

R E M A R K S,

ON

MODERN FEMALE MANNERS,

AS DISTINGUISHED BY

INDIFFERENCE TO CHARACTER,

AND

INDECENCY OF DRESS;

EXTRACTED CHIEFLY FROM

“ REFLECTIONS POLITICAL AND MORAL AT THE
CONCLUSION OF THE WAR. BY JOHN BOWLES, ESQ.”

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OF all the symptoms which characterize the morals, and indicate the depravity, of the age in which we live, one of the most inauspicious is the decay of those feelings, which have hitherto been the ornament, the pride, and the protection of the female sex. It is not meant here to insist upon the alarming progress of adultery; upon the growing numbers, and increasing shamelessness, of those women, who abandon the paths of virtue. A still more unwelcome reflection forces itself upon the mind of every one, who contemplates the present manners of the fashionable world; and it relates to women, whose character is without a blemish.

blemish. No longer do such women, at least in the higher circles, pride themselves, as they have ever been wont to do, on the distinction which separates them from the abandoned part of their sex. Females of superior rank, who give the *ton* to the polished part of society, and the influence of whose example must extend, through numerous gradations, to the humblest walks of life, are beginning to lay aside that dignified reserve, which formerly kept, at an awful distance, all who were not clad in the fair robe of un sullied reputation. They are become so wonderfully condescending as to associate with those, whose approaches they would formerly have considered as an insult, and the smallest communication with whom they would have deemed infamous. Does this astonishing condescension proceed from that tender and compassionate sympathy with guilt, which has been caught from the German school, and which impels us to consider vice as an object of compassion and indulgence, rather than of horror and detestation? or, is it the result of an opinion, that the principle of female virtue must derive such vigour from the circumstances of *the times*, and the *present* state of the social world, as to stand no longer in need of those auxiliaries, which have *hitherto* been found necessary to assist it in its struggles with passion and temptation? or, is it produced by the sanction which the Legislature, by repeatedly refusing to prohibit adulterous marriages, and, indeed, to subject adultery itself to legal penalties,

nalties, has *seemed* to give to this most atrocious; and most pernicious of all the vices, which disturb the order, and endanger the existence of civil society? In whatever cause it originates, it furnishes an indication of the most unfavourable nature, and its tendency is pernicious in the highest degree. However the sentiments of mankind may fluctuate on these, as on many other subjects, human nature continues unchanged, and unchangeable. In its best state, (a distinction which it is very far from being, at this time, entitled to claim,) it wants every possible assistance to confirm it in virtue, and to guard it against vice. Female chastity ever has been, and ever *must* be, the main source of all the virtues, which constitute the strength and security of human society.—And female modesty is ordained, by the unalterable constitution of our nature, to be the guardian of female chastity. What was it, but the prudent vigilance of this *Guardian*, which, till lately, prohibited its valuable charge, the *Virtuous Fair*, from all communication with the depraved part of their sex; which inspired our female ancestors, and, till lately, the females of our own time, with that conservative pride of character, that extreme sensibility of honour, which made them look with scorn upon a woman who had lost her purity, and almost to consider her atmosphere as pestilential? Much as these feelings have, in particular cases, been made the subject of ridicule or of censure, they were inexpressibly beneficial. They preserved

a constant and lively sense of the value of what is most valuable in society ; and they tended to deter from vice, by rendering it odious and infamous. But to preserve these feelings, it is necessary to maintain them in their utmost extent. The case does not allow of any qualification. Honour, especially in women, can admit of no compromise with dishonour ; no approaches from one towards the other must be suffered ; the boundary between them must be considered as impassable ; the line by which they are divided is the RUBICON of female virtue. Never could it be more truly said, than in relation to this subject,—

- “ Vice is a monster of such frightful mien
- “ As to be hated needs but to be seen ;
- “ Yet seen too oft, familiar with its face,
- “ We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

