Homer live immortal as his song. 535

What does not fade? The tow'r that long had stood
The crush of thunder and the warring winds,
Shook by the slow but sure destroyer Time,
Now hangs in doubtful ruins o'er its base ;
And flinty pyramids and walls of brass 540
Descend. The Babylonian spires are sunk ;
Achaia, Rome, and Egypt, moulder down.
Time shakes the stable tyranny of thrones,
And tott'ring empires rush by their own weight.
This huge rotundity we tread grows old, 545
And all those worlds that roll around the sun,
The sun himself shall die, and ancient Night
Again involve the desolate abyss,
Till the great Father thro' the lifeless gloom
Extend his arm to light another world, 550
And bid new planets roll by other laws :
For thro' the regions of unbounded space,

B. I. PRESERVING HEALTH. 43

Where unconfin'd Omnipotence has room,
Being in various systems fluctuates still
Between creation and abhorr'd decay : 555
It ever did, perhaps and ever will :
New worlds are still emerging from the deep ;
The old descending, in their turns to rise. 55

ART
OF
PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK III.

Exercise.

THRO' various toils th' advent'rous Muse has past,
But half the toil, and more than half remains.
Rude is her theme, and hardly fit for song,
Plain, and of little ornament, and I
But little practis'd in th' Aonian arts : 5
Yet not in vain such Labours have we try'd
If aught these Lays the fickle Health confirm.
To you, ye Delicate! I write, for you
I tame my youth to philosophic cares,
And grow still paler by the midnight lamp. 10
Not to debilitate with tim'rous rules
A hardy frame, nor needlessly to brave
Unglorious dangers, proud of mortal strength,
Is all the lesson that in wholesome years
Concerns the strong. His care were ill bestow'd If
Who would with warm effeminacy nurse

The thriving oak which on the mountain's brow
Bears all the blasts that sweep the wintry heav'n.

Behold the lab'rer of the glebe, who toils
In dust, in rain, in cold and sultry skies : 20
Save but the grain from mildews and the flood,
Nought anxious he what sickly stars ascend.
He knows no laws but Æsculapius giv'n,
He studies none ; yet him nor midnight fogs
Infest nor those envenom'd shafts that fly 25
When rapid Sirius fires th' autumnal noon.
His habit pure with plain and temp'rate meals,
Robust with labour, and by custom steel'd
To ev'ry casualty of vary'd life,
Serene he bears the peevish eastern blast, 30
And uninfected breathes the mortal south.

Such the reward of rude and sober life,
Of labour such. By Health the peasant's toil
Is well repaid, if exercise were pain
Indeed and temp'rance pain. By arts like these 35
Laconia nurs'd of old her hardy sons,
And Rome's unconquer'd legions urg'd their way
Unhurt thro' ev'ry toil in ev'ry clime.

Toil and be strong. By toil the flaccid nerves

Grow firm, and gain a more compacted tone ; 40
The greener juices are by toil subdu'd,
Mellow'd, and subtiliz'd, the vapid old
Expell'd, and all the rancour of the blood.
Come, my Companions ! ye who feel the charms
Of Nature and the year ; come, let us stray 45
Where chance or fancy leads our roving walk ;
Come while the soft voluptuous breezes fan
The fleecy heav'ns, inwrap the limbs in balm,
And shed a charming languor o'er the soul ;
Nor when bright Winter sows with prickly frost 50
The vig'rous ether, in unmanly warmth
Indulge at home, nor ev'n when Eurus' blasts
This way and that convolve the lab'ring woods.
My lib'ral walks, save when the skies in rain
Or fogs relent, no season should confine 55
Or to the cloister'd gall'ry or arcade.
Go climb the mountain ; from th' ethereal source
Imbide the recent gale. The cheerful morn
Beams o'er the hills ; go mount th' exulting steed :
Already see the deep-mouth'd beagles catch 60
The tainted mazes, and on eager sport
Intent with emulous impatience try
Each doubtful trace : or if a nobler prey
Delight you more, go chase the desp'rate deer,

B. III. PRESERVING HEALTH. 47

And thro' its deepest solitudes awake 65

The vocal forest with the jovial horn.

But if the breathless chase o'er hill and dale
Exceed your strength, a sport of less fatigue,
Nor less delightful, the prolific stream
Affords. The crystal rivulet that o'er 70

A stony channel rolls its rapid maze
Swarms with the silver fry : such thro' the bounds
Of past'ral Stafford runs the brawling Trent ;
Such Eden, sprung from Cumbrian mountains ; such
The Esk, o'erhung with woods ; and such the stream
On whose Arcadian banks I first drew air, 76

Liddal, till now, except in Doric lays,
Tun'd to her murmurs by her lovesick swains,
Unknown in song, tho' not a purer stream 79

Thro' meads more flow'ry or more romantic groves
Rolls toward the western main. Hail sacred Flood !
May still thy hospitable swains be blest

In rural innocence, thy mountains still
Teem with the fleecy race, thy tuneful woods
For ever flourish, and thy vales look gay 85

With painted meadows and the golden grain !
Oft' with thy blooming sons, when life was new,
Sportive and petulant, and charm'd with toys,
In thy transparent eddies have I lav'd,

Oft' trac'd with patient steps thy Fairy banks, 90
With the well-imitated fly, to hook
The eager trout, and with the slender line
And yielding rod solicit to the shore
The struggling panting prey, while vernal clouds
And tepid gales obscur'd the ruffled pool, 95
And from the deeps call'd forth the wanton swarm.

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

(His fortune and his fame by worthy means 115
Attain'd, and equal to his mod'rate mind,
His life approv'd by all the wise and good,
Ev'n envy'd by the vain) the peaceful groves
Of Epicurus from this stormy world
Receive to rest, of all ungrateful cares 120
Absolv'd, and sacred from the selfish crowd!
Happiest of men, if the same soil invites
A chosen few, companions of his youth,
Once fellow-rakes perhaps, now rural friends,
With whom in easy commerce to pursue 125
Nature's free charms, and vie for sylvan fame;
A fair ambition, void of strife or guile,
Or jealousy or pain to be outdone;
Who plans th' enchanted garden, who directs
The vizio best, and best conducts the stream, 130
Whose groves the fastest thicken and ascend,
Whom first the welcome spring salutes, who shews
The earliest bloom, the sweetest proudest charms
Of Flora, who best gives Pomona's juice
To match the sprightly genius of Champaign. 135
Thrice happy days in rural bus'ness past!
Blest winter nights! when, as the genial fire
Cheers the wide hall, his cordial family
With soft domestic arts the hours beguile,
And pleasing talk that starts not tim'rous fame, 140

With witless wantonness to hunt it down,
Or thro' the fairyland of tale or song
Delighted wander, in fictitious fates
Engag'd, and all that strikes humanity,
Till lost in fable they the stealing hour 145
Of timely rest forget. Sometimes at eve
His neighbours lift the latch, and bless unbid
His festal roof, while o'er the light repast
And sprightly cups they mix in social joy,
And thro' the maze of conversation trace 150
Whate'er amuses or improves the mind.
Sometimes at eve (for I delight to taste
The native zest and flavour of the fruit,
Where sense grows wild and tastes of no manure)
The decent, honest, cheerful, husbandman 155
Should drown his labours in my friendly bowl,
And at my table find himself at home.

