

with the indispensable duties of his station: the felicity of human life would be considerably augmented. From this source the refined and vivid pleasure of the imagination are almost entirely derived; and the elegant arts owe their choicest beauties to a taste for the contemplation of nature. Painting and sculpture are express imitations of visible objects, and where would be the charms of poetry, if divested of the imagery and embellishments which she borrows from rural scenes? Painters, statuaries, and poets, therefore, are always ambitious to acknowledge themselves the pupils of nature; and, as their skill increases they grow more and more delighted with every view of the animal and vegetable worlds. But the pleasure resulting from admiration is transient—and to cultivate taste without regard to its influence on the passions and affections, “is to rear a tree for its blossoms which is capable of yielding the richest and most valuable fruit.” Physical and moral felicity bear so intimate a relation to each other that they may be considered as different gradations in the scale of excellence—and the knowledge and relish of the former should be deemed only a step to the nobler and more permanent enjoyments of the latter.

Whoever has visited the Leasowes, in Warwickshire, must have felt the force and purity of an inscription which meets the eye at the entrance into these delightful grounds—

“Would you, then, taste the tranquil scene?

Be sure your bosom be serene—

Devoid of hate, devoid of strife.

Devoid of all that poisons life—

And much it vails you, in this place

To graft the love of human race.”

Now, such scenes contribute powerfully to inspire that serenity which is necessary to enjoy and to heighten their beauties. By a sweet contagion the soul catches the harmony which she contemplates—and the frame within assimilates itself to that which is without. For

“— Who can forbear to smile with nature?

Can the strong passions in the bosom roll
While every gale is peace, and every grove
Is melody?”

In this state of composure we become susceptible of virtuous impressions from almost every surrounding object—an equal and extensive benevolence is called forth into exertion—and having felt a common interest in the

gratifications of inferior beings, we shall be no longer indifferent to their sufferings, or become wantonly instrumental in producing them.

It seems to be the intention of Providence that the lower order of animals should be subservient to the comfort, convenience, and sustenance of man. But his right of dominion extends no further—and if this right be exercised with mildness, humanity, and justice, the subjects of his power will be no less benefited than himself—for various species of living creatures are annually multiplied by human art, improved in their perceptive powers by human culture, and plentifully fed by human industry. The relation, therefore, is reciprocal between such animals and man—and he may supply his own wants by the use of their labour, the produce of their bodies, and even the sacrifice of their lives—whilst he cooperates with all-gracious Heaven in promoting happiness, the great end of existence.

But though it be true that partial evil, with respect to different orders of sensitive beings, may be universal good, and that it is a wise and benevolent institution of nature, to make destruction itself, within certain limitation, the cause of an increase of life and enjoyment—yet a generous person will extend his compassionate regards to every individual that suffers for his sake—and whilst he sighs

“Even for the kid, or lamb, that pours its life,
Beneath the bloody knife,”

He will naturally be solicitous to mitigate pain, both in duration and degree, by the gentle mode of inflicting it.

I am inclined to believe, however, that this sense of humanity would soon be obliterated, and that the heart would grow callous to every soft impression, were it not for the benignant influence of the smiling face of nature. The Count de Laezun, when imprisoned by Louis XIV. in the Castle of Pignerol, amused himself, during a long period of time, with catching flies, and delivering them to be devoured by a rapacious spider. Such an entertainment was equally singular and cruel, and inconsistent, I believe, with his former character and subsequent turn of mind. But his cell had no window, and received only a glimmering light from an aperture in the roof. In less unfavourable circumstances, may we not presume that, instead of sporting with misery,