

**A comparative view of the state and faculties of man with those of the animal world.**

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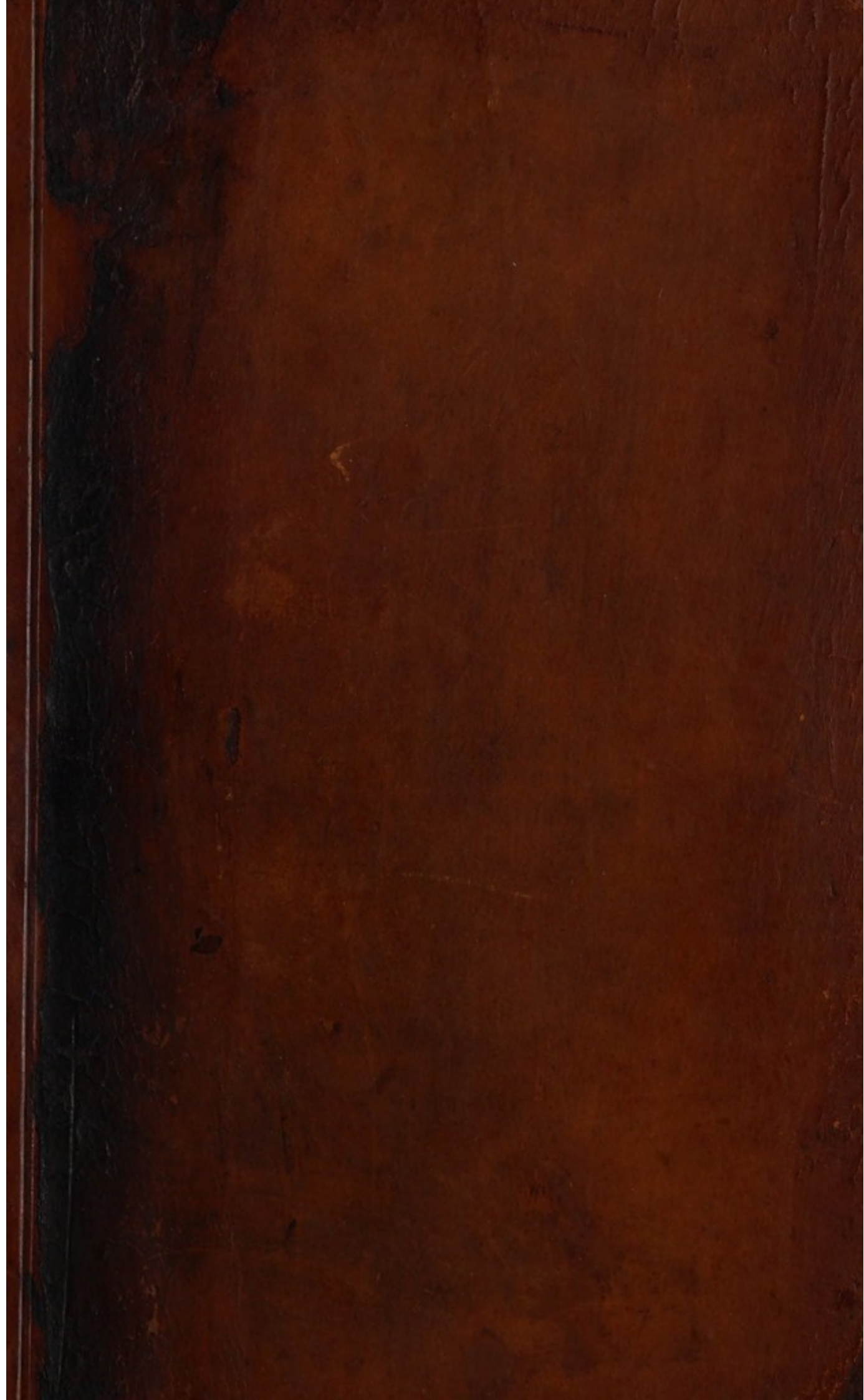
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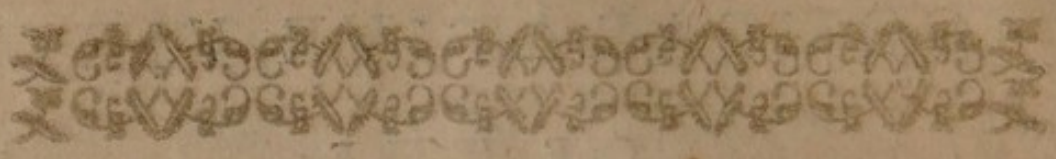
A  
COMPARATIVE VIEW  
OF THE  
State and Faculties of MAN,  
WITH THOSE OF THE  
ANIMAL WORLD.  
THE SECOND EDITION.



LONDON:  
Printed for J. DODSLEY in Pall-Mall.  
MDCCCLXVI.

*Gregory* —





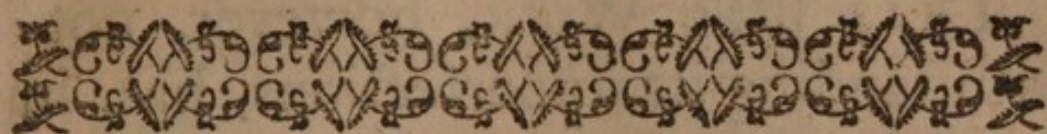
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THE following Discourses were originally delivered in a private literary society, without the most distant view to their publication. It must, in truth, be acknowledged that the Reader will find in them many hints thrown out on subjects of consequence, which are not accurately prosecuted as their importance requires; besides that sentiments are often expressed with freedom, which, however allowable in a private company, may perhaps be deemed too bold when offered to the Public. All this the Author himself was fully sensible of, though he had neither leisure nor inclination to alter them.



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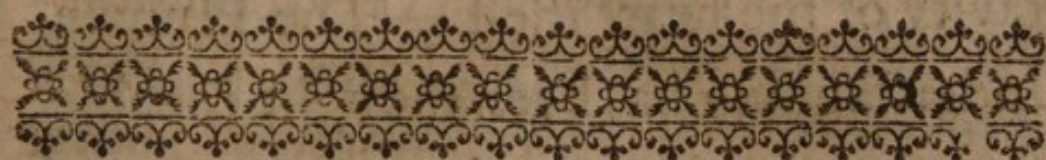
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THIS little Work, however, notwithstanding its imperfections, has, in the Editor's opinion, a very considerable degree of merit; and in these sentiments he has the honour of being joined by several of the Author's friends of great distinction in the Republic of Letters. He has taken the liberty, therefore, of offering it to the Public, almost without the Author's consent, though not without his knowledge: how far he has been his friend in so doing, that Public, to whose candor he submits it, must determine.







## DISCOURSE I.

**H**UMAN Nature has been considered in different and opposite lights. Some have painted it in a most amiable form, and carefully shaded every weakness and deformity. They have represented vice as foreign and unnatural to the Human Mind, and have maintained that what passes under that name is, in general, only an exuberance of virtuous dispositions, or good affections im-

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properly



properly directed, but that it never proceeds from any natural malignity or depravity of the heart itself.—The Human Understanding has been thought capable of penetrating into the deepest recesses of nature, the Human Power capable of imitating her works, and in some cases acquiring a superiority over them.—Such views are generally embraced by those who have good hearts and happy tempers, who are beginning the world, and are not yet hackney'd in the ways of men, by those who love science and have an ambition to excell in it; and they have an obvious tendency to raise the genius and mend the heart, but are the source of frequent and cruel disappointments.—Others have represented Human Nature as a sink of depravity and wretchedness, have supposed this its natural State and  
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the unavoidable lot of humanity ; They have represented the Human Understanding as weak and short sighted, the Human Power as feeble and extremely limited, and have treated all attempts to enlarge them as vain and chimerical.—Such representations are greedily adopted by narrow and contracted hearts, and by men of very limited genius, who feel within themselves the justness of the description.—It must be owned likewise, that they are often agreeable and soothing to men of excellent and warm affections, but too great sensibility of Spirit, whose tempers have been hurt by frequent disappointments in life.—A bad opinion of Human Nature readily produces a selfish disposition, and renders the temper cheerless and unsociable ; A low opinion of our intellectual faculties de-



presses the genius, as it cuts off all prospect of attaining a much greater degree of knowledge than is presently posselt, and of executing any grand and extensive plans of improvement.

It is not proposed to insist further on the several advantages and disadvantages of these opposite views of Human Nature, and the influence they have in forming a character.—Perhaps that View may be the safest which considers it as formed for every thing that is good and great, and sets no bounds to its capacity and power, but looks on its present attainments as trifling and of no account.

ENQUIRIES into Human Nature, tho' of the first importance, have been prosecuted with little care and less success—This has been partly owing to the general causes which have obstructed the progress of the  
other



other branches of knowledge, and partly to the peculiar difficulties of the Subject.—Enquiries into the structure of the Human Body have indeed been prosecuted with great diligence and accuracy. But this was a matter of no great difficulty. It required only labour and a steady hand: The Subject was permanent; the Anatomist could fix it in any position, and make what experiments on it he pleased.

THE Human Mind, on the other hand, is an object extremely fleeting, not the same in any two persons upon earth, and ever varying even in the same person.—To trace it thro' its almost endless varieties, requires the most profound and extensive knowledge, and the most piercing and collected genius.—But tho' it be a matter of great difficulty to investigate and ascertain the laws of the mental Constitution,



yet there is no reason to doubt of its being, however seemingly fluctuating, governed by laws as fixt and invariable as those of the Material System.

It has been the misfortune of most of those who have study'd the Philosophy of the Human Mind, that they have been little acquainted with the structure of the Human Body, and the laws of the Animal Oeconomy; and yet the Mind and Body are so intimately connected, and have such a mutual influence on one another, that the constitution of either, examined apart, can never be thoroughly understood. For the same reason it has been an unspeakable loss to Physicians, that they have been so generally inattentive to the peculiar laws of the Mind and their influence on the Body. A late celebrated professor of that art in a neighbouring nation,



nation, who perhaps had rather a clear and methodical head, than an extensive genius or enlarged views of Nature, wrote a System of Physic, wherein he seems to have considered Man entirely as a Machine, and makes a feeble and vain attempt to explain all the Phænomena of the Animal Oeconomy, by mechanical and chymical principles.—Stahl his contemporary and rival, who had a more enlarged genius, and penetrated more deeply into Nature, took in the consideration of the sentient Principle, and united the Philosophy of the Human Mind, with that of the Human Body: but the luxury of his imagination often bewildered him, and the perplexity of his manner and obscurity of his Stile, make his Writings little read and less understood.

BESIDES these, there is another cause



which makes the knowledge of Human Nature very lame and imperfect, which we propose more particularly to enquire into.

MAN has been usually considered as a Being that had no analogy to the rest of the Animal Creation.—The comparative Anatomy of Brute Animals has indeed been cultivated with some attention; and has been the source of the most useful discoveries in the Anatomy of the Human Body: But the comparative Animal Oeconomy of Mankind and other Animals, and comparative Views of their States and manner of life, have been little regarded.—The pride of man is alarmed, in this case, with too close a comparison, and the dignity of Philosophy will not easily stoop to receive a lesson from the instinct of Brutes.—But this conduct is very weak and foolish.—Nature is a whole, made  
up



up of parts, which tho' distinct, are intimately connected with one another. This connection is so close, that one Species often runs into another so imperceptibly, that it is difficult to say where the one begins and the other ends.—This is particularly the case with the lowest of one Species, and the highest of that immediately below it.—On this account no one part of the great Chain can be perfectly understood, without the knowledge, at least, of the links that are nearest to it.

In comparing different Animals with one another, an immense variety is to be observed in their several powers and faculties, which are adapted to the peculiar spheres of Action allotted them by Providence.—There are many circumstances in which they are similar, and some which are common to them all.

MAN



MAN is evidently at the head of the Animal Creation.—He seems not only to be posselt of every source of pleasure, which any of them enjoy, but of many others, which they are altogether strangers to. If he is not the only Animal posselt of reason, he has it in a degree so greatly superior, as admits of no comparifon.—The pleasures of the Imagination, the pleasure arising from Science, from the fine Arts, and from the Principle of curiosity, are peculiar to the Human Species. But above all, the Moral Sense, with the happiness inspired by religion and the various intercourses of focial life, is their distinguishing characteristic.

WE propose now to make some observations on certain advantages which the lower Animals seem to possess above us, and afterwards to enquire how far the advantages



advantages possess by Mankind are cultivated by them in such a manner as to render them happier as well as wiser and more distinguished.

THERE are many Animals who have some of the external Senses more acute than We have; some are stronger, some swifter; but these and such other qualities, however advantageous to them in their respective spheres of life, would be useless and often very prejudicial to us.— But it should be a very serious and interesting Question, whether there may not be certain advantages they have over us, which are not the result of their particular state of life, but are advantages in those points, where we should at least be on a level with them.

Is it not a truth that all Animals, except ourselves, enjoy every pleasure their



Natures are capable of, that they are strangers to pain and sickness, and, abstracting from external accidents, arrive at the natural period of their Being? We speak of wild Animals only. Those that are tame and under our direction partake of all our miseries.—Is it a necessary consequence of our superior faculties, that not one of ten thousand of our Species should die a natural death, that we struggle thro' a \* frail and feverish being, in continual danger of sickness, of pain, of dotage, and the thousand nameless ills that experience shews to be the portion of human life.—If this appears to be the designed order of Nature, it becomes us cheerfully to submit to it ; but if these Evils appear to be adventitious and unnatural to our constitution, it is an

\* Milton.

enquiry



enquiry of the last importance, whence they arise and how they may be remedied.

THERE is one Principle which prevails universally in the Brute Creation, and is the immediate source of all their Actions. This Principle, which is called Instinct, determines them by the shortest and most effectual means to pursue what their several constitutions make necessary.

IT seems to have been thought, that this Principle of Instinct was peculiar to the Brute Creation; and that Mankind were designed by Providence, to be governed by the superior Principle of Reason, entirely independent of it. But a little attention will shew, that Instinct is a Principle common to us and the whole Animal World, and that, as far as it extends, it is a sure and infallible guide; tho' the depraved and unnatural State, into which

Mankind



Mankind are plunged, often stifles its voice, or makes it impossible to distinguish it from other Impulses which are accidental and foreign to our Nature.

REASON indeed is but a weak Principle in Man, in respect of Instinct, and generally is a more unsafe guide.—The proper province of Reason is to investigate the causes of things, to shew us what consequences will follow from our acting in any particular way, to point out the best means of attaining an end, and in consequence of this, to be a check upon our Instincts, our tempers, our passions and tastes ; But these must still be the immediately impelling Principles of Action. In truth, Life, without them, would not only be joyless and insipid, but quickly stagnate and be at an end.

THE advantages, which the Brute  
Animals



Animals have over us, are possessed by those of our own Species, who are just above them, guided in a manner entirely by Instinct, equally strangers to the noble attainments their Natures are capable of, and to the many miseries attendant on their more enlightened Brethren of Mankind.

It should seem therefore of the greatest consequence, to enquire into the Instincts that are natural to Mankind, to separate them from those cravings which bad habits have occasioned, and where any doubt remains on this subject, to enquire into the analogous Instincts of other Animals, particularly of the savage part of our own Species.