What then have we not to dread from the disposition, which is now beginning to display itself in the fashionable world, to disregard feelings, which, till now, have been cherished by all who had even a respect for female chastity? To counteract that disposition, (which, as well as every other disposition favourable to immorality, may be expected to derive great strength from our approaching intimacy with dissolute France*) it is necessary to raise an additional mound about the virtue of the fair sex ; by considering the character

* Of the dangers arising from that intercourse with France which is the unavoidable consequence of the Peace, some notion may be derived from an expression contained in a letter of
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of those women, who, in defiance of decency, dare to associate with pollution, as contaminated by the contact. Whatever the professors of the new philosophy, or the eulogists of modern candour, may think, *the infamy of Vice is the last bulwark of Virtue.*

That women of fashion, in this country, have made great advances towards a state of total indifference respecting the moral character of the females whom they admit into their society, striking proofs have been publicly exhibited. A woman of the most infamous life was lately received into the circles of fashion. The female in question, a foreigner, had lived publicly as the Mistress of Berthier, and of other French Republican Generals. With such a woman it seems that some English ladies, of the first distinction, think it no disgrace to associate !!! It is even said, that great and illustrious Personages, who have formed connections which are expressly prohibited by the laws of God; employ the influence which their exalted situation gives them, in prevailing upon women of character to associate with females, the impropriety of whose conduct is notorious. If this be true, it denotes, on the part of the Personages

an English Gentleman, who went to Paris soon after the signature of the Preliminary Articles, and who observes, that "the prominent objects of a stranger's notice at Paris, are the extreme indelicacy of Female Dress, and the grossness of Male Manners."

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to whom it relates, the most woful infatuation. Are those Personages aware that they are endangering, by such conduct, the elevated rank, which, since it is essential to the well-being of society, is entitled to the utmost respect; and which they are so well qualified, by their many natural and acquired endowments, to dignify and illustrate? nay, that they are even undermining the Throne to which they are so nearly allied, and of which the sanctity of marriage is a necessary support? Can they so soon forget that the overthrow of the Gallic Throne—that the total subversion of rank, dignity, and order in France—may, in a great degree, be attributed, as a predisposing cause, to the vices of those who, by their conduct, seemed to think, that elevated station was exempted from the rules prescribed by Religion and Morality, and the baneful influence of whose manners overpowered the salutary effects, which the attractive example of a Pious King was calculated to produce? Though the intermixture of reputation and infamy, in female society, be a proof of the increased depravity of modern times? and one effect of that pernicious liberality, which insidiously attacks those feelings that are the ancient barriers of civilized society; it has too long been the custom of persons in elevated stations, to think themselves entitled to adapt their systems of morality to their depraved propensities; and to consider the rules which are prescribed for human conduct,

conduct, by the sacred oracles of eternal Truth, and which really admit of *no exception*, as dispensed with, in their favour, on account of the peculiar, and it must be admitted, *severe*, though necessary restrictions, to which they are subjected by their birth. On this subject may I not be permitted to recommend to their serious consideration, some sentiments that I find in a publication which, probably, has not attracted their notice, and which appeared not long since in consequence of an interesting debate in the House of Lords respecting a bill for the prevention of adultery ?

