

With the Author's Consent

▲

POETICAL EPISTLE

TO

SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART.

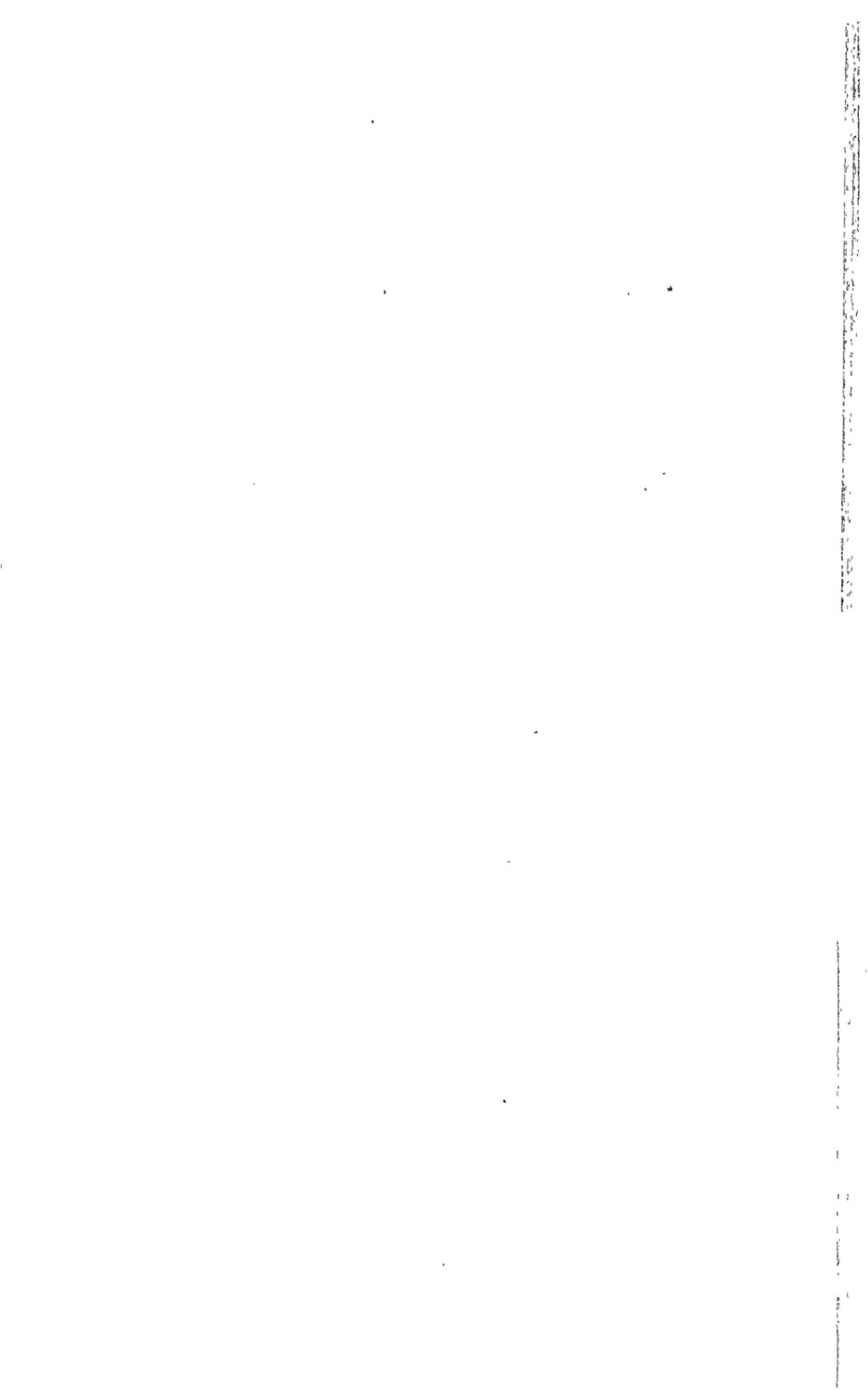
S. GOSNELL, Printer,
Little Queen Street, Holborn.

A
POETICAL EPISTLE
TO
SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART.
ON THE
ENCOURAGEMENT
OF THE
BRITISH SCHOOL
OF
PAINTING.

BY WILLIAM SOTHEBY, ESQ. F.R.S. AND A.S.S.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR JOHN WRIGHT, PICCADILLY,

1801.



P R E F A C E.

THE following Poem arose from the perusal of a plan, originally suggested by Sir George Beaumont, for the improvement of the School of Painting in this country, by an exhibition of those pictures of English Masters, on which the test of time, and the decision of the public, had conferred distinguished approbation.

