

TIROCINIUM;
OR,
A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Kt<pa\atov ST; iraiScias opirj rpocprj.—PLATO.

Apxi iro\Tfias awaorjs, vvav Tpoepa.—DIOG. LAERT.

To the Rev. William Cawthorne Unwin, Rector of Stock in Essex, the tutor of his two sons, the following poem, recommending private tuition in preference to an education at school, is inscribed, by his affectionate friend,

Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.

WILLIAM COWPER.

[ARGUMENT :—Man's supremacy derived not from his outward form, but from the soul, I—Creation in vain, unless subservient to the purposes of an immortal being, 35—Heavenly truth not difficult to discover, 73—Man made to discover and declare it, 100—Duty of making it known to the young, 103—Importance of infant instruction, 109—'Pilgrim's Progress,' 131—Happy if such studies were approved in riper years, 147—The Gospel rejected for false philosophy, 185—Corrupting influence of large schools, 201—Effects of bad example on the young, 220—College, 240—Errors in education from following established precedent, 255—Teachers connive at vice in their pupils, 269—Degeneracy of schools, 279—Early school associations, 296—Parents recounting their early follies to their children, 318—Advancement in the world expected from school friendships, 393—These are not always permanent, 436—Is emulation a right motive of action ? 458—Great and small schools alike, 515—Parental confidence and companionship, 537—This confidence destroyed by absence, 561—Classics not enough, 605—Study of Nature, 630—A private tutor recommended, 658—Danger of association with servants, 688—Tutors to be treated with respect, 706—Where home example is bad, board in some retired house recommended, 735—The author's advice not likely to be followed, 779—The middle ranks warned against sending their sons to school, 807—Which should be managed better or encouraged less, 922.]

10 It is not from his form, in which we trace
Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form, indeed, the associate of a mind
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,
That form, the labour of Almighty skill,
Framed for the service of a freeborn will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
For her the memory fills her ample page
With truths pour'd down from every distant age;
For her amasses an unbounded store,
The wisdom of great nations, now no more;
Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil;
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil;
When copiously supplied, then most enlarged;

20 Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged.
 For her the Fancy, roving unconfined,
 The present muse of every pensive mind,
 Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
 To Nature's scenes than Nature ever knew.
 At her command winds rise and waters roar,
 Again she lays them slumbering on the shore;
 With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,
 Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.
 For her the Judgment, umpire in the strife
 30 That Grace and Nature have to wage through life,
 Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
 Appointed sage preceptor to the Will,
 Condemns, approves, and, with a faithful voice,
 Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.
 Why did the fiat of a God give birth
 To yon fair Sun and his attendant Earth?
 And, when descending he resigns the skies,
 Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,
 Whom Ocean feels through all his countless waves,
 40 And owns her power on every shore he laves?
 Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
 Fruitful and young as in their first career?
 Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
 Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze:
 Summer in haste the thriving charge receives
 Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
 Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
 Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—
 'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
 50 Power misemploy'd, munificence misplaced,
 Had not its Author dignified the plan,
 And crown'd it with the majesty of man.
 Thus form'd, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,
 Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
 The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws
 Finds in a sober moment time to pause,
 To press the important question on his heart,
 "Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art?"
 If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
 60 The next mere dust and ashes in the grave;
 Endued with reason only to descry
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye;
 With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,
 The force he spends against their fury vain;
 And if, soon after having burnt, by turns,
 With every lust with which frail Nature burns,
 His being end where death dissolves the bond,
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond;
 Then he, of all that Nature has brought forth,
 70 Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth,
 And, useless while he lives, and when he dies,
 Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.
 Truths that the learn'd pursue with eager thought
 Are not important always as dear-bought,
 Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,