We should likewise avail ourselves of the Observations made on tame Animals in those particulars where Art has in some measure improved upon Nature.—Thus

by



by a proper attention we can preserve and improve the breed of Horses, Dogs, Cattle, and indeed all other Animals. Yet it is amazing this Observation was never transferred to the Human Species, where it would be equally applicable.—It is certain that notwithstanding our promiscuous Marriages, many families are distinguished by peculiar circumstances in their character. This Family Character, like a Family Face, will often be lost in one generation and appear again in the succeeding. Without doubt, Education, Habit and Emulation may contribute greatly in many cases to keep it up, but it will be generally found, that independent of these, Nature has stamped an original impression on certain Minds, which Education may greatly alter or efface, but seldom so entirely as to prevent its traces being seen  
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by an accurate observer.—How a certain character or constitution of mind can be transmitted from a Parent to a Child, is a question of more difficulty than importance. It is indeed equally difficult to account for the external resemblance of features, or for bodily diseases being transmitted from a Parent to a Child. But we never dream of a difficulty in explaining any appearance of Nature, which is exhibited to us every day.—A proper attention to this Subject would enable us to improve not only the Constitutions but the Characters of our Posterity. Yet we every day see very sensible people, who are anxiously attentive to preserve or improve the breed of their Horses, tainting the blood of their Children, and entailing on them not only the most loathsome diseases of the Body, but Madness, Folly, and the



most unworthy dispositions, and this too, when they cannot plead being stimulated by necessity or impelled by passion.

We shall proceed now to enquire more particularly into the comparative State of Mankind and the inferior Animals.

By the most accurate Calculation, one third of Mankind dies under two Years old.—Of one hundred Children born in the same week, only forty are alive at the end of twenty years, and at the end of eighty-four years, which should be the shortest natural period of Human life, they are all dead.—As this mortality is greatest among the most luxurious part of Mankind, and gradually decreases in proportion as the diet becomes simpler, the exercise more frequent, and the general method of living more hardy, and as it is altogether unknown among wild Animals,



the general foundations of it are sufficiently pointed out. — The extraordinary havock made by diseases among Children is owing to the greater delicacy of their tender frames, which are but ill suited to support the unnatural treatment they meet with. — Their own Instincts and the conduct of Nature in rearing other Animals are never attended to, and they are incapable of helping themselves. When they are farther advanced in life, the voice of Nature becomes too loud to be stifled, and then, in spite of the influence of corrupted and adventitious taste, will be obeyed. Every other Animal brings forth its young without any assistance; but we judge Nature insufficient for that work, and think a Midwife understands it better. — What numbers of Infants as well as of Mothers are destroyed by the



preposterous management of these Artists is well known to all who have enquired into this matter.—The most knowing and successful Practitioners, if they are candid, will own, that in common and natural cases, Nature is entirely sufficient, and that their business is only to assist her efforts in case of weakness of the Mother, or an unnatural position of the Child.

As soon as an Infant comes into the world, our first care is to cram it with Physic.—There is a glareous liquor contained in the bowels of Infants and many other Animals when they are born, which it is necessary to carry off. The Medicine which Nature has prepared for this purpose is the Mother's first milk. This indeed answers the end very effectually, but we think some Drug forced down the Child's throat will do much better. The  
composition



composition of this varies according to the fancy of the good Woman who presides at the birth.—It deserves to be remarked, when we are on this Subject, that Calves, which are the only Animals generally taken under our peculiar care in these circumstances, are treated in the same manner. They have the same sort of Physic administered to them, and often with the same success, many of them dying under the operation, or of its consequences. We have the greatest reason to think that more of this species of Animals die at this period, than of all the other species of Animals we see in these circumstances, put together, our own only excepted.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many moving calls of Natural Instinct in the Child to suck the Mother's breast, yet the usual practice has been, obstinately to deny



that indulgence till the third day after the birth. By this time the suppression of the Natural Evacuation of the Milk, usually bringing on a fever, the consequence was often fatal to the Mother, or put it out of her power to suckle her Child at that time.—We must observe here, to the Honor of the Gentlemen who had the care of the lying-in Hospital in London, that they were the first who, in this instance, brought us back to Nature and common Sense, and by this means have preserved the lives of thousands of their fellow creatures. They made the Child be put to the Mother's breast as soon as it shewed a desire for it, which was generally within ten or twelve hours after it was born; This rendered the Dose of Physick unnecessary, the Milk fever was prevented, and things

went



went smoothly on in the natural way. We are sorry however to observe, that this practice is not likely to become soon general. Physicians do not concern themselves with matters of this kind, nor with the Regimen of Mankind, unless their advice is particularly asked. These matters are founded on established customs and prejudices, which it is difficult to conquer, and dangerous to attack ; nor will it ever be attempted by Men who depend on the favor and caprice of the World for their subsistence, and who find it their interest rather to flatter prejudice than oppose it. — The management of Children is reckoned the Privilege of the Women, and Infants in particular are submitted to the absolute direction of Midwives and Nurses, whose good graces it is the Physician's peculiar interest to cultivate.



WOMEN's not nursing their own Children is openly flying in the face of Nature. — The sudden check given to the great natural evacuation of milk, at a time when a Woman's weakly state renders her little able to sustain so violent a shock, is often of the worst consequence to her, and the loss to the Child is much greater than is commonly apprehended. — A Woman in this case runs an immediate risk of her life by a Milk fever, besides the danger of swelling and impostumes of the breasts, and such obstructions in them as lay the foundation of a future cancer. — Women sometimes have it not in their power to nurse their Children, for want of milk ; sometimes it is improper both for the Mother and Child, on account of some particular disorder the Mother labours under. But this is very seldom the case.

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On the contrary there are many disorders Women are subject to, of which Nursing is the most effectual Cure; and delicate Constitutions are generally strengthened by it. As a proof of this we may observe, that while a Mother nurses her Child, her complexion becomes clearer and more blooming, her Spirits are more uniformly chearful, her appetite is better, and her general habit of body fuller and stronger. It is particularly worthy of observation, that fewer Women die while they are nursing than at any equal period of their lives, if we except the time of pregnancy, during which it is unusual for a Woman to die of any disease unless occasioned by some violent external injury.— Another great inconveniency attending the neglect of Nursing, is the depriving Women of that interval of respite and ease which



which Nature intended for them betwixt Child-bearings. A Woman who does not nurse has naturally a Child every year; this quickly exhausts the constitution, and brings on the Infirmities of Old age before their time; and as this neglect is most frequent among Women of fashion, the delicacy of their Constitutions is particularly unable to sustain such a violence to Nature.—A Woman who nurses her Child, has an interval of a year and a half or two years betwixt her children, in which the Constitution has time to recover its vigor. — We may reckon among the disadvantages consequent on the neglect of Nursing, the Mother's being deprived of a very high pleasure of the most tender and endearing kind, which likewise strengthens her attachment to the Child in a very remarkable manner.—It is not necessary



cessary here to enquire into the cause of this particular affection which a Mother feels for the Child she has suckled beyond what she feels for a Child suckled by a stranger; but the fact is indisputable. Yea the Maternal fondness itself is by this means transferred to a stranger.

It is not easy to ascertain the injury Children sustain by being deprived of their natural nourishment, and instead of it, being suckled by the milk of Women of different ages and Constitutions from their Mothers. This far is certain, that a greater number of those Children die who are nursed by strangers, than of those who are suckled by their own Mothers. But this is partly owing to the want of that care and attention which the anxiety of a Mother can only supply, and which the helpless state of Infancy so much



much requires.—Indeed if it was not that Nurses naturally contract a large share of the instinctive fondness of a Mother, for the Children they suckle, many more Children would perish by want of care.—But it should be observed, that this acquired attachment cannot reasonably be expected among Nurses, in large Cities. The same perversion of Nature and Manners which prevails there among Women of fashion, and makes them decline this duty, extends equally to those of lower rank : and it cannot be supposed that what the Call of Nature, not to speak of Love for the Husband, cannot effectuate in the Mother, will be found in a hireling, who for a little money turns her own child out of doors.—The many miserable diseases to which the lower class of Women in large Cities are subjected, is another reason  
 against



against their being intrusted with such an office; diseases which are often fatal to their little charges, or which taint their blood in a manner that they and their succeeding families may feel very severely.

WE proceed to mention some other circumstances in the rearing of Children, in which, we apprehend, neither Instinct nor the Analogy of Nature is commonly regarded.

ALL young Animals naturally delight to be in the open air, and in perpetual motion: But we signify our disapprobation of this Intention of Nature by confining our Infants mostly in houses, and swathing them from the time they are born as tightly as possible.—

This natural Instinct appears very strong when we see a Child released from its confinement, in the short interval betwixt

pulling



pulling off its day cloaths, and fwathing it again before it is put to sleep.—The evident tokens of delight which the little creature fhews in recovering the free ufe of its limbs, and the strong reluctance it discovers to be again remitted to its bondage, one fhould think would ftrike conviction of the cruelty and abfurdity of this practice, into the moft ftupid of Mankind. — This confinement Boys, in fome degree, are fooner releafed from, but the fairer part of the Species fuffer it, in a manner, during life.—Some nations have fancied that Nature did not give a good fhape to the head, and thought it would be better to mould it into the fhape of a fugar loaf. The Chinefe think a Woman's foot much handsomer if squeezed into a third part of its natural fize ; Some African Nations have  
a like



a like quarrel with the shape of the nose, which they think ought to be laid as flat as possible with the face.—We laugh at the folly and are shocked with the cruelty of these Barbarians, but think it a very clear case that the natural shape of a Woman's chest is not so elegant, as we can make it by the confinement of Stays.—The common effect of this is to produce obstructions in the lungs, from their not having sufficient room to play, and this, besides tainting the breath, cuts off numbers of young Women by consumptions in the very bloom of life.—But Nature has shewn her resentment of this practice in the most striking manner, by rendering above half the Women of fashion deformed in some degree or other.—Deformity is peculiar to the civilized part of Mankind, and is almost  
always



always the work of our own hands.—  
 The superior strength and agility of Savages is entirely the effect of their hardy education, of their living mostly abroad in the open air, and their limbs never having suffered any confinement.

THE Practice of putting many cloaths on Children, indulging them in sitting over the fire, sleeping in warm rooms, and preserving them from being exposed to the various inclemencies of the weather, relaxes their bodies and enervates their minds. If Children, along with such an effeminate education, are pampered with Animal food, rich sauces and such other diet as overcharges their digestive powers, they become sickly as well as weak.— Yet Diet, tho' it requires the greatest attention to be paid to it in puny Constitutions, admits of a very great latitude in habits



—habits hardened by labour, and daily exposed to the vicissitudes of the weather.— All that Class of diseases which arise from catching of cold, or a sudden check given to the Perspiration, is found only among the civilized part of Mankind. An old Roman or an Indian in the pursuits of war, or hunting, would plunge into a River whilst in a profuse sweat, without fear and without danger. A similar hardy education would make us all equally proof against the bad effects of such accidents.— The greater care we take to prevent catching cold by the various contrivances of modern luxury, the more we become subjected to it.— We can guard against cold only by rendering ourselves superior to its influence.— There is a striking proof of this in the vigorous Constitutions of Children braced by the

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daily



daily use of the cold Bath ; and still a stronger proof in those Children who go thinly clad and without stockings or shoes in all seasons and weathers.

NATURE never made any country too cold for its own inhabitants.—In cold climates she has made exercise and even fatigue habitual to them, not only from the necessity of their situation, but from choice, their natural diversions being all of the athletic and violent kind. But the softness and effeminacy of modern manners has both deprived us of our natural defence against the diseases most incident to our own climate, and subjected us to all the inconveniencies of a warm one, particularly to that debility and morbid sensibility of the nervous System, which lays the foundation of most of our diseases, and deprives us at the same time of the  
spirit



spirit and resolution to support them. These few observations are selected from a great number that might be mentioned, to prove that many of the calamities complained of as peculiarly affecting the Human Species, are not necessary consequences of our Constitution, but are entirely the result of our own caprice and folly in paying greater regard to vague and shallow reasonings, than to the plain dictates of Instinct, and the analogous Constitutions of other Animals. — They are taken from that period of life, where Instinct is the only active principle of our Nature, and consequently where the analogy between us and other Animals will be found most compleat. — When our superior and more distinguishing faculties begin to expand themselves, the analogy becomes less perfect. Besides,



if we would enquire into the cause of our weak and sickly habits, we must go back to the State of Infancy. — The foundation of the evil is laid there. Habit soon succeeds in the place of Nature, and, however unworthy a Successor, requires almost equal regard. — As years come on, additional causes of these evils are continually taking place, and disorders of the body and mind mutually inflame each other. — But this opens a field too extensive for this place. We shall only observe that the Decline of Human Life exhibits generally a scene quite singular in Nature. — The gradual decay of the more humane and generous feelings of the heart, as well as of all our boasted superior powers of Imagination and Understanding, till at last they are utterly obliterated and leave us in a more helpless and wretched situation than



than that of any Animal whatever, is surely the most humbling consideration to the pride of Man.—Yet there is the greatest reason to believe that this melancholy Exit is not our natural one, but that it is owing to causes foreign and adventitious to our Nature.—There is the highest probability that if we led natural lives, we should retain to the last the full exercise of all our senses, at least the full possession of those superior faculties, which we hope will survive with us in a future and more perfect State of existence.—There is no reason to doubt but it is in the power of Art to protract life even beyond the period which Nature has assigned to it. The enquiry is important, but yet trifling in respect of that which leads us to the means of enjoying it, whilst we do live.—This Subject is so



interesting, that we propose to discuss it at greater length on a future occasion. In the mean time we intend, in the following Discourses, to make some observations on the uses that Mankind make of those faculties which distinguish them from the rest of the Animal Creation.—

Read at the Philosophical Society,

October 11th. 1758.





## DISCOURSE II.

**T**HE advantages, which Mankind possess above the rest of the Animal Creation, are principally derived from Reason, from the Social Principle, from Taste, and from Religion.—We shall proceed to enquire how much these contribute to make life more happy and comfortable.

REASON, of itself, cannot, any more than Riches, be reckoned an immediate blessing to Mankind—It is only the pro-



per application of it to render them more happy that can entitle it to that name.—Nature has furnished us with a variety of internal Senses and Tastes, unknown to other Animals. All these are Sources of Pleasure if properly cultivated, but without culture, most of them are so faint and languid, that they convey no gratification to the Mind.—This culture is the peculiar province of Reason. It belongs to Reason to analyze our Tastes and Pleasures, and, after a proper arrangement of them according to their different degrees of excellency, to assign to each that degree of cultivation and indulgence which its rank deserves, and no more—But if Reason, instead of thus doing justice to the various gifts of Providence, be unattentive to her Charge, or bestow her whole attention on One, neglecting the rest, and if in consequence



sequence of this, little happiness be enjoyed in life, in such a case Reason can with no great propriety be called a blessing. Let us then examine its effects among those who possess it in the most eminent degree.

THE natural advantages of Genius, and a superior Understanding, are extremely obvious. One unacquainted with the real State of human affairs, would never doubt of their securing to their possessors the most honourable and important stations among Mankind, nor suspect that they could ever fail to place them at the head of all the useful Arts and Professions. — If he were told this was not the case, he would conclude it must be owing to the folly or wickedness of Mankind, or some unhappy concurrence of Accidents, that such Men were deprived of their natural stations



tions and rank in life. — But in fact it is owing to none of these causes. A superior degree of Reason and Understanding is not found to qualify a Man either for being a more useful Member of Society, or more happy in himself. — These talents are usually dissipated in such a way, as renders them of no account, either to the Public or the Possessor. — This waste of Genius exhibits a most astonishing and melancholy prospect. — A large Library gives a full view of it. — Among the multitude of Books of which it is composed, how few engage any one's attention? Such as are addressed to the Heart and Imagination, such as paint Life and Manners in just colours and interesting situations, and the very few that give genuine descriptions of Nature in any of her forms, are read and admired. But  
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the far more numerous Volumes, productions of the intellectual Powers, profound Systems and Disquisitions of Philosophy and Theology, are neglected and despised, and remain only as monuments of the pride and impotency of Human Understanding. Yet many of the Inventors of these Systems discover the greatest acuteness and depth of genius, half of which exerted on any of the useful or elegant Arts of life would have rendered their names immortal.—But it has ever been the misfortune of Philosophical Genius to grasp at objects which Providence has placed beyond its reach, and to ascend to general Principles and to build Systems, without that previous large collection and proper arrangement of facts, which alone can give them a solid foundation. — Notwithstanding  
this



this was pointed out by Lord Bacon in the fullest and clearest manner, yet no attempts have been made to cultivate any one branch of useful Philosophy upon his plan, except by Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. Boyle, and a few others, Founders of the Royal Society. — Genius is naturally impatient of restraint, keen and impetuous in its pursuits; it delights therefore in building with materials which the Mind contains within itself, or such as the Imagination can create at pleasure. But the materials, requisite for the improvement of any useful Art or Science, must all be collected from without, by such slow and patient observation, as little suits the vivacity of Genius, and generally requires more bodily activity than is usually found among Philosophers. — Almost the only pure productions of the Understanding  
that



that have continued to command respect are those of abstract Mathematicks. These will always be valuable, independent of their application to the useful Arts. The exercise they give to the Invention, and the agreeable surprise they excite in the Mind, by exhibiting unexpected relations of figures and quantity, are of themselves natural sources of pleasure. This is the only Science, the Principles of which the Philosopher carries in his own Mind, infallible Principles to which he can safely trust.

