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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

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An Essay on Conversation. By Benjamin Stillingfleet.

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A N
 E S S A Y
 O N
 C O N V E R S A T I O N .

By BENJAMIN STILLINGFLEET.

*Oderunt bilarem tristes, tristemque jocos,
 Sedatum celes, agilem gnavumque remissi.*

H O R .

THE art of converse, how to sooth the soul
 Of haughty man, his passions to controul,
 His pride at once to humble and to please,
 And join the dignity of life with ease,
 Be now my theme. O thou, whom Nature's hand
 Fram'd for this best, this delicate command,
 And taught, when lisping without reason's aid,
 At the same time to speak and to persuade,
 WYNDHAM, with diligence awhile attend,
 Nor scorn th' instructions of an older friend;
 Who when the world's great commerce shall have join'd
 The deep reflection, and the strength of mind,

To

To the bright talents of thy youthful state,
In turn shall on thy better lessons wait.

Whence comes it, that in every art we see
Many can rise to a supreme degree ;
Yet in this art, for which all seem design'd
By nature, scarcely one compleat we find ?
You'll say, perhaps, we think, we speak, we move,
By the strong springs alone of selfish love :
Yet among all the species, is there one,
Whom with more caution than ourselves, we shun ?
What is it fills a puppet-shew or court ?
Go none but for the profit or the sport ?
If so, why comes each soul fatigu'd away,
And curses the dull puppets same dull play ;
Yet, unconvinc'd, is tempted still to go ?
'Tis that we find at home our greatest foe.
And reason good why solitude we flee ;
Can wants with self-sufficiency agree ?

Yet, such our inconsistency of mind,
We court society, and hate mankind.
With some we quarrel, for they're too sincere :
With others, for they're close, reserv'd and queer :
This is too learn'd, too prudent, or too wise ;
And that we for his ignorance despise :
A voice perhaps our ear shall harshly strike,
Then strait ev'n wit itself shall raise dislike :
Our eye may by some feature be annoy'd,
Behold at once a character destroy'd,

One's

One's so good-natur'd, he's beyond all bearing
 He'll ridicule no friend, tho' out of hearing :
 Another warm'd with zeal, offends our eyes,
 Because he holds the mirror up to vice.
 No wonder then, since fancies wild as these
 Can move our spleen, that real faults displeas.
 When Mævius, spite of dullness, will be bright,
 And teach ARGYLL to speak, and SWIFT to write ;
 When Flavia entertains us with her dreams,
 And Macer with his no less airy schemes ;
 When peevishness, and jealousy and pride,
 And int'rest that can brother hearts divide,
 In their imagin'd forms our eyesight hit,
 Of an old maid, a poet, peer or cit ;
 Can then, you'll say, philosophy refrain,
 And check the torrent of each boiling vein ?
 Yes. She can still do more ; view passion's slave
 With mind serene, indulge him, and yet save.

But self-conceit steps in, and with strict eye
 Scans every man, and every man awry ;
 That reigning passion, which thro' every stage
 Of life, still haunts us with unceasing rage.
 No quality so mean, but what can raise
 Some drudging driveling candidate for praise ;
 Ev'n in the wretch, who wretches can despise,
 Still self-conceit will find a time to rise.
 Quintus salutes you with forbidding face,
 And thinks he carries his excuse in lace :

You

You ask, why Clodius bullies all he can ?
 Clodius will tell you, he's a gentleman :
 Myrtilla fruts and shudders half the year,
 With a round cap, that shews a fine turn'd ear :
 The lowest jest makes Delia laugh to death ;
 Yet she's no fool, she has only handsome teeth.
 Ventofo lolls, and scorns all humankind
 From the gilt coach with four lac'd slaves behind ;
 Does all this pomp and state proceed from merit,
 Mean thought ! he deems it nobler to inherit :
 While Fopling from some title draws his pride,
 Meanless, or infamous, or misapply'd ;
 Free-mason, rake or wit, 'tis just the same,
 The charm is hence, he has gain'd himself a name.
 Yet, spite of all the fools that pride has made,
 'Tis not on man an usefess burthen laid ;
 Pride has ennobled some, and some disgrac'd ;
 It hurts not in itself, but as 'tis plac'd ;
 When right, its view knows none but virtue's bound ;
 When wrong, it scarcely looks one inch around.
 Mark ! with what care the fair one's critic eye
 Scans o'er her drefs, nor let's a fault slip by ;
 Each rebel hair must be reduc'd to place
 With tedious skill, and tortur'd into grace ;
 Betty must o'er and o'er the pins dispose,
 'Till into modish folds the drapery flows,
 And the whole frame is fitted to express
 The charms of decency and nakedness.