A childish waste of philosophic pains;
 But truths on which depends our main concern,
 That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
 Shine by the side of every path we tread
 80 With such a lustre, he that runs may read.
 'Tis true that, if to trifle life away
 Down to the sunset of their latest day,
 Then perish on futurity's wide shore
 Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
 Were all that Heaven required of human kind,
 And all the plan their destiny design'd,
 What none could reverence all might justly blame,
 And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.
 But reason heard, and nature well perused,
 90 At once the dreaming mind is disabused.
 If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
 Reflect His attributes who placed them there,
 Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd
 Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing mind,
 'Tis plain the creature, whom he chose to invest
 With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
 Received his nobler nature, and was made
 Fit for the power in which he stands array'd;
 That first, or last, hereafter, if not here,
 100 He too might make his author's wisdom clear,
 Praise him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,
 Suffer his justice in a world to come.
 This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied
 To prove a consequence by none denied,
 That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
 Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
 That taught of God they may indeed be wise,
 Nor ignorantly wandering miss the skies.
 In early days the conscience has in most
 110 A quickness, which in later life is lost:
 Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
 Or guilty, soon relenting into tears.
 Too careless often, as our years proceed,
 What friends we sort with, or what books we read,
 Our parents yet exert a prudent care
 To feed our infant minds with proper fare;
 And wisely store the nursery by degrees
 With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.
 Neatly secured from being soil'd or torn
 120 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,
 A book (to please us at a tender age
 'Tis call'd a book, though but a single page)
 Presents the prayer the Saviour deign'd to teach,
 Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.
 Lispering our syllables, we scramble next
 Through moral narrative, or sacred text;
 And learn with wonder how this world began,
 Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd man:
 Points which, unless the Scripture made them plain,
 130 The wisest heads might agitate in vain.
 O thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing

Back to the season of life's happy spring,
 I pleased remember, and, while memory yet
 Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
 Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
 Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
 Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style,
 May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;
 Witty, and well employ'd, and, like thy Lord,
 140 Speaking in parables his slighted word;
 I name thee not, lest so despised a name
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame;
 Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,
 That mingles all my brown with sober grey,
 Revere the man whose PILGRIM marks the road,
 And guides the PROGRESS of the soul to God.
 'Twere well with most, if books that could engage
 Their childhood pleased them at a riper age;
 The man, approving what had charm'd the boy,
 150 Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy,
 And not with curses on his heart, who stole
 The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
 The stamp of artless piety impress'd
 By kind tuition on his yielding breast,
 The youth, now bearded and yet pert and raw,
 Regards with scorn, though once received with awe;
 And, warp'd into the labyrinth of lies,
 That babblers, call'd philosophers, devise,
 Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
 160 Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
 Assert the native evil of his heart,
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof^{1[1]}
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough:
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
 The young apostate sickens at the view,
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.
 How weak the barrier of mere nature proves,
 170 Opposed against the pleasures nature loves!
 While self-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
 She longs to yield, no sooner woo'd than won.
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
 Time was, he closed as he began the day,
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray;
 The practice was a bond upon his heart,
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part;
 Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
 180 A power confess'd so lately on his knees.
 But now farewell all legendary tales,
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails;
 Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves;
 Religion makes the free by nature slaves.
 Priests have invented, and the world admired

^{1[1]} See 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

What knavish priests promulgate as inspired;
 Till Reason, now no longer overawed,
 Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud;
 And, common sense diffusing real day,
 190 The meteor of the Gospel dies away.
 Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
 Learn from expert inquirers after truth;
 Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.
 And thus, well tutor'd only while we share
 A mother's lectures and a nurse's care;
 And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,^{2[2]}
 But sound religion sparingly enough;
 Our early notices of truth disgraced,
 200 Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.
 Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once;
 That in good time the stripling's finish'd taste
 For loose expense and fashionable waste
 Should prove your ruin, and his own at last;
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,
 Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten
 In infidelity and lewdness men.
 210 There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,
 That authors are most useful pawn'd or sold;
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;
 There waiter Dick, with bacchanalian lays,
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,
 His counsellor and bosom friend shall prove,
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
 Detain their adolescent charge too long;
 220 The management of tyros of eighteen
 Is difficult, their punishment obscene.
 The stout tall captain, whose superior size
 The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
 Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
 Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
 His pride, that scorns to obey or to submit,
 With them is courage; his effrontery wit.
 His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
 Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
 230 His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,
 Transport them, and are made their favourite themes.
 In little bosoms such achievements strike
 A kindred spark: they burn to do the like.
 Thus, half accomplish'd ere he yet begin
 To show the peeping down upon his chin;
 And, as maturity of years comes on,