Tho' Men of Genius cannot bear the fetters of Method and System, yet they are the only proper people to plan them out. The Genius to lead and direct in Philosophy is distinct from and almost incompatible with the Genius to execute. Lord Bacon was a remarkable instance of this. He brought



brought the Systematic Method of the Schoolmen, which was founded on Metaphysical and often Nominal Subtilties, into deserved contempt, and layed down a Method of investigation founded on the justest and most enlarged views of Nature, but which neither himself nor succeeding Philosophers have chosen to put in strict execution.—For the reasons above mentioned, it will be found that scarcely any of the useful Arts of life owe their improvements to Philosophers. They have been principally obliged to accidental discoveries, or to the happy natural sagacity of their private practitioners, unacquainted with and undebauched by Philosophy.—This has in a particular manner been the fate of Medicine, the most useful of all those Arts. If by Medicine be meant the Art of preserving Health, and restoring



restoring it when lost, any Man of sense and candor, who has been regularly bred to it, will own that his time has been mostly taken up with Enquiries into branches of learning, which upon trial he finds utterly useless to the main ends of his profession, or wasted in reading useless Theories and voluminous Explanations and Commentaries on these Theories; and will ingenuously acknowledge, that every thing useful, which he ever learned from books in the course of many years study, might be taught to any Man of common sense and attention in almost as many months, and that two years experience is worth all his Library.—Medicine in reality owes more to that illiterate Enthusiast Paracelsus than to all the Physicians who have wrote since the days of Hippocrates, if we except Dr. Sydenham, who owes his reputation



tion entirely to a great natural sagacity in making observations, and a still more uncommon candor in relating them. What little Medical Philosophy he had, which was as good as his time afforded, served only to warp his Genius and render his Writings more perplexed and tiresome.

BUT what shews in the strongest light at what an awful distance Philosophers have usually kept from Enquiries of general utility to Mankind, is that Agriculture, as a Science, is yet only in its infancy.—A Mathematician or Philosopher, if he happens to possess a farm, does not understand the construction of his cart or plough so well as the fellow who drives them, nor is he so well acquainted with the method of cultivating his ground to the greatest advantage.

NOTHING contributes more to deprive the World of the fruits of great Parts, than



than the passion for universal knowledge so constantly annexed to those who possess them. By means of this the flame of Genius is wasted in the endless labour of accumulating promiscuous or useless facts, while it might have enlightened the most useful Arts by concentrating its force upon one object. Nothing more effectually checks this dissipation of Genius, than the honest love of fame, which prompts a Man to appear in the world as an Author. This necessarily circumscribes his excursions, and determines the force of his Genius into one point. This likewise rescues him from that usual abuse and prostitution of fine parts, the wasting of the greatest part of his time in reading, which is entirely the effect of laziness. Here the Mind is in a great measure passive, and becomes surfeited with knowledge which it

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never



never digests : The memory is burdened with a load of nonsense and impertinence, while the powers of Genius and Invention languish for want of exercise.

HAVING observed the little consequence that a great Understanding is generally of to the Public, let us next consider the effects it has in promoting the happiness of the Individual. — It is very evident that those, who devote most of their time to the exercises of the Understanding, are far from being the happiest Men. — They enjoy indeed the pleasure arising from the pursuit and discovery of Truth. — Perhaps too the vanity arising from a consciousness of superior talents makes no inconsiderable part of their happiness. — But there are many natural sources of pleasure from which they are in a great measure cut off. — All the public and social



social affections, in common with every Taste natural to the Human Mind, if they are not properly exercised, grow languid. — People who devote most of their time to the cultivation of their Understandings, must of course live retired and abstracted from the World. The social affections (these great sources of happiness) have therefore no play, and consequently lose their natural warmth and vigor. The private and selfish affections however are not proportionably reduced. Envy and Jealousy, the most tormenting of all Passions, prevail remarkably among this rank of Men.

WHEN abstraction from Company is carried far, it occasions great ignorance of life and manners, and necessarily deprives a Man of all those little accomplishments and graces which are essential to polished and elegant Society, and



which can only be acquired by mixing with the World.—The want of these is often an insuperable bar to the advancement of persons of merit, and proves therefore a frequent source of their disgust to the World, and consequently to themselves; for no Man can be happy in himself, who thinks ill of every one around him.—The general complaint of the neglect of merit does not seem to be well founded.—It is unreasonable for any Man, who lives detached from Society, to complain that his merit is neglected, when he never has made it known. The natural reward of mere Genius, is the esteem of those who know and are judges of it.—This reward is never withheld.—There is a like unreasonable complaint, that little regard is commonly paid to good qualities of the heart. But it should be considered, that the World cannot see into the heart,



heart, and can therefore only judge of its goodness by visible effects. There is a natural and proper expression of good affections, which ought always to accompany them, and in which true Politeness principally consists. This expression may be counterfeited, and so may obtain the reward due to genuine Virtue; but where this natural index of a worthy character is wanting, or where there is an outward expression of bad dispositions, the World cannot be blamed for judging from such appearances.

BAD health is another common attendant on great parts, when these parts are exerted, as is usually the case, rather in a speculative than active life.—It is observed that great quickness and vivacity of Genius is commonly attended with a remarkable delicacy of constitution, and a

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peculiar



peculiar sensibility of the nervous System, and that those, who possess it, seldom arrive at old Age.—A sedentary studious life greatly increases this natural weakness of constitution, and brings on that train of nervous complaints and low spirits, which render life a burden to the possessor and useless to the Public. Nothing can effectually prevent this but activity, regular exercise, and frequent relaxations of the Mind from those keen pursuits it is usually engaged in.—Too assiduous an exertion of the Mind on any particular Subject, not only ruins the health, but impairs the Genius itself; whereas, if the Mind be properly unbent by amusements, it always returns to its favorite object with double vigor.

BUT one of the principal misfortunes of a great Understanding, when exerted in  
a spe-



a speculative rather than an active Sphere, is its tendency to lead the Mind into too deep a sense of its own weakness and limited capacity. — It looks into Nature with too piercing an eye, discovers every where difficulties never suspected by a common Understanding, and finds its progress stopt by obstacles that appear insurmountable. This naturally produces a gloomy and forlorn Scepticism, which poisons the chearfulness of the temper, and by the hopeless prospect it gives of improvement, becomes the bane of Science and Activity. This Sceptical Spirit, when carried into life, renders Men of the best Understandings unfit for business. When they examine with the greatest accuracy all the possible consequences of a step they are to make in life, they discover so many difficulties and chances against them,



which ever way they go, that they become slow and fluctuating in their resolutions, and undetermined in their conduct. But as the business of life is only a conjectural Art in which there is no guarding against all possible contingencies, a Man that would be useful to the Public or to himself, must acquire a quickness in perceiving where the greatest probability of good lies, must be decisive in his resolutions, steady and fearless in putting them in execution.

WE shall mention, in the last place, among the inconveniences attendant on superior parts, that solitude in which they place a person on whom they are bestowed, even in the midst of Society.

Condemned in Business or in Arts to drudge,  
Without a Second and without a Judge †.

To the few, who are judges of his abilities, he is an object of jealousy and

† Pope.

envy.



envy. The bulk of Mankind consider him with that awe and distant regard that is inconsistent with confidence and friendship. They will never unbosom themselves to one they are afraid of, nor lay open their weakness to one they think has none of his own. For this reason we commonly find Men of Genius have the greatest real affection and friendship for such as are very much their inferiors in point of Understanding; good-natured, unobserving people, with whom they can indulge all their peculiarities and weaknesses without reserve. Men of great abilities therefore who prefer the sweets of social life and private friendship to the vanity of being admired, must carefully conceal their superiority, and bring themselves down to the level of those they converse with. Neither must this seem to be the effect of a designed condescension;

for



for this is still more mortifying to human pride than the other.

Thus we have endeavoured to point out the effects which the faculty of Reason, that boasted characteristic and privilege of the Human Species, produces among those who possess it in the most eminent degree, and from the little influence it seems to have in promoting either public or private good, we are tempted to suspect, that Providence purposely blasts those great fruits we naturally expect from it, in order to preserve a certain ballance and equality among Mankind. — Certain it is that Virtue, Genius, Beauty, Wealth, Power, and every natural advantage one can be possessed of, are usually mixed with some alloy, which disappoints the fond hope of their raising the possessor to any uncommon degree of eminence, and even in



in some measure brings him down to the common level of his Species.

THE next distinguishing Principle of Mankind, which was mentioned, is that which unites them into Societies, and attaches them to one another by sympathy and affection. This Principle is the source of the most heart-felt pleasure which we ever taste. —

It does not appear to have any natural connexion with the Understanding. — It was observed formerly that persons of the best Understanding possessed it frequently in a very inferior degree to the rest of Mankind ; but it was at the same time noticed that this did not proceed from less natural sensibility of heart, but from the Social Principle languishing for want of proper exercise. — It must be acknowledged, that the idle, the dissipated,  
and



and debauched, draw most pleasure from this source. —

Not only their pleasures but their vices are often of the social kind. This makes the Social Principle warm and vigorous, and hence perhaps there is more friendship among them than among Men of any other class, though considering the slightness of its foundation, such friendship cannot be supposed to be very lasting. — Even drinking, if not carried to excess, is found favourable to friendship, especially in our northern climates, where the affections are naturally cold; as it produces an artificial warmth of temper, opens and enlarges the heart, and dispells the reserve natural perhaps to wise Men, but inconsistent with friendship, which is entirely a connexion of the heart. —

ALL



ALL those warm and elevated descriptions of friendship, which so powerfully charm the minds of young people, and represent it as the height of human felicity, are really romantic among us.—When we look round us into life, we meet with nothing corresponding to them, except among an happy few in the sequestered scenes of life far removed from the pursuits of interest or ambition.—These sentiments of friendship are original and genuine productions of warmer and happier climes, and adopted by us merely out of vanity.—The same observation may be applied to the more delicate and interesting attachment between the sexes. — The wife and learned of our sex generally treat this attachment with great ridicule, as a weakness below the dignity of a Man, and allow no kind of it but what we have in common



common with the whole Animal Creation. They acknowledge, that the fair sex are useful to us, and a very few will deign to consider some of them as reasonable and agreeable companions.—But it may be questioned, whether this is not the language of an heart insensible to the most refined and exquisite pleasure Human Nature is capable of enjoying, or the language of disappointed Pride, rather than of Wisdom and Nature.—No Man ever despised the sex who was a favorite with them, nor did any one ever speak contemptuously of love, who was conscious of loving and being beloved by a Woman of merit.

If we examine into the other pleasures we enjoy as Social Beings, we shall find many delicacies and refinements admired by some, which others who never felt them



them treat as visionary and romantic.—  
 It is no difficult matter to account for  
 this.—There is certainly an original difference in the constitutions both of Men and Nations ; but this is not so great as at first view it seems to be. Human Nature consists of the same Principles everywhere.—In some people one Principle is naturally stronger than it is in others, but exercise and proper culture will do much to supply the deficiency.—The inhabitants of cold climates having less natural warmth and sensibility of heart, enter but a little way into those refinements of the Social Principle, in which Men of a different temper delight. But if such refinements are capable of affording to the Mind innocent and substantial pleasure, it should be the business of Philosophy to search into the proper methods of cultivating and improving



proving them.—This study, which makes a considerable part of the Philosophy of life and manners, has been surprisngly neglected in Great Britain.—Whence is it that the English with great natural Genius and Acuteness, and still greater Goodness of heart, blessed with riches and liberty, are rather a melancholy and unhappy people? Why is their neighbouring Nation, whom they despise for their shallowness and levity, yet awkwardly imitate in their most frivolous accomplishments, happy in poverty and slavery? We own the one possesses a native chearfulness and vivacity beyond any people upon earth, but still much is owing to their cultivating with the greatest care all the Arts which enliven and captivate the Imagination, soften the heart and give Society its highest polish; while  
the



the other is immerfed in a fevere and fupercilious Philosophy, which feems to make them too wife to be happy. In confequence of this, we generally find in Britain Men of fenfe and learning fpeaking in a contemptuous manner of all writings addreffed to the Imagination and the heart, even of fuch as exhibit genuine pictures of life and manners. But befides the additional vigor, which thefe give to the powers of the Imagination, and the influence they have in rendering the affections warmer and more lively, they are frequently of the greateft fervice in communicating a knowledge of the World; a knowledge the moft important of any to one who is to live in it, and would wifh to act his part with propriety and dignity. Moral painting is undoubtedly the higheft and moft ufeful fpecies of painting.



— The execution may be, and generally is, very wretched, and such as has the worst effects in misleading the judgement, and debauching the heart; but if this kind of writing continues to come into the hands of Men of Genius and worth, no room will be left for this complaint.

THERE is a remarkable difference between the English and French in their Taste of social life. The gentlemen in France, in all periods of life, and even in the most advanced age, never associate with one another, but spend all the hours that can be spared from business or study with the ladies, with the young, the gay, and the happy.— It is observed that the people of this rank in France live longer, and, what is of much greater consequence, live more happily, and enjoy their faculties  
of



of Body and Mind more entire, in old Age, than any people in Europe.—In Great Britain we have certain notions of propriety and decorum, which lead us to think the French manner of spending their hours of freedom from business extremely ridiculous. But if we examine very attentively into these sentiments of propriety, we shall not perhaps find them to be built on a very solid foundation.—We believe that it is proper for persons of the same age, of the same sex, of similar dispositions and pursuits, to associate together. But here we seem to be deceived by words. If we consult Nature and common sense, we shall find that the true propriety and harmony of social life depends upon the connexion of people of different dispositions and characters, judiciously blended together.—Nature



has made no individual nor no class of people independent of the rest of their Species, or sufficient for their own happiness. — Each sex, each character, each period of life, have their several advantages and disadvantages, and that union is the happiest and most proper, where wants are mutually supplied. — The fair sex should naturally expect to gain from our conversation, knowledge, wisdom, and sedateness; and they should give us in exchange, humanity, politeness, cheerfulness, taste, and sentiment. — The levity, the rashness and folly of early life, is tempered with the gravity, the caution, and the wisdom of age; while the timidity, coldness of heart, and languor incident to declining years, are supported and assisted by the courage, the warmth, and the vivacity of youth. — Old people  
 would



would find great advantage in associating rather with the young than with those of their own age. — Many causes contribute to destroy cheerfulness in the decline of life, besides the natural decay of youthful vivacity. The few surviving friends and companions are then dropping off apace; the gay prospects, that swelled the Imagination in more early and more happy days, are then vanished, and along with them the open, generous, unsuspicious temper, and that warm heart which dilated with benevolence to all Mankind. These are succeeded by gloom, disgust, suspicion, and all the selfish passions which sour the temper and contract the heart. — When old people associate only with one another, they mutually increase these unhappy dispositions, by brooding over their



disappointments, the degeneracy of the times, and such like cheerless and uncomfortable Subjects.—The conversation of young people dispells this gloom and communicates a cheerfulness, and something else perhaps which we do not fully understand, of great consequence to health and the prolongation of life. There is an universal Principle of imitation among Mankind, which disposes them to catch instantaneously, and without being conscious of it, the resemblance of any action or character that presents itself. This disposition we can often check by the force of Reason, or the assistance of opposite impressions : at other times, it is insurmountable. We have numberless examples of this in the similitude of character and manners induced by people living much together, in the sudden com-



communications of terror, of melancholy, of joy, of the military ardor, when no cause can be assigned for these emotions. The communication of nervous disorders, especially of the convulsive kind, is often so astonishing, that it has been referred to fascination or witchcraft. We will not pretend to explain the nature of this mental infection; but it is a fact well established, that such a thing exists, and that there is such a Principle in Nature as an healthy sympathy, as well as a morbid infection.