“ That high rank is necessarily accompanied with sacrifices that more than compensate for the splendid advantages, by which it excites the envy of inconsiderate minds, is indisputably true. But those sacrifices, arising out of the nature of society, which cannot exist without a gradation of rank, can by no means justify the smallest departure from virtue. For besides the peculiar and appropriate duties which belong to each situation, a strict compliance with the universal rules of morality is alike indispensable in all situations. And in proportion as exalted rank is exposed to temptations to violate those rules; in proportion as it demands privations which may render a strict government of the passions a difficult task; it is presumed to have the assistance of a higher cultivation of mind, and of a nicer sense of duty, honour, and propriety, than can be expected to fall to the lot of the mass of
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mankind. Persons of high station, who are destitute of these advantages, and who, for want of them, cannot submit to the sacrifices which are necessarily imposed upon them, are unfit for their place in society; as much as the warrior would be unfit for the field, who could not undergo the toils, the watchings, and the abstinence, which are necessary in a military life. In short, elevated rank, instead of affording a dispensation for vice, should be considered by its possessors as furnishing an occasion for the most exalted virtue. Unless it be viewed in this light, essential as it is, in itself, to the existence of social order, the individuals whom it distinguishes will be a curse, instead of a blessing to mankind. They are placed on an eminence; and in proportion as they are raised above the common level, their influence is extensive. Every degree of their elevation therefore, supplies an additional motive to a virtuous life, and enhances the guilt and the mischief of all kinds of immorality.

“ Much of the hardship, which is generally supposed to belong to the situation of the exalted Personages above alluded to, is, evidently, owing to themselves. Although their opportunities of forming matrimonial connections be circumscribed within narrow limits, it is but too obvious that they are far from being improved to the utmost. Are there no Ladies in the Protestant Courts of Europe, with whom they might reasonably hope to live in happiness and in honour? The Royal Family

Family affords two instances, which strongly encourage such a hope; and in one of those instances the Royal Pair had never met, before the formation of their sacred engagement. But they met with virtuous minds, with refined sentiments, and with a mutual desire to discover and to prize each others worth. And hence, though destitute of the high advantage of a previous attachment, they have exhibited a pattern of conjugal bliss, scarcely to be equalled among the many millions of their admiring subjects."

But it is impossible to advert to the present state of female manners, without noticing a still more melancholy proof of the decay of those feelings which are the grand bulwarks of female virtue, than even a growing indifference to the character of those who are admitted into the parties of fashionable life; I mean the indecent modes of dress, which are becoming more and more prevalent among women of all classes. These modes, and, indeed, the whole stile of modern female dress, were evidently invented for the purpose of exciting sensuality, and of inflaming passions that stand in the greatest need of restraint; but they have been adopted by women who lay claim to unfulfilled reputation, and by them transmitted to the lowest ranks of female society, with a rapidity of communication, which affords a most striking instance of the contagion of bad example. The prevalence of such a fashion in those ranks, where it can be but little

counteracted by education or reflection, must inevitably prove an inexhaustible source of prostitution and debauchery;—a consideration which ought surely to induce every woman, who has the least regard for her sex, to exert all her authority, and all her influence, in discountenancing a practice which leads to such direful consequences. This scandalous violation of the laws of decency, on the part of those whose duty it was to be the guardians of those laws, has already, in many instances, been followed by a severe, though, it must be owned, a just punishment; with a punishment which, however just, is calculated to wound the tenderest feelings of our nature. Many women who, a little while since, shone forth among the loveliest of their sex, are now dressed in their shrouds, because, in an evil hour, they laid aside those parts of their apparel, which health, as well as decency, forbade them to relinquish. What must be the emotions of those parents, and of those husbands, who have been thus bereft of their dearest comforts, which a little seasonable and kind admonition might have still preserved! A very moderate degree of reflection, indeed, without the aid of admonition, should be more than sufficient to prevent the adoption of so baneful a fashion. What woman, having any claim to character, would suffer herself to transgress the laws of decency, if she considered, for a single moment, how cheap she thereby renders herself in the eyes of the other sex? The female who
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makes an improper display of her person, may become an object of transient desire, but forfeits all title to respect. The man of sense, who is ever the friend of decency (for never was a maxim more true than that which represents a want of decency as a want of sense), looks upon such a woman as a disgrace to her sex. Nay, the shallow superficial coxcomb has sense enough to discover her unfitness for the sacred duties of conjugal life; and to know that decency is the least pledge that a woman can give for chastity. Even the licentious admiration, which the profligate libertine pays to her charms, is mingled with secret contempt; and he talks of her, among his dissolute companions, with a grossness of familiarity, the very idea of which would raise in her cheeks the glow of indignation, if it did not suffuse them with the blush of modesty.