^{2[2]} The author begs leave to explain.—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

Made just the adept that you design'd your son;
 To ensure the perseverance of his course,
 And give your monstrous project all its force,
 240 Send him to college. If he there be tamed,
 Or in one article of vice reclaim'd,
 Where no regard of ordinances is shown
 Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own.
 Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,
 Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking bout,
 Nor gambling practices can find it out.
 Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
 Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you:
 Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
 250 For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.
 The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,
 With packhorse constancy we keep the road,
 Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
 True to the jingling of our leader's bells.
 To follow foolish precedents, and wink
 With both our eyes, is easier than to think;
 And such an age as ours balks no expense,
 Except of caution and of common sense;
 Else sure notorious fact, and proof so plain,
 260 Would turn our steps into a wiser train.
 I blame not those who, with what care they can,
 O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan;
 Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
 Promise a work of which they must despair.
 Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
 A ubiquarian presence and control,
 Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi stray'd,
 Went with him, and saw all the game he play'd?
 Yes—ye are conscious; and on all the shelves
 270 Your pupils strike upon have struck yourselves.
 Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,
 Boys as ye were, the gravity of men,
 Ye knew at least, by constant proofs address'd
 To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.
 But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
 And evils not to be endured endure,
 Lest power exerted, but without success,
 Should make the little ye retain still less.
 Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth
 280 Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth;
 And in the firmament of fame still shines
 A glory, bright as that of all the signs,
 Of poets raised by you, and statesmen, and divines.
 Peace to them all! those brilliant times are fled,
 And no such lights are kindling in their stead.
 Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays
 As set the midnight riot in a blaze;
 And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,
 Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.
 290 Say, muse (for education made the song,
 No muse can hesitate, or linger long),
 What causes move us, knowing, as we must,

That these *ménageries* all fail their trust,
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
While colts and puppies cost us so much care?

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
We love the play-place of our early days;
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.

300 The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
The very name we carved subsisting still;
The bench on which we sat while deep employ'd,
Though mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet destroy'd;
The little ones, unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot;
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw;
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;

310 The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That, viewing it, we seem almost to obtain
Our innocent sweet simple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day.
Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share
Of classic food begins to be his care,

320 With his own likeness placed on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heartfelt glee;
And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,
That they must soon learn Latin, and to box;
Then turning, he regales his listening wife
With all the adventures of his early life;
His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,
In bilking tavern-bills, and spouting plays;
What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,
How he was flogg'd, or had the luck to escape;
330 What sums he lost at play, and how he sold
Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.
Retracing thus his frolics ('tis a name
That palliates deeds of folly and of shame),
He gives the local bias all its sway;
Resolves that where he play'd his sons shall play,
And destines their bright genius to be shown
Just in the scene where he display'd his own.

The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought;
340 The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
Ah, happy designation, prudent choice,
The event is sure; expect it, and rejoice!
Soon see your wish fulfill'd in either child,
The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
Excused the incumbrance of more solid worth,
Are best disposed of where with most success