An old Man who enters into this Philosophy, is far from envying or proving a check on the innocent pleasures of young people, and particularly of his own Children. On the contrary he attends with delight to the gradual opening of the Imagination and the dawn of Reason; he



enters by a secret sort of sympathy into their guiltless joys, that revive in his memory the tender images of his youth, which, as Mr. Addison observes, by length of time have contracted a softness inexpressibly agreeable; and thus the evening of life is protracted to an happy, honourable, and unenvied old Age.

THE advantages derived to Mankind from Taste, by which we understand the improvement of the powers of the Imagination, are confined to a very small number. The servile condition of the bulk of Mankind requires constant labour for their daily subsistence. This of necessity deprives them of the means of improving the powers either of Imagination or of Reason, except in so far as their particular employments make such an improvement necessary. — Yet there is  
great



great reason to think the Men of this class the happiest, at least such of them as are just above want. — If they do not enjoy the pleasures arising from the proper culture of the higher powers of their Nature, they are free from the misery consequent upon the abuse of these powers. They are likewise in full possession of one great source of human happiness, which is good health and good spirits. — Their spirits never languish for want of exercise or want of a pursuit, and therefore the *tædium vitæ*, the insupportable listlessness arising from the want of an object, something to wish or something to fear, is unknown among them. — But even among those to whom an easy fortune gives sufficient leisure and opportunities for the improvement of Taste, we find little attention given to it, and consequently



quently little pleasure derived from it. Nature gives only the seeds of Taste, culture must rear them, or they will never become a source of pleasure. —

The only powers of the Mind, that have been much cultivated in this Island, are these of the Understanding. — One unhappy consequence of this has been to dissolve the natural union between Philosophy and the fine Arts, an union extremely necessary to their improvement. — Hence Music, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, have been left in the hands of ignorant Artists unassisted by Philosophy, or even an acquaintance with the works of great Masters. — The productions of purely natural Genius are sometimes great and surprising, but are generally attended with a wildness and luxuriance inconsistent with just Taste. It

is means to essential as is generally be-  
lieved.



is the business of Philosophy to analyse and ascertain the Principles of every Art where Taste is concerned; but this does not require a Philosopher to be master of the executive part of these Arts, or to be an inventor in them. His business is to direct the exertion of Genius in such a manner that its productions may attain to the utmost possible perfection.

It is but too lately that any attempt was made among us to analyse the Principles of Beauty, or of musical Expression. And its having been made was entirely owing to the accident of two eminent Artists, the one in Painting, the other in Music, having a philosophical spirit, and applying it to their several professions. — Their being eminent Masters and Performers, was undoubtedly of singular advantage to them in writing on these Subjects, but was by no means so essential as is generally believed.



lieved.—It is likewise but very lately that modern Philosophy has condescended to bestow any attention on Poetry or on Composition of any kind.—The genuine spirit of Criticism is but just beginning to exert itself.—The consequence has been, that all these Arts have been entirely under the dominion of fashion and caprice, and therefore have not given that high and lasting pleasure to the Mind, which they would have done, if they had been exercised in a way agreeable to Nature and just Taste. — Thus in Painting, the Subject is very seldom such as has any grateful influence on the Mind. — The design and execution, as far as the mere Painter is concerned, is often admirable, and the Taste of Imitation is highly gratified, but the whole piece wants meaning and expression, or what it has is trifling



fling and often extremely disagreeable. —  
 It is but seldom we see Nature painted in  
 her most amiable or graceful forms, in a  
 way that may captivate the heart and make  
 it better. — On the contrary we ever find  
 her in situations the most unpleasing to  
 the Mind, in old Age, Deformity, Dis-  
 ease, and Idiotism. The Dutch and many  
 of the Flemish commonly exhibit her in  
 the lowest and most debasing attitudes,  
 and in Italy the Genius of Painting is al-  
 most constantly prostituted to the pur-  
 poses of the most despicable superstition.  
 — Thus the Mind is disappointed in the  
 pleasure which this elegant Art is so ad-  
 mirably fitted to convey ; the agreeable  
 effect of the Imitation being counteracted  
 and destroyed by the unhappy choice of  
 the Subject. — The influence of Music  
 over the Mind is perhaps greater than  
 that



that of any of the fine Arts. It is capable of raising and soothing every passion and emotion of the Soul. Yet the real effects produced by it are inconsiderable. This is entirely owing to its being in the hands of practical Musicians, and not under the direction of Taste and Philosophy: For in order to give Music any extensive influence over the Mind, the Composer and Performer must understand well the human heart, the various associations of the Passions, and the natural transitions from one to another, so as to enable him to command them in consequence of his skill in musical Expression. — No Science ever flourished, while it was confined to a set of Men who lived by it as a profession. Such Men have pursuits very different from the end and design of their Art. The



interested views of a trade are far different from the enlarged and liberal prospects of Genius and Science. — When the knowledge of an Art is confined in this manner, every private Practitioner must attend to the general Principles of his craft, or starve. If he goes out of the common path, he is an object of the jealousy and abuse of his brethren, and among the rest of Mankind he can neither find Judges nor Patrons. This is particularly the case of the delightful Art we are speaking of, which has now become a Science scarcely understood by any but a few Composers and Performers. — They alone direct the public Taste, or rather dictate to the World what they should admire and be moved with, which the vanity of most people makes them acquiesce in.

The Art is not so much a science as a



esce in, lest otherwise they should be suspected to want Taste and knowledge in the Subject.—In the mean time Men of sense and candor not finding that pleasure in Music, which they were made to expect, are above dissembling, and give up all pretensions to the least knowledge in it. They are even modest enough to ascribe their insensibility of the charms of Music to their want of a good ear, or a natural Taste for it, and they find the Science so complicated, that they do not think it worth the trouble it would cost them to acquire one. But before they entirely forego one of the most innocent amusements in life, not to speak of it in an higher stile, it would not be improper to enquire a little more particularly into the Subject. We shall therefore



fore here beg leave to enquire into some of the first Principles of Taste in Music with the utmost freedom.

Read at the Philosophical Society;

August 28th. 1759.





# DISCOURSE III.

**M**USIC is the Science of Sounds in so far as they affect the Mind.—Nature independent of custom has connected certain Sounds or Tones with certain feelings of the Mind.—Measure or proportion in Sounds has likewise its foundation in Nature. Thus certain Tones are naturally adapted to solemn, plaintive, and mournful Subjects, and the movement is slow & G 2





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flow ; others are expressive of the joyous and elevating, and the movement is quick. — Sounds likewise affect the Mind, as they are loud or soft, rough or smooth, distinct from the consideration of their gravity or acuteness. Thus in the Æolian harp the Tones are pleasant and soothing, though they do not vary in acuteness, but only in loudness. — The effect of the common drum in rousing and elevating the Mind is very strong ; yet it has no variety of notes ; though the effect indeed here depends much on the proportion and measure of the notes.

MELODY consists in the agreeable succession of single Sounds. — The melody that pleases in one country does not equally please in another, though there are certain general Principles which universally regulate it, the scale of Music being the same



same in all countries.—Harmony consists in the agreeable effect of Sounds differing in acuteness produced together; the general Principles of it are likewise fixed.

ONE end of Music is to communicate pleasure, but the far nobler and more important is to command the Passions and move the heart. In the first view it is an innocent amusement, well fitted to give an agreeable relaxation to the Mind from the fatigue of study or business.—In the other it is one of the most useful Arts in life. The effect of eloquence depends in a great measure on it. We take Music here in the large and proper sense of the word, the Art of variously affecting the Mind by the power of Sounds. In this sense, all Mankind are more or less judges of it, without regard to exactness of ear.—Every Man feels the differ-



ence between a sweet melodious voice and a harsh dissonant one.

EVERY agreeable speaker, independent of the sweetness of his Tones, rises and falls in his voice in strict musical intervals, and therefore his discourse is as capable of being set in musical characters as any song whatever. — But however musical a voice may be, if the intervals which it uses are uniformly the same, it displeases, because the ear is fatigued with the constant return of the same Sounds, however agreeable in themselves; and if we are attending to the Subject, we are displeased on another account, as hearing the same musical passages used to express and inspire sentiments of the most different and opposite natures, whereas they should be always varying and adapted to them. This has justly brought great  
ridicule



ridicule on what is called Singing a Discourse, though what really offends is either the badness of the song, or its being tiresome for want of variety. — If we examine into the effects produced by eloquence in all ages, we must ascribe them principally to the power of Sounds. We allow that composition, action, the expression of the countenance, and some other circumstances, contribute their share, though a much smaller one. — The most pathetic composition may be pronounced in such a manner, as to prevent its having the least influence. Orations which have commanded the Minds of the greatest Men, and that have determined the fate of Nations, have been read in the closet with languor and disgust.

As the proper application of the voice to the purposes of eloquence has been



little attended to, it has been thought an Art unattainable by any rules, and depending entirely on natural Taste and Genius. In some measure it certainly is so, yet it is much more reducible to rules, and more capable of being taught, than is commonly imagined. Indeed before Philosophy ascertains and methodizes the Ideas and Principles on which an Art depends, it is no wonder it be difficult of acquisition.—The very language in which it is to be communicated is to be formed, and it is a considerable time before this language comes to be understood and adopted.—We have a remarkable instance of this in the Subject of musical expression, or performing a piece of Music with Taste and propriety. People were sensible, that the same Music performed by different Artists had very different



different effects. Yet they all played the same notes, played equally well in tune and in time. But still there was an unknown somewhat that gave it meaning and expression from one hand, while from another it was lifeless and insipid. — People were satisfied in resolving this into performing with or without Taste, which was thought the entire gift of Nature. — Geminiani, who was both a Composer and Performer of the highest class, first thought of reducing the Art of playing on the Violin with Taste to rules, for which purpose he was obliged to make a great addition to the musical language and characters. The scheme was executed with great ingenuity, yet it has scarcely been attended to by any practical Musicians except Mr. Avison.

MUSIC,



Music, like Eloquence, must propose  
 as its end a certain effect to be produced  
 on the hearers. If it produces this effect,  
 it is good Music; if it fails, it is bad. —  
 No Music can be pronounced good or  
 bad in itself; it can only be relatively so.  
 Every country has a Melody peculiar to  
 itself, expressive of the several Passions.  
 A Composer must have a particular re-  
 gard to this, if he proposes to affect them.  
 — Thus in Scotland there is a species of  
 Music perfectly well fitted to inspire that  
 joyous mirth suited to dancing, and a  
 plaintive Music peculiarly expressive of  
 that tendernefs and pleasing melancholy  
 attendant on distress in love; both ori-  
 ginal in their kind, and different from  
 every other in Europe. — It is of no con-  
 sequence whence this Music derives its  
 origin, whether it be simple or complex,  
 according



according to the rules of regular composition, or against them; whilst it produces its intended effect in a superior degree to any other, it is the preferable Music; and while a person feels this effect, it is a reflection on his Taste and common sense, if not on his candor, to despise it.

THEY who apply much of their time to Music, acquire new Tastes, besides their national one, and in the infinite variety which Melody and Harmony are capable of, discover new sources of pleasure formerly unknown to them. But the finest natural Taste never adopts a new one, till the ear has been long accustomed to it, and after all seldom enters into it with that warmth and feeling, which those do, to whom it is national.

THE general admiration pretended to be given to foreign Music in Britain, is a  
despicable



despicable piece of affectation. In Italy we see the natives transported at the opera with all that variety of delight and passion which the Composer intended to produce. — The same opera in England is seen with the most remarkable listlessness and inattention. It can raise no passion in the audience, because they do not understand the language in which it is written. — To them it has as little meaning as a piece of instrumental Music. The ear may be transiently pleased with the Air of a song, but that is the most trifling effect of Music. — Among the very few who understand the language, and enter with pleasure and Taste into the Italian Music, the conduct of the dramatic part appears so ridiculous, that they can feel nothing of that transport of passion, the united effect of Music and Poetry, which may  
be



be gradually raised by the artful texture and unfolding of a dramatic story\*. — Yet vanity prevails so much over the very sense of pleasure, that the Italian opera is in England more frequented by people of rank, than any other public diversion; and they, to avoid the imputation of want of Taste, condemn themselves to some hours painful attendance on it every week, and to talk of it in raptures which their hearts never felt.

SIMPLICITY in Melody is very necessary in all Music intended to reach the heart, or even greatly to delight the ear. — The effect here must be produced instantaneously, or not at all. The Subject must therefore be simple and easily traced, and not a single note or grace should be admitted, but what has a view to the

\* Brown.

proposed



proposed end.—If simplicity of Melody be so necessary where the view is to move the Passions, simplicity of Harmony must be still more necessary. Some of the most delicate touches of pathetic Music will not allow any accompaniment.

THE ancient Music certainly produced much greater and more general effects than the modern, though the accounts of it be supposed greatly exaggerated.—Yet the Science of Music was in a very low state among the Ancients. They were strangers to Harmony, all the voices and instruments being unisons in concert: and the instruments they made use of, appear to have been much inferior in respect of compass, expression, and variety, to those which we are possessed of. Yet these very deficiencies might render their Music more expressive and powerful.—The only



view of Composers was to touch the heart and the Passions. Proper Melody was sufficient for this purpose, which might easily be comprehended and felt by the whole people.—There were not two different species of Music among them, as with us, one for the learned in the Science, and another for the vulgar.

THE introduction of Harmony opened a new World in Music. It promised to give that variety which Melody alone could never afford, and likewise to give Melody an additional charm and energy.

—Unfortunately the first Composers were so immerst in the study of Harmony, which soon appeared to be a Science of great extent and intricacy, that these principal ends of it were forgot. They valued themselves on the laboured construction of parts which were multiplied

in



in a surprising manner.—In fact this Art of Counterpoint and complicated Harmony was in a very few years brought to the highest degree of perfection, after its introduction by Palæstine, who lived in the time of Leo X.—But this species of Music could only be understood by the few who had made it their particular study. To every one else it appeared a confused jargon of sounds without design or meaning. To the very few who understood it there appeared an evident deficiency in Air or Melody, especially when the parts were made to run in strict fugues or canons, with which Air is in a great measure incompatible.—Besides the real deficiency of Air in these compositions, it required the attention to be constantly exerted to trace the Subject of the Music, as it was alternately carried  
on



on through the feveral parts ; an attention inconfiftent with what delights the ear, much more with what touches the Paflions; where that is intended, the Mind muft be difengaged, muft fee no contrivance, admire no execution ; but be open and paffive to the impreffion.