Does the degraded female console herself, for such mortifications, by the reflection that she has not sacrificed her virtue? Does she think her conduct and character irreproachable, because, in the ordinary sense of the word, she has preserved her chastity? Alas! what erroneous ideas has she formed of female chastity! To abstain from the grossness of vice is the least, though an indispensable, part of this most important of virtues. This divine principle is seated in the mind; it is enthroned in the heart, and there maintains a sovereign sway, not only over the external deportment, but over the hidden thoughts and inmost feelings.

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These thoughts and feelings are not within the reach of human observation ; and consequently it cannot always be ascertained whether the claims, of any particular woman, to chastity, be unimpeachable ; or whether they be founded merely in that counterfeit quality, the very existence of which depends on the want of opportunity to indulge the licentious passions, without inconvenience, or danger of discovery. But though it be difficult to pronounce, with certainty, on this delicate question, it is easy to come to a fair decision upon it. Genuine chastity—that is, chastity of the heart and of the mind—has some characteristics with which it never fails to be accompanied. Of those characteristics, the most indubitable, as well as the most indispensable, is that nice and extreme sensibility, which instinctively shrinks from whatever can give the smallest offence to the most refined delicacy ; and which acts as the vigilant centinel—the jealous guardian—not only of the citadel itself, but of the remotest outworks of female chastity. What then shall be said of those women, who, instead of displaying any symptoms of these delicate feelings, set decency itself at defiance, and prove themselves to be destitute of all sense of shame ? How dare *she* claim to be considered as a virtuous, who gives the most glaring proof that she is not even a *modest*, woman ? That this is a just description of the fashionable females of the present day, no one, who is witness to the indecent exposure which they

they make of their persons, can pretend to dispute. So scandalously indecent is that exposure, that, to judge from appearances, *virtuous* women seem now to have less modesty, than belonged to the prostitutes of former times. Justice, however, requires a distinction between the blooming but unfortunate maid, whose native blushes are overpowered by the influence and example of a venal mother; and the *chaste* matron, who, by a wanton exhibition of her person, shews that she is incapable of a blush. The former is an object of compassion; and still more so than she would be, if her life were to become a sacrifice to the brutal rage of her, from whom she received it. The latter displays the female character in the most odious form which it is capable of assuming. She is even more odious and detestable on account of her pretensions to chastity. The monstrous and unnatural alliance, which she endeavours to establish between virtue and shamelessness, tends not only to bring the former into contempt, but to endanger its very existence, by depriving it of its natural and necessary defence. Compared with such a woman, the female who has fallen a victim to temptation, and who hides herself in retirement from the disgrace which she can never wipe away, is an object of commiseration.—Nay, compared with such a woman, the bold and abandoned profligate, who, with dauntless effrontery, appears publicly in her true character, is less disgraceful to her sex, and less injurious to society.

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Of all the dangers to which this country is now exposed, great and manifold as they are, not one, perhaps, has so destructive a tendency, as the disposition which manifests itself among the fair sex, particularly in the higher circles, to sacrifice decency at the shrine of fashion, and to lay aside that modesty, by which they have so long been pre-eminently distinguished. He must have a very superficial knowledge of human nature; he must be consummately ignorant of the structure of the social machine; who does not see, in this disposition, a much more formidable enemy than Buonaparte himself, with all his power, perfidy, and malice. Female modesty is the last barrier of civilized society. When *that* is removed, what remains to stem the torrent of licentiousness and profligacy? As the sexes have different parts respectively allotted them, in the great business of human life, so they are severally endowed with appropriate qualities, which are precisely analogous to their various destinations and characters. In every condition of society, whether rude or refined, these qualities are strongly and instinctively marked; yet, in order to judge of them adequately, we should contemplate them as they appear in a state of high cultivation: as the properties of plants, and their excellence and utility, are more fairly appreciated when they have the advantages of culture, than when they are left to grow wild—unattended by the hand of man—unassisted by human skill and industry. Without attempting