They may acquire that confident address,
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,
 That scorn of all delights but those of sense,
 Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,
 With so much reason, all expect from them.
 But families of less illustrious fame,
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
 Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,
 Must shine by true desert, or not at all,
 What dream they of, that, with so little care
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?
 They dream of little Charles or William graced
 With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist;
 They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
 The father, who designs his babe a priest,
 Dreams him episcopally such at least;
 And, while the playful jockey scours the room
 Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,
 In fancy sees him more superbly ride
 In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.
 Events improbable and strange as these,
 Which only a parental eye foresees,
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
 But how? resides such virtue in that air,
 As must create an appetite for prayer?
 And will it breathe into him all the zeal
 That candidates for such a prize should feel,
 To take the lead and be the foremost still
 In all true worth and literary skill?
 “Ah, blind to bright futurity, untaught
 The knowledge of the World, and dull of thought!
 Church-ladders are not always mounted best
 By learned clerks and Latinists profess’d.
 The exalted prize demands an upward look,
 Not to be found by poring on a book.
 Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,
 Is more than adequate to all I seek.
 Let erudition grace him, or not grace,
 I give the bauble but the second place;
 His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
 Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.
 A friend, whate’er he studies or neglects,
 Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.
 His intercourse with peers and sons of peers—
 There dawns the splendour of his future years:
 In that bright quarter his propitious skies
 Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
 Your Lordship, and Your Grace! what school can teach
 A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?
 What need of Homer’s verse or Tully’s prose,
 Sweet interjections! if he learn but those?
 Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,
 Who starve upon a dog’s-ear’d Pentateuch,
 The parson knows enough who knows a duke.”
 Egregious purpose! worthily begun

In barbarous prostitution of your son;
 Press'd on his part by means that would disgrace
 A scrivener's clerk, or footman out of place,
 And ending, if at last its end be gain'd,
 In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.
 410 It may succeed; and, if his sins should call
 For more than common punishment, it shall;
 The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth
 Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,
 To occupy a sacred, awful post,
 In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
 The royal letters are a thing of course,
 A king, that would, might recommend his horse;
 And deans, no doubt, and chapters, with one voice,
 As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
 420 Behold your bishop! well he plays his part,
 Christian in name, and infidel in heart,
 Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
 A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.
 Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
 A piece of mere church furniture at best;
 To live estranged from God his total scope,
 And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
 But, fair although and feasible it seem,
 Depend not much upon your golden dream;
 430 For Providence, that seems concern'd to exempt
 The hallow'd bench from absolute contempt,
 In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
 Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace;
 And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,
 We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.
 Besides, school friendships are not always found,
 Though fair in promise, permanent and sound;
 The most disinterested and virtuous minds,
 In early years connected, time unbinds,
 440 New situations give a different cast
 Of habit, inclination, temper, taste;
 And he, that seem'd our counterpart at first,
 Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.
 Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
 And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
 Boys are, at best, but pretty buds unblown,
 Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known;
 Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
 But learns his error in maturer years,
 450 When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd,
 Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
 If, therefore, e'en when honest in design,
 A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
 'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart
 With just abhorrence of so mean a part,
 Than set your son to work at a vile trade
 For wages so unlikely to be paid.
 Our public hives of puerile resort,
 That are of chief and most approved report,
 460 To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul,

Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
 A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
 Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass—
 That with a world, not often over-nice,
 Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice;
 Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
 Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—
 Contributes most, perhaps, to enhance their fame;
 And emulation is its specious name.
 470 Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
 Feel all the rage that female rivals feel;
 The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
 Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
 The spirit of that competition burns
 With all varieties of ill by turns;
 Each vainly magnifies his own success,
 Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
 Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,
 Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
 480 And labours to surpass him day and night,
 Less for improvement than to tickle spite.
 The spur is powerful, and I grant its force;
 It pricks the genius forward in its course,
 Allows short time for play, and none for sloth;
 And, felt alike by each, advances both:
 But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
 The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
 Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
 Against a heart depraved and temper hurt;
 490 Hurt too perhaps for life; for early wrong
 Done to the nobler part affects it long;
 And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,
 If you can crown a discipline, that draws
 Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.
 Connexion form'd for interest, and endear'd
 By selfish views, thus censured and cashier'd;
 And emulation, as engendering hate,
 Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate:
 The props of such proud seminaries fall,
 500 The Jachin and the Boaz of them all.
 Great schools rejected then, as those that swell
 Beyond a size that can be managed well,
 Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
 And small academies win all the praise?
 Force not my drift beyond its just intent,
 I praise a school as Pope a government;
 So take my judgment in his language dress'd,
 "Whate'er is best administer'd is best."
 Few boys are born with talents that excel,
 510 But all are capable of living well;
 Then ask not, whether limited or large;
 But, watch they strictly, or neglect their charge?
 If anxious only that their boys may learn,
 While morals languish, a despised concern,
 The great and small deserve one common blame,
 Different in size, but in effect the same.

Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
 Though motives of mere lucre sway the most;
 Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
 520 For there the game they seek is easiest found;
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
 Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.
 If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,
 Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill;
 As, wheresoever taught, so form'd, he will;
 The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,
 Claims more than half the praise as his due share.
 But if, with all his genius, he betray,
 530 Not more intelligent than loose and gay,
 Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame;
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred
 The symptoms that you see with so much dread;
 Unenvied there, he may sustain alone
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
 Oh! 'tis a sight to be with joy perused,
 By all whom sentiment has not abused;
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
 540 Of those who never feel in the right place;
 A sight surpass'd by none that we can show,
 Though Vestris on one leg still shine below;
 A father blest with an ingenuous son,
 Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.
 How!—turn again to tales long since forgot,
 Aesop, and Phaedrus, and the rest?—Why not?
 He will not blush, that has a father's heart,
 To take in childish plays a childish part;
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy
 550 That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy:
 Then why resign into a stranger's hand
 A task as much within your own command,
 That God and nature, and your interest too,
 Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
 Why hire a lodging in a house unknown
 For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your own?
 This second weaning, needless as it is,
 How does it lacerate both your heart and his!
 The indented stick, that loses day by day,
 560 Notch after notch, till all are smoothed away,
 Bears witness, long ere his dismissal come,
 With what intense desire he wants his home.
 But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
 Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
 Harmless, and safe, and natural, as they are,
 A disappointment waits him even there:
 Arrived, he feels an unexpected change;
 He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange
 No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,
 570 His favourite stand between his father's knees,
 But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
 And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,

And, least familiar where he should be most,
 Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
 Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
 Of love by absence chill'd into respect.
 Say, what accomplishments, at school acquired,
 Brings he, to sweeten fruits so undesired?
 Thou well deserv'st an alienated son,
 580 Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none;
 None that, in thy domestic snug recess,
 He had not made his own with more address,
 Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,
 And better never learn'd, or left behind.
 Add too, that, thus estranged, thou canst obtain
 By no kind arts his confidence again;
 That here begins with most that long complaint
 Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,
 Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years
 590 A parent pours into regardless ears.
 Like caterpillars, dangling under trees
 By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
 Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
 The boughs in which are bred the unseemly race;
 While every worm industriously weaves
 And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;
 So numerous are the follies that annoy
 The mind and heart of every sprightly boy;
 Imaginations noxious and perverse,
 600 Which admonition can alone disperse.
 The encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
 Patient, affectionate, of high command,
 To check the procreation of a breed
 Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
 'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,
 At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage;
 E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend
 To warn, and teach him safely to unbend;
 O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
 610 Watch his emotions, and control their tide;
 And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
 A tax of profit from his very play,
 To impress a value, not to be erased,
 On moments squander'd else, and running all to waste.
 And seems it nothing in a father's eye
 That unimproved those many moments fly?
 And is he well content his son should find
 No nourishment to feed his growing mind,
 But conjugated verbs and nouns declined?
 620 For such is all the mental food purvey'd
 By public hackneys in the schooling trade;
 Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
 Of syntax truly, but with little more;
 Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,
 Machines themselves, and govern'd by a clock.
 Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,
 Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,
 To improve this diet, at no great expense,

