

Night is the good man's friend, and guardian too ;
It no less rescues virtue, than inspires.

Virtue for ever frail, as fair, below,
Her tender nature suffers in the croud,
Nor touches on the world, without a stain :
The world's infectious ; few bring back at eve,
Immaculate, the manners of the morn.
Something we thought, is blotted ; we resolv'd,
Is shaken ; we renounc'd, returns again.
Each salutation may slide in a sin
Unthought before, or fix a former flaw.
Nor is it strange : *Light, motion, concurrence, noise,*
All, scatter us abroad ; thought outward-bound,
Neglectful of our home-affairs, flies off
In fume and dissipation, quits her charge,
And leaves the breast unguarded to the foe.

Present example gets within our guard,
And acts with double force, by few repell'd.
Ambition fires ambition ; *love of gain*
Strikes, like a pestilence, from breast to breast ;

Riot, pride, perfidy, blue vapours breathe ;
 And *inhumanity* is caught from man,
 From smiling man. A slight, a single glance
 And shot at random, often has brought home
 A sudden fever, to the throbbing heart,
 Of *envy, rancour, or impure desire*.
 We see, we hear, with peril ; *safety* dwells
 Remote from *multitude* ; the world's a school
 Of *wrong*, and what proficients swarm around !
 We must, or imitate, or disapprove ;
 Must list as their accomplices or foes ;
That stains our innocence ; *this* wounds our peace.
 From nature's birth, hence, *wisdom* has been smit
 With sweet recess, and languisht for the shade.

This sacred shade and solitude, what is it ?

'Tis the felt presence of the Deity.

Few are the faults we flatter when alone.

Vice sinks in her allurements, is unguilt,

And looks, like other objects, black by night.

By night an Atheist half-believes a God.

Night is fair virtue's immemorial friend ;

The conscious moon thro' ev'ry distant age,

Has held a lamp to *wisdom*, and let fall,

On *contemplation's* eye, her purging ray.