THE artifice of fugues in vocal Mufic feems in a peculiar manner ill adapted to affect the Paflions. If every one of four voices is expreffing a different fentiment and a different mufical paffage at the fame time, the hearer cannot poffibly attend to, and be affected with them all.— This is a ftile of compofition in which a perfon, without the leaft Taft or Genius, may arrive at great perfection, by the mere force of ftudy : But without a very great fhare of thefe to give fpirit and meaning to the leading Airs or Subjects, fuch



compositions will always be dry and uninteresting. Besides the objections that lie against all complex Music considered as to its composition, there are others arising from the great difficulty of its execution. It is not easy to preserve a number of instruments playing together in tune. Stringed instruments are falling, while wind instruments naturally rise in their tone during the performance. — But it is not sufficient that all the Performers play in the most exact tune and time. They must all understand the stile and design of the composition, and be able to make the responses in the fugue with proper spirit. Every one must know how to carry on the Subject with the proper expression when it is his turn to lead; and when he falls into an auxiliary part, he must know how



to conduct his accompaniment in such a manner as to give an additional force to the leading Subject. But musical Taste and judgement are most remarkably displayed in the proper accompanying of vocal Music, especially with the thorough bass. If this is not conducted with the strictest attention to heighten the intended expression of the song, it destroys it altogether, as frequently happens from the throwing in the full chords, when a single note should only have been struck, or when perhaps the accompaniment should have ceased altogether.

THESE are difficulties few Performers have an idea of, and fewer are able to conquer. Most Performers think they do all that is incumbent on them, if they play in tune and in time, and vanity



often leads them to make their voice or instrument to be heard above the rest, without troubling their heads about the Composer's design.

It has been much the fashion for some years past, to regard Air entirely in musical Compositions; and the learned works of Harmony have fallen into neglect, being considered as cold and spiritless. This change has been introduced by Composers who unfortunately happened to be great Performers themselves. These people had no opportunities in the old compositions of shewing the dexterity of their execution; the wild and extravagant flights, which they indulged in order to display this, being absolutely destructive of the Harmony. They introduced therefore Solo's of their own composition, or Concerto's, which from the thinness and meagreness  
of



of the parts, cannot be considered in any other light than Solo's. — It is not easy to characterise the stile of most of these pieces. In truth they have no character or meaning at all. — The Authors of them are little concerned what Subject they choose, their single view being to excite the surprize and admiration of their hearers. This they do by the most unnatural and wild excursions, that have not the remotest tendency to charm the ear or affect the heart. In many passages they are grating to the ear when performed by the best hands, but in others they are perfectly intolerable.

A new stile of composition has lately been cultivated in Italy, and greatly promoted in Britain, particularly by one person of rank. The present fashion is to admire this, and to despise Corelli as want-



ing spirit and variety. — The truth is, Corelli's stile and this will not bear a comparison. — Corelli's excellence consists in the chastity of his composition, in the richness and sweetness of his Harmonies. — The other pleases by its spirit and a wild luxuriancy, which makes an agreeable variety in a Concert, but possesses too little of the elegance and pathetic expression of Music, to remain long the public Taste.

THOUGH Music, considered in its useful application, to delight the ear and touch the Passions of the bulk of Mankind, requires the utmost simplicity, yet considered as an Art capable of giving a lasting and varied enjoyment to the few, who from a stronger natural Taste devote part of their time and attention to its cultivation, it both admits, and requires variety,



riety, and even some degree of complication. — Not only the ear becomes more delicate by cultivation, but the musical Taste.

WHEN the ear becomes acquainted with a variety of Melodies, it begins by degrees to relish others, besides those which are national. A national Melody may have expressions for only a few affections. A cultivated and enlarged Taste easily adopts a greater variety of expressions for these and other affections, and learns from the deepest recesses of Harmony, to express some, unknown to every national Music.

WHEN one practises Music much, the simplicity of Melody tires the ear. When he begins to hear an Air he was formerly acquainted with, he immediately recollects the whole, and this anticipation pre-



vents his enjoying it. He requires therefore the assistance of Harmony, which, without hurting the Melody, gives a variety to the Music, and sometimes renders the Melody more expressive.—Practice enables one to trace the Subject of a complex Concerto, as it is carried through the several parts, which to a common ear is an unmeaning jumble of Sounds. Distinct from the pleasure which the ear receives here from the Music, there is another which arises from the perception of the contrivance and ingenuity of the Composer.—The enjoyment, it must be owned, is not of that heart-felt kind which simple Music can only give, but of a more sober and sedate kind, which proves more lasting: And it must be considered that whatever touches the heart or the Passions very sensibly, must be applied with a very judicious



judicious and very sparing hand.—The sweetest and fullest chords must be seldom repeated, otherwise the certain effect is satiety and disgust.—They who are best acquainted with the human heart, need not be told that this observation is not confined to Music.

On the whole we may observe, that musical Genius consists in the invention of Melody suited to produce a desired effect on the Mind.—Musical Taste consists in conducting the Melody with spirit and elegance, in such a manner as to produce this single effect in its full force.

JUDGEMENT in Music is shewn by adapting such harmonious accompaniments to the Melody as may give it a variety without destroying its simplicity; in the preparation and resolution of Discords, and



and the artful transitions from one key to another.—Taste in a Performer consists in a knowledge of the Composer's design, and expressing it in a spirited and pathetic manner, without any view of shewing the dexterity of his own execution.—But though all these circumstances of Composition and Performance should concur in any piece of Music, yet it must always fail in affecting the Passions, unless its meaning and direction be ascertained by adapting it to sentiment and pathetic composition.—— It exerts its greatest powers when used as an assistant to Poetry †: hence the great superiority of vocal to instrumental Music: the human voice is capable of more justness, and a more delicate musical expression, than any instrument

† Brown.

what-



whatever ; the perfection of an instrument depending on its nearest approach to it. — Vocal Music is much confined by the language it is performed in. — The harmony and sweetness of the Greek and Italian languages gives them great advantages over the English and French, which are harsh, unmusical, and full of consonants ; and this among other inconveniences occasions perpetual sacrifices of the quantity to the modulation \*. This is one great cause of the flightiness and want of variety of the French Music, which they in vain endeavour to cover and supply by laboured and complex accompaniments. — As vocal Music is the first and most natural Music of every country, it is reasonable to expect some analogy between it and the Poetry of the

\* Rousseau.



country, to which it is always adapted.—  
 The great superiority of the Scotch songs  
 to the English may in a great measure  
 be accounted for from this Principle.  
 The Scotch songs are simple and tender,  
 full of strokes of Nature and Passion.—  
 So is their Music.—Most of the English  
 songs abound in quaint and childish con-  
 ceits. They all aim at wit, and some-  
 times attain it; but Music has no expres-  
 sion for wit, and the Music of their songs  
 is therefore flat and insipid, and so little  
 esteemed by the English themselves, that  
 it is in a perpetual fluctuation, and has  
 never had any characteristic stile.—On the  
 other hand, England has produced many  
 admirable Composers of Church Music.  
 —Their great attachment to Counterpoint  
 has often led them into a wrong track;  
 in other respects, they have shewn both  
 Genius



Genius and Taste.—Religion indeed opens the amplest field for musical, as well as poetical Genius, it produces almost all the variety of Subjects, which Music can express, the sublime, the joyous, the chearful, the serene, the devout, the plaintive, the sorrowful. It likewise warms the heart with that enthusiasm so peculiarly necessary in all works of Genius.—Accordingly the finest compositions in Music we have, are in the Church stile. Handel far advanced in life, when his constitution and spirits seemed nearly exhausted, was so roused by this Subject, that he exhibited proofs of extent and sublimity of Genius in his Messiah, superior to any he had shewed in his most vigorous and happy period of life.—We have another instance of the same kind in Marcello, a noble Venetian, who set the first fifty

Psalms



Psalms to Music. In this work he has united the simplicity and pathos of the ancient Music with the grace and variety of the modern. In compliance with the Taste of the times he was sometimes forced to leave that simplicity of stile which he loved and admired, but by doing so he has enriched the Art with a variety of the most expressive and unusual Harmonies. — The great object in vocal Music is to make the Music expressive of the sentiment. How little this is usually regarded appears by the practice of singing all the parts of a song to the same Music, though the sentiments and passions to be expressed be ever so different. — If the Music has any character at all, this is a manifest violation of Taste and common sense, as it is obvious every different sentiment and passion should be expressed



in a stile peculiarly suited to itself.—But the most common blunder in Composers, who aim at expression, is their mistaking imitation for it.—

† Music, considered as an imitative Art, can imitate only Sounds or Motion, and this last but very imperfectly.—A Composer should make his Music expressive of the sentiment, and never have a reference to any particular word used in conveying that sentiment, which is a common practice, and really a miserable species of punning.— Besides, where imitation is intended, it should generally be laid upon the instrumental accompaniments, which by their greater compass and variety are fitter to perform the imitation, while the voice is left at liberty to express the sentiment. When the imi-

† See Harris and Avison.



tation is laid upon the voice, it obliges it to a strained and unnatural exertion, and prevents the distinct articulation of the words, which it is necessary to preserve in order to convey the meaning of the song.—Handel sometimes observed this very carefully, at other times, as his Genius or Attention was very unequal, he entirely neglected it. In that beautiful song of the *Il Penferoso*,

“ Oft on a plate of rising ground,  
 “ I hear the far off curfew found,”

he has thrown the imitation of the bell with great art and success into the symphony, and reserves the song entire for the expression of that pleasing tranquil melancholy, which the words emphatically convey. He has shewn the same  
 address



addresses in the celebrated song of Acis and Galatea, “ Hush ye little warbling quire,” where he has laid the imitation of the warbling of the birds upon the symphony and accompaniments, and preserves in the song that simplicity and tender languishing, which the Subject of it particularly required.—On the other hand in the song in Semele,

“ The morning lark to mine accords his note,

“ And tunes to my distress his warbling throat,”

he runs a long and laboured division on the word Warbling; and after all, the voice gives but a very faint imitation of the warbling of the lark, though the violins in the symphony could express it with great justness and delicacy.—In the union of Poetry and Music, the Music should be

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subservient



subservient to the Poetry : the very reverse is the common practice ; the Poetry is ever made subordinate to the Music. —

Handel made those people, who composed the words of his Oratorios, alter and transpose them, as he thought best suited his Music ; and as no Man of Genius could submit to this, we find the Poetry the most wretched imaginable. — We have frequently a more shocking instance of the little regard the Composer has to the Poetry, and to the effect which should be left upon the Mind in the repetition of the first part of the Music after the second. — It frequently happens, that a succession of very opposite Passions takes place in the course of a song ; for instance, from anger to reconciliation and tenderness, with which the sense requires



quires it should conclude ; yet the Composer sometimes constructs his Music in such a way, as requires a return from the second to the first part with which it must end.—This is a glaring absurdity in point of sense, and likewise distracts the Mind by a most unnatural succession of Passions. —We have another instance of the little regard paid to the ultimate end of Music, the affecting the Heart and Passions, in the universally allowed practice of making a long flourish at the close of a song, and sometimes at other Periods of it.—In this the Performer is left at liberty to shew the utmost compass of his throat and execution ; and all that is required, is, that he should conclude in the proper key : the Performer accordingly takes this opportunity of shewing the audience the extent of his abilities, by the most fan-



tastical and unmeaning extravagance of execution.—The disgust which this gives to some, and the surprise which it excites in all the audience, breaks the tide of Passion in the soul, and destroys all the effect which the Composer has been labouring to produce. — Our Oratorios lie under a great disadvantage in being deprived of the assistance of Action and Scenery: another one is their having no unity or design as a whole. They are little else than a collection of songs pretty much independent of one another.—Now the effect of a Dramatic performance does not depend on the effect of particular passages, considered by themselves, but on that artful construction, by which one part gives strength to another, and gradually works the Mind up to those sentiments and passions, which it was



the design of the author to produce.—  
 The effects of Music depend upon many  
 other circumstances besides its connection  
 with Poetry. — The effect, for instance,  
 of Cathedral Music depends greatly on its  
 being properly adapted to the particular  
 service of the day, and discourse of the  
 Preacher, and such a direction of it  
 requires great taste and judgment.—  
 Yet this is never thought of: the whole  
 conduct of the Music is left to the caprice  
 of the Organist, who makes it airy or  
 grave, chearful or melancholy, as it suits  
 his fancy, and often degrades the solemnity  
 and gravity suitable to divine worship,  
 by the lightest and most trivial  
*Airs.*

We see the same want of public Taste  
 in the Music performed between the acts



in † Tragedy, where the tone of Passion is oft broke in upon, and destroyed by airy and impertinent Music.—The effect of Music may sometimes be lost by an unhappy association of Ideas with the person and character of a Performer. When we hear at the Oratorio an Italian Eunuch squeaking forth the vengeance of divine wrath, or a gay lively strumpet pouring forth the complaint of a deeply penitent and contrite heart, we cannot prevent our being hurt by such an association.—These observations relate principally to the public Taste of Music in Britain, if the Public can be said to have any Taste.—In Italy a chastity, an elegance, a simplicity and pathos of stile has been cultivated by Pergolese, Astorgo,

† Elements of Criticism.

Caldara,



Caldara, and some other eminent masters, and we hope will soon spread its influence. — I could not pursue this Subject farther without entering deeply into the intricacies of the technical part of Music, which I have carefully endeavoured to avoid. — My design was only to shew, that the Principles of Taste in Music, like those of the other fine Arts, have their foundation in Nature and common sense; that these Principles have been grossly violated by those unworthy hands to whose direction alone this delightful Art is entrusted; and that Men of sense and genius should not imagine they want an ear or a musical Taste, because they do not relish much of the modern Music, as in many cases this is rather a proof of the goodness both of the one and the other.



AFTER all it cannot be expected, that either Music, or any of the fine Arts, will ever be cultivated in such a manner as to make them useful and subservient to life, till the natural union be restored which so happily subsisted between them and Philosophy in ancient days ; when Philosophy gave to the World not only the most accomplished Generals and Statesmen, but presided with the greatest lustre and dignity over Rhetoric, Poetry, Music, and all the elegant Arts that polish and adorn Mankind.

Read at the Philosophical Society,  
August 9th. 1763.





## DISCOURSE IV.

**I**T was formerly observed, that the pleasures arising from works of Taste and Imagination were confined to a small part of Mankind, and that although the foundations of a good Taste are laid in human Nature, yet without culture it never comes to a considerable source of pleasure. As we formerly made some observations on the real effects produced by a cultivated Taste in some of the fine Arts,



Arts, we shall proceed to consider its influence on the pleasure arising from such works of Genius as are in a particular manner addressed to the Imagination and the heart. This pleasure, in the earlier part of life, is often extremely high.—Youth indeed has peculiar advantages in this respect.—The Imagination is then lively and vigorous, the Heart warm and feeling, equally open to the joyous impressions of wit and humour, the force of the sublime, and every softer and more delicate sentiment of humanity. It is a melancholy thing to observe the gradual decay of this innocent and rich source of enjoyment, along with many others equally pure and natural.—Nature, it is true, has allotted different pleasures to different periods of life : but there is no reason to think, that Nature has deprived  
any



any period of those pleasures we are now treating of.

WE complained formerly of many of the useful Sciences as well as fine Arts being left entirely in the hands of Men unassisted with Learning and Philosophy; but there is some reason to suspect that these assistances have commonly been applied to works of Taste and Imagination in such a manner as has rather weakened their force and influence.—This Subject is interesting, and deserves a particular discussion.

THE Imagination, like every thing in nature, is subjected to general and fixt laws, which can only be discovered by experience. But it is a matter of the utmost difficulty precisely to ascertain these laws. The Subject is so fleeting, so various in different countries, in different

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constitutions of Men, and even in the same person in different periods and situations in life, that it requires a person of the most enlarged knowledge of Mankind to reduce its laws to any kind of System; and this person likewise must in himself possess the most delicate sensibility of Heart and Imagination, otherwise he cannot understand what he is employed about.—Such a System of laws, particularly relating to Dramatic and Epic Poetry, was formed by some great Men of antiquity, and has been very universally adopted since their time. It must be observed however, that the most admired Epic Poem in the World, and the most perfect Greek Tragedies, were composed before the establishment of these laws, and seem principally to have laid the foundation of them.