630 With savoury truth and wholesome common sense;
 To lead his son, for prospects of delight,
 To some not steep, though philosophic, height,
 Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
 Yon circling worlds, their distance and their size,
 The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
 And the harmonious order of them all;
 To show him in an insect or a flower
 Such microscopic proof of skill and power
 As, hid from ages past, God now displays
 To combat atheists with in modern days;
 640 To spread the earth before him, and commend,
 With designation of the finger's end,
 Its various parts to his attentive note,
 Thus bringing home to him the most remote;
 To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,
 Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame;
 And, more than all, with commendation due,
 To set some living worthy in his view,
 Whose fair example may at once inspire
 A wish to copy what he must admire.
 650 Such knowledge, gain'd betimes, and which appears,
 Though solid, not too weighty for his years,
 Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
 When health demands it, of athletic sort,
 Would make him—what some lovely boys have been,
 And more than one perhaps that I have seen—
 An evidence and reprehension both
 Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth.
 Art thou a man professionally tied,
 With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,
 660 Too busy to intend a meaner care
 Than how to enrich thyself, and next thine heir;
 Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)
 But poor in knowledge, having none to impart:—
 Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad;
 His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad;
 Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
 Heard to articulate like other men;
 No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
 His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force;
 670 And his address, if not quite French in ease,
 Not English stiff, but frank, and form'd to please;
 Low in the world, because he scorns its arts;
 A man of letters, manners, morals, parts;
 Unpatronised, and therefore little known;
 Wise for himself and his few friends alone
 In him thy well-appointed proxy see,
 Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee;
 Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,
 To form thy son, to strike his genius forth;
 680 Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove
 The force of discipline when back'd by love;
 To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
 His mind inform'd, his morals undefiled.
 Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show

No spots contracted among grooms below,
 Nor taint his speech with meannesses, design'd
 By footman Tom for witty and refined.
 There, in his commerce with liveried herd,
 Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd;
 690 For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim
 A higher than a mere plebeian fame,
 Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
 To entertain a thief or two in pay
 (And they that can afford the expense of more,
 Some half a dozen, and some half a score),
 Great cause occurs to save him from a band
 So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand;
 A point secured, if once he be supplied
 With some such Mentor always at his side.
 700 Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound
 Were occupation easier to be found,
 Were education, else so sure to fail,
 Conducted on a manageable scale,
 And schools, that have outlived all just esteem,
 Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.—
 But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,
 Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
 And, as thou wouldst the advancement of thine heir
 In all good faculties beneath his care,
 710 Respect, as is but rational and just,
 A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.
 Despised by thee, what more can he expect
 From youthful folly than the same neglect?
 A flat and fatal negative obtains
 That instant upon all his future pains;
 His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
 And all the instructions of thy son's best friend
 Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.
 Doom him not then to solitary meals;
 720 But recollect that he has sense, and feels
 And that, possessor of a soul refined,
 An upright heart, and cultivated mind,
 His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
 He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
 And, if admitted at thy board he sit,
 Account him no just mark for idle wit;
 Offend not him, whom modesty restrains
 From repartee, with jokes that he disdains;
 Much less transfix his feelings with an oath;
 730 Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth.—
 And, trust me, his utility may reach
 To more than he is hired or bound to teach;
 Much trash unutter'd, and some ills undone,
 Through reverence of the censor of thy son.
 But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
 Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
 And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
 The world accounts an honourable man,
 Because forsooth thy courage has been tried,
 740 And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side;

Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
 That any thing but vice could win thy love;—
 Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
 Chain'd to the routs that she frequents for life;
 Who, just when industry begins to snore,
 Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door;
 And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
 With half the chariots and sedans in town;
 Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou may'st;
 750 Not very sober though, nor very chaste;
 Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
 If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
 And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,
 A trifler vain, and empty of all good;—
 Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
 Here Nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
 Saved from his home, where every day brings forth
 Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
 Find him a better in a distant spot,
 760 Within some pious pastor's humble cot,
 Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,
 The most seducing, and the oftenest seen)
 May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,
 Not yet perhaps incurably impress'd.
 Where early rest makes early rising sure,
 Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,
 Prevented much by diet neat and clean;
 Or, if it enter, soon starved out again:
 Where all the attention of his faithful host,
 770 Discreetly limited to two at most,
 May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
 And not at last evaporate in air:
 Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind
 Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
 Not occupied in day dreams, as at home,
 Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,
 His virtuous toil may terminate at last
 In settled habit and decided taste.—
 But whom do I advise? the fashion-led,
 780 The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead!
 Whom care and cool deliberation suit
 Not better much than spectacles a brute;
 Who if their sons some slight tuition share,
 Deem it of no great moment whose, or where;
 Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
 And much too gay to have any of their own.
 But courage, man! methought the Muse replied,
 Mankind are various, and the world is wide:
 The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,
 790 And form'd of God without a parent's mind,
 Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,
 Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;
 And, while on public nurseries they rely,
 Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,
 Irrational in what they thus prefer,
 No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.