Why

Why all this art, this labour'd ornament ?
 To captivate, you'll cry no doubt, 'tis meant.
 True. But let's wait upon this fair machine
 From the lone closet to the social scene ;
 There view her loud, affected, scornful, four,
 Paining all others, and herself still more.
 What means she, at one instant to disgrace,
 The labour of ten hours, her much-lov'd face ?
 Why, 'tis the self-same passion gratify'd ;
 The work is ruin'd, that was rais'd by pride.
 Yet of all tempers, it requires least pain,
 Could we but rule ourselves, to rule the vain.
 The prudent is by reason only sway'd,
 With him each sentence and each word is weigh'd :
 The gay and giddy can alone be caught
 By the quick lustre of a happy thought ;
 The miser hates, unless he steals your pelf ;
 The prodigal, unless your rob yourself ;
 The lewd will shun you, if your wife prove chaste ;
 The jealous, if a smile on his be cast ;
 The steady or the whimsical will blame,
 Either, because you're not, or are the same ;
 The peevish, fullen, shrewd, luxurious, rash,
 Will with your virtue, peace, or interest, clash ;
 But mark the proud man's price, how very low !
 'Tis but a civil speech, a smile, or bow.

Ye who, push'd on by noble ardour, aim
 In social life to gain immortal fame,

Observe

Observe the various passions of mankind,
 General, peculiar, single or combin'd :
 How youth from manhood differs in its views,
 And how old age still other paths pursues ;
 How zeal in Priscus nothing more than heats,
 In Codex burns, and ruins all it meets ;
 How freedom now a lovely face shall wear,
 Now shock us in the likeness of a bear ;
 How jealousy in some resembles hate,
 In others, seems but love grown delicate ;
 How modesty is often pride refin'd,
 And virtue but the canker of the mind ;
 How love of riches, grandeur, life, and fame,
 Wear different shapes, and yet are still the same.

But not our passions only disagree,
 In taste is found as great variety :
 Sylvius is ravish'd when he hears a hound,
 His lady hates to death the odious sound :
 Yet both love music, tho' in different ways ;
 He in a kennel, she at opera's.
 A florist shall, perhaps, not grudge some hours,
 To view the colours in a bed of flowers ;
 Yet, shew him TITIAN's workmanship divine,
 He passes on, and only cries, 'tis fine.
 A rusty coin, an old worm-eaten post,
 The mouldy fragment of an author lost,
 A butterfly, an equipage, a star,
 A globe, a fine lac'd head, a china jar,
 A mistress,

A mistress, or a fashion, that is new,
 Have each their charms, tho' felt but by a few.
 Then study each man's passions and his taste,
 The first to soften, and indulge the last :
 Not like the wretch, who beats down virtue's fence,
 And deviates from the paths of common sense ;
 Who daubs with fulsome flattery, blind and bold,
 The very weakness we with grief behold.
 Passions are common to the fool and wise,
 And all would hide them under art's disguise ;
 For so avow'd, in others, is their shame,
 None hates them more, than he who has the fame.
 But taste seems more peculiarly our own,
 And every man is fond to make his known ;
 Proud of a mark he fancies is design'd
 By nature to advance him o'er his kind ;
 And where he sees that character impress'd,
 With joy he hugs the favourite to his breast.