It is not the object of this Preface to advert to the causes which have delayed the execution of a design, judiciously calculated to excite the attention of the Public, and the emulation of the Artists; yet no opportunity should be neglected of zealously enforcing, not on the lovers of virtù alone, but on the Statesman and the Patriot, the necessity of speedily adopting

some expedient, which may counterbalance the efforts of our ambitious rival to fix the School of Art at Paris, and, by its relative influence on society at large, be attended with most important consequences to the commerce, the constitution, and the general prosperity of Great Britain.

It is necessary to observe, for the clearer comprehension of the first paragraph of the Epistle, that it was written at the Author's summer residence in Epping Forest, and sent to Sir George Beaumont, in the neighbourhood of Conway Castle.

A

POETICAL EPISTLE,

Sc. Sc.

BEAUMONT, while thou, in Nature's wild
domain,

Allur'st to Cambria's cliffs thy polish'd train,
Charm'd to retrace, in each romantic view,
Scenes whence thy landscape caught its living hue;
I, to my native shades, far off, retire,
And woo the peace that milder haunts inspire.

Yet, where thou roam'st, I once, with lonely tread,
Search'd the deep glen, prone flood, and mountain
head,

And still, in Fancy's magic colours shown,
Catch their wild grace, and make each scene my own.

Whether

Whether thou view, while ocean bursts in sight,
The ray of morn that purples Menai's height ;
Where Penmaen-Mawr his brow gigantic bends,
And, stretch'd o'er half the bay, his gloom extends ;
Or, in low dales, when twilight shadows glide,
Wind thy slow path along the wizard tide ;
While the broad moon from Conway's castled brow,
Sivers, with quivering gleam, the flood below ;
Still my charm'd thoughts thy favourite haunts
pursue,
And glow, as if thy colours grac'd the view.

Here, o'er its base, no mountain darkly bends,
No boundless ocean spreads, no flood descends,
No isle, by morn empurpled, gems the deep,
No moonlight beams on silver turrets sleep.
Yet here green champains stretch, and grassy glades
Lead to wild walks and unfrequented shades ;
Plains, o'er whose bosom, swelling to the day,
Sunshine and shadow sweep in broad array ;
Slopes hung with fern, whose wavy tufts between,
Soft winds the village path of level green,
Smooth as the wake that gleams along the tide,
While the curl'd billows foam on either side.

And

And many a deep wood dims the noontide glare,
Whence the lone stag springs stately from his lair,
And, sweet at distance, float the horizon round
Fields gay with corn, the forest's golden bound.

Here, 'mid the varied charms that nature yields,
Sweet interchange of forests, glades, and fields,
Sunshine and shade, that swift as spirits glide,
And paths, like those that gleam along the tide,
Mindful of thee, the Muse her voice shall raise,
And lift thy liberal aim to public praise ;
Bid answering Britain aid thy just design,
Art, at thy call, each favourite work combine,
And all that genius crowns, and taste inspires,
Feed the bright flame that emulation fires.

At Fame's high call, thro' each progressive stage,
Art to new efforts rose, from age to age :
Rous'd at her mandate, burst the Gothic gloom,
And scorn'd the cell, her cradle and her tomb.
Yet, as gray clouds, that from the valley stream,
Dim the fair dawn, and pale its roseate beam,
In floating shadows tremulously play,
And mock the senses with delusive ray ;

Thus doubt and fear, from wavering ignorance
bred,

O'er the rude age the mists of error spread,
When Cimabue first deckt the astonish'd shrine,
And pious ignorance hymn'd his bold design.
By slow gradation, skill from practice grew,
And dawning beauty open'd on the view.
But when the Muse her classic treasures bore,
Lur'd by great Cosmo to the Tuscan shore,
Masaccio rose : his freer hand unroll'd
The clinging robe, and flung in easy fold,
First taught to blend the colours' artful strife,
And grac'd rude nature with ideal life.
Then daring Angelo's creative mind
Rang'd o'er the realms of genius unconfin'd.
Triumphant Sculpture claim'd him for her own,
And glory, more than mortal, awes in stone,
Where Moses, such as blazing Sinai saw,
Broods on the wonders of Jehovah's law.
Him Architecture claim'd—the votive dome,
Proud boast and triumph of Imperial Rome,
Rais'd at his bidding, as from magic sprung,
Its ponderous orb in air suspended hung.

He too, while art, from time's o'erwhelming waste
Rescu'd each hallow'd wreck of Grecian taste,
And in proud triumph to Lorenzo bore
The sculptur'd group, grav'd gem, and imag'd
ore,
From the bold outline on the broken stone,
To painting gave new strength and pow'r unknown;
Felt all its force, then laid the fragment by,
And look'd on NATURE with a master's eye.
But when bright Vinci, harbinger of day,
Had warn'd the world of Raffael's golden ray,
On seraph pinions Art sublimely soar'd,
A wondering age the pictur'd saint ador'd,
In heavenly visions inspiration came,
And kindled genius with ethereal flame.