NOTHING



NOTHING tends more to stop the improvement of any Art or Science, than the reducing all its Principles too soon into a regular System. The bulk of Mankind are incapable of thinking or judging for themselves on any Subject. There are a few leading spirits, whom the rest must follow. This makes Systems so universally agreeable. If they cannot teach people to think and to feel, they teach them what to say, which answers all the purposes of vanity, the most universally ruling Principle among Mankind, and which particularly shews itself in the Subjects we are treating of, as they make so considerable a part of popular conversation.—A person without the least Taste or Genius may, by the help of a little reading, make himself master of all the established rules of Criticism, and thus acquire



quire the reputation both of Taste and Learning. These rules make it very easy for a dull Man to point out the defects of a work of Genius, though no rules can inform him when he is to admire and be moved. He has likewise the advantage of a fixt standard to appeal to, that of ancient and established authority, an authority which the modesty and good sense usually attendant on real Genius submits to in silence. By these means fashion and authority take the lead in all decisions of Taste, few being so hardy as to shake off their fetters, boldly to avow what they feel, and to appeal from the tribunal of Aristotle to that of Nature. But when once Taste comes to be confined in this manner, it is capable of the greatest perversion, and every sentiment of Nature may be deadened or effaced. Thus there

is



is a corruption of the very source and fountain of genuine Criticism, which depends entirely on properly collecting and arranging the feelings of pure unaffected Nature. We do not mean here to detract from the merits of Aristotle as a Critic, whose writings in that character are not the least proofs of the extent and acuteness of his Genius; but all Criticism in a certain degree must be temporary and local.

SOME tempers, and even some Nations are ~~not~~<sup>most</sup> pleased with Nature in her fairest and most regular forms, while others admire her in the great, the wonderful, and wild. Thus elegance, regularity, and sentiment are chiefly attended to in France, and French Criticism principally refers to these; but its rules can with no propriety be applied in England, where  
the



the natural Genius or Taste of the people is very different. The grand, the sublime, the surprising, and whatever very forcibly strikes the Imagination, ought there to be principally regarded. Without these the utmost elegance and propriety will be cold and insipid; and with them elegance and propriety can be in a good measure dispensed with.

WHENEVER what is called a very correct Taste generally prevails, the powers of Genius and Invention gradually languish; and the constant attention to prevent giving offence to a few, renders them incapable of giving much pleasure to any.

REFINEMENT and delicacy of Taste is an acquisition very dangerous and deceitful. — It flatters our pride by giving us a conscious superiority over the rest of Mankind,



Mankind, and by specious promises of enjoyment, <sup>unknown</sup> to vulgar Minds, often cheats us out of those pleasures, which belong equally to the whole Species, and which Nature intended every one should enjoy. People possessed of extreme delicacy are haunted as it were with an evil Genius, by certain Ideas of the coarse, the low, the vulgar, the irregular, which strike them in all the natural pleasures of life, and render them incapable of enjoying them.

THERE is scarcely an external or internal Sense but may be brought by constant indulgence and attention to such a degree of acuteness as to be disgusted at every object that is presented to it.—This extreme sensibility and refinement, though usually at first the effect of vanity and affectation, yet by a constant attention



to all the little circumstances that feed them, soon become real and genuine. But Nature has set bounds to all our pleasures. We may enjoy them safely within these bounds, but if we refine too much upon them, the certain consequence is disappointment and chagrin.

WHEN such a false delicacy, or, what has much the same effect, when the affectation of it comes to prevail generally, it checks, in works of Taste, all vigorous efforts of Genius and Imagination, enervates the force of language, and produces that mediocrity, that coldness and insipidity of composition, which does not indeed greatly disgust, but never can give high pleasure. This is one bad effect of the spirit of Criticism prevailing very generally, and especially when Men of Learning and philosophical Genius condescend



descend to bestow their attention on works of Taste and Imagination. As such Men are sometimes deficient in those powers of fancy, and that sensibility of heart, which are essential to the relishing such Subjects: they are too often ready to despise and condemn those things which they have no right to judge of, as they neither perceive, nor feel them.

A clear and acute Understanding is far from being the only quality necessary to form a perfect Critic.—The Heart is often more concerned here than the Head.—In general, it seems the more proper business of true philosophical Criticism to observe and watch the excursions of fancy at a distance, than to be continually checking all its little irregularities.—Too much restraint and pruning is of more fatal consequence



sequence here than a little wildness and luxuriancy.

THE\* beauties of every work of Taste are of different degrees, and so are its blemishes. The greatest blemish is the want of such beauties as are characteristic, and essential to its kind. Thus in dramatic Poetry one part may be constructed according to the laws of unity and truth, whilst another directly contradicts them. The French, by their great attention to the general oeconomy and unity of their fable, and the mechanical construction of their scenes, have universally obtained the character of superior correctness to the English. — If correctness consists in a freedom from little faults, they certainly are entitled to this character. — But unity of character is prior

\* *Musæum*, vol. I. in



in dignity to unity of fable, and in this respect the English greatly excel them. Their characters indeed are often so vague and indeterminate, that they are not capable of consistence. They are frequently too making long declamatory speeches, where the Poet forgets he is imitating, and says pompous things in his own person, when he ought only to say natural things, and suitable to the condition of his Actor. The Frenchified appearance of all their characters, without any regard to the country where the scene is laid, is another great absurdity in the conduct of their Drama. These are instances of want of true Taste far beyond the broken scenes and frequent changes of place on the English Theatre. The latter indeed shew a neglect of mechanical contrivance, but the former strike at the truth and beauty



of poetic imitation in its most essential part.—Shakespear, by his lively creative Imagination, his strokes of Nature and Passion, and preserving the consistency of his characters, amply compensates for his transgressions against the rules of time and place, which the Imagination can easily dispense with. His frequently breaking the tide of the Passions by the introduction of low and absurd comedy is a more capital transgression against Nature, and the fundamental laws of the Drama.

PROBABILITY is one of the boundaries, within which it has pleased Criticism to confine the Imagination. This appears plausible, but upon enquiry will perhaps be found too far extended. Events may appear to our Reason not only improbable, but absurd and impossible, yet the Imagination may adopt them with facility and



and delight. The time was, when an universal belief prevailed of invisible Agents concerning themselves in the affairs of this World. Many events were supposed to happen out of the ordinary course of things by the supernatural agency of these Spirits, who were believed to be of different ranks, and of different dispositions towards Mankind. Such a belief was well adapted to make an impression on some of the most powerful Principles of our Nature, to gratify the natural Passion for the marvellous, to dilate the Imagination, and give boundless scope to its excursions.

In those days the old Romance was in its highest glory. Though a belief of the interposition of these invisible Powers in the ordinary affairs of Mankind has now ceased, yet it still keeps its hold of the



Imagination, which has a natural propensity to embrace this opinion. Hence we find that Oriental tales continue to be universally read and admired by those who have not the least belief in the Genii, who are the most important Agents in the story. All that we require in these works of Imagination is an unity and consistency of character. † The Imagination willingly allows itself to be deceived into a belief of the existence of beings, which Reason sees to be ridiculous ; but then every event must take place in such a regular manner as may be naturally expected from the interposition of superior intelligence and power. It is not a single violation of truth and probability that offends, but such a violation as perpetually recurs. We have a

† Adventurer.

strong



strong evidence of the ease with which the Imagination is deceived, in the effects produced by a well acted Tragedy. The Imagination there soon becomes too much heated, and the Passions too much interested, to allow Reason to reflect that we are agitated with the feigned distress of people entirely at their ease. We suffer ourselves to be transported from place to place, and believe we are hearing the private soliloquy of a person in his chamber, while he is talking on a stage so as to be heard by a thousand people.

THE deception in our modern Novels is more perfect than in the old Romance; but as they profess to paint Nature and Characters as they really are, it is evident that the powers of fancy cannot have the same play, nor can the succession of incidents be so quick nor so

sur-



surprising. It requires therefore a Genius of the first class to give them that spirit and variety so necessary to captivate the Imagination, and to preserve them from sinking into dry narrative and tiresome declamation.

NOTWITHSTANDING the ridiculous extravagance of the old Romance in many particulars, it seems calculated to produce more favourable effects on the morals of Mankind, than our modern Novels.—If the former did not represent Men as they really are, it represented them better; its Heroes were patterns of courage, generosity, truth, humanity, and the most exalted virtues. Its Heroines were distinguished for modesty, delicacy, and the utmost dignity of manners.—The latter represent Mankind too much what they are, paint such scenes of pleasure



fure and vice as are unworthy to see the  
 light, and thus in a manner hackney  
 youth in the ways of wickedness, before  
 they are well entered into the World ;  
 expose the fair sex in the most wanton  
 and shameless manner to the eyes of the  
 world, by stripping them of that modest  
 reserve, which is the foundation of grace  
 and dignity, the veil with which Nature  
 intended to protect them from too fa-  
 miliar an eye, to be at once the greatest  
 incitement to love and the greatest secu-  
 rity to virtue.—In short, the one may  
 mislead the Imagination ; the other has  
 a tendency to inflame the Passions and  
 corrupt the Heart. The pleasure which  
 we receive from History arises in a great  
 measure from the same source with that  
 which we receive from Romance. It is  
 not the bare recital of facts that gives us  
 pleasure.



pleasure. They must be facts that give some agitation to the Mind by their being important, interesting or surprizing. But events of this kind do not very frequently occur in History, nor does it descend to paint those minute features of particular persons which are more likely to engage our Affections and interest our Passions than the fate of Nations. It is not therefore surprizing that we find it so difficult to keep attention awake in reading History, and that fewer have succeeded in this kind of composition than in any other whatever. To render History pleasing and interesting, it is not sufficient that it be strictly impartial, that it be written with all the elegance of language, and abound in the most judicious and uncommon observations. We never begin to enter with pleasure into a  
History



History till we contract an attachment to some public and important cause, or some distinguished characters which it represents to us. The fate of these interests us, and keeps the Mind in an anxious yet pleasing suspense. We do not require the author to violate the truth of History by representing our favorite cause or hero as perfect; we will allow him to represent all their weaknesses and imperfections, but still it must be with such a tender and delicate hand as not to destroy our attachment. There is a sort of unity or consistency of character that we even expect in History. An author of any ingenuity who is disposed to it can easily disappoint this expectation without deviating from truth. There are certain features in the greatest and worthiest characters, which may be painted in such a  
light



light as to make them appear little and ridiculous. If an Historian be constantly attentive to check admiration, he certainly may do it; but if the Mind be thus continually disappointed, and can never find an object that it can dwell on with pleasure, though we may admire his Genius and be instructed by his History, he will never leave a pleasing and grateful impression on the Mind. Where this is the prevailing spirit and genius of a History, it not only deprives us of a great part of the pleasure we expected from it, but leaves disagreeable effects on the Mind, as it stifles that noble enthusiasm, which is the foundation of all great actions, and produces a *scepticism* ~~debility~~, coldness, and indifference about all Characters and Principles whatsoever. We acknowledge however it may be of great



great service in correcting the narrow prejudices of party and faction ; as they will be more influenced by the representations of one who seems to take no side, than by any thing which can be said by their antagonists.

A lively Imagination, and particularly a poetical one, bears confinement nowhere so ill as in the use of Metaphor and Imagery. This is the peculiar province of the Imagination. The soundest head can neither assist, nor judge in it. The Poet's eye, as it \* glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, is struck with numberless similitudes and analogies, that not only pass unnoticed by the rest of Mankind, but even cannot be comprehended when suggested to them. There is a correspondence between

\* Shakespear.

certain



certain external forms of Nature, and certain affections of the Mind, that may be felt, but cannot be explained. — Sometimes the association may be accidental, but it often seems to be innate. Hence the great difficulty of ascertaining the true sublime. It cannot indeed be confined within any bounds, it is entirely relative, depending on the warmth and liveliness of the Imagination, and therefore different in different countries. For the same reason, wherever there is great richness and profusion of Imagery, which in some species of Poetry is a principal beauty, there are always very general complaints of obscurity, which is increased by those sudden transitions that bewilder a common reader, but are easily followed by a poetical one. An accurate scrutiny into the propriety of Images and

Meta-



Metaphors is to no purpose. If it be not felt at first, it seldom can be communicated: while we analyse it, the impression vanishes. The same observation may be applied to Wit, which consists in a quick and unexpected assemblage of Ideas, that strike the Mind in an agreeable manner either by their resemblance or incongruity. Neither is the justness of humour a Subject that will bear reasoning. This consists in a lively painting of those weaknesses of character, which are not of importance enough to raise pity or indignation, but only excite mirth and laughter. One must have an Idea of the original to judge of, or be affected by the representation, and if he does not see its justness at the first glance, he never sees it. For this reason all works of humour and ridicule, and all satire,

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which



which paint the particular features and manners of the times, being local and transient, quickly lose their poignancy, become obscure and insipid.—

WHATSOEVER is the object of Imagination and Taste can only be seen to advantage at a certain distance, and in a particular light. If brought too near the eye, the beauty which charmed before, may appear faded, and often distorted.—It is therefore the business of judgment to ascertain this point of view, to exhibit the object to the Mind in that position which gives it most pleasure, and to prevent the Mind from viewing it in any other.—This is generally very much in our own power. It is an Art which we all practise in common life. We learn by habit to turn up to the eye the agreeable side of any object which gives us pleasure,



pleasure, and to keep the dark one out of sight. If this be kept within any reasonable bounds, the soundest judgement will not only connive at, but approve it.—Human life itself is not only chequered, but every object in it.—Whatever we admire or love, as great, or beautiful, or amiable, has certain circumstances belonging to it, which if attended to would poison our enjoyment.—We are agreeably struck with the grandeur and magnificence of Nature in her wildest forms, with the prospect of vast and stupendous mountains; but is there any necessity for our attending at the same time to the bleakness, the coldness, and the barrenness, which are universally connected with them? When a lover contemplates with rapture the charms of beauty and elegance that captivate his



heart, must he at the same time reflect how uncertain and transient the object of his passion is, and that the succession of a few years must lay it mouldering in the dust?

BUT we not only think it unnecessary always to see the whole truth, but frequently allow and justify ourselves in viewing things magnified beyond the truth. We indulge a manifest partiality to our friends, our children, and native country. We not only keep their failings as much as prudence will allow out of sight, but exalt in our Imagination all their good qualities beyond their just value. Nor does the general sense of mankind condemn this indulgence, for this very good reason, because it is natural, and because we could not forego it, without losing at the same time all sense of friendship, natural affection and patriotism.



ism. — There appears no sufficient reason why this conduct, which we observe in common life, should not be followed in our enquiries into works of Imagination: A person of a cultivated Taste, while he resigns himself to the first impressions of pleasure excited by real excellency, can at the same time, with the slightest glance of the eye, perceive whether the work will bear a nearer inspection. If it can bear this, he has the additional pleasure before him arising from those latent beauties which strike the Imagination less forcibly. If he finds they cannot bear this examination, he should remove his attention immediately, enjoy and be grateful for the pleasure he has already received.

WHAT is usually called a correct Taste is very much offended with Dr. Young's Night Thoughts; it observes that the re-



presentation there given of Human Life is false and gloomy ; that the Poetry sometimes sinks into childish conceits or prosaic flatness, but oftener rises into the turgid or false sublime ; that it is perplexed and obscure ; that the reasoning is often weak, and that the general plan of the work is ill laid, and not happily conducted. — Yet this work may be read with very different sentiments. It may be found to contain many strokes of the most sublime Poetry that any language has produced, and to be full of those pathetic strokes of Nature and Passion, which touch the heart in the most tender and affecting manner.—Besides the Mind is sometimes in a disposition to be pleased only with dark views of Human Life.