But the main stress of all our cares must lie,
 To watch ourselves with strict and constant eye :
 To mark the working mind, when passion's course
 Begins to swell, and reason still has force ;
 Or, if she's conquer'd by the stronger tide,
 Observe the moments when they first subside :
 For he who hopes a victory to win
 O'er other men, must with himself begin ;
 Else like a town by mutiny oppress'd,
 He's ruin'd by the foe within his breast ;

And

And they alone, who in themselves off view
 Man's image, know what method to pursue;
 All other creatures keep in beaten ways,
 Man only moves in an eternal maze :
 He lives and dies, not tam'd by cultivation;
 The wretch of reason, and the dupe of passion ;
 Curious of knowing, yet too proud to learn ;
 More prone to doubt, than anxious to discern :
 Tir'd with old doctrines, prejudic'd at new ;
 Mistaking still the pleasing for the true ;
 Foe to restraints approv'd by general voice,
 Yet to each fool-born mode a slave by choice :
 Of rest impatient, yet in love with ease ;
 When most good-natur'd, aiming how to tease :
 Disdaining by the vulgar to be aw'd,
 Yet never pleas'd but when the fools applaud :
 By turns severe, indulgent, humble, vain ;
 A trifle serves to lose him or to gain.
 Then grant this trifle, yet his vices shun,
 Not like to CATO or to a CLINIAS' son :
 This for each humour every shape could take,
 Ev'n virtue's own, tho' not for virtue's sake ;
 At Athens rakish, thoughtless, full of fire,
 Severe at Sparta, as a Chartreux fryar ;
 In Thrace, a bully, drunken, rash, and rude ;
 In Asia gay, effeminate and lewd ;

Alibiades.

While the rough Roman, virtue's rigid friend,
 Cou'd not to save the cause he dy'd for bend :
 In him 'twas scarce an honour to be good,
 He more indulg'd a passion, than subdu'd.
 See how the skilful lover spreads his toils,
 When eager in pursuit of beauty's spoils !
 Behold him bending at his idol's feet ;
 Humble, not mean ; disputing, and yet sweet ;
 In rivalship not fierce, nor yet unmov'd ;
 Without a rival studious to be lov'd ;
 For ever fearful, tho' not always witty,
 And never giving cause for hate or pity :
 These are his arts, such arts as must prevail,
 When riches, birth, and beauty's self will fail :
 And what he does to gain a vulgar end,
 Shall we neglect, to make mankind our friend ?

Good sense and learning may esteem obtain ;
 Humour and wit a laugh, if rightly ta'en ;
 Fair virtue admiration may impart ;
 But 'tis good-nature only wins the heart :
 It molds th' body to an easy grace,
 And brightens every feature of the face :
 It smoothes the unpolish'd tongue with eloquence,
 And adds persuasion to the finest sense.
 Yet this, like every disposition, has
 Fixt bounds, o'er which it never ought to pass ;
 When stretch'd too far, its honour dies away,
 Its merit sinks, and all its charms decay ;

Among

Among the good it meets with no applause,
 And to its ruin the malicious draws :
 A slave to all, who force it, or entice,
 It falls by chance in virtue or in vice.

'Tis true, in pity for the poor it bleeds,
 It cloaths the naked, and the hungry feeds ;
 It chears the stranger, nay its foes defends,
 But then as oft it injures its best friends.

Study with care Politeness, that must teach
 The modish forms of gesture and of speech :
 In vain Formality, with matron mien,
 And Pertness, apes her with familiar grin :
 They against nature for applauses strain,
 Distort themselves, and give all others pain :
 She moves with easy, tho' with measur'd pace,
 And shews no part of study, but the grace.
 Yet ev'n by this man is but half refin'd,
 Unless philosophy subdues the mind :
 'Tis but a varnish that is quickly tost.
 Whene'er the soul in passion's sea is lost.

Wou'd you both please and be instructed too,
 Watch well the rage of shining to subdue ;
 Hear every man upon his favourite theme,
 And ever be more knowing than you seem.
 The lowest genius will afford some light,
 Or give a hint that had escap'd your sight.
 Doubt, till he thinks you on conviction yield,
 And with fit questions let each pause be fill'd ;



And the most knowing will with pleasure grant;
You're rather much reserv'd, than ignorant.