Such, Beaumont, such thy aim : let Britain aid,
And wreath her brow with Art's distinctive braid.

Beaumont, from age to age, recording Fame
High on her column graves Britannia's name.
Concord of balanc'd pow'rs, more finely wrought
Than the fair forms that gleam'd on Plato's thought,

With kings, protectors of the public cause,
 With freedom, rising firm from equal laws,
 Sustains the state, by patriot Alfred plann'd,
 And links in bonds of love th' united land.

Valour, a banner'd knight, on Crecy's field
 Who couch'd his lance, and grasp'd his sable shield;
 Whose steed, 'mid Agincourt's emblazon'd plain,
 On Gallia shook the blood-drops from his mane;
 O'er her arm'd nation lifts the patriot spear,
 Calls on th' invading host, and mocks at fear.

Far as old ocean winds his billowy zone,
 The empire of the sea is all her own.
 From heroes old transmitted victory runs,
 Drake, Raleigh, Howe, still triumph in their sons.
 With Duncan's arm they fir'd the Belgic main;
 With Jervis quell'd at once the pride of Spain;
 And wav'd round Nelson's brow, in stern delight,
 Fame's gory banner 'mid Aboukir's fight.
 Even now, again, proud victory's brazen roar
 Bears Nelson's * name to Britain's echoing shore,

* This alludes to the recent news of the destruction of the Danish fleet, the 2d of April 1801.

'Mid waves of blood, through horror's fiery blast,
The mighty master of the ocean past ;
Troops, train'd to battle, here his course oppos'd,
There thundering forts the winding channel
 clos'd,

Ship link'd to ship, where stationed navies lay,
Bulwark on bulwark raked the watery way ;
Death steer'd his prow, and burst the triple chain,
That barr'd 'gainst Albion's fleet the Baltic main :
Fate from his hand th' avenging thunder hurl'd,
And still'd the tempest of the northern world.

Fleets in each tide, with press of sail unfurl'd,
Crowd in her ports the produce of the world.
'Mid the throng'd havens Commerce proudly
 stands,

A golden key, and balance in her hands.
This the stor'd tribute guards of either Ind,
That weighs the wants and wishes of mankind.
If here gaunt famine desolate the plain,
There sated luxury loath th' untasted grain,
She looks o'er earth, and, with proportion'd aid,
Spreads wide Heav'n's partial gifts by equal trade.

Tamed

Tamed by her sons, the British mountains hold
Ore, whose high worth outweighs Potosi's gold.
Through flinty rocks, scoop'd out from side to side,
'Mid realms of night here fleets securely glide ;
Others, on breezy uplands, catch the gale,
And o'er the lifted billows shift the sail,
Where gather'd floods, from shore to distant shore,
Arch above arch, in stony channels roar.
At Arkwright's magic wand, what myriads join,
And spin, with fairy hands, th' aerial line !
At Wedgwood's call, each Grecian grace returns,
And forms that floated round the Tuscan urns.
Lo ! on yon mystic vase, exulting Fame
Graves, hail'd by Art, Etrurian Wedgwood's name,
Bids Albion's sons th' unrivall'd wonder hold,
While weeping Graces clasp the broken mould.

But not mechanic Art's contracted sphere
Shall bound the scope of Britain's free career.
Bright Fancy ! here unborrow'd charms supply ;
Inventive Genius ! fix the public eye.
Rule thou, while Labour toils, and Skill refines,
And Wealth, proud handmaid, serves thy high
designs !

Are

Are there, who rashly deem, by fate assign'd,
That varying climates mould the plastic mind ?
Who Heav'n's free gift to partial zones confine,
And limit genius to a boundary line ?
Speak they to Britain ? " Search, with Locke, the
soul :

" With Newton, guide the planets as they roll.
" Lo ! this thy range ; be sense, be science thine ;
" Taste, fancy, art, to happier climes resign !"

Say, where, by zephyrs borne, can Maia fling
Her flowers more fragrant on the lap of spring ?
A robe more verdant dewy summer weave,
Or brighter colours tinge th' autumnal eve ?

What lovelier views than Albion's scenes display,
Lure the charm'd wanderer on his varied way ?
Whether he gaze from Snowdon's summit hoar,
Or scale the rugged heights of bold Lodore,
Down Wye's green meads, white cliffs, and wood-
lands sail,
Catch inspiration from Llangollen's vale,
In Dove's still dell the world's far din forsake,
Or hermit visions feed on Lomond's lake.

Here

Here gray tow'rs crest the rock's embattled height,
In shadowy glens there abbeys sink from sight,
And Druid altars awe the o'ershadow'd plain,
And forests sweep the margin of the main.