Whate'er you study, in whate'er you sweat,
Indulge your taste. Some love the manly foils,
The tennis some, and some the graceful dance; 160
Others more hardy range the purple heath
Or naked stubble, where from field to field
The sounding covies urge their lab'ring flight,
Eager amid the rising cloud to pour
The gun's unerring thunder; and there are 165

Whom still the meed * of the green archer charms,
He chuses best whose labour entertains
His vacant fancy most : the toil you hate
Fatigues you soon, and scarce improves your limbs.

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

Begin with gentle toils, and, as your nerves 180
Grow firm, to hardier by just steps aspire.
The prudent ev'n in ev'ry mod'rate walk
At first but saunter, and by slow degrees
Increase their pace. This doctrine of the wise
Well knows the master of the flying steed. 185
First from the goal the manag'd coursers play

* This word is much used by some of the Old English poets, and signifies reward or prize.

On bended reins ; as yet the skilful youth
 Repress their foamy pride ; but ev'ry breath
 The race grows warmer, and the tempest swells,
 Till all the fiery mettle has its way 190
 And the thick thunder hurries o'er the plain.
 When all at once from indolence to toil
 You spring, the fibres by the hasty shock
 Are tir'd and crack'd, before their unctuous coats
 Compress'd can pour the lubricating balm. 195
 Besides, collected in the passive veins
 The purple mass a sudden torrent rolls,
 O'erpow'rs the heart and deluges the lungs
 With dang'rous inundation ; oft' the source
 Of fatal woes, a cough that foams with blood, 200
 Asthma and feller peripneumony*,
 Or the slow minings of the hectic fire.

Th' athletic fool, to whom what Heav'n deny'd
 Of soul is well compensated in limbs,
 Oft' from his rage or brainless frolic feels 205
 His vegetation and brute force decay.
 The men of better clay and finer mould,
 Know nature, feel the human dignity,
 And scorn to vie with oxen or with apes.

* The inflammation of the lungs.

B. III. PRESERVING HEALTH. 58

Pursu'd proluxly, ev'n the gentlest toil 210
Is waste of Health : repose by small fatigue
Is earn'd, and (where your habit is not prone
To thaw) by the first moisture of the brows.
The fine and subtile spirits cost too much
To be profus'd, too much the roscid balm : 215
But when the hard varieties of life
You toil to learn, or try the dusty chase,
Or the warm deeds of some important day,
Hot from the field indulge not yet your limbs
In wish'd repose, nor court the fanning gale, 220
Nor taste the spring. O by the sacred tears
Of widows, orphans, mothers, sisters, sires,
Forbear! no other pestilence has driv'n
Such myriads o'er th' irremeable deep.
Why this so fatal the sagacious Muse 225
Thro' Nature's cunning labyrinths could trace;
But there are secrets which who knows not now
Must ere he reach them climb the heapy Alps
Of Science, and devote sev'n years to toil.
Besides, I would not stun your patient ears 230
With what it little boots you to attain.
He knows enough, the mariner, who knows
Wherelurk the shelves, and where the whirlpools boil
What signs portend the storm : to subtler minds
He leaves to scan from what mysterious cause 235

Charybdis rages in th' Ionian wave,
Whence those impetuous currents in the main
Which neither oar nor sail can stem, and why
The rough'ning deep expects the storm as sure
As red Orion mounts the shrouded heav'n. 240

In ancient times, when Rome with Athens vy'd
For polish'd luxury and useful arts,
All hot and reeking from th' Olympic strife
And warm palestra, in the tepid bath
Th' athletic youth relax'd their weary limbs; 245
Soft oils bedew'd them, with the grateful pow'rs
Of nard and cassia fraught, to sooth and heal
The cherish'd nerves. Our less voluptuous clime
Not much invites us to such arts as these.
'Tis not for those whom gelid skies embrace, 250
And chilling fogs, whose perspiration feels
Such frequent bars from Eurus and the north,
'Tis not for these to cultivate a skin
Too soft, or teach the recremental fume
Too fast to crowd thro' such precarious ways; 255
For thro' the small arterial mouths, that pierce
In endless millions the close-woven skin,
The baser fluids in a constant stream
Escape, and viewless melt into the winds;
While this eternal this most copious waste 260

Of blood, degenerate into vapid brine,
Maintains its wonted measure, all the pow'rs
Of Health befriend you, all the wheels of life
With ease and pleasure move ; but this restrain'd
Or more or less, so more or less you feel 265
The functions labour : from this fatal source
What woes descend is never to be sung ;
To take their numbers were to count the sands
That ride in whirlwind the parch'd Libyan air,
Or waves that, when the blust'ring north embroils 270
The Baltic, thunder on the German shore.
Subject not, then, by soft emollient arts,
This grand expence, on which your fates depend,
To ev'ry caprice of the sky, nor thwart
The genius of your clime ; for from the blood 275
Least fickle rise the recremental streams,
And least obnoxious to the styptic air,
Which breathe thro' straiter and more callous pores :
The temper'd Scythian hence half-naked treads
His boundless snows, nor rues th' inclement heav'n ;
And hence our painted ancestors defy'd 281
The east, nor curs'd like us their fickle sky.

The body, moulded by the clime, endures
Th' equator heats or Hyperborean frost,
Except by habits foreign to its turn 285

Unwise you counteract its forming pow'r.
Rude at the first, the winter shocks you less
By long acquaintance: study then your sky,
Form to its manners your obsequious frame,
And learn to suffer what you cannot shun. 290
Against the rigours of a damp cold heav'n
To fortify their bodies some frequent
The gelid cistern, and where nought forbids
I praise their dauntless heart: a frame so steel'd
Dreads not the cough, nor those ungenial blasts 295
That breathe the tertian or fell rheumatism;
The nerves so temper'd never quit their tone;
No chronic languors haunt such hardy breasts:
But all things have their bounds; and he who makes
By daily use the kindest regimen 300
Essential to his health, should never mix
With human-kind, nor art nor trade pursue:
He not the safe vicissitudes of life
Without some shock endures; ill-fitted he
To want the known or bear unusual things. 305
Besides, the pow'rful remedies of pain
(Since pain in spite of all our care will come)
Should never with your prosp'rous days of Health
Grow too familiar; for by frequent use
The strongest med'cines lose their healing pow'r, 310
And ev'n the surest poisons theirs to kill.