The rays of wit gild wherefoe'er they strike,
But are not therefore fit for all alike;
They charm the lively, but the grave offend,
And raise a foe as often as a friend;
Like the resistless beams of blazing light,
That cheer the strong, and pain the weakly fight.
If a bright fancy therefore be your share,
Let judgment watch it with a guardian's care:
'Tis like a torrent apt to overflow,
Unless by constant government kept low;
And ne'er inefficacious passes by,
But overturns or gladens all that's nigh.
Or else, like trees, when suffer'd wild to shoot,
That put forth much, but all unripen'd fruit;
It turns to affectation and grimace,
As like to wit, as dullness is to grace.

How hard foe'er it be to bridle wit,
Yet mem'ry oft no less requires the bit:
How many, hurried by its force away,
For ever in the land of gossips stray?
Usurp the province of the nurse to lull,
Without her privilege for being dull?
Tales upon tales they raise ten stories high,
Without regard to use or symmetry:
So R——, till his destin'd space is fill'd,
Heaps bricks on bricks, and fancies 'tis to build.

A story

A story should, to please, at least seem true,
 Be à propos, well told, concise, and new ;
 And whensoever it deviates from these rules,
 The wife will sleep, and leave applause to fools.
 But others, more intolerable yet,
 The waggeries, that they've said, or heard, repeat ;
 Heavy by mem'ry made, and what's the worst,
 At second-hand, as often as at first.
 And can even patience hear, without disdain,
 The maiming register of sense once slain ?
 While the dull features, big with archness, strive
 In vain, the forc'd half-smile to keep alive.

Some know no joy like what a word can raise,
 Haul'd thro' a language's perplexing maze ;
 Till on a mate, that seems t' agree, they light,
 Like man and wife, that still are opposite ;
 Not lawyers at the bar play more with sense,
 When brought to the last trope of eloquence,
 Then they on ev'ry subject, great or small,
 At clubs, or councils, at a church, or ball ;
 Then cry we rob them of their tributes due :
 Alas ! how can we laugh and pity too ?

While others to extremes as wild will run,
 And with four face anatomize a pun ;
 When the brisk glass to freedom does intice,
 And rigid wisdom is a kind of vice.
 But let not such grave fops your laughter spoil ;
 Ne'er frown where sense may innocently smile,



Cramp not your language into logick rules,
 To rostrums leave the pedantry of schools ;
 Nor let your learning always be discern'd,
 But chuse to seem judicious more than learn'd.
 Quote seldom, and then let it be, at least,
 Some fact that's prov'd, or thought that's well express'd.
 But lest, disguis'd, your eye it should escape,
 Know, pedantry can put on ev'ry shape :
 For when we deviate into terms of art,
 Unless constrain'd, we act the pedant's part.
 Or if we're ever in the self-same key,
 No matter of what kind the subject be,
 From laws of nations down to laws of dress,
 For statesmen have their cant, and belles no less.
 As good hear B——y dictate on epistles,
 Or B——rm——n comment on the Grecian whistles ;
 As old Obefus preach upon his belly,
 Or Phileunucha rant on Farinelli ;
 Flirtilla read a lecture on a fan,
 Or W—— d set forth the praise of Kouli-Kan.
 But above all things, raillery decline,
 Nature but few does for that task design ;
 'Tis in the ablest hand a dang'rous tool,
 But never fails to wound the meddling fool :
 For all must grant, it needs no common art
 To keep men patient, when we make them smart.
 Not wit alone, nor humour's self, will do,
 Without good nature, and much prudence too,

To

To judge aright of persons, place, and time ;
 For taste decrees what's low, and what's sublime :
 And what might charm to-day, or o'er a glass,
 Perhaps at court, or next day, wou'd not pass,
 Then leave to low buffoons, by custom bred,
 And form'd by nature to be kick'd and fed,
 The vulgar and unenvied task, to hit
 All persons right or wrong with random wit.
 Our wise forefathers, born in sober days,
 Resign'd to fools the tart and witty phrase ;
 The motley coat gave warning for the jest,
 Excus'd the wound, and sanctify'd the pest :
 But we from high to low all strive to sneer,
 Will all be wits, and not the livery wear.