Say, where can earth a lovelier race behold,
Shap'd by soft grace, or cast in manly mould ?
Where finer tints that all the soul reveal,
Or bolder brows, where Freedom stamps his seal ?

What guides the artist's hand ? the poet's
mind ?

Each link'd with each, congenial talents bind.
For them, bright Fancy from her rainbow wings,
O'er earth's dim scene a fairer radiance flings ;
For them, unfetter'd Genius soars between
The vast creation, and the world unseen,
Thence culls exhaustless stores, anew combines,
Mixes and moulds to form his high designs,
Sweeps heav'n and earth, bids shadowy beings
swarm,
“ And gives to airy nothing place and form.”

And

And is not Shakespeare ours? whose wizzard strain
Call'd forth wild Fancy's visionary train,
Bade the pale spectre rise, rous'd passion start,
And struck each chord that vibrates on the heart.
Milton is ours, who charm'd the seraph choir,
And Gray, that smote with master hand the lyre.
Rous'd by their genius, by their glory fir'd,
Fancy and force have British art inspir'd ;
Burst are the bonds that long her vigour bound,
And wondering Europe envied while she crown'd.

Far from the light of living fame I turn,
And hang my chaplet on the funeral urn.

If Art, through blended groups, can aptly join
Part link'd with part, and mould in one design,
If keen-ey'd Humour catch in brilliant hues,
The changeful colours of the comic muse,
Where Nature pours her spirit o'er the whole,
And every stroke is truth that paints the soul,
Mark'd by distinctive touches, finely wrought,
In every form of life, and cast of thought :
If Wit, enforcing Wisdom's moral plan,
Lash vice and weakness to amend the man :—

Satire and sense, on Hogarth's tomb reclin'd,
Shall point the ethic painter of mankind.

In Wilson view the spirit of the storm,
That rolls the thunder round his shapeless form,
Whose floating limbs on Snowdon's brow expand,
Swell on the sight, and awe th' o'ershadow'd land.
While midnight clouds beneath the demon rise,
And metcors streak with trailing flame the skies,
Launch'd from his hand, prone lightnings fire the
wood,
The tempest smites the far-resounding flood,
Shivers the crags, and down their rifted side
Whirls the uprooted oaks along the tide.
Onward he sails, and o'er the corse beneath
Spreads all his plumes, and rocks the blasted
heath.

Let others Wright's resplendent pencil praise,
And lustrous hues, that like the lightning blaze,
Catch from the sparkling steel the furnace-glow,
And trace the melted mountains as they flow :

I, to

I, to yon lonely tent by pity led,
View where the widow mourns her Soldier dead ;
Turns from her babe, whose careless smiles impart
Strange woe, that harrows up the mother's heart,
Hangs o'er the body bleeding on the ground,
Clasps his cold hand, and faints upon the wound.

Not such the scene that lonely Gainsborough led
To the wild wood, dark dell, and mouldering shed.
Lo ! bending o'er the lake, the village child,
That on her smiling image sweetly smil'd ;
The boy that worshipp'd, with uplifted eye,
The broad arch beaming on the stormy sky ;
Each quivering gleam, when tenderest colours play
On the light foliage, fresh'ning all the May ;
Bright summer's noontide glare, th' autumnal hue,
That melts, in golden glow, the mellow'd view ;
The solemn darkness stealing o'er the year,
When glimmers on the branch the brown leaf sear ;
Each varied tint, by Time's soft pencil thrown,
The dew-stain'd bark, gray moss, and mouldering
stone ;
His bold rough touch to these existence gives,
And, in his faithful mirror, nature lives.

Beaumont ! while fond remembrance wakes thy
tear,

That streams o'er these frail flow'rs on Reynolds' bier,
Low droops the Muse, unequal to her aim :
Genius, like thine, should raise thy friend to fame.

Hail ! guide and glory of the British School,
Whose magic line gave life to every rule.
Reynolds ! thy portraits, true to nature, glow'd,
Yet o'er the whole ideal graces flow'd ;
While forth to sight the living likeness came,
Souls touch'd by genius, felt thy higher aim :
Here, where the public gaze a Siddons views,
See fear and pity crown the Tragic Muse :
There, girt with flames, where Calpe gleams afar,
In dauntless Heathfield hail the God of War.

Painter of grace ! love gave to thee alone
Corregio's melting line with Titian's tone,
Bade *beauty* wear all forms that breathe delight,
And a new charm in each enchant the sight :
Here, a wild Thais, wave the blazing brand,
There yield her zone to Cupid's treacherous hand,

An

An Empress, melt the pearl in Egypt's bowl,
Or, a sly Gipsej, read the tell-tale soul.

Painter of passion ! horror on thy view
Pour'd the wild scenes that daring Shakespeare drew,
When the fiend scowl'd on Beaufort's bed of death,
And each weird Hag 'mid lightnings hail'd Macbeth.