attempting to describe, or even to enumerate, the various characteristic qualities, which, when they are displayed in the degree of perfection of which they are respectively capable, render the sexes objects of mutual estimation, and conduce to their beneficial influence on each other, it will suffice, for the present purpose, to advert to that native modesty—that extreme delicacy, bashfulness, and reserve—which are peculiar to the female sex. These qualities are by far the most important in the economy of social life: for without them there could be no such thing as virtue; and, consequently, no such thing as happiness. They are indispensably necessary to keep within bounds those passions, which, if unrestrained, would, by their violence and impetuosity, drive us upon the fatal rocks of sensuality and licentiousness. Without the aid of these qualities, women could never attain their due rank and consequence in society; they could never inspire respect, esteem, or confidence; nay, they could never excite any other emotions than coarse desires of sensual gratification. But adorned by those nice and delicate feelings, which heighten, while they restrain, within its proper sphere, the attraction of their charms, they become objects of the highest possible admiration, and of the most refined and durable regard. They dignify their character by investing it with chastity. They not only purify passion from all its grossness, but they convert, what would otherwise be a mere brutal appetite,

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into the sacred flame of connubial love. They inspire into the tender mind, which it is more immediately their province to form and to cultivate, sentiments and principles; which, in future life, may prove a sure preservative from vice; or which, should they fail so to operate, may, nevertheless, become faithful monitors, to recall to the paths of Religion and Virtue. By their "chaste conversation, coupled with fear," they soften, they polish, the rougher sex, which, without their mild and genial influence, would never exhibit any thing better than a race of barbarians. They refine, they ennoble, the human mind, by presenting to its view the tender, the indissoluble attachment of virtuous love, as the source of the highest temporal felicity. They constitute the very ties of those family connections, those domestic societies, which alone can foster in the human heart the tender sympathies, the social affections, and "all the charities of Father, Son, and Brother." In short, they adorn, they harmonize the world; they shed on human life its choicest comforts; they excite and cherish the sensibilities which are the germ of virtue; they prepare and dispose the mind for the sacred and salutary influence of Religion; and they qualify mankind for that state of high civilization which, if accompanied with piety and good morals, would constitute the perfection of human society.

But it must be remembered; that females would be unable to produce these wonderful and happy effects

effects, without the aid of that native and instinctive modesty, which is the grand characteristic of their sex. This is the source of their influence; the foundation of their utility; nay, even the *ceffus* of their charms. To what a deplorable state then would the world be reduced, if they were to divest themselves of this amiable and attractive quality, which Providence has ordained to be the primary source of human excellence and felicity? Of all the calamities which can befall society, this would be the greatest; nay, it would involve every calamity to which the lot of humanity is exposed. Freed from their first, their last, their only effectual restraint, the passions would know no bounds; they would rush forth with impetuous, with irresistible force, and would defy all laws, both of God and man. The human character would become altogether sensual, and of course selfish, brutal, and ferocious; every refined feeling, every nice sensibility, every generous emotion, would be quenched in a rage for indiscriminate, unbounded, gratification; men would degenerate into savage, unfeeling, and sanguinary monsters; but women, who seem to be formed for the extremes, either of virtue or vice, and who, as their propensities are good or evil, either attain the highest degrees of excellence, or fall into the lowest depths of depravity; these pure angelic beings would, by the corruption of their nature, be transformed into furies of hell—goading the other sex to every species of crime, and exerting all their influence to promote the

utmost excesses of rage, violence, and ferocity. The effects of high civilization would serve only to aggravate the mischief, and to render the human race more terrible and destructive to each other. Indeed, as moral evils are far more dreadful than those of a physical kind, the change, now under contemplation, would be more tremendous than even the suspension of those wonderful powers of nature, which confine the planets to their respective orbs, and maintain, from age to age, the harmony of the universe.