Of all the qualities that help to raise
 In men the universal voice of praise,
 Whether in pleasure or in use they end,
 There's none that can with modesty contend,
 'Tis a transparent veil, that helps the sight,
 And lets us look on merit with delight :
 In others, 'tis a kindly light, that seems
 To gild the worst defects with borrow'd beams,
 Yet, 'tis but little that its form be caught,
 Unless its origin be first in thought :
 Else rebel nature will reveal the cheat,
 And the whole work of art at once defeat.

Hold forth upon yourself on no pretence,
 Unless invited, or in self-defence ;



The praise you take, altho' it be your due,
 Will be suspected, if it come from you :
 For each man, by experience taught, can tell
 How strong a flatterer does within him dwell :
 And if to self-condemning you incline,
 In sober sadness, and without design,
 (For some will sily arrogate a vice,
 That from excess of virtue takes its rise)
 The world cries out, why does he hither come ?
 Let him do penance for his sins at home.

No part of conduct asks for skill more nice,
 Tho' none more common, than to give advice :
 Misers themselves in this will not be saving,
 Unless their knowledge makes it worth the having,
 And where's the wonder, when we will obtrude
 An useles gift, it meets ingratitude ?
 Shun then, unask'd, this arduous task to try ;
 But if consulted, use sincerity :
 Too sacred is the welfare of a friend,
 To give it up for any selfish end.
 But use one caution; sift him o'er and o'er,
 To find if all be not resolv'd before.
 If such the case, in spite of all his art,
 Some word will give the soundings of his heart ;
 And why shou'd you a bootles freedom use,
 That serves him not, and may his friendship lose ?
 Yet still on truth bestow this mark of love,
 Ne'er to commend the thing you can't approve.

Sincerity

Sincerity has such resistless charms,
 She oft the fiercest of our foes disarms :
 No art she knows, in native whiteness dress'd,
 Her thoughts all pure, and therefore all express'd ;
 She takes from error its deformity ;
 And without her, all other virtues die.
 Bright source of goodness ! to my aid descend,
 Watch o'er my heart, and all my words attend :
 If still thou deign to set thy foot below,
 Among a race quite polish'd into show.
 Oh ! save me from the jilt's dissembling part,
 Who grants to all all favours, but her heart :
 Perverts the end of charming, for the fame ;
 To fawn, her business ; to deceive, her aim :
 She smiles on this man, tips the wink on that,
 Gives one a squeeze, another a kind pat ;
 Now jogs a foot, now whispers in an ear ;
 Here slips a letter, and there casts a leer ;
 Till the kind thing, the company throughout,
 Distributes all its pretty self about ;
 While all are pleas'd, and wretched soon or late,
 All but the wise, who see and shun the bait.
 Yet if, as complaisance requires to do,
 And rigid virtue sometimes will allow,
 You stretch the truth in favour of a friend,
 Be sure it ever aim at some good end ;
 To cherish growing virtue, vice to shame,
 And turn to noble views the love of fame :

And

And not, like fawning parasites, unaw'd
By sense or truth, be ev'ry passion's bawd.

Be rarely warm in censure, or in praise;
Few men deserve our passion either ways:
For half the world but floats 'twixt good and ill,
As chance disposes objects, these the will;
'Tis but a see-saw game, where virtue now
Mounts above vice, and then sinks down as low.
Besides the wise still hold it for a rule,
To trust that judgment most, that seems most cool:
For all that rises to hyperbole,
Proves that we err, at least in the degree.
But if your temper to extremes should lead,
Always upon th' indulging side exceed;
For tho' to blame most lend a willing ear,
Yet hatred ever will attend on fear;
And when a neighbour's dwelling blazes out,
The world will think 'tis time to look about.