Thee, Dante led to famine's murky cave :
“ Round yon mute father hear his children rave ;
“ Behold them stretch'd beneath his stony eye,
“ Drop one by one, and gaze on him, and die ;
“ So strain each starting ball in sightless stare,
“ And each grim feature fix in stern despair.”

No earth-born giant struggling into size,
Stretch'd in thy canvass, sprawls before our eyes,
The mind applies its standard to the scene,
Notes, with mute awe, the more than mortal mien,
Where boundless genius, brooding o'er the whole,
Stamps e'en on babes sublimity of soul.
Whether, where terror crowns Jove's infant brow,
Before the Godhead aw'd Olympus bow ;

Or,

Or, in yon babe, the Herculean strength upholds
 Th' enormous snakes, and slacks their length'ning
 folds ;

Or while, from heav'n celestial Grace descends,
 Meek on his knees the infant Samuel bends,
 Lifts his clasp'd hands, and, as he glows in pray'r,
 Fixes, in awful trance, his eye on air.

Yet not fair forms by Reynolds' hand design'd,
 No, nor his magic pen, that paints the mind ;
 That pen, which erst on charm'd Ilyssus' shore
 Th' exulting Graces to their Plato bore,
 When Fancy wove, for Truth, her fairest flow'rs,
 And Wisdom commun'd in the Muses' bow'rs :
 Not West's heroic chiefs, the heirs of fame,
 Martyrs and saints that holy zeal inflame ;
 Chaste Barry's moral scenes, from age to age,
 That trace mankind through culture's gradual stage ;
 Not Westall's graceful touch and brilliant hue,
 Ham's flame-wing'd plague, that Turner greatly
 drew,
 Not beauty's self by Hoppner's pencil wrought,
 Northcote's bold stroke, nor Opie's, big with
 thought,

Poetic

Poetic Fuseli by Genius fired,
Nor Lawrence, second Reynolds, self inspir'd :
Not these suffice :—if Art, to Britain led,
Shall far and wide her gathering glories spread,
Tow'r like the oak, that now adorns her plain,
Then spreads her empire o'er the boundless main,
Beaumont ! bid Albion's chief support her claim,
Bid wealth supply what yet is left of fame,
Each hallow'd model to her school resign,
And Raffael's grace with Titian's hue combine,
From daring Angelo's Promethean fire,
With ray of heav'n Britannia's sons inspire ;
Fix every charm that glides divinely fair,
O'er Parma's forms, and Guido's angel air ;
All that from art the learn'd Caracci drew,
All that wild nature pour'd on Rosa's view,
Paulo's free pencil, Rembrandt's forceful blaze,
And tints that melt in Claude's aerial haze.

And shall not commerce every sail expand,
Waft willing arts, and fix on British land ?

Alas ! for these no sail has cross'd the main,
And weeping Rome on Albion call'd in vain,

Stern war has glean'd the plunder o'er and o'er,
And blood-stain'd Gaul the Arts in triumph bore.

The time must come, the earth shall rest in peace,
And realms, exhausted, bid the battle cease :
France from her slaves unyoke the iron chain,
And Britain still the thunder of the main.

Our fleets from sea to sea have lightning hurl'd,
And, wing'd by victory, flown to save the world :
A sterner trial waits, when peace unplumes
The warrior's brow, and softer pomp assumes.

I dread not Gallia's desolating pow'rs,
" No hostile foot shall bruise our native flow'rs."
I dread her not, stern foe array'd in arms ;
I dread the Syren deck'd in magic charms ;
I dread her crown'd enchantress of the heart,
And hail'd by Europe, arbitress of art.

The feast is spread in proud theatric state,
Th' invited nations at her portal wait.
Transported guests ! the golden gates expand,
The shout of rapture bursts from land to land.

Zephyrs, whose roseate wings soft dews distil,
The air around with sweets Sabean fill :
Banners where rainbow colours richly play,
Catch the soft gale, and stream a fairer day.
Above, below, around, the viewless choir
Wake the soft flute, and sweep th' accordant lyre,
And, at each tuneful stop, from nymphs unseen,
Symphonious voices swell the pause between.
Others, by beauty moulded, move in sight,
And every sense by every charm delight,
With flowing locks, loose robe, and bosom bare,
Melt in the dance, that floats upon the air.
Th' enchantress smiles, her hands a goblet hold,
On Hebe's bosom Cupid wrought the mould :
Th' enchantress smiles, and mingles in the bowl
Drops of Circean juice, that drug the soul.

Ah, woe for Britain ! if her youthful train
Desert their country for the banks of Seine !
Ah, woe for Britain ! if insidious Gaul
Th' attracted artist to her trophies call.
Here Vice, slow stealing on with secret fear,
Chain'd by stern Justice, stops in mid career ;
Rous'd at the public eye's indignant flame,
Here conscience burns upon the cheek of shame ;

And Penitence, that sighs to be forgiv'n,
Still holds her faith in God, her hope in Heav'n.