Let those who from the frozen Arctos reach
Parch'd Mauritania or the sultry west,
Or the wide flood that laves rich Indostan,
Plunge thrice a day, and in the tepid wave 315
Untwist their stubborn pores, that full and free
Th' evaporation thro' the soften'd skin
May bear proportion to the swelling blood ;
So may they 'scape the fever's rapid flames,
So feel untainted the hot breath of hell. 320
With us the man of no complaint demands
The warm ablution just enough to clear
The sluices of the skin, enough to keep
The body sacred from indecent soil.
Still to be pure, ev'n did it not conduce 325
(As much it does) to Health, were greatly worth
Your daily pains : it is this adorns the rich ;
The want of this is poverty's worst wo ;
With this external virtue age maintains
A decent grace ; without it youth and charms 330
Are loathsome : this the venal graces know ,
So doubtless do your wives ; for marry'd sires
As well as lovers still pretend to taste :
Nor is it less (all prudent wives can tell)
To lose a husband's than a lover's heart. 335

But now the hours and seasons when to toil

From foreign themes recal my wand'ring song,
Some labour fasting, or but slightly fed,
To lull the grinding stomach's hungry rage.
Where nature feeds too corpulent a frame, 340
'Tis wisely done; for while the thirsty veins,
Impatient of lean penury, devour
The treasur'd oil, then is the happiest time
To shake the lazy balsam from its cells.
Now while the stomach from the full repast 345
Subsides, but ere returning hunger gnaws,
Ye leaner habits! give an hour to toil,
And ye whom no luxuriance of growth
Oppresses yet, or threatens to oppress:
But from the recent meal no labours please 350
Of limbs or mind; for now the cordial pow'rs
Claim all the wand'ring spirits to a work
Of strong and subtle toil and great event,
A work of time; and you may rue the day
You hurry'd with untimely exercise 355
A half-concocted chyle into the blood.
The body overcharg'd with unctuous phlegm
Much toil demands, the lean elastic less.
While winter chills the blood and blinds the veins,
No labours are too hard: by those you 'scape 360
The slow diseases of the torpid year,
Endless to name, to one of which alone,

To that which tears the nerves, the toil of slaves
Is pleasure. Oh from such inhuman pains
May all be free who merit not the wheel! 365
But from the burning Lion, when the sun
Pours down his sultry wrath, now while the blood
Too much already maddens in the veins,
And all the finer fluids thro' the skin
Explore their flight, me near the cool cascade 370
Reclin'd, or saunt'ring in the lofty grove,
No needless slight occasion should engage
To pant and sweat beneath the fiery noon :
Now the fresh morn alone and mellow eve
To shady walks and active rural sports 375
Invite ; but while the chilling dews descend,
May nothing tempt you to the cold embrace
Of humid skies, tho' 'tis no vulgar joy
To trace the horrors of the solemn wood
While the soft ev'ning saddens into night, 380
Tho' the sweet poet of the vernal groves
Melts all the night in strains of am'rous wo.

The shades descend, and Midnight o'er the world
Expands her sable wings ; great Nature droops
Thro' all her works : now happy he whose toil 385
Has o'er his languid pow'rless limbs diffus'd
A pleasing lassitude ; he not in vain

Invokes the gentle deity of Dreams:
His pow'rs the most voluptuously dissolve
In soft repose; on him the balmy dews 390
Of sleep with double nutriment descend.
But would you sweetly waste the blank of night
In deep oblivion, or on Fancy's wings
Visit the paradise of happy Dreams,
And waken cheerful as the lively Morn? 395
Oppress not nature sinking down to rest
With feasts too late, too solid, or too full,
But be the first concoction half-matur'd
Ere you to mighty indolence resign
Your passive faculties. He from the toils 400
And troubles of the day to heavier toil
Retires, whom, trembling from the tow'r that rocks
Amid the clouds on Calpe's hideous height,
The busy demons hurl, or in the main
O'erwhelm, or bury struggling under ground. 405
Not all a monarch's luxury the woes
Can counterpoise of that most wretched man
Whose nights are shaken with the frantic fits
Of wild Orestes, whose delirious brain, 409
Stung by the Furies, works with poison'd thought,
While pale and monstrous painting shocks the soul,
And mangled Consciousness bemoans itself
For ever torn, and chaos floating round.

B. III. PRESERVING HEALTH.

61

What dreams presage, what danger these or those
Portend to sanity, tho' prudent seers 415
Reveal'd of old, and men of deathless fame,
We would not to the superstitious mind
Suggest new throbs, new vanities of fear :
'Tis ours to teach you from the peaceful night
To banish omens and all restless woes. 420

In study some protract the silent hours,
Which others consecrate to mirth and wine,
And sleep till noon, and hardly live till night.
But surely this redeems not from the shades
One hour of life. Nor does it aught avail 425
What season you to drowsy Morpheus give
Of th' ever-varying circle of the day,
Or whether thro' the tedious winter gloom
You tempt the midnight or the morning damps.
The body fresh and vig'rous from repose 430
Defies the early fogs; but, by the toils
Of wakeful day exhausted and unstrung,
Weakly resists the night's unwholesome breath.
The grand discharge, th' effusion of the skin,
Slowly impair'd, the languid maladies 435
Creep on, and thro' the sick'ning functions steal;
As when the chilling east invades the spring,
The delicate Narcissus pines away

In hectic languor, and a slow disease
Taints all the family of flow'rs, condemn'd 440
To cruel heav'ns. But why, already prone
To fade, should Beauty cherish its own bane?
O shame! O pity! nipt with pale quadrille
And midnight cares the bloom of Albion dies.

By toil subdu'd, the warrior and the hind 445
Sleep fast and deep; their active functions soon
With gen'rous streams the subtle tubes supply,
And soon the tonic irritable nerves
Feel the fresh impulse and awake the soul.
The sons of Indolence with long repose 450
Grow torpid, and, with slowest Lethe drunk,
Feebly and ling'ringly return to life,
Blunt ev'ry sense and pow'rless ev'ry limb.
Ye prone to sleep! (whom sleeping most annoys)
On the hard mattress or elastic couch 455
Extend your limbs, and wean yourselves from sloth,
Nor grudge the lean projector, of dry brain
And springy nerves, the blandishments of down,
Nor envy while the bury'd Bacchanal
Exhales his surfeit in proluxer dreams. 460

He without riot in the balmy feast
Of life the wants of nature has supply'd

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

Observe the circling year, how unperceiv'd
Her seasons change! behold by slow degrees
Stern Winter tam'd into a ruder Spring,
The ripen'd Spring a milder Summer glows, 475
Departing Summer sheds Pomona's store,
And aged Autumn brews the winter storm.
Slow as they come, these changes comes not void
Of mortal shocks: the cold and torrid reigns,
The two great periods of th' important year, 480
Are in their first approaches seldom safe:
Funereal Autumn all the sickly dread,
And the black Fates deform the lovely Spring.
He well advis'd who taught our wiser sires
Early to borrow Muscovy's warm spoils 485
Ere the first frost has touch'd the tender blade,
And late resign them, tho' the wanton Spring

Should deck her charms with all her sister's rays;
For while th' effluence of the skin maintains
Its native measure, the pleuritic Spring 490
Glides harmless by, and Autumn, sick to death
With sallow quartans, no contagion breathes.

I in prophetic numbers could unfold
The omens of the year, what seasons teem
With what diseases, what the humid south 495
Prepares, and what the demon of the east;
But you perhaps refuse the tedious song.
Besides, whatever plagues in heat or cold,
Or drought or moisture, dwell, they hurt not you,
Skill'd to correct the vices of the sky, 500
And taught already how to each extreme
To bend your life. But should the public bane
Infect you, or some trespass of your own,
Or flaw of nature, hint mortality,
Soon as a not unpleasing horror glides 505
Along the spine, thro' all your torpid limbs,
When first the head throbs, or the stomach feels
A sickly load, a weary pain the loins,
Be Celsus call'd : the Fates come rushing on;
The rapid Fates admit of no delay. 510
While wilful you, and fatally secure,
Expect to morrow's more auspicious sun,

The growing pest, whose infancy was weak
And easy vanquish'd, with triumphant sway
O'erpow'rs your life. For want of timely care 515
Millions have dy'd of medicable wounds.