Such, without any exaggeration, would be the inevitable effects of an extinction of female modesty; and although so dreadful an extremity may seem at too great a distance to be an object of serious apprehension, yet, it deserves to be remembered that any decay of a sentiment, which is the grand operative principle of human virtue and felicity, must be attended with a proportionable degree of corruption and calamity. What then have we not to dread from that great and rapid declension of this sentiment, which has visibly taken place within a very few years? What have we not to apprehend from the notorious prevalence of a fashion, the direct and obvious tendency of which is utterly to extinguish all sense of shame in the female breast, and to expel decency from the intercourse of the sexes? What a rich harvest of adulteries must inevitably be produced by a fashion, which is so calculated to inflame the passions, and to weaken all the restraints which are so much wanted to
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keep them within any bounds ; particularly when the operation of that fashion is favoured, in the greatest degree, by the corruption of the times ; by the rage for pleasure and dissipation, which new contrivances are daily invented to increase* ; and by publications which pollute the female mind, by filling it with images from which modesty would turn aside with horror†. The British Fair, though

* The Pic Nic Society will here naturally present itself to the mind of the reader.

† From some recent convictions and subsequent detection, it appears that attempts to pollute and debauch the minds of youth, of both sexes, by prints of the most gross and shocking obscenity, are multiplying in an alarming degree. Happily there are societies for the detection and suppression of vice, which are extremely active in detecting and bringing to justice the wretches who are guilty of such atrocious attempts to corrupt the rising generation. Every individual, who has any solicitude for the morals of the country, will contribute all in his power to aid the salutary efforts of those societies, by denouncing to them offenders of the above description, as well as by watching over the youth over whom he has any authority, or with whom he has any influence. It is justly observed by Mr. Gillies, in his history of Greece, " that the fine arts, particularly painting, have been prostituted to the purpose of voluptuousness ; and that licentious pictures are mentioned, by ancient writers, as a general source of corruption, and considered as the first ambush that beset the safety of youth and innocence." Vol. ii. p. 188, 2d Edition.

Inferior only to this offence is the crime of those authors who endeavour, by their licentious compositions, to corrupt the minds of unguarded youth before their judgment is mature, before their principles are sufficiently established to controul the impulse of passion. Respecting this offence, the sentiments of the

though hitherto distinguished no less by the purity of their minds, and the delicacy of their manners, than by their personal charms, are submitting themselves to the degrading dominion of this accursed fashion; but may we not hope that, with a few exceptions in the higher ranks, they are as yet chargeable, rather with inconsiderate imitation, than with actual depravity? Oh! may those Fair discover, in time, the precipice towards which they are rapidly and blindly advancing. May they seriously reflect on the vast importance, on the prodigious influence of the female character in the social world. May they consider to what heights of estimation, respect, and utility, that character may attain, provided it continue under the controul and direction of those feelings, to the guidance and guardianship of which Providence has committed the natural weakness of their sex. In fine, may they be fully sensible of the in-

the great moralist of modern times, whose loss, in this age of increasing depravity, is an irreparable misfortune to the interests of Religion and virtue, are highly deserving of attention.

“ The wickedness of a loose or profane author is more atrocious than that of the giddy libertine or drunken ravisher, not only because it extends its effects wider, as a pestilence that taints the air is more destructive than poison infused into a draught, but because it is committed with cool deliberation. What punishment can be adequate to the crime of him who tortures his fancy, and ransacks his memory, only that he may leave the world less virtuous than he found it, that he may intercept the hopes of the rising generation, and spread snares for the soul with more dexterity?” See Rambler, No. 77.