By Gallia train'd to meretricious charms,
Art shall extend the triumph of her arms,
And issue forth, fit instrument design'd
To spread her empire, and corrupt the mind.

Let commerce, freedom, virtue, *Here* withstand,
And, train'd to moral grace, her pow'rs expand.

Beaumont ! where man on life's mysterious scene,
Half brute, half angel, wavers both between,
His body, form'd from dust, a kindred clod,
His soul, a living spirit, breath'd from God ;
This, by degrading passions, yok'd to earth,
And that with seraphs claiming heav'nly birth,
Art can refine each sense from low desire,
Can feed warm fancy with ethereal fire,
From Nature's loveliest forms to worlds unknown,
Fill the vast void, with beauties all her own,
And lead ascending thought, from height to height,
To purer pleasures, and sublime delight.

Else,

Else, why in proud magnificence display'd,
The wondrous world in pomp of charms array'd ?
Why, Man ! o'er earth this flow'ry carpet spread,
Why bow'd yon arch of azure o'er thy head ?
Whose robe cerulean floats along the flood ?
Whose mantle, waving verdure, clothes the wood ?
Why launch'd yon golden orb, that wheels the light ?
And gemm'd with stars, the canopy of night ?

All, all alike, earth, ocean, heav'n declare,
God, the first good, first perfect, and first fair.

And happier far, in nature's early stage,
The savage struggling with a barbarous age,
By want surrounded, and by danger fed,
The cave his shelter, and the rock his bed ;
Than fortune's silken sons in luxury born,
Where plenty o'er them pour'd her golden horn,
Who, foes to art, by culture unrestrain'd,
Recl o'er the bowl, by feverish passions drain'd,
Or doze out life, on Sloth's dull couch reclin'd,
And listless droop in apathy of mind.

“ Creative fancy o'er each work presides,
“ Taste moulds the clay, and grace the shuttle
 guides.

“ For freedom plead—where wasting far and wide,
“ A realm o'erflows with wealth's voluptuous tide,
“ Genius alone the sinking land can save,
“ While idiot luxury shrinks in heart a slave.

“ Oh plead for virtue—o'er her hallow'd shrine,
“ Raise consecrated art's sublime design,
“ Saints that, 'mid wearied fiends resign their breath,
“ And a meek Christ that bows his head in death.

“ And thou ! whose firmness still'd a nation's
 fear,
“ Whose holy smile repress'd the general tear,
“ When frenzy, aiming the assassin blow,
“ Smote every bosom with domestic woe ;
“ Patron of Commerce ! who, from pole to pole,
“ Bad'st Cook explore where utmost oceans roll ;
“ Patron of Science ! who, from height to height,
“ Bad'st Herschel soar, and claim new worlds of
 light ;

“ Patron

“ Patron of Arts ! whose stately dome beneath,
 “ Fame binds her votary’s brow with annual wreath :
 “ Still foster Genius with paternal hand,
 “ Point his high course, and all his pow’rs expand !

“ While frantic Gaul, her native arts o’erthrown,
 “ From the waste palace reft, and prostrate throne,
 “ Crush’d on the altar, where, his God denied,
 “ Th’ infuriate Atheist thundering Heav’n defied,
 “ Crush’d on the tomb, where, bending o’er the
 dead,

“ Fame crown’d the chief, that for his country
 bled :—

“ While o’er the ravag’d earth, from clime to clime,
 “ Marshall’d by avarice, sacrilege, and crime,
 “ Her hosts, like locusts warping with the wind,
 “ Smote all beneath, nor left a wreck behind,
 “ From plunder’d temples, and demolish’d fanes,
 “ Pluck’d violated Art’s sublime remains,
 “ And on the basis of eternal shame,
 “ Rear’d the frail pile of transitory fame.—
 “ King, Guardian, Father ! Art beneath thy hand
 “ Rose to new triumphs on this shelter’d land,

- “ O'er Statesmen, Patriots, Heroes laid in dust,
“ Grav'd the proud tomb, and fix'd the breathing
 bust,
“ In consecrated domes sublimely soar'd,
“ And deck'd the fane of God, by faith ador'd.
“ Oh may the realm, by thy example fired,
“ Bless'd by thy virtues, by thy taste inspir'd,
“ Raise public artists, guardians of her fame,
“ And kindle genius with celestial flame !
“ Each shall reflect on each ; Art's moral views
“ A moral influence o'er the land diffuse :
“ Exalt the standard of the public mind,
“ Show taste and truth eternally combin'd ;
“ Taste that from sense, to thought, to life, extends,
“ And truth, that to its object, God, ascends !”