Ah ! in what perils is vain life engag'd !
What slight neglects, what trivial faults, destroy
The hardest frame ! Of indolence, of toil,
We die ; of want, of superfluity. 520
The all-surrounding heav'n, the vital air,
Is big with death : and tho' the putrid south
Be shut, tho' no convulsive agony
Shake from the deep foundations of the world
Th' imprison'd plagues, a secret venom oft 525
Corrupts the air, the water, and the land.
What livid deaths has sad Byzantium seen !
How oft has Cairo with a mother's wo
Wept o'er her slaughter'd sons and lonely streets !
Ev'n Albion, girt with less malignant skies, 530
Albion the poison of the gods has drank,
And felt the sting of monsters all her own.

Ere yet the fell Plantagenets had spent
Their ancient rage at Bosworth's purple field,
While for which tyrant England should receive 535
Her legions incestuous murders mix'd
And daily horrors, till the Fates were drunk

With kindred-blood by kindred-hands profus'd,
Another plague, of more gigantic arm,
Arose, a monster, never known before, 540
Rear'd from Cocytus its portentous head :
This rapid Fury not like other pests
Pursu'd a gradual course, but in a day
Rush'd as a storm o'er half th' astonish'd isle,
And strew'd with sudden carcasses the land. 545

First thro' the shoulders, or whatever part
Was seiz'd the first, a fervid vapour sprung ;
With rash combustion thence the quiv'ring spark
Shot to the heart, and kindled all within,
And soon the surface caught the spreading fires : 550.
Thro' all the yielding pores the melted blood
Gush'd out in smoky sweats ; but nought assuag'd
The torrid heat within, nor aught reliev'd
The stomach's anguish. With incessant toil,
Desp'rate of ease, impatient of their pain, 555
They toss'd from side to side. In vain the stream
Ran full and clear ; they burnt and thirsted still.
The restless arteries with rapid blood
Beat strong and frequent : thick and pantingly
The breath was fetch'd, and with huge lab'ring heav'd.
At last a heavy pain oppress'd the head ; 560
A wild delirium came : their weeping friends

Were strangers now, and this no home of theirs.
Harass'd with toil on toil the sinking pow'rs
Lay prostrate and o'erthrown : a pond'rous sleep 565
Wrapt all the senses up. They slept and dy'd.

In some a gentle horror crept at first
O'er all the limbs : the sluices of the skin
Withheld their moisture, till by art provok'd
The sweats o'erflow'd, but in a clammy tide, 570
Now free and copious, now restrain'd and slow,
Of tinctures various, as the temp'tature
Had mix'd the blood, and rank with fetid steams,
As if the pent-up humours by delay
Were grown more fell, more putrid, and malign. 575
Here lay their hopes, (tho' little hope remain'd)
With full effusion of perpetual sweats
To drive the venom out : and here the Fates
Were kind, that long they linger'd not in pain ;
For who surviv'd the sun's diurnal race, 580
Rose from the dreary gates of hell redeem'd ;
Some the sixth hour oppress'd, and some the third.

Of many thousands, few untainted 'scap'd ;
Of those infected, fewer 'scap'd alive ;
Of those who liv'd, some felt a second blow ; 585
And whom the second spar'd, a third destroy'd.

Frantic with fear they sought by flight to shun
The fierce contagion. O'er the mournful land
Th' infected City pour'd her hurring swarms;
Rous'd by the flames that fir'd her seats around 590
Th' infected Country rush'd into the Town.
Some sad at home, and in the desert some,
Abjur'd the fatal commerce of mankind.
In vain; where'er they fled the Fates pursu'd.
Others with hopes more specious cross'd the main,
To seek protection in far distant skies; 596
But none they found. It seem'd the gen'ral air
From pole to pole, from Atlas to the east,
Was then at enmity with English blood;
For but the race of England all were safe 600
In foreign climes; nor did this Fury taste
The foreign blood which England then contain'd.
Where should they fly? the circumambient heav'n
Involv'd them still, and ev'ry breeze was bane:
Where find relief? the salutary art 605
Was mute, and, startled at the new disease,
In fearful whispers hopeless omens gave.
To Heav'n with suppliant rites they sent their pray'rs;
Heav'n heard them not. Of ev'ry hope depriv'd,
Fatigu'd with vain resources, and subdu'd 610
With woes restless and enfeebling fear,
Passive they sunk beneath the mighty blow.

B. III. PRESERVING HEALTH. 69

Nothing but lamentable sounds were heard,
O'er aught was seen but ghastly views of death.
Infectious horror ran from face to face, 619
And pale despair. 'Twas all the bus'ness then
To tend the sick and in their turns to die.
In heaps they fell; and oft' one bed, they say,
The sick'ning, dying, and the dead contain'd.

Ye guardian Gods! on whom the fates depend 62
Of tott'ring Albion, ye eternal Fires O
'That lead thro' heav'n the wand'ring year! ye Pow'rs
'That o'er th' encircling elements preside!
May nothing worse than what this age has seen
Arrive! Enough abroad, enough at home, 625
Has Albion bled. Here a distemper'd heav'n
Has thinn'd her cities, from those lofty cliffs
'That awe proud Gaul to Thule's wintry reign;
While in the West, beyond th' Atlantic foam,
Her bravest sons, keen for the fight, have dy'd 630
'The death of cowards and of common men,
Sunk void of wounds, and fall'n without renown.

But from these views the weeping Muses turn,
And other themes invite my wand'ring song. 634

ART
OF
PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK IV.

The Passions.

THE choice of Aliment, the choice of Air,
The use of Toil and all external things,
Already sung, it now remains to trace
What good what evil from ourselves proceeds,
And how the subtile principle within §
Inspires with Health, or mines with strange decay
The passive body. Ye poetic Shades,
Who know the secrets of the world unseen,
Assist my song! for, in a doubtful theme
Engag'd, I wander thro' mysterious ways. 10

There is, they say, (and I believe there is)
A spark within us of the immortal fire
That animates and moulds the grosser frame,

B. IV. PRESERVING HEALTH. 71

And when the body sinks, escapes to heav'n,
Its native seat, and mixes with the gods: 15
Meanwhile this heav'nly particle pervades
The mortal elements, in ev'ry nerve
It thrills with pleasure or grows mad with pain,
And in its secret conclave, as it feels
The body's woes and joys, this ruling pow'r 20
Wields at its will the dull material world,
And is the body's health or malady.

By its own toil the gross corporeal frame
Fatigues, extenuates, or destroys, itself.
Nor less the labours of the mind corrode 25
The solid fabric; for by subtile parts
And viewless atoms secret Nature moves
The mighty wheels of this stupendous world:
By subtile fluids, pour'd thro' subtile tubes,
The natural vital functions are perform'd: 30
By these the stubborn aliments are tam'd,
The toiling heart distributes life and strength;
These the still-crumbling frame rebuild, and these
Are lost in thinking, and dissolve in air.

