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AN
ORATION
DELIVERED AT THE
DEDICATION
OF
FREE-MASONS' HALL,

Great Queen-street, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields,

On THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1776.

By WILLIAM DODD, LL. D. G. C.

PUBLISHED BY GENERAL REQUEST,
UNDER SANCTION OF THE GRAND LODGE.

L O N D O N :

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and at FREE-MASONS' HALL, in Great Queen-street.

MDCCLXXVI.

N. B. Any profits arising from the sale of this ORATION,
will be given to the HALL FUND.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
L O R D P E T R E,
GRAND MASTER;
ROWLAND HOLT, ESQUIRE,
DEPUTY GRAND MASTER;
THE GRAND WARDENS,
AND
OTHER GRAND OFFICERS
AND BRETHREN
OF THE ANTIENT AND HONOURABLE
SOCIETY OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS,
THIS ORATION,
DELIVERED AT THEIR REQUEST,
AND NOW PUBLISHED UNDER THEIR SANCTION,
IS INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE BROTHER,
AND FAITHFUL FRIEND,

Hockliffe,
Aug. 1. 1776.

WILLIAM DODD.

At a GRAND LODGE held at *Free-Masons Hall*, on Monday,
the 3d Day of *June* 1776.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this SOCIETY be given to the Rev.
WILLIAM DODD, LL. D. *Grand Chaplain*, for his excellent Oration
delivered at the Dedication of the Hall on *Thursday* the 23d of *May*
last, and that he be requested to permit the Publication thereof, under
the Sanction of the GRAND LODGE.

By the Grand Master's Command;

JAMES HESELTINE, G. S.

A N

O R A T I O N, &c.

Most Worshipful Grand Master, and Brethren all,

THERE never was a stranger paradox advanced, than that, which the gloomy *philosopher of Malmesbury* hath laboured to support, against the *Sociability of Man*. Every feeling of the human heart,—every trait in the human character,—every line in the history of civilized nature, serves to *explode* the idea; and to convince us, “That Man is a being formed for *society*, and deriving from thence his highest felicity and glory*.” Nay, indeed, the *history of mankind* might well

* The ingenious and excellent Abbé Reynall, in his admirable “History of the political and commercial State of the East and West Indies,” speaks thus on the subject of Sociability. “Society naturally results from population, and government is a part of the social state. From considering the few wants that men have, in proportion to the resources which nature affords them; the little assistance and happiness they find in the civil state, in comparison of the pains and evils they accumulate in it; their instinct for independence and liberty, common to them with all other living beings, together with a number of reasons drawn from their natural construction; from considering all these things, it has been doubted, whether sociability was so natural to mankind as it has generally been thought to be.

“But, on the other hand, the helplessness and duration of man’s infancy; the nakedness of his body, not covered either with hair or feathers; the tendency

B

will be considered as “ the *history of social life* ; perpetually and “ invariably tending more and more to perfection.”

It is not to be doubted, that the mighty Master-hand, which with so much facility created from the dust of the earth the first inhabitants of it, could, with equal ease, have created *thousands* of the same species, and have given them all the means and advantages of perfect civilization.—But He thought good to create *two* only, with an evident purpose to a *gradual population* of the earth which he had formed ; and to a *gradual advancement* of those improvements, for which He wisely fitted the human mind ; and in which He as wisely determined to keep that mind continually occupied.

“ dency of his mind to perfection, the necessary consequence of the length of
 “ his life ; maternal fondness, which is increased by cares and fatigues ; which,
 “ after it has carried the child in the womb for nine months, suckles it, and
 “ bears it in its arms for whole years ; the reciprocal attachment arising from
 “ this habit between two beings that relieve and care for each other ; the nu-
 “ merous marks of intercourse in an organization, that adds to the accents of
 “ the voice, common to so many animals, the language of the fingers, and of
 “ gestures that are peculiar to the human race ; natural events, which in a
 “ hundred different ways may bring together, or re unite wandering and free
 “ individuals ; accidents and unforeseen wants, which oblige them to meet for
 “ the purposes of hunting, fishing, or even of defence ; in a word, the example
 “ of so many creatures that live in herds, such as amphibious animals and sea-
 “ monsters, flights of cranes and other birds, even insects that are found in
 “ columns and in swarms :—All these facts and reasonings seem to prove, that
 “ man by his nature tends to sociability, and that he reaches that end so much
 “ the more speedily, as he cannot populate much under the torrid zone, with-
 “ out being collected into wandering or sedentary tribes ; nor spread himself
 “ much under the other zones, without associating with his fellow creatures,
 “ for the prey and the spoils which the wants of food and clothing require.”