NOTES.

PAGE 10. *When Cimabue first, &c.*] Giovanni Cimabue, the father of modern painters, was born of a noble family at Florence, in 1240—died 1300.

“Fece poi per la Chiesa di S. Maria Novella, la Tavola di Nostra Donna, che é posta in alto fra la Capella dè Rucellai, e quella dè Bardi da Vernia: la qual opera fù di maggior grandezza, che figura, che fusse stata fatta in sin’ a quel tempo. Et alcuni Angeli, che le sono intorno, mostrano, ancor che gli havesse la maniera greca, che s’ andò accostando in parte al lineamento, & modo della moderna. Onde fù questa opera di tanta maraviglia né popoli di quell’ età, per non si essere veduto allora meglio, che di casa di Cimabue fù con molta festa, et con le trombe alla chiesa portata con solennissima processione, et egli perciò molto premiato, & honorato.” VASARI.

Page 10. *Masaccio rose, &c.*] Born at S. Juan de Valdarno, 1417—died 1443.

“Le sue fatiche meritano infinitissime lodi, e massimamente, per avere egli dato ordine nel suo magisterio, alla bella maniera de’ tempi nostri — e che questo sia il vero, tutti i più celebrati Scultori, et Pittori, che sono stati da lui in quà, esercitando, e studiando in questa Capella (de’ Brancacci, at *Florence*) sono divenuti eccellenti, e chiari—” Here Vasari enumerates various artists of the first reputation; and among them, “Lionardo da Vinci, et il divinissimo Michaelagnolo Buonaroti—Raffaello ancora da Urbino, di quivi trasse il principio della bella maniera sua.”

The excellencies of Masaccio are particularly pointed out in the 12th Discourse of Sir J. Reynolds. H

Page 10. *Then daing Angelo, &c.*] The fame of this extraordinary man * has, in this country, received additional lustre, from the taste, precision, and energy, with which the characteristics of his genius are discriminated, by his congenial votary, Sir J. Reynolds. See his fifth and his last Discourse.

Page 10. *Where Moses, &c.*] Of this celebrated statue in the church of Santo Pietro ad Vincula, not even the highest enthusiasm for the arts can justify the following extravagant commendation: “é finito talmente ogni lavoro suo, che Moisé puo’ più hoggi, che mai chiamarsi amico di

* Born at the Castle of Chiusi, in the territory of Arezzo, in Tuscany, in 1474—died 1564.

Dio, poich  tanto innanzi a gli altri h  voluto mettere insieme, e preparargli il corpo par la sua resurrettione, per le mani di Michaelagnolo.” VASARI.

Page 10. *Its ponderous orb in air.*] “The design of the dome of St. Peter, of the same diameter as the Pantheon, was drawn by him with such accuracy, that Giacompo della Porta built it many years after Michaelagnolo’s death, without having occasion to vary it in any one instance.”

SIR R. CLAYTON’S *Translation of Tenhove.*

Page 11. *From the bold outline, &c.*] This passage alludes to the celebrated Torso.—“Michaelagnolo, approfittandosi delle statue raccolte dai Medici, apr  gli occhi, e conobbe che gli antichi avean tenuta una certa arte nell’imitare la verit , con cui si faceva la imitazione pi  intelligibile, e pi  bella, che nello stesso originale.” *Op. di MENGES, vol. ii. p. 99.*

109. *From a Note in Roscoe’s Life of LORENZO.*

Page 11. *But when bright Vinci*.*] “It was absolutely from the loins of Lionardo da Vinci, that all the schools of art in Europe have been impregnated with almost all the perfections that ennoble modern art.” *Extract from Mr. BARRY’S Letter to the Dilettanti Society.*