But 'tis not thought, (for still the soul's employ'd)
'Tis painful thinking that corrodes our clay. 36
All day the vacant eye without fatigue

Strays o'er the heav'n and earth, but long intent
On microscopic arts its vigour fails.
Just so the mind, with various thought amus'd, 40
Nor akes itself nor gives the body pain ;
But anxious study, discontent, and care,
Love without hope, and hate without revenge,
And fear and jealousy, fatigue the soul,
Engross the subtile ministers of life, 45
And spoil the lab'ring functions of their share :
Hence the lean gloom that Melancholy wears,
The lover's paleness, and the sallow hue
Of Envy, Jealousy, the meagre stare
Of sore revenge : the canker'd body hence 50
Betrays each fretful motion of the mind.

The strong built pedant, who both night and day
Feeds on the coarsest fare the schools bestow,
And crudely fattens at gross Burman's stall,
O'erwhelm'd with phlegm lies in a dropsy drown'd,
Or sinks in lethargy before his time. 56
With useful studies you and arts that please
Employ your mind ; amuse but not fatigue.
Peace to each drowsy metaphysic sage,
And ever may all heavy systems rest ! 60
Yet some there are, ev'n of elastic parts,
Whom strong and obstinate ambition leads

B. IV. PRESERVING HEALTH.

73

Thro' all the rugged roads of barren lore,
And gives to relish what their gen'rous taste
Would else refuse ; but may not thirst of fame 65
Nor love of knowledge urge you to fatigue
With constant drudgery the lib'ral soul.
Toy with your books ; and, as the various fits
Of humour seize you, from philosophy
To fable shift, from serious Antonine 70
To Rabelais' ravings, and from prose to song.

While reading pleases, but no longer, read ;
And read aloud, resounding Homer's strain.
And wield the thunder of Demosthenes.
The chest so exercis'd improves its strength, 75
And quick vibrations thro' the bowels drive
The restless blood, which in unactive days
Would loiter else thro' unelastic tubes.
Deem it not trifling while I recommend
What posture suits : To stand and sit by turns, 80
As Nature prompts, is best ; but o'er your leaves
To lean for ever, cramps the vital parts,
And robs the fine machin'ry of its play.

'Tis the great art of life to manage well
The restless mind ; for ever on pursuit 85
Of knowledge bent, it starves the grosser pow'rs :

Quite unemploy'd, against its own repose
It turns its fatal edge, and sharper pangs
Than what the body knows embitter life :
Chiefly where Solitude, sad nurse of Care, 90
To sickly musing gives the pensive mind :
There madness enters ; and the dim-ey'd fiend,
Sour Melancholy, night and day provokes
Her own eternal wound : the sun grows pale,
A mournful visionary light o'er spreads 95
The cheerful face of Nature, earth becomes
A dreary desert, and Heav'n frowns above :
Then various shapes of curs'd illusion rise .
Whate'er the wretched fears, creating Fear,
Forms out of nothing, and with monsters teem, 100
Unknown in hell. The prostrate soul beneath
A load of huge imagination heaves,
And all the horrors that the murd'rer feels
With anxious flutt'rings wake the guiltless breast.

Such phantoms Pride in solitary scenes, 105
Or Fear on delicate Selflove creates.
From other cares absolv'd, the busy mind
Finds in yourself a theme to pore upon ;
It finds you miserable, or makes you so :
For while yourself you anxiously explore, 110
Timorous Selflove, with sick'ning Fancy's aid,

Presents the danger that you dread the most,
 And ever galls you in your tender part :
 Hence some for love, and some for jealousy,
 For grim religion some, and some for pride, 115
 Have lost their reason ; some for fear of want
 Want all their lives ; and others ev'ry day
 For fear of dying suffer worse than death.
 Ah ! from your bosoms banish if you can
 Those fatal guests, and first the demon Fear, 120
 That trembles at impossible events,
 Lest aged Atlas should resign his load,
 And heav'n's eternal battlements rush down.
 Is there an evil worse than fear itself?
 And what avails it that indulgent Heav'n 125
 From mortal eyes has wrapt the woes to come,
 If we, ingenious to torment ourselves,
 Grow pale at hideous fictions of our own !
 Enjoy the present, nor with needless cares
 Of what may spring from blind Misfortune's womb
 Appal the surest hour that life bestows. 131
 Serene, and master of yourself, prepare
 For what may come, and leave the rest to Heav'n.

Oft' from the body, by long ails mistun'd,
 These evils sprung the most important Health, 135
 That of the mind, destroy ; and when the mind

They first invade, the conscious body soon
In sympathetic languishment declines.
These chronic Passions, while from real woes
They rise, and yet without the body's fault 140
Infest the soul, admit one only cure,
Diversion, hurry, and a restless life.
Vain are the consolations of the wise ;
In vain your friends would reason down your pain.
O ye whose souls relentless love has tam'd 145
To soft distress, or friends untimely fall'n !
Court not the luxury of tender thought,
Nor deem it impious to forget those pains
That hurt the living, nought avail the dead.
Go, soft Enthusiast ! quit the cypress groves, 150
Nor to the rivelet's lonely moanings tune
Your sad complaint : go seek the cheerful haunts
Of men, and mingle with the bustling crowd ;
Lay schemes for wealth, or pow'r, or fame, the wish
Of nobler minds, and push them night and day ; 155
Or join the caravan in quest of scenes
New to your eyes, and shifting ev'ry hour,
Beyond the Alps, beyond the Apennines ;
Or, more advent'rous, rush into the field
Where war grows hot, and raging thro' the sky 160
The lofty trumpet swells the madd'ning soul,
And in the hardy camp and toilsome march
Forget all softer and less manly cares.

B. IV. PRESERVING HEALTH.

77

But most, too passive, when the blood runs low,
Too weakly indolent to strive with pain, 165
And bravely, by resisting, conquer Fate,
Try Circe's arts, and in the tempting bowl
Of poison'd nectar sweet oblivion swill.

Struck by the pow'rful charm, the gloom dissolves
In empty air, Elysium opens round, 170

A pleasing frenzy buoys the lighten'd soul,
And sanguine hopes dispel your fleeting care,
And what was difficult and what was dire
Yields to your prowess and superior stars :
The happiest you of all that e'er were mad, 175
Or are or shall be, could this folly last.

But soon your heav'n is gone ; a heavier gloom
Shuts o'er your head, and as the thund'ring stream,
Swoln o'er its banks with sudden mountain rain,
Sinks from its tumult to a silent brook, 180

So when the frantic raptures in your breast
Subside, you languish into mortal man ;
You sleep, and, waking, find yourself undone :
For prodigal of life, in one rash night 184

You lavish'd more than might support three days.
A heavy morning comes ; your cares return
With tenfold rage. An anxious stomach well
May be endur'd, so may the throbbing head ;
But such a dim delirium, such a dream,

Involves you, such a dastardly despair 190
Unmans your soul, ^{as} madd'ning Pentheus felt
When, baited round Cithæron's cruel sides,
He saw two suns and double Thebes ascend.
You curse the sluggish Port, you curse the wretch,
The felon, with unnat'ral mixture first 195
Who dar'd to violate the virgin wine,
Or on the fugitive Champaign you pour
A thousand curses, for to heav'n it rapt
Your soul to plunge you deeper in despair :
Perhaps you rue ev'n that divinest gift, 200
The gay, serene, good natur'd, Burgundy,
Or the fresh fragrant vintage of the Rhine,
And wish that Heav'n from mortals had withheld
The grape and all intoxicating bowls.