Let not the curious from your bosom steal
Secrets, where Prudence ought to set her seal;
Yet be so frank and plain, that at one view,
In other things, each man may see you thro':
For if the mask of policy you wear,
The honest hate you, and the cunning fear.

Wou'd you be well receiv'd where-e'er you go,
Remember, each man vanquish'd is a foe.
Resist not, therefore, with your utmost might,
But let the weakest think he's sometimes right;

He,

He, for each triumph you shall thus decline,
 Shall give ten opportunities to shine :
 He fees, since once you own'd him to excel,
 That 'tis his interest you should reason well ;
 And tho' when roughly us'd, he's full of choler,
 As blust'ring B——y to a brother scholar,
 Yet by degrees, inure him to submit,
 He's tame, and in his mouth receives the bit.
 But chiefly against trifling contests guard,
 'Tis here submission seems to man most hard :
 Nor imitate that resolute old fool b,
 Who undertook to kick against his mule.
 But those who will not by instruction learn,
 How fatal trifles prove, let story warn.
 Panthus and Euclio, link'd by friendship's tie,
 Liv'd each for each, as each for each wou'd die ;
 Like objects pleas'd them, and like objects pain'd ;
 'Twas but one soul that in two bodies reign'd.
 One night, as usual 'twas their nights to pass,
 They play'd the chearful, but still temp'rate glass,
 When lo ! a doubt is rais'd about a word :
 A doubt that must be ended by the sword :
 One falls a victim, mark, O man, thy shame,
 Because their glossaries were not the same.
 Cou'd Ba—l—y's self more tenderness have shown
 For his two tomes of words, tho' half his own ?

Ctesipho.

For

For what remains of failings without end,
 Morals must some, and some the laws must mend,
 While others in such monstrous forms appear,
 As tongue-ty'd founness, fly suspicion's leer,
 Free-fisted rudeness, dropfical pretence,
 Proteus' caprice, and elbowing insolence ;
 No caution to avoid them they demand,
 Like wretches branded by the hangman's hand.

If faith to some philosophers be given,
 Man, that great lord of earth, that heir of heav'n,
 Savage at first, inhabited the wood,
 And scrambled with his fellow-brutes for food ;
 No social home he knew, no friendship's tie,
 Selfish in good, in ill without ally ;
 Till some in length of time, of stronger nerve,
 And greater cunning, forc'd the rest to serve
 One common purpose, and, in nature's spite,
 Brought the whole jarring species to unite.
 But might we not with equal reason say,
 That ev'ry single particle of clay,
 Which forms our body, was at first design'd
 To lie for ever from the rest disjoin'd ?
 Can this be said, and can it be allow'd
 'Twas with its powers for no one end endow'd ?
 If so ; we own that man, at first, by art
 Was sooth'd to act in social life a part.
 'Tis true, in some the seeds of discord seem
 To contradict this all-uniting scheme ;

But

But that no more hurts nature's general course,
Than matter found with a repelling force.

Turn we awhile on lonely man our eyes,
And see what frantick scenes of folly rise :
In some dark monastery's gloomy cells,
Where formal self-presuming Virtue dwells,
Bedoz'd with dreams of grace-distilling caves,
Of holy puddles, unconsuming graves,
Of animated plaister, wood, and stone,
And mighty cures by fainted finners done.
Permit me, Muse, still farther to explore,
And turn the leaves of superstition o'er ;
Where wonders upon wonders ever grow,
Chaos of zeal and blindness, mirth and woe ;
c Visions of devils into monkeys turn'd,
That hot from hell roar at a finger burn'd ;
d Bottles of precious tears that faints have wept,
e And breath a thousand years in phials kept ;
f Sun-beams sent down to prop one friar's staff,
g And hell broke loose to make another laugh ;