Vol. iv. p. 397. English Translation.

Hence,

Hence, we perceive, that from this fertile and unexhausted storehouse of human intelligence and invention, arts, sciences, and culture of every kind have proceeded, with gradual progress; and MAN,—peculiarly distinguished as he is from the whole animal creation, by his boundless capability of invention and improvement—MAN hath still gone on to cultivate and adorn social life: and to beautify and bless that life with all which *Utility* could ask; which *Reason* could approve; nay, or even the luxuriance of *Fancy* itself, with *charmed* eyes, could delight in and admire!

Immortality and glory crown the *men*—those truly great and distinguished worthies, who have nobly added to the advancement of *human happiness*, by the advancement of *civilization*!—who, by the invention or improvement of arts and sciences,—of religion and laws, by *human* or *civil* culture,—have been instrumental to exalt the dignity, and to enlarge the comforts of their species!

Kings of the earth!—who have furled with exulting triumph your standards, crimson'd in fellow-creatures' blood!—*mighty conquerors!*—who have proudly built your fame on wide-spread ruin, and fearful devastation!—how doth your false honour fade, and sink into darkness and obscurity, before the ever-living lustre of *their* genuine glory—those fathers, friends, and benefactors of mankind—those true heroes, who, like their just emblem, *the Sun*, have perpetually diffused life, blessing, beneficence; have existed only to instruct, improve, and humanize the world!

These—*Illustrious Hearers!* are the men, whom we exult to call BRETHREN: and of this truly honourable fraternity it is, that MASONRY, throughout all ages, hath been composed: an
 B 2 institution,

institution,—not, as the *ignorant* and *uninstructed* vainly suppose, founded on *unmeaning mystery*, and supported by mere *good-faith*:—but “an *institution* founded on eternal Reason and Truth; whose deep basis is the *civilization* of *mankind*; and whose everlasting glory it is, to have the immoveable support of those two mighty pillars, *Science*, and *Morality*!”

In proof of what I advance, permit me just to touch, with a passing pencil,—as the *time*,—not as the unlimited *nature* of my *subject*, will admit,—just to *touch* upon—(1.) the ANTIQUITY;—(2.) the EXISTENT;—(3.) the COMPREHENSIVENESS;—(4.) the EXCELLENCE and UTILITY of our Royal *Art*; of whose daily-advancing *progress*, highly-flourishing *state*, and unquestionable *merit*, who can doubt a moment—that beholds this splendid EDIFICE; that considers this lovely, honourable, and illustrious assemblage?

ANTIQUITY

1. And permit me to observe, that the brightest titles suffer no diminution of lustre; nay, that *Nobility* itself derives distinction, from the support and countenance of an institution so venerable. For, if ANTIQUITY merits our attention, and demands our reverence,—where will the society be found, that hath an equal claim?—*Masons* are well informed from their own private and interior records, that the *building* of *Solomon's Temple* is an important æra, from whence they derive many mysteries of their art. Now, be it remembered, that this great event took place above *a thousand* years before the *Christian æra*; and consequently more than a century before *Homer*, the first of the Grecian poets, wrote; and above *five* centuries before *Pythagoras* * brought from the East his

* See Dacier's *Life of Pythagoras*.

sublime

sublime system of *truly masonic* instruction, to illuminate our Western world.