Besides, it wounds you sore to recollect 205
What follies in your loose unguarded hour
Escap'd. For one irrevocable word,
Perhaps that meant no harm, you loose a friend ;
Or in the rage of wine your hasty hand
Performs a deed to haunt you to the grave : 210
Add that your means, your health, your parts decay ;
Your friends avoid you ; brutishly transform'd
They hardly know you ; or if one remains
To wish you well, he wishes you in heav'n.

B. IV. PRESERVING HEALTH. 79

Despis'd, unwept, you fall, who might have left 215
A sacred, cherish'd, sady-pleasing, name,
A name still to be utter'd with a sigh.
Your last ungraceful scene has quite effac'd
All sense and mem'ry of your former worth.

How to live happiest, how avoid the pains, 220
The disappointments, and disgusts, of those
Who would in pleasure all their hours employ,
The precepts here of a divine old man
I could recite. Tho' old, he still retain'd
His manly sense and energy of mind. 225
Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe:
He still remember'd that he once was young;
His easy presence check'd no decent joy.
Him ev'n the dissolute admir'd, for he
A graceful looseness when he pleas'd put on, 230
And laughing could instruct. Much had he read,
Much more had seen: he study'd from the life,
And in th' original perus'd mankind.

Vers'd in the woes and vanities of life
He pity'd man, and much he pity'd those 235
Whom falsely-smiling Fate has curs'd with means
To dissipate their days in quest of joy.
"Our aim is happiness; 'tis your's 'tis mine,"

He said ; " it is the pursuit of all that live ;
" Yet few attain it, if 'twas e'er attain'd ; 240
" But they the wildest wander from the mark
" Who thro' the flow'ry paths of saunt'ring joy
" Seek this coy goddess, that from stage to stage
" Invites us still, but shifts as we pursue :
" For not to name the pains that pleasure brings 245
" To counterpoise itself, relentless Fate
" Forbids that we thro' gay voluptuous wilds
" Should ever roam ; and, were the Fates more kind,
" Our narrow luxuries would soon grow stale : 249
" Were these exhaustless, Nature would grow sick,
" And, cloy'd with pleasure, squeamishly complain
" That all is vanity, and life a dream.
" Let Nature rest : be busy for yourself
" And for your friend ; be busy ev'n in vain
" Rather than tease her sated appetites. 255
" Who never fasts no banquet e'er enjoys ;
" Who never toils or watches never sleeps.
" Let Nature rest ; and when the taste of joy
" Grows keen, indulge, but shun satiety.

" 'Tis not for mortals always to be blest, 260
" But him the least the dull or painful hours
" Of life oppress, whom sober Sense conducts
" And Virtue thro' this labyrinth we tread.

“ Virtue and Sense I mean not to disjoin ;
“ Virtue and Sense are one : and, trust me still, 265
“ A faithless heart betrays the head unsound.
“ Virtue (for mere Goodnature is a fool)
“ Is sense and spirit with humanity :
“ 'Tis sometimes angry, and its frown confounds ;
“ 'Tis ev'n vindictive, but in vengeance just. 270
“ Knaves fain would laugh at it ; some great ones dare ;
“ But at his heart the most undaunted son
“ Of fortune dreads its name and awful charms.
“ To noblest uses this determines wealth ;
“ This is the solid pomp of prosp'rous days, 275
“ The peace and shelter of adversity :
“ And if you pant for glory, build your fame
“ On this foundation, which the secret shock
“ Defies of Envy and all-sapping Time.
“ The gaudy gloss of fortune only strikes 280
“ The vulgar eye : the suffrage of the wise,
“ The praise that's worth ambition, is attain'd
“ By Sense alone and dignity of mind.

“ Virtue, the strength and beauty of the soul,
“ Is the best gift of Heav'n, a happiness 285
“ That, ev'n above the smiles and frowns of Fate,
“ Exalts great Nature's fav'rites ; a wealth
“ That ne'er incumbers nor can be transferr'd.

“ Riches are oft’ by guilt and baseness earn’d,
“ Or dealt by Chance to shield a lucky knave, 290
“ Or throw a cruel sunshine on a fool :
“ But for one end, one much-neglected use,
“ Are riches worth your care : (for Nature’s wants
“ Are few, and without opulence supply’d)
“ This noble end is to produce the soul, 295
“ To shew the virtues in their fairest light,
“ To make Humanity the minister
“ Of bounteous Providence, and teach the breast
“ That gen’rous luxury the gods enjoy.”

Thus in his graver vein the friendly sage 300
Sometimes declaim’d. Of right and wrong he taught
Truths as refin’d as ever Athens heard,
And (strange to tell!) he practis’d what he preach’d.
Skill’d in the Passions, how to check their sway
He knew, as far as Reason can control 305
The lawless pow’rs. But other cares are mine :
Form’d in the school of Pæon, I relate
What Passions hurt the body, what improve ;
Avoid them or invite them as you may.

Know, then, whatever cheerful and serene 310
Supports the mind, supports the body too :
Hence the most vital movement mortals feel

Is hope, the balm and lifeblood of the soul:
It pleases and it lasts. Indulgent Heav'n
Sent down the kind delusion thro' the paths 315
Of rugged life to lead us patient on,
And make our happiest state no tedious thing.
Our greatest good, and what we least can spare,
Is Hope; the last of all our evils, Fear.

But there are Passions grateful to the breast 320
And yet no friends to life; perhaps they please
Or to excess, and dissipate the soul,
Or while they please torment. The stubborn clown,
The iil-tam'd ruffian, the pale usurer,
(If Love's omnipotence such hearts can mould) 325
May safely mellow into love, and grow
Refin'd, humane, and gen'rous, if they can.
Love in such bosoms never to a fault
Or pain or pleasures: but ye finer Souls!
Form'd to soft luxury, and prompt to thrill 330
With all the tumults, all the joys and pains,
That beauty gives, with caution and reserve
Indulge the sweet destroyer of repose,
Nor court too much the queen of charming cares;
For while the cherish'd poison in your breast 335
Ferments and maddens, sick with jealousy,
Absence, distrust, or ev'n with anxious joy,

The wholesome appetites and pow'rs of life
Dissolve in languor: the coy stomach loathes
The genial board; your cheerful days are gone; 340
The gen'rous bloom that flush'd your cheeks is fled:
To sighs devoted and to tender pains,
Pensive you sit, or solitary stray,
And waste your youth in musing: musing first
Toy'd into care your unsuspecting heart: 345
It found a liking there, a sportful fire,
And that fomented into serious love,
Which musing daily strengthens and improves
Thro' all the heights of fondness and romance;
And you're undone, the fatal shaft has sped, 350
If once you doubt whether you love or no;
The body wastes away, th' infected mind,
Dissolv'd in female tenderness, forgets
Each manly virtue, and grows dead to fame.
Sweet Heav'n! from such intoxicating charms 355
Defend all worthy breasts! not that I deem
Love always dang'rous, always to be shunn'd;
Love well repaid, and not too weakly sunk
In wanton and unmanly tenderness,
Adds bloom to Health, o'er ev'ry virtue sheds 360
A gay, humane, a sweet, and gen'rous, grace,
And brightens all the ornaments of man:
But fruitless, hopeless, disappointed, rack'd

B. IV. PRESERVING HEALTH. 85

With jealousy, fatigu'd with hope and fear,
Too serious or too languishingly fond, 365
Unnerves the body and unmans the soul.
And some have dy'd for love, and some run mad,
And some with desp'rate hands themselves have slain.