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disputable truth, that woman, *by a sacrifice of modesty*, violates the most sacred laws of nature, and renders herself the most disgusting and mischievous of human beings; that she not only sinks to the lowest depths of contempt and infamy, but disturbs the order and endangers the safety of civil society itself; and that she becomes the disgrace and the curse of this beautiful and highly-favoured part of creation, of which she was designed to be the brightest ornament, and the choicest blessing.

Before I take leave of my fair Countrywomen, an ardent desire for whose respectability and happiness has produced the foregoing remarks, I will recommend to their serious consideration some passages in an author, whose writings are well calculated not only to afford them the most gratifying amusement, but also to inform their minds, to improve their understandings, and to cultivate their taste. The subject to which the extracts about to be presented to them relate, is nothing less than—*the occupation of their time*; a subject evidently involving the utility, and, in a very great degree, the happiness of their lives. On this subject the reflections of the author, must be accompanied, in their minds, with a due allowance for the great change which has taken place, during the long period of time to which he alludes, not merely in the manners, but in the general attainments, of society. The progress of civilization,
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and the diffusion of literature, have afforded opportunities to the Ladies of modern times, to store their minds with a great variety of elegant and useful knowledge; opportunities, the improvement of which may very beneficially supersede the severer employments, in which, in times of ancient simplicity, Women of the highest rank were accustomed to engage, provided pursuits of a literary nature be not allowed to interfere with those domestic duties, which (as the author justly observes) Providence has made the special destination of the sex. While subordinate to these duties, such pursuits may raise the female character to a degree of excellence, incomparably greater than it could possibly attain, in ages destitute of such advantages: inasmuch that a well educated female, of the present day, who, without neglecting any thing that relates to the order, comfort, and good management of her family, devotes her leisure, chiefly, to mental improvement, is as much superior to the Princesses who appear to such advantage in the ancient classical writers, as the latter are to a modern dissipated woman of fashion, who lives in a continued round of what she calls pleasure, who, far from having any taste for that refined and exquisite gratification, an evening spent sociably at home in intellectual occupations, thinks every evening lost which is not passed in frivolous amusement, to use no harsher term; whose children, cruelly deprived of their natural

natural right, the ineffimable advantage of maternal attention, are entrusted to mercenaries; and whose family, for want of her superintending care, nay, by the influence of her own conduct and example, is a constant scene of extravagance and irregularity.

“ I discover, (says the author alluded to, in his history of Alexander,) in the same relation, several valuable footsteps of that happy simplicity which prevailed in ancient times, when it was the custom for ladies, though of the greatest distinction, to employ themselves in useful, and sometimes laborious works. Every one knows what is told us in Scripture to this purpose, concerning Rebecca, Rachael, and several others. We read in Homer of princesses drawing themselves water from springs, and washing, with their own hands, the linen of their respective families. Here the sisters of Alexander, that is the daughters of a powerful prince, are employed in making clothes for their brother. The celebrated Lucretia used to spin in the midst of her female attendants. Augustus, who was sovereign of the world, wore, for several years together, no other clothes but what his wife and sister made him. It was a custom in the northern parts of the world, not many years since, for the princesses, who then sat upon the throne, to prepare several of the dishes at every meal. In a word, needle-work, the care of domestic affairs, a serious and retired life, is

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the proper function of women, and for this they were designed by Providence. The depravity of the age has indeed affixed to these customs, which are very near as old as the creation, an idea of meanness and contempt: But then, what has it substituted in the room of the harsh and vigorous exercises which a just education enabled the sex to undertake, to that laborious and useful life, which was spent at home? A soft indolence, a stupid idleness, frivolous conversations, vain amusements, a strong passion for public shows, and a frantic love of gaming. Let us compare these two characters, and then pronounce, which of them may justly boast its being founded on good sense, solid judgment, and a taste for truth and nature."—See Rollin's Ancient History, translated from the French, Vol. iv. p. 497. (The "*Belles Lettres*" of this admirable author, are particularly deserving the attention of youth of both sexes.)

THE END.