- c *St. Dominick, vide Jansenius (Nic.)*
d *Of our Saviour and others, vide Ferrand.*
e *Of Joseph, vide Molinæum.*
f *St. Cathro's, vide Colganum.*
g *St. Anthony.*

h Obedient

h Obedient fleas, and i superstitious mice ;
 k Confessing wolves, and l sanctifying lice ;
 m Letters and houses by an angel carried ;
 n And, wondrous ! virgin nuns to JESUS married.
 One monk, not knowing how to spend his time,
 Sits down to find out some unheard-of crime ;
 Increases the large catalogue of sins,
 And where the sober finish, there begins.
 Of death eternal his decree is past,
 For the first crime, as fix'd as for the last.
 While that, as idle, and as pious too,
 Compounds with false religion for the true ;
 He, courtly usher to the blest abodes,
 Weighs all the niceties of forms and modes ;
 And makes the rugged paths so smooth and even,
 None but an ill-bred man can miss of heav'n.
 One heav'n-inspir'd invents a frock, or hood :
 The taylor now cuts out, and men grow good.
 Another quits his stockings, breeches, shirt,
 Because he fancies virtue dwells with dirt :

h *Vide life of St. Colman by Colganus.*

i *The same life by the same author.*

k *Vide speculum vite sancti Francisci.*

l *St. Munnu gathered those that dropt from him, and put them in their place again, vide Act. Sanctorum.*

m *From St. Firman to St. Columba, vide Colganum. Chapel of Loretto.*

n *Maria de la Visitation, vide her life by Lufignam.*

While

While all concur to take away the stress
 From weightier points, and lay it on the less.
 Anxious each paltry relique to preserve
 Of him, whose hungry friends they leave to starve,
 Harrafs'd by watchings, abstinence, and chains;
 Strangers to joys, familiar grown with pains;
 To all the means of virtue they attend
 With strictest care, and only miss the end.
 Can scripture teach us, or can sense persuade,
 That man for such employments e'er was made?
 Far be that thought! but let us now relate
 A character as opposite, as great,
 In him, who living gave to Athens fame,
 And, by his death, immortaliz'd her shame.
 Great scourge of sophists! he from heaven brought down,
 And plac'd true wisdom on th' usurper's throne:
 Philosopher in all things, but pretence;
 He taught what they neglected, common sense.
 They o'er the stiff Lyceum form'd to rule;
 He, o'er mankind; all Athens was his school.
 The sober tradesman, and smart petit-maitre,
 Great lords, and wits, in their own eyes still greater,
 With him grew wise; unknowing they were taught;
 He spoke like them, tho' not like them he thought:
 Nor wept, nor laugh'd, at man's perverted state;
 But left to women this, to ideots that.
 View him with sophists fam'd for fierce contest,
 Or crown'd with roses at the jovial feast;

Insulted



Insulted by a peevish, noisy wife,
 Or at the bar foredoom'd to lose his life ;
 What moving words flow from his artless tongue,
 Sublime with ease, with condescension strong !
 Yet scorn'd to flatter vice, or virtue blame ;
 Nor chang'd to please, but pleas'd because the same ;
 The same by friends carefs'd, by foes withstood,
 Still unaffected, chearful, mild, and good.
 Behold one pagan, drawn in colours faint,
 Outshine ten thousand monks, tho' each a saint !
 Here let us fix our foot, hence take our view,
 And learn to try false merit by the true.
 We see, when reason stagnates in the brain,
 The dregs of fancy cloud its purest vein ;
 But circulation betwixt mind and mind
 Extends its course, and renders it refin'd.
 When warm with youth we tread the flow'ry way,
 All nature charms, and ev'ry scene looks gay ;
 Each object gratifies each sense in turn,
 Whilst now for rattles, now for nymphs we burn ;
 Enslav'd by friendship's or by love's soft smile,
 We ne'er suspect, because we mean no guile :
 Till, flush'd with hope from views of past success,
 We lay on some main trifle all our stress ;
 When lo ! the mistress or the friend betrays,
 And the whole fancied cheat of life displays :
 Stun'd with an ill that from ourselves arose ;
 For instinct rul'd, when reason should have chose ;

We