Some to extinguish, others to prevent,
A mad devotion to one dang'rous fair, 370
Court all they meet, in hopes to dissipate
The cares of love amongst an hundred brides.
Th' event is doubtful ; for there are who find
A cure in this, there are who find it not.
'Tis no relief, alas ! it rather galls 375
The wound to those who are sincerely sick ;
For while from fev'rish and tumultuous joys
The nerves grow languid and the soul subsides,
The tender fancy smarts with ev'ry sting,
And what was love before is madness now. 380
Is Health your care, or luxury your aim ?
Be temp'rate still : when Nature bids, obey ;
Her wild impatient sallies bear no curb :
But when the prurient habit of delight
Or loose imagination spurs you on 385
To deeds above your strength, impute it not
To Nature ; Nature all compulsion hates.
Ah ! let nor luxury nor vain renown

Urge you to feats you well might sleep without,
To make what should be rapture a fatigue, 390
◀ tedious task, nor in the wanton arms
Of twining La's melt your manhood down;
For from the colliquation of soft joys
How chang'd you rise! the ghost of what you was
Languid and melancholy, and gaunt and wan, 395
Your veins exhausted and your nerves unstrung,
Spoil'd of its balm and sprightly zest, the blood
Grows vapid phlegm : along the tender nerves
(To each slight impulse tremblingly awake)
A subtile fiend, that mimics all the plagues, 400
Rapid and restless springs from part to part :
The blooming honours of your youth are fall'n,
Your vigour pines, your vital pow'rs decay,
Diseases haunt you, and untimely age
Creeps on, unsocial, impotent, and lewd. 405
Infatuate, impious, Epicure! to waste
The stores of pleasure, cheerfulness, and Health!
Infatuate all who make delight their trade,
And coy perdition ev'ry hour pursue.

Who pines with love, or in lascivious flames 410
Consumes, is with his own consent undone :
He chooses to be wretched, to be mad,
And warn'd proceeds, and wilful to his fate.
But there is a Passion whose tempestuous sway

B. IV. PRESERVING HEALTH. 87

Tears up each virtue planted in the breast, 415
And shakes to ruins proud Philosophy :
For pale and trembling Anger rushes in
With falt'ring speech, and eyes that wildly stare,
Fierce as the tiger, madder than the seas,
Desp'rate, and arm'd with more than human strength,
How soon the calm, humane, and polish'd, man 425
Forgets compunction, and starts up a fiend !
Who pines in love, or wastes with silent cares,
Envy or ignominy, or tender grief,
Slowly descends, and ling'ringly, to the shades ; 425
But he whom anger stings, drops, if he dies,
At once, and rushes apoplectic down,
Or a fierce fever hurries him to hell :
For as the body thro' unnumber'd strings
Reverberates each vibration of the soul, 430
As is the Passion such is still the pain
The body feels, or chronic or acute ;
And oft' a sudden storm at once o'erpow'rs
The life, or gives your reason to the winds.
Such fates attend the rash alarm of fear 435
And sudden grief, and rage, and sudden joy:

There are mean time to whom the boist'rous fit
Is Health, and only fills the sails of life :
For where the mind a torpid winter leads,
Wrapt in a body corpulent and cold, 440

And each clogg'd function lazily moves on,
 A gen'rous sally spurns th' incumbent load,
 Unlocks the breast, and gives a cordial glow.
 But if your wrathful blood is apt to boil,
 Or are your nerves too irritably strung, 44
 Wave all dispute; be cautious if you joke;
 Keep lent for ever, and forswear the bowl;
 For one rash moment sends you to the shades,
 Or shatters ev'ry hopeful scheme of life,
 And gives to horror all your days to come. 45
 Fate arm'd with thunder, fire, and ev'ry plague
 That ruins, tortures, or distracts, mankind,
 And makes the happy wretched in an hour,
 O'erwhelms you not with woes so horrible
 As your own wrath, nor gives more sudden blows. 45

While choler works, good Friend! you may be
 Distrust yourself, and sleep before you fight: [wronging
 'Tis not too late to-morrow to be brave;
 If Honour bids, to-morrow kill or die.
 But calm advice against a raging fit 46
 Avails too little; and it braves the pow'r
 Of all that ever taught in prose or song
 To tame the fiend that sleeps a gentle lamb
 And wakes a lion. Unprovok'd and calm
 You reason well, see as you ought to see, 46

And wonder at the madness of mankind ;
Seiz'd with the common rage you soon forget
The speculations of your wiser hours :
Beset with Furies of all deadly shapes,
Fierce and insidious, violent and slow, 470
With all that urge or lure us on to fate,
What refuge shall we seek, what arms prepare ?
Where reason proves too weak, or void of wiles
To cope with subtile or impetuous pow'rs,
I would invoke new Passions to your aid ; 475
With indignation would extinguish fear,
With fear or gen'rous pity vanquish rage,
And love with pride, and force to force oppose.

There is a charm, a pow'r, that sways the breast
Bids ev'ry Passion revel or be still, 480
Inspires with rage, or all your cares dissolves,
Can sooth distraction, and almost despair :
That pow'r is Music ; far beyond the stretch
Of those unmeaning warblers on our stage,
Those clumsy heroes, those fat-headed gods, 485
Who move no Passion justly but contempt,
Who, like our dancers, (light indeed and strong !)
Do wondrous feats, but never heard of grace.
The fault is ours ; we bear those monstrous arts,
Good Heav'n ! we praise them ; we with loudest peals

Applaud the fool that highest lifts his heels, 491
And, with insipid shew of rapture, die
Of idiot notes impertinently long.
But he the M^{use}'s laurel justly shares,
A poet he and touch'd with Heav'n's own fire, 495
Who with bold rage, or solemn pomp of sounds,
Inflames, exalts, and ravishes, the soul;
Now tender, plaintive, sweet almost to pain,
In love dissolves you; now in sprightly strains
Breathes a gay rapture thro' your thrilling breast, 500
Or melts the heart with airs divinely sad,
Or wakes to horror the tremendous strings.
Such was the bard whose heav'nly strains of old
Appeas'd the fiend of melancholy Saul;
Such was, if old and heathen fame say true, 505
The man who bade the Theban domes ascend,
And tam'd the savage nations with his song;
And such the Tracian, whose melodious lyre
Tun'd to soft wo, made all the mountains weep,
Sooth'd ev'n th' inexorable pow'rs of hell, 510
And half redeem'd his lost Eurydice.
Music exalts each joy, allays each grief,
Expels diseases, softens ev'ry pain,
Suddues the rage of poison and the plague;
And hence the wise of ancient days ador'd
One pow'r of Physic, Melody, and Song. 515

THE CHOICE.