But, remote as is *this period*, we date not from thence the commencement of our Art. For though it might owe to the wise and glorious King of Israel some of its many mystic forms and hieroglyphic ceremonies, yet certainly the Art itself is coeval with *Man*, the great subject of it. Nay, it may be well stiled coeval with *Creation*; when the *Sovereign ARCHITECT* raised on masonic principles this beauteous globe;—and commanded that *master-science Geometry* to lay the rule to the *planetary* world, and to regulate by its laws the whole stupendous system, in just unerring proportion rolling round the central *Sun!*

2. And as *Masonry* is of this remote *antiquity*, so is it, EXTENT. as might reasonably be imagined, of boundless EXTENT. We trace its footsteps in the most distant, the most remote ages and nations of the world. We find it amongst the first and most celebrated *civilizers* of the *East* * : we deduce it re-

* “ The beauty and fertility of those climes [the Eastern],” says Abbé Reynall, “ hath ever engendered a most numerous race of people, as well as abundance of fruits of all kinds. There, laws and arts, the offspring of genius and tranquillity, have arisen from the settled state of government; and luxury, the parent of every enjoyment that attends industry, has sprung out of the richness of the soil. India, China, Persia, and Egypt, were in possession not only of all the stores of nature, but also of the most brilliant inventions of art. War has frequently obliterated every monument of genius in these parts, but they revive again out of their own ruins, as well as mankind. Not unlike those laborious swarms we see perish in their hives by the wintry blast of the north, and which reproduce themselves in spring; retaining still the same love of toil and order. There are certain Asiatic nations, which have still preserved the arts of luxury with their materials, notwithstanding the incursions and conquests of the Tartars.” Vol. iv. p. 489.

gularly,

gularly, from the first astronomers on the plains of *Chaldea*, to the wise and mystic kings and priests of Egypt *;—the sages of Greece, the philosophers of *Rome*:—nay, and even to the rude and *Gothic builders* of a dark and degenerate age; whose vast temples still remain amongst us, as monuments of their attachment to the *Masonic Arts*, and as high proofs of a taste, which, however irregular, must always be esteemed awful and venerable †.

In truth, in no *civilized* age or country hath *Masonry* been neglected: the most illustrious characters,—kings and nobles,—sages and legislators,—authors and artists,—have thought it their glory to protect and to honour it.—And, at the *present* hour, while we find the *Brotherhood* successfully established in every kingdom of the earth, we are happy to rank in that list many names, which do honour to their own,—would have done honour to any, age. To *enumerate* them would be a task abundantly pleasing; but the time allows me not. It would, however, be inexcusable to omit particularising that *Hero-King*, that bright and northern star, whom the admiring world allows to be one of the greatest princes, and of whom we may justly boast as one of the first and most distinguished friends and lovers of our *Art*! ‡.—that ancient, honourable *Art*,

for

* The regal and sacerdotal offices, in the ancient world, were frequently united; *Melchizedec* was king and priest; and Virgil speaks of Anius under the same characters:

Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Plæbique sacerdos. *Æn.* iii. 80.

† So Abbé *Reynall* observes,—“The Gothic ages have left us some monuments, the boldness and majesty of which still strike the eye amidst the ruins of taste and elegance.” P. 526.

‡ I cannot withhold from my Reader the following eulogium on the King of Prussia, by the historian so often quoted, and whose work alone would confer

for whose promotion and dignity LODGES are opened in every quarter of the globe.—For I cannot but remark with peculiar pleasure, that in whatsoever else men may dispute and disagree, yet they are all unanimous to respect and to support a singularly amiable institution; which annihilates all parties; conciliates all private opinions; and renders those who by their Almighty Father were *made of one blood*, to be also of one heart and one mind; BRETHREN, bound, firmly bound together by that indissoluble tie—“the love of their GOD, and the love of their
“ *Kind.*”

3. This alone might well be judged a sufficient reason for the *extent*, and, if we may so say, *universality* of the Craft. But, when to this we farther add, the **COMPREHENSIVENESS** of the institution, and the vast circle of arts and sciences which it takes in, we shall no longer wonder at that *extent*; but be satisfied,

COMPRE-
HENSIVE-
NESS.