But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
 May here and there prevent erroneous choice;
 And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,
 800 Yet make their progeny their dearest care
 (Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
 Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach),
 Will need no stress of argument to enforce
 The expedience of a less adventurous course:
 The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn;
 But they have human feelings—turn to them.
 To you, then, tenants of life's middle state,
 Securely placed between the small and great,
 Whose character yet undebauch'd, retains
 810 Two-thirds of all the virtue that remains,
 Who, wise yourselves, desire your sons should learn
 Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.
 Look round you on a world perversely blind;
 See what contempt is fallen on human kind;
 See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,
 Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,
 Long lines of ancestry, renown'd of old,
 Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold;
 See Bedlam's closeted and handcuff'd charge
 820 Surpass'd in frenzy by the mad at large;
 See great commanders making war a trade,
 Great lawyers, lawyers without study made;
 Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ
 Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
 Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves
 With Gospel lore, turn infidels themselves;
 See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed
 With infamy too nauseous to be named,
 Fops at all corners, ladylike in mien,
 830 Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,
 Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
 On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,
 Now flush'd with drunkenness, now with whoredom pale,
 Their breath a sample of last night's regale;
 See volunteers in all the vilest arts,
 Men well endow'd, of honourable parts,
 Design'd by Nature wise, but self-made fools;
 All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.
 And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
 840 That though school-bred the boy be virtuous still;
 Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,
 Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark:
 As here and there a twinkling star descried
 Serves but to show how black is all beside.
 Now look on him, whose very voice in tone
 Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
 And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,
 And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
 And say, My boy, the unwelcome hour is come,
 850 When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,
 Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
 And trust for safety to a stranger's care;

What character, what turn thou wilt assume
 From constant converse with I know not whom;
 Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
 And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose;
 Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
 Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me.
 Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
 860 And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids;
 Free too, and under no constraining force,
 Unless the sway of custom warp thy course;
 Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
 Merely to gratify so blind a guide?
 Thou canst not! Nature, pulling at thine heart,
 Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.
 Though wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tenderest plea,
 Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
 Nor say, Go thither, conscious that there lay
 870 A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way;
 Then, only govern'd by the self-same rule
 Of natural pity, send him not to school.
 No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
 Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?
 And hopest thou not ('tis every father's hope)
 That, since thy strength must with thy years elope,
 And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage
 Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
 That then, in recompence of all thy cares,
 880 Thy child shall show respect to thy grey hairs,
 Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
 And give thy life its only cordial left?
 Aware then how much danger intervenes,
 To compass that good end, forecast the means.
 His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;
 Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand;
 If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
 Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
 Complain not if attachments lewd and base
 890 Supplant thee in it and usurp thy place.
 But, if thou guard its sacred chambers sure
 From vicious inmates and delights impure,
 Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
 And keep him warm and filial to the last;
 Or, if he prove unkind (as who can say
 But, being man, and therefore frail, he may?),
 One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,
 Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.
 Oh, barbarous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand
 900 Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools i' th' land;
 Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms,
 Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms?
 A captious question, sir (and yours is one),
 Deserves an answer similar, or none.
 Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ
 (Apprised that he is such) a careless boy,
 And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,
 Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?

910 Survey our schools and colleges, and see
A sight not much unlike my simile.
From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its colour draws;
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.
And though I would not advertise them yet,
Nor write on each—*This Building to be Let*,
Unless the world were all prepared to embrace
A plan well worthy to supply their place;
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
920 To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean
(Forgive the crime), I wish them, I confess,
Or better managed, or encouraged less.