BY POMFRET.

IF Heaven the grateful liberty would give,
That I might choose my method how to live,
And all those hours propitious Fate should lend
In blissful ease and satisfaction spend :

Near some fair town I'd have a private seat, 5
Built uniform ; not little, nor too great ;
Better if on a rising ground it stood,
On this side fields ; on that a neighb'ring wood :
It should within no other things contain
But what are useful, necessary, plain : 10
Methinks 'tis nauseous, and I'd ne'er endure
The needless pomp of gaudy furniture.
A little garden, grateful to the eye,
And a cool rivulet run murm'ring by,
On whose delicious banks a stately row 15
Of shady limes or sycamores should grow ;

At th' end of which a silent study plac'd,
Should be with all the noblest authors grac'd.
Horace and Virgil, in whose mighty lines
Immortal wit and solid learning shines ; 20
Sharp Juvenal, and am'rous Ovid too,
Who all the turns of love's soft passion knew ;
He that with judgment reads his charming lines,
In which strong art with stronger nature joins,
Must grant his fancy does the best excel, 25
His thoughts so tender, and express'd so well ;
With all those Moderns, men of steady sense,
Esteem'd for learning and for eloquence.
In some of these, as Fancy should advise,
I'd always take my morning exercise ; 30
For sure no minutes bring us more content
Than those in pleasing useful study spent.

I'd have a clear and competent estate,
That I might live genteelly, but not great ;
As much as I could moderately spend ; 35
A little more, sometimes t'oblige a friend :
Nor should the sons of Poverty repine
Too much at Fortune, they should taste of mine ;
And all that objects of true pity were, 39
Should be reliev'd with what my wants could spare :

THE CHOICE.

For that our Maker has too largely giv'n
Should be return'd in gratitude to Heaven.
A frugal plenty should my table spread,
With healthy, not luxurious, dishes fed ;
Enough to satisfy, and something more, 45
To feed the stranger and the neighb'ring poor.
Strong meat indulges vice, and pamp'ring food
Creates diseases, and inflames the blood :
But what's sufficient to make nature strong,
And the bright lamp of life continue long, 50
I'd freely take ; and, as I did possess,
The bounteous Author of my plenty bless.

I'd have a little vault, but always stor'd
With the best wines each vintage could afford.
Wine whets the wit, improves its native force, 55
And gives a pleasant flavour to discourse :
By making all out spirits debonaire,
Throws off the lees, the sediment of care :
But as the greatest blessing Heaven lends
May be debauch'd, and serve ignoble ends, 60
So, but too oft, the grape's refreshing juice
Does many mischevious effects produce.
My house should no such rude disorders know,
As from high drinking consequently flow,
Nor would I use what was so kindly giv'n 65
To the dishonour of indulgent Heaven.

If any neighbour came he should be free,
 Us'd with respect, and not uneasy be
 In my retreat, or to himself or me.
 What freedom, prudence, and right reason, give 70
 All men may, with impunity receive;
 But the least swerving from their rule's too much;
 For what's forbidden us, 'tis death to touch.

That life may be more comfortable yet,
 And all my joys refin'd, sincere, and great, 75
 I'd choose two friends, whose company would be
 A great advance to my felicity;
 Well born, of humours suited to my own,
 Discreet, and men as well as books have known;
 Brave, gen'rous, witty, and exactly free 80
 From loose behaviour or formality;
 Airy and prudent; merry, but not light;
 Quick in discerning, and in judging right;
 Secret they should be, faithful to their trust;
 In reas'ning cool, strong, temperate, and just; 85
 Obliging, open, without huffing brave;
 Brisk in gay talking, and in sober grave;
 Close in dispute, but not tenacious; try'd
 By solid reason, and let that decide:
 Not prone to lust, revenge, or envious hate, 90
 Nor busy meddlers with intrigues of state;

THE CHOICE.

5

Strangers to slander, and sworn foes to spite;
 Not quarrelsome, but stout enough to fight;
 Loyal and pious, friends to Cæsar; true,
 As dying martyrs, to their Maker too: 95
 In their society I could not miss
 A permanent, sincere, substantial, bliss.

Would bounteous Heav'n once more indulge, I'd
 (For who would so much satisfaction lose [choose
 As witty nymphs in conversation give?) 100
 Near some obliging modest fair to live;
 For there's that sweetness in a female mind,
 Which in a man's we cannot hope to find;
 That by a secret but a pow'rful art,
 Winds up the spring of life, and does impart 105
 Fresh vital heat to the transported heart.

I'd have her reason all her passions sway;
 Easy in company, in private gay;
 Coy to a fop, to the deserving free:
 Still constant to herself, and just to me: 110
 A soul she should have for great actions fit,
 Prudence and wisdom to direct her wit;
 Courage to look bold Danger in the face;
 No fear, but only to be proud or base;

Quick to advise, by an emergence prest 115
 To give good counsel, or to take the best :
 I'd have th' expression of her thoughts be such,
 She might not seem reserv'd, nor talk too much ;
 That shews a want of judgment and of sense ;
 More than enough is but impertinence : 120
 Her conduct regular, her mirth refin'd,
 Civil to strangers, to her neighbours kind ;
 Averse to vanity, revenge, and pride,
 In all the methods of deceit untry'd ;
 So faithful to her friend, and good to all, 125
 No censure might upon her actions fall :
 Then would e'en Envy be compell'd to say—
 She goes the least of woman-kind astray.

To this fair creature I'd sometimes retire,
 Her conversation would new joys inspire, 130
 Give life an edge so keen, no surly care
 Would venture to assault my soul, or dare,
 Near my retreat, to hide one secret snare.
 But so divine, so noble, a repast
 I'd seldom, and with moderation, taste ; 135
 For highest cordials all their virtue lose
 By a too frequent and too bold a use ;
 And what would cheer the spirits in distress,
 Ruins our health when taken to excess.

THE CHOICE.

7

I'd be concern'd in no litigious jar ; 140
 Belov'd by all, not vainly popular.
 Whate'er assistance I had pow'r to bring,
 T'oblige my country, or to serve my king,
 Whene'er they call'd I'd readily afford
 My tongue, my pen, my counsel, or my sword. 145
 Law-suits I'd shun with as much studious care
 As I would dens where hungry lions are,
 And rather put up injuries than be
 A plague to him who'd be a plague to me.
 I value quiet at a price too great 150
 To give for my revenge so dear a rate ;
 For what do we by all our bustle gain
 But counterfeit delight for real pain ;

If Heaven a date of many years would give,
 Thus I'd in pleasure, ease, and plenty live ; 155
 And as I near approach'd the verge of life,
 Some kind relation (for I'd have no wife)
 Should take upon him all my worldly care,
 Whilst I did for a better state prepare :
 Then I'd not be with any troubles vex'd, 160
 Nor have the ev'nings of my days perplex'd,
 But, by a silent and a peaceful death,
 Without a sigh resign my aged breath :

And when committed to the dust, I'd have
Few tears, but friendly, dropp'd into my grave :
Then would my exit so propitious be,
All men would wish to live and die like me. 167

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