for immortality. “The King of Prussia alone hath invented a new method of disciplining armies, of heading battles, and of gaining victories. This prince, who would have been better served by another nation, and certainly better commended than he could possibly be by his own; who hath not had, since Alexander, his equal in history, for extent and variety of talents; who, without having been himself formed by Greeks, hath been able to form Lacedæmonians; he, in a word, who hath deserved, beyond all others, that his name should be recorded in his age, as a distinction vying in greatness with those of the finest ages of the world: this same King of Prussia hath totally changed the principles of war, by giving in some measure to the legs an advantage over the arms; that is to say, that by the rapidity of his evolutions, and the celerity of his marches, he hath always excelled his enemies, even when he hath not conquered them. All the nations of Europe have been obliged to imitate his example, in order not to be obliged to submit to him. He will enjoy the glory, since it is one, of having raised the art of war to a degree of perfection, from which, fortunately, it cannot but degenerate.” P. 452.

“ That

“ That MASONRY must and will always keep pace, and run
 “ parallel with the culture and *civilization* of mankind.” Nay,
 we may pronounce, with strict truth, That where *Masonry* is
 not, *civilization* will never be found.—And so in fact it appears:
 for, in *savage* countries, and barbarous climes, — where opera-
 tive *Masonry* never lays the *line*, nor stretches the *compass*;—where
 skilful *Architecture* never plans the *dome*, nor rears the well-or-
 dered *column*;—on those benighted realms, liberal Science never
 smiles, nor does ingenious Art exalt, refine, embellish, and
 soften the mind * !

But, give MASONRY once to exert her heaven-descended ta-
 lents, even in realms like those;—let her rear the dwelling,
 and teach the lofty temple to emulate the clouds;—see what
 a train of Arts immediately enter, and join, in ample *suite*, to
 give their patron *Architecture* completion and glory †!—Lo!
 at their head, *Sculpture* with his animating chisel bids the
 forming marble breathe!—See *Painting* with his vivid pencil
 steal

* Ovid's famous line is so well known, and become, as it were, such a ge-
 neral axiom, that it is scarce needful even to hint at it,

Ingenas d. d. q. &c.

† “ The Genius,” says Abbe Reynal, “ which presides over Design raised
 “ three of these arts at once; I mean Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting.
 “ Architecture, in which convenience of itself regulated those proportions of
 “ symmetry that contribute to give pleasure to the eye; Sculpture, which flat-
 “ ters princes, and is the reward of great men; and Painting, which perpe-
 “ tuates the remembrance of noble actions, and the instances of mutual love.”
 And speaking of the union and dependance of the arts and manufactures, he
 goes on, “ Manufactures contribute to the advancement of knowledge and of
 “ the sciences. The torch of industry serves at once to enlighten a vast ho-
 “ rizon. No art is single: the greater part of them have their forms, modes,
 “ instruments, and elements, in common. The mechanics themselves have
 “ contributed prodigiously to extend the study of mathematics. Every branch

steal Nature's fairest tints, while the glowing canvas starts beneath his touch into beauty and life!—See the long labours of the loom; the storied tapestry, and the rich wrought silk, employed to decorate the habitation which every art and every exertion of the manufacturer and mechanic are busied to complete.

But not the *manual arts* alone attend: hark!—through the finished dome divine *Music* pours her soul-commanding sounds; with her artful hand and finely-varied tones sweetly enforcing the lofty and instructive lessons of heaven-born *Poesy*!—which, whilst it wraps the delighted mind in deep contemplation, gives birth and being to those sage, those *civil*, those *legislative* and *moral* plans;—or, in one word, to *all that round of speculative Masonry*, which secures, adorns, and dignifies society; and represents in strong contrast the *savage*, and the *civilized* man *!

Thus

“ of the genealogical tree of science has unfolded itself with the progress of the
 “ arts and handicrafts. Mines, mills, cloth-works, dying, have enlarged the
 “ sphere of philosophy and natural history. Luxury has given rise to the art
 “ of enjoyment, which is entirely dependant on the liberal arts. As soon as
 “ Architecture admits of ornaments without, it brings with it decorations for
 “ the inside of our houses; while Sculpture and Painting are at the same time
 “ at work for the embellishment and adorning of the edifice. The art of De-
 “ sign is employed in our dress and furniture. The pencil, ever fertile in
 “ novelty, is varying without end its sketches and shades on our stoffs and our
 “ porcelain. The powers of genius are exerted in composing at leisure master-
 “ pieces of poetry and eloquence, or those happy systems of policy and philo-
 “ sophy, which restore to the people their natural rights, and to sovereigns
 “ all their glory, which consists in reigning over the heart and the mind, over
 “ the opinion and will of their subjects, by the means of reason and equity.”
 P. 492.

* See the histories of the Savages in *America, Kamtschatza, Greenland, &c.*
 The ingenious Author of *The View of the internal Evidence of the Christian Reli-
 gion,*

Thus *comprehensiveness* is the noble Art we boast; and such are the triumphs of *Architecture* alone, in whose ample grasp are contained such numberless benefits to human nature, and which may justly be deemed the peculiar and favourite child of civilization, as well as the unerring mark and criterion of that civilization, and of the progress of the fine arts in every state. —Were I to proceed—or had I assumed for my proof that wonderful, all-informing science on which *Masonry* is built; nay, and which,—*proud Mistress of Arts!*—issues forth her commanding laws not only to those arts, but even to *nature*—even to nature's amplest round—the *solar system* itself:—had Geometry been my theme—the time would have failed me to have recounted even a part of that comprehensive extent and reach of instruction;—that inexhausted fund of information and knowledge, of improvement and advantage, which it imparts to its studious votaries. Happy votaries,—adepts in true *Masonry*,—ever the zealous and most ardent admirers of natural and moral *beauty!* for they are especially sensible of the *beauties* of that *world*, which, amongst the intelligent Greeks, knew no other name. And well indeed might it be styled *Κοσμος*, essential “*BEAUTY*,”—for it excels, at once, in all the regularity of order, the exactness of proportion, the glow of colouring, the force of expression, and the strength of design.

gion (to whom I am happy in an opportunity to pay my feeble tribute of thanks for his useful, well-timed, and irrefragable work) observes, “That if we turn
 “our eyes to those remote regions of the globe, to which supernatural assistance
 “has never yet extended, we shall there see men, endued with sense, and reason,
 “son, not inferior to our own, so far from being capable of forming systems of
 “religion and morality, that they are at *this day totally unable to make a nail or a*
 “*hatchet!*—From whence we may surely be convinced, that reason alone is so
 “far from being sufficient to offer to mankind a perfect religion, that it has
 “never yet been able to lead them to any degree of culture or civilization!”
 P. 116, &c.

4. But future and more extensive discussions of this high and entertaining theme may one day, perhaps, through *your* honourable function, happily engage my pen *. For the *present*,—after what hath been already advanced, can any man doubt a moment of “the EXCELLENCE and UTILITY of MASONRY,” thus deep in antiquity, boundless in extent, and universal in its comprehension of science, operative and speculative: thus, in its wide bosom, embracing at once the whole circle of Arts and Morals ?

EXCELLENCE
and USE.

To attempt its encomium (particularly after what has been already so ably, so elegantly, advanced by my worthy brother †) would be “wasteful and superfluous excess;” would be, in the fine language of our first and sublimest of Bards,

“ To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
 “ To throw a perfume on the violet ;
 “ To smooth the ice; to add another hue
 “ Unto the rainbow; or, with taper-light
 “ To seek the beauteous eye of Heav’n to garnish.”

For who, in this polished, this improving age, is insensible of the attraction, the excellence, the utility of the Fine Arts, the Liberal Sciences ‡? Who in this peculiarly humane and philanthropic

* See the Proposals at the *End*.

† Mr. HESELTINE, the Grand Secretary, whose *Exordium* was not more elegant and instructive, than ably and eloquently delivered.

‡ It is a pleasure to remark, that while our *country* has equalled *Rome* in arms, she is every day advancing, and we trust will rival *Greece* in Arts;—so that Virgil’s fine compliment to both these countries, we may hope, will be completely applicable to her;

throughout, is cold to the call of BENEVOLENCE,—that