THERE are afflictions too deep to bear either reasoning or amusement. They  
may



may be soothed, but cannot be diverted. The gloom of the Night Thoughts perfectly corresponds with this state of Mind. It indulges and flatters the present passion, and at the same time presents those motives of consolation which alone can render certain griefs supportable.—We may here observe that secret and wonderful endearment, which Nature has annexed to all our sympathetic feelings, whereby we enter into the deepest scenes of distress and sorrow with a melting softness of heart, far more delightful than all the joys which dissipated and unthinking mirth can inspire. \* Dr. Akenfide describes this very pathetically,

                                         Ask the faithful youth,  
Why the cold urn of her, whom long he loved,  
So often fills his arms; so often draws

\* Pleasures of Imagination.



His lonely footsteps at the silent hour,  
 To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?  
 Oh! he will tell thee, that the wealth of worlds  
 Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego  
 That sacred hour, when stealing from the noise  
 Of care and envy, sweet remembrance sooths  
 With virtue's kindest looks his aching breast,  
 And turns his tears to rapture.

He afterwards proceeds to paint with all  
 the enthusiasm of Liberty and poetic Ge-  
 nius, and in all the sweetness and harmony  
 of numbers, those heart-ennobling sorrows,  
 which the Mind feels by the representa-  
 tion of the present miserable condition of  
 those countries, which were once the  
 happy seats of Genius, Liberty, and the  
 greatest virtues that adorn humanity.

THE principal thing to be regarded in  
 the culture of Taste is to discover those  
 many



many beauties in the works of Nature and Art, which would otherwise escape our notice. Thomson in that beautiful descriptive Poem, the Seasons, pleases by the justness of his painting; but his greatest merit consists in impressing the Mind with numberless beauties of Nature in her various and successive forms, which formerly passed unheeded.—This is the most pleasing and useful effect of Criticism; to lay open new sources of pleasure unknown to the bulk of Mankind; and it is only in as far as it discovers these that Taste can be accounted a blessing.

It has been often observed that a good Taste and a good heart commonly go together.—That sort of Taste, however, which is constantly prying into blemishes and deformity, can have no good effect  
either



either on the temper or the heart. The Mind naturally takes a taint from those objects and pursuits which usually employ her. Disgust, often recurring, spoils the temper, and a habit of nicely discriminating, when carried into life, contracts the heart, and checks all the benevolent and generous affections, by holding up to view the faults and weaknesses inseparable from every character ; it likewise stifles all the pleasing emotions of love and admiration. — The habit of dwelling too much on what is ridiculous in Subjects of Taste, when transferred into life, has the worst effect upon the character, if not softened by the greatest degree of humanity and good humour, and confers only a fullen and gloomy pleasure by feeding the worst and most painful feelings of the human breast, envy  
and



and malignity of heart.—But an intimate acquaintance with the works of Nature and Genius in their most beautiful and amiable forms humanizes and sweetens the temper, opens and extends the Imagination, and disposes to the most pleasing views of Mankind and Providence.—By considering Nature in this favourable point of view, the heart is dilated and filled with the most benevolent purposes, and then indeed the secret sympathy and connection between the feelings of Natural and Moral Beauty, the connection between a good Taste and a good Heart appears with the greatest lustre.

Read at the Philosophical Society,

March 31st. 1761.



and dignity of man. But in the  
 comparison with the works of Nature  
 and Gods in their most perfect and



and in the most perfect and  
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DISCOURSE V.  
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## DISCOURSE V.

**W**E proceed now to consider that Principle of human Nature which seems in a peculiar manner the characteristic of the Species, the Sense of Religion. It is not our business here to consider the evidence of Religion as founded in truth ; we propose only to examine it as a Principle founded in human Nature, and the influence it has, or may have, on the happiness



happiness of Mankind. — The beneficial consequences which should naturally result from this Principle, seem to be very obvious. There is something naturally soothing and comfortable in a firm belief that the whole frame of Nature is supported and conducted by an eternal and omnipotent Being of infinite goodness, who intends by the whole course of his Providence to promote the greatest good of his creatures ; a belief that we are acquainted with the means of conciliating the Divine favor, and that in consequence of this we have it in our own power to obtain it ; a belief that this life is but the infancy of our existence, that we shall survive the seeming destruction of our present frame, and have it in our power to secure our entrance on a new state of eternal felicity. If we believe that the  
conduct



conduct which the Deity requires of us is such as most effectually secures our present happiness, together with the peace and happiness of Society, we should naturally imagine that these sentiments would be fondly cherished and adopted by all wise and good Men, whether they were supposed to arise from any natural anticipation of the human Mind, the force of Reason, or an immediate revelation from the Supreme Being.

But though the belief of a Deity and of a future state of existence have universally prevailed in all Ages and Nations of the World, yet it has been diversified and connected with a variety of superstitions, which have often rendered it useless, and even hurtful to the general interests of Mankind.—The Supreme Being has sometimes been represented in



such a light as made him rather an object of terror than of love ; as executing both present and eternal vengeance on the greatest part of the World, for crimes they never committed, and for not believing doctrines which they never heard. — Men have been taught that they did God acceptable service by abstracting themselves from all the duties they owed to Society, by denying themselves all the pleasures of life, and even by voluntarily enduring and inflicting on themselves the severest tortures which Nature could support. They have been taught that it was their duty to persecute their fellow creatures in the cruellest manner, in order to bring them to an uniformity with themselves in religious opinions ; a scheme equally barbarous and impracticable. In fine, Religion has often been the engine made

use



use of to deprive Mankind of their most valuable privileges, and to subject them to the most despotic tyranny.

THESE pernicious consequences have given occasion to some ingenious Men to question, whether Atheism or Superstition were most destructive to the happiness of Society ; while others have been so much impressed by them, that they seemed to think it safer to divest Mankind of all religious opinions and restraints whatever, than to run the risk of the abuses which they thought almost inseparable from them. — This seems to be the most favorable construction that can be put on the conduct of the Patrons of Infidelity. But however specious this pretence might have been some centuries ago, there does not now appear to be the least foundation for it. — Experience has now shewn that

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Religion



Religion may subsist in a public establishment, divested of that absurd and pernicious Superstition which was only adventitious, and most apparently contrary to its genuine and original spirit and genius. — To separate Religion entirely from Superstition in every individual, may indeed be impossible, because it is impossible to make all Mankind think wisely and properly on any one Subject, where the Understanding alone is concerned, much more where the Imagination and the Affections are so deeply interested. — If then the positive advantages of Religion to Mankind be evident, this should seem a sufficient reason for every worthy Man to support its cause, and at the same time to keep it disengaged from those accidental circumstances that have so highly dishonoured it.

MAN-



MANKIND certainly have a sense of right and wrong independent of religious belief; but experience shews that the allurements of present pleasures and the impetuosity of passion are sufficient to prevent Men from acting agreeably to this moral sense, unless it be supported by Religion, the influence of which upon the Imagination and Passions, if properly directed, is extremely powerful. — Even those persons, who have got free from all religious restraint themselves, seem to be very sensible of this truth. They always wish those to be believers in whose virtue they are particularly interested. Whatever zeal they may have to enlighten the Understandings of their neighbours wives and daughters, they commonly chuse to let their own believe with the vulgar, being sensible that however



Religion and Virtue may be separated in Theory, yet in fact they are too closely connected and interwoven to allow such a separation safely.

WE will readily acknowledge that many of the greatest enemies of Religion have been distinguished for their honour, probity, and good nature. — But it is to be considered, that many virtues as well as vices are constitutional. — A cool and equal Temper, a dull Imagination and an unfeeling Heart, ensure the possession of many virtues, or rather are a security against many vices. They may produce temperance, chastity, honesty, prudence, and a harmless, inoffensive behaviour. Whereas keen Passions, a warm Imagination, and great sensibility of Heart, lay a natural foundation for prodigality, debauchery, and ambition;



tion; attended, however, with the seeds of all the social and most heroic virtues. Such a temperature of Mind carries along with it a check to its constitutional vices, by rendering those possessed of it peculiarly susceptible of religious impressions. They often appear indeed to be the greatest enemies to Religion, but that is entirely owing to their impatience of its restraints. Its most dangerous enemies have ever been among the temperate and chaste Philosophers, void of passion and sensibility, who had no vicious appetites to be restrained by its influence, and who were equally unsusceptible of its terrors or pleasures. Absolute Infidelity or settled Scepticism in Religion is no proof of a bad Understanding or a bad Heart, but is certainly a very strong presumption of



the want of Imagination and sensibility of Heart. Many Philosophers have been Infidels, few Men of Taste and Sentiment. Yet the example of Lord Bacon, Mr. Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton, among many other first names in Philosophy, is a sufficient evidence that religious belief is perfectly compatible with the clearest and most enlarged Understanding.

THE general sense of Mankind of the connection between a religious disposition and a feeling Heart, appears from the universal aversion, which all Men have to Infidelity in the fair sex. We not only look on it as removing the principal security we have for their virtue, but as the strongest proof of their want of that softness and delicate sensibility of Heart, which endears them more to us, and secures more effectually their empire over

our



our Hearts, than any quality they can possess. — There are Men who can persuade themselves, that there is no supreme Intelligence who directs the course of Nature, who can see those they have been connected with by the strongest bonds of Nature and Friendship gradually dropping off from them, who are persuaded that this separation is final and eternal, and who expect that they themselves shall soon sink down after them into nothing; and yet such Men shall appear easy and contented. But to a sensible Heart, and particularly to a Heart softened by past endearments of Love or Friendship, such opinions are attended with gloom inexpressible, that strikes a damp into all the pleasures and enjoyments of life, and cuts off those views which alone can speak comfort to the soul under certain distresses



where all other aid is feeble and ineffectual. — Scepticism or suspension of judgement as to the truth of these great articles of Religion is attended with the same fatal effects. Wherever the Affections are deeply interested, a state of suspension is more distracting to the Mind, than the sad assurance of the evil which 's most dreaded.

It should therefore be expected that those Philosophers, who stand in no need themselves of the assistance of Religion for the support of their virtue, and who never feel the want of its consolations, would yet have the humanity to consider the different situation of the rest of Mankind, and not endeavour to deprive them of what Habit, at least, if they will not allow Nature, has made necessary to their morals and happiness.

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—To attempt this may be agreeable to some by relieving them from a restraint upon their pleasures, and may render others very miserable, by making them doubtful of these truths, in which they were most deeply interested, but it can convey real good and happiness to no one individual.

To support openly and avowedly the cause of Infidelity may be owing in some to the vanity of appearing wiser than the rest of Mankind. The zeal of making proselytes to it may often be owing to a like vanity of possessing a direction and ascendancy over the Minds of Men, which is a very flattering species of superiority. But there seems to be some other cause that secretly influences the conduct of some unbelievers, who from the rest of their character, cannot be suspected of  
 vanity,



vanity, or any ambition of such superiority. This we shall attempt to explain.

THE very differing in opinion, upon any interesting Subject, from all around us, gives a disagreeable sensation. This must be greatly increased in the present case, as the feeling, which attends Infidelity or Scepticism in Religion, is certainly a comfortless one, where there is the least degree of sensibility. — Sympathy is much more sought after by an unhappy mind than by one chearful and at ease. We require a support in the one case, — which in the other is not necessary. — A person therefore void of Religion feels himself as it were alone in the midst of Society ; and though for prudential reasons he chuses to disguise his sentiments and join in some form of religious Worship,



Worship, yet this to a candid and ingenuous Mind must always be very painful, nor does it abate the disagreeable feeling which a social Spirit has in finding itself alone and without any friend to soothe and participate its uneasiness. This seems to have a considerable share in that anxiety, which Freethinkers generally discover to make profelytes to their opinions, an anxiety much greater than what is shewn by those, whose Minds are at ease in the enjoyment of happier prospects.

—THE excuse, which these Gentlemen plead for their conduct, is a regard for the cause of truth. But this is a very insufficient one. None of them act upon this Principle in common life, nor could any Man live in the World, and pretend to



to do it. In the pursuit of happiness, \* our beings end and aim, the discovery of truth is far from being the most important object. The Mind receives a high pleasure from the investigation and discovery of it in the Abstract Sciences, in the works of Nature and Art, but in all Subjects, where the Imagination and Affections are deeply concerned, we regard it only in so far as it is subservient to them.—One of the first principles of Society, of decency, and good manners is, that no Man is entitled to say every thing he thinks true, when it would be injurious or offensive to his neighbour. If it was not for this Principle, all Mankind would be in a state of war. Suppose a person to lose an only child, the sole comfort and happiness of his

\* Pope.

life.



life. When the first overflowings of Nature are past, he recollects the infinite goodness and wisdom of the Disposer of all events, he is persuaded that the revolutions of a few years will unite him again to his child never more to be separated. In these views he acquiesces with a melancholy yet pleasing resignation to the Divine will. Now supposing all this to be a deception, a pleasing dream, would not the general sense of Mankind condemn the Philosopher as barbarous and inhuman, who should attempt to wake him out of it? — Yet so far does vanity prevail over good nature, that we frequently see Men of the most benevolent tempers labouring to cut off that hope, which cheers the Heart under all the pressures and afflictions of human Life, and enables



enables us to resign it with chearfulness and dignity.

RELIGION may be considered in three different views. First, As containing doctrines relating to the being and perfections of God, his moral administration of the World, a future state of existence, and particular communications to Mankind by an immediate supernatural revelation. — Secondly, As a rule of life and manners. — Thirdly, As the source of certain peculiar Affections of the Mind, which either give pleasure or pain, according to the particular genius and spirit of the Religion that inspires them.

IN the first of these views, which gives a foundation to all religious belief, and on which the other two depend, Reason

is



is principally concerned. On this Subject the greatest efforts of human genius and application have been exerted, and with the most desirable success in those great and important articles that seem most immediately to affect the interest and happiness of Mankind.—But when our enquiries here are pushed a certain length, we find that Providence has set bounds to our Reason, and even to our capacities of apprehension. This is particularly the case, where infinity and the moral œconomy of the Deity are concerned. The objects are here in a great measure beyond the reach of our conception; and induction from experience, on which all our other reasonings are founded, cannot be applied to a Subject altogether dissimilar to any thing we are acquainted with.—Many of the fundamental



mental articles of Religion are such, that the Mind may have the fullest conviction of their truth, but they must be viewed at a distance, and are rather the objects of silent and religious veneration, than of metaphysical disquisition. If the Mind attempts to bring them to a nearer view, it is confounded with their immensity.

WHEN we push our enquiries into any part of Nature beyond certain bounds, we find ourselves involved in perplexity and darkness. But there is this remarkable difference between these and religious enquiries ; in the investigation of Nature we can always make progress in knowledge, and approximate to the truth by the proper exertion of genius and observation ; but our enquiries into religious Subjects are confined within



within narrow bounds, and no force of Reason or Application can lead the Mind one step beyond that impenetrable gulph which separates between the visible and invisible World.

T H O U G H the articles of religious belief, which fall within the comprehension of Mankind, and seem essential to their happiness, are few and simple, yet ingenious Men have contrived to erect them into a most tremendous System of metaphysical Subtlety, which will long remain a monument of the extent and weakness of human Understanding. The bad consequences of such Systems have been various. By attempting to establish too much, they have hurt the foundation of the most interesting Principles of Religion.—Most Men are bred up in a belief of the peculiar and



distinguishing opinions of some one religious Sect or other. They are taught that all these are equally founded on Divine Authority, or the clearest deductions of Reason. By which means all their Religion hangs together; so that one part cannot be shaken without endangering the whole. But wherever any freedom of enquiry is allowed, the folly of some of these opinions, and the uncertain foundation of others, cannot be concealed; and when this is the case, a general distrust of the whole commonly succeeds, with that lukewarmness in Religion, which is its necessary consequence.

THE very habit of frequent reasoning and disputing upon religious Subjects takes off from that reverence with which the Mind would otherwise consider them.

This



This seems particularly to be the case, when Men presume to enter into an exact scrutiny of the views and œconomy of Providence in the administration of the World, why God Almighty made it as it is, the freedom of his actions, and many other such questions infinitely beyond our reach. The natural tendency of this is to lessen that awful veneration with which we ought always to contemplate the Divinity, but which can never be preserved, when Men canvas his ways with such ease and freedom. Accordingly we find amongst those Sectaries where such disquisitions have principally prevailed, that he has been spoke of and even addressed with the most indecent and shocking familiarity. The truly devotional spirit has seldom been found among such persons, the chief foundation and



characteristic of which is genuine humility.

ANOTHER bad effect of this speculative Theology has been to withdraw people's attention from its practical duties.

—We usually find that those, who are most distinguished by their excessive zeal for opinions in Religion, shew great moderation and coolness as to its precepts.

Their great severity in this respect has been exerted against a few vices, where the Heart is but little concerned, and to which their own dispositions preserved them from any temptations.

BUT the worst effects of speculative and controversial Theology are those, which it produces on the Temper and Affections.—When the Mind is kept constantly embarrassed in a perplext and thorny path where it can find no steady light



light to shew the way, nor foundation to rest on, the Temper loses its native cheerfulness, and contracts a gloom and severity, partly from the chagrin of disappointment, and partly from the social and kind Affections being extinguished for want of exercise. When the evil has been exasperated by opposition and dispute, the consequences have proved very fatal to the peace of Society; especially when Men have been persuaded, that their holding certain opinions intitled them to the Divine favor, and that those, who differed from them, were devoted to eternal destruction. This persuasion broke at once all the ties of Society. The toleration of Men who held erroneous opinions was considered as conniving at their destroying not only themselves, but all others who came within the reach of their



influence. This has produced that cruel and implacable spirit, which has so often disgraced the cause of Religion, and dishonoured humanity. Yet the effects of religious controversy have sometimes proved beneficial to Mankind. That spirit of freedom, which incited the first Reformers to shake off the yoke of ecclesiastical tyranny, naturally begot sentiments of civil liberty, especially when irritated by persecution. When such sentiments came to be united with that bold enthusiasm, that severity of temper and manners that distinguished some of the reformed Sects; they produced those resolute and inflexible Men, who alone were able to assert the cause of liberty in an age when most others were enervated by Luxury or Superstition; and to such Men we owe that freedom and happy constitution which



which we at present enjoy.—But these advantages of religious enthusiasm have been but accidental.

In general it would appear that Religion, considered as a Science, in the manner it has been usually conducted, is but little beneficial to Mankind, neither tending to enlarge the Understanding, sweeten the Temper, or mend the Heart. At the same time the labours of ingenious Men, in explaining obscure and difficult passages of Sacred Writ, have been highly useful and necessary. And as it is natural for Men to carry their speculations on a Subject, that so nearly concerns their present and eternal happiness, farther than Reason extends, or than is clearly and expressly revealed; these can be followed by no bad consequences, if they are carried



on with that modesty and reverence which the Subject requires. They only become pernicious when they are formed into Systems, to which the same credit and submission is required as to Holy Writ itself.

We shall now proceed to consider Religion as a rule of life and manners.—In this respect its influence is very extensive and beneficial, even when disfigured by the wildest Superstition, it being able to check and conquer those Passions, which Reason and Philosophy are too weak to encounter. But it is much to be regretted, that the application of Religion to this end has not been attended to with that care which the importance of the Subject required.—The speculative part of Religion seems generally to have engrossed the attention of

Men



Men of Genius. This has been the fate of all the useful and practical Arts of life, and the application of Religion to the regulation of life and manners must be considered entirely as a practical Art.—The reasons of this neglect seem to be these. —Men of a philosophical Genius have an aversion to all application where the active powers of their own Mind are not immediately employed. But in acquiring a practical Art a Philosopher is obliged to spend most of his time in employments where his Genius and Understanding have no exercise.—The fate of the practical parts of Medicine and of Religion have been very much alike. The object of the one is to cure the diseases of the Body; of the other, to cure the diseases of the Mind. The progress and degree of perfection of both these Arts can be estimated



mated by no other standard than their  
 success in the cure of the diseases, to  
 which they are severally applied. — In  
 Medicine, the facts on which the Art  
 depends, are so numerous and compli-  
 cated, so misrepresented by credulity, or  
 a heated Imagination, that there has hard-  
 ly ever been found a truly philosophical  
 Genius, who has attempted the practical  
 part of it. Almost all Physicians, who  
 have been Men of ingenuity, have amused  
 themselves in forming Theories, which  
 gave exercise to their invention, and at  
 the same time contributed to their repu-  
 tation. Instead of being at the trouble  
 of making observations themselves, they  
 culled out of the promiscuous multitude  
 already made, such as suited their pur-  
 pose, and dressed them up in the way  
 their System required. — In consequence  
 of



of this the history of Medicine does not exhibit the history of a progressive Art, but a history of opinions, which prevailed perhaps for twenty or thirty years, and then sunk into contempt and oblivion.—The case has been very similar in practical Divinity. But this is attended with much greater difficulties, than the practical part of Medicine. In this last nothing is required but assiduous and accurate observation, and a good Understanding to direct the proper application of such observation.—But to cure the diseases of the Mind, there is required that intimate knowledge of the human Heart, which must be drawn from life itself, and which books can never teach, of the various disguises, under which Vice recommends herself to the Imagination, the artful association of Ideas which she forms there, to the



the many nameless circumstances that soften the Heart and render it accessible, the Arts of insinuation and persuasion, the Art of breaking false associations of Ideas, or inducing counter associations, and employing one Passion against another; and when such a knowledge is acquired, the successful application of it to practice depends in a considerable degree on powers which no extent of Understanding can confer.

Vice does not depend so much on a perversion of the Understanding, as of the Imagination and Passions, and on habits originally founded on these. A vicious Man is generally sensible enough that his conduct is wrong; he knows that Vice is contrary both to his duty and interest, and therefore all laboured reasoning to satisfy his Understanding of these truths



truths is useless, because the disease does not lie in the Understanding. The evil is seated in the Heart. The Imagination and Passions are engaged on its side, and the cure must be applied to these. This has been the general defect of writings and sermons intended to reform Mankind. Many ingenious and sensible remarks are made on the several duties of Religion, and very judicious arguments are brought to enforce them. Such performances may be attended to with pleasure by pious and well disposed persons, who likewise may derive useful instruction from them for their conduct in life. The wicked and profligate, if ever books of this sort fall in their way, very readily allow that what they contain are great and eternal Truths, but they leave no further impression. If any thing can

touch



touch them, it is the power of lively and pathetic description, which traces and lays open their Hearts through all their windings and disguises, makes them see and confess their own characters in all their deformity and horror, impresses their Hearts, and interests their Passions by all the motives of love, gratitude and fear, the prospect of rewards and punishments, and whatever others Religion or Nature may dictate. But to do this effectually requires very different powers from those of Understanding. A lively and well regulated Imagination is essentially requisite.

IN public addresses to an Audience the great end of Reformation may be more effectually promoted, because all the powers of voice and action, all the Arts of eloquence may be brought to  
give



give their assistance. But some of those Arts depend on gifts of Nature, and cannot be attained by any strength of Genius or Understanding. Even where Nature has been liberal of those necessary requisites, they must be cultivated by much practice before the proper exercise of them can be acquired.—Thus a public Speaker may have a voice that is musical and of great compass, but it requires much time and labour to acquire its just modulation and that variety of flexion and tone, which a pathetic discourse requires. The same difficulty attends the acquisition of that propriety of action, that power over the expressive features of the countenance, particularly of the eyes, so necessary to command the Hearts and Passions of Mankind.

It is usually said that a Preacher, who  
feels



feels what he is saying himself, will naturally speak with that tone of voice and expression in his countenance that suits the Subject, and which is necessary to move his Audience. Thus it is said, a person under the influence of fear, anger or sorrow, looks and speaks in the manner naturally expressive of these emotions. This is true in some measure; but it can never be supposed that any Preacher will be able to enter into his Subject with such real warmth upon every occasion. Besides, every prudent Man will be afraid to abandon himself so entirely to any impression, as he must do to produce this effect. — Most Men, when strongly affected by any Passion or emotion, have some peculiarity in their appearance, which does not properly belong to the natural expression of such an emotion.



emotion. If this be not properly corrected, a public Speaker, who is really warmed and animated with his Subject, may yet make a very ridiculous and contemptible figure. — It is the business of Art to shew Nature in her most amiable and graceful forms, and not with those peculiarities in which she appears in particular instances; and it is this difficulty of properly representing Nature that renders the eloquence and action both of the Pulpit and Stage acquisitions of such hard attainment.

BUT besides those talents inherent in a Preacher himself, an intimate knowledge of Nature will suggest the necessity of attending to certain external circumstances, which operate powerfully on the Mind, and prepare it for receiving the designed impressions. Such in particular is the

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proper



proper regulation of Church Music, and the solemnity and pomp of public Worship. Independent of the effect that these things have on the Imagination, it might be expected that a just Taste, a sense of decency and propriety, would make them more attended to than we find they are. We acknowledge that they have been abused, and occasioned the grossest Superstition; but this universal propensity to carry them to excess is the strongest proof that the attachment to them is deeply rooted in human Nature, and consequently that it is the business of good sense to regulate and not vainly attempt to extinguish it. Many religious sects in their infancy have supported themselves without any of these external assistances; but when time has abated the fervour of their zeal, we always find that their public Worship has  
been



been conducted with the most remarkable coldness and inattention, unless supported by well regulated ceremonies. Those sects who in their beginning have been most distinguished for a religious enthusiasm that despised all forms, and the genius of whose Religion could not admit of any being introduced, have either been of short duration, or ended in Infidelity.

THE many difficulties that attend the practical Art of making Religion influence the manners and lives of Mankind, by acquiring a command over the Imagination and Passions, have made it too generally neglected even by the most eminent of the Clergy for learning and good sense. These have rather chosen to confine themselves to a tract, where they were sure to excell by the force of their own Genius, than to attempt a road where their success



was doubtful, and where they might be outshone by Men greatly their inferiors. It has therefore been principally cultivated by Men of lively Imaginations, possessed of some natural advantages of voice and manner. But as no Art can ever become very beneficial to Mankind unless it be under the direction of Genius and good sense, it has too often happened, that the Art we are now speaking of has become subservient to the wildest Fanaticism, often to the gratification of vanity, and sometimes to still more unworthy purposes.

THE third view of Religion considers it as engaging and interesting the Affections, and comprehends the devotional or sentimental part of it. — The devotional spirit is in a great measure constitutional, depending on liveliness of Imagination and sensibility of Heart, and like these qualities,



lities, prevails more in warmer climates than ours. What shews the great dependence it has on the Imagination, is the remarkable attachment it has to Poetry and Music, which Shakespear calls the Food of Love, and which may with equal truth be called the Food of Devotion. The Deity, viewed by the eye of cool Reason, may be said with great propriety to dwell in light inaccessible. The Mind struck with the immensity of his being, and a sense of its own littleness and unworthiness, admires with that distant awe and veneration that rather excludes love. But viewed by a devout Imagination he may become an object of the warmest affection, and even passion.—The Philosopher considers the Divinity in all those marks of wisdom and benignity diffused through the whole works of Nature. The de-



vout Man confines his views rather to his own particular connection with the Deity, the many instances of goodness he himself has experienced, and the many greater he still hopes for. This establishes an intercourse, which often interests the Heart and Passions in the deepest manner.—The devotional Taste, like all other Tastes, has had the fate to be condemned as a weakness by all who are strangers to its joys and its influence. Too frequent occasion has been given to turn this Subject into ridicule.—A heated and devout Imagination, when not under the direction of a very good Understanding, is apt to run very wild; and is as impatient to publish all its follies to the World.—The feelings of a devout Heart should be mentioned with great reserve and delicacy, as they depend upon pri-



vate experience, and certain circumstances of Mind and Situation, which the World cannot know nor judge of. But devotional writings executed with Judgment and Taste, are not only highly useful, but to all, who have a sense of Religion, peculiarly engaging.

THE devotional spirit united to good sense and a chearful temper, gives that steadiness to virtue, which it always wants when produced and supported by good natural dispositions only. It corrects and humanizes those constitutional vices, which it is not able entirely to subdue; and though it may not be able to render Men perfectly virtuous, it preserves them from becoming utterly abandoned. It has the most favourable influence on all the passive virtues; it gives a softness and sensibility to the Heart, and a



mildness and gentleness to the Manners; but above all, it produces an universal charity and love to Mankind, however different in Station, Country, or Religion. There is a sublime yet tender melancholy, almost the universal attendant on Genius, which is too apt to degenerate into gloom and disgust with the World. Devotion is admirably calculated to sooth this disposition, by insensibly leading the Mind, while it seems to indulge it, to those prospects which calm every murmur of discontent, and diffuse a cheerfulness over the darkest hours of human Life. — Persons in the pride of high health and spirits, who are keen in the pursuits of pleasure, interest, or ambition, have either no Ideas on this Subject, or treat it as the enthusiasm of a weak Mind. But this really shews great narrowness



towness of Understanding; a very little  
 reflection and acquaintance with Nature  
 might teach them on how precarious  
 a foundation their boasted independence  
 on Religion is built; the thousand name-  
 less accidents that may destroy it, and  
 though for some years they should escape  
 these, yet that time must impair the  
 greatest vigour of health and spirits, and  
 deprive them of all those objects for which  
 at present they may think life only worth  
 enjoying.—It should seem therefore very  
 necessary to secure some permanent ob-  
 ject, some support to the Mind against  
 the time when all others shall have lost  
 their influence.—The greatest inconve-  
 nience, indeed, that attends devotion, is  
 its taking such a strong hold of the Affec-  
 tions, as sometimes threatens the extin-  
 guishing of every other active Principle of  
 the



the Mind. When the devotional spirit falls in with a melancholy temper, it is apt to depress the Mind entirely, to sink it to the weakest Superstition, and to produce a total retirement and abstraction from the World, and all the duties of life.

I shall now conclude these loose observations thrown out on a Subject of great extent and importance, viz. the advantages which arise to Mankind from those faculties, which distinguish them from the rest of the Animal World, advantages which do not seem correspondent to what might be reasonably expected from a proper exertion of these faculties, not even among the few who have the greatest intellectual abilities, and the greatest leisure to improve them. The capital error seems to consist in such Mens confining their attention chiefly to enquiries that

are



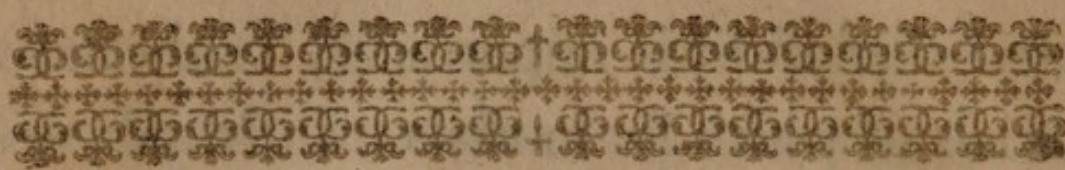
are either of little importance, or the materials of which lie in their own Minds.— The bulk of Mankind are made to act, not to reason, for which they have neither abilities nor leisure. They who possess that deep, clear and comprehensive Understanding which constitutes a truly philosophical Genius, seem born to an ascendancy and empire over the Minds and Affairs of Mankind, if they would but assume it. It cannot be expected, that they should possess all those powers and talents which are requisite in the several useful and elegant Arts of life, but it is they alone who are fitted to direct and regulate their application.

Read at the Philosophical Society,

January 11th. 1763.

C O N-





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- P. 127. l. 13. *for not, read most.*  
129. l. 2. *r. enjoyment unknown to vulgar Minds.*  
142. l. 17. *for Debility, read Scepticism.*