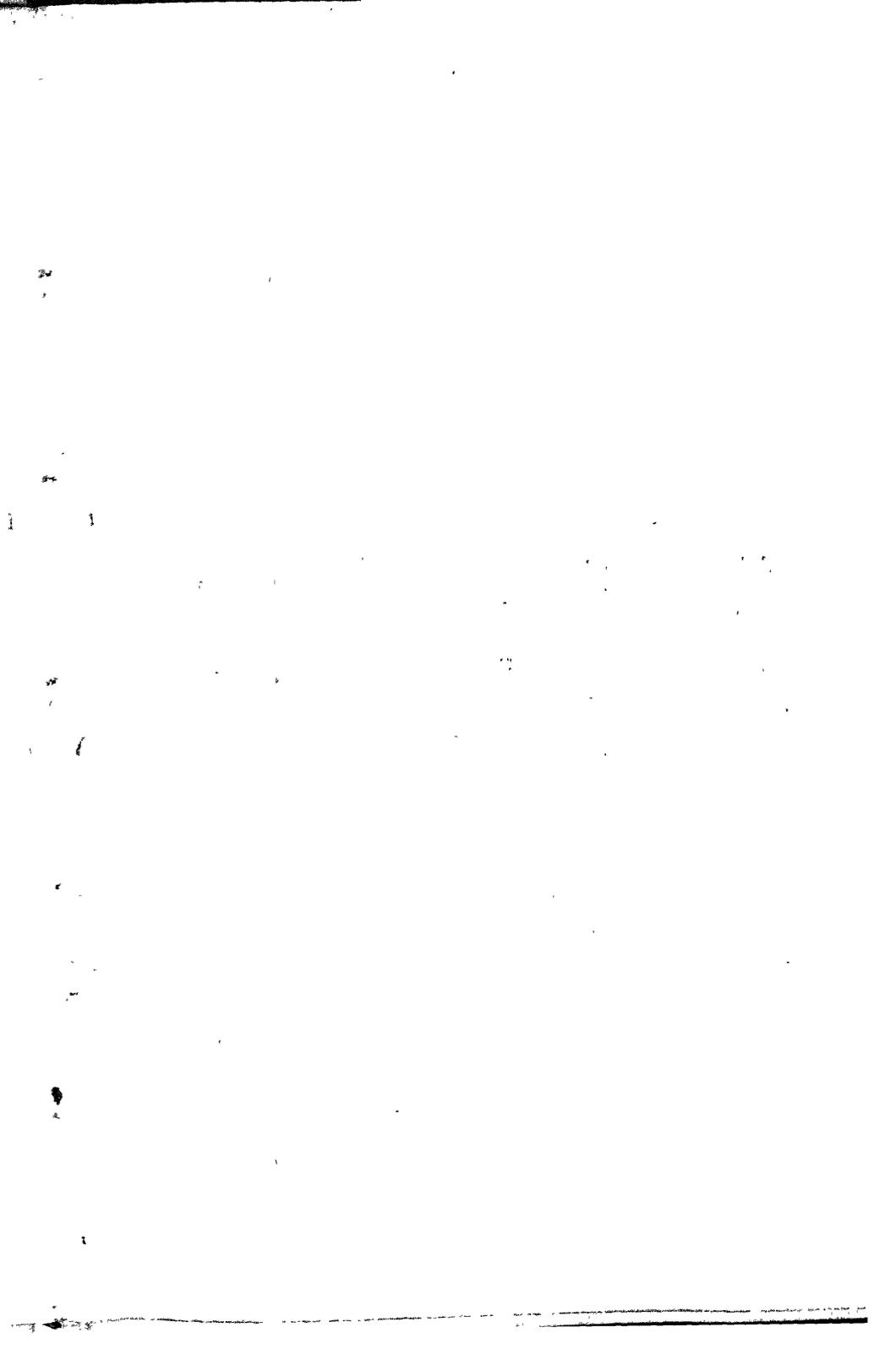
* Born of a noble family at the Castle of Vinci, near Florence, in 1445—died 1520.

Page 14. *Lo, on yon mystic vase.*] The imitation of the Portland Vase, by Mr. Wedgwood, may justly be deemed the perfection of mechanic art. The mould of it, as I have been informed, was broken by his orders, when a limited number of casts had been made.

Page 15. *And limit genius to a boundary line.*] This opinion is ably discussed, and its futility exposed, by Mr. Darry, in his pamphlet on the real and imaginary obstructions to the acquisition of the arts in England.

Page 23. *Each hallow'd model to her school resign.*] "The principal advantage of an academy is, that, besides furnishing able men to direct the student, it will be a repository for the great examples of the art. These are the materials on which genius is to work; and without which, the strongest intellect may be fruitlessly or deviously employed. The student receives, at one glance, the principles which many artists have spent their whole lives in ascertaining; and satisfied with their effect, is spared the painful investigation, by which they came to be known and fixed. How many men, of great natural abilities, have been lost to this nation, for want of these advantages! They never had an opportunity of seeing these masterly efforts of genius, which at once kindle the whole soul, and force it into sudden and irresistible approbation." Sir J. REYNOLDS, *Disc. 1.*

Such were the sentiments of Sir J. Reynolds, on the importance of this great desideratum, for the improvement of the English School: and what lover of the arts can, without wonder and regret, reflect, that, in an age of luxury and high refinement, and in a country unexampled for the immensity of its public supplies, and for the extravagant sums eagerly poured forth by individuals, for the pictures of the old masters, but one solitary instance is to be produced of the slightest attention to supply this defect! This solitary instance is a copy of the Cartoons of Raffael, lately presented to the Academy by the munificence of the Duke of Bedford. May, however, the example of this patriotic Nobleman, by influencing the fashion, give rise to the same beneficial effects on the Arts, as have attended his knowledge and public-spirited pursuits, in the improvement of some of the most important branches of the georgics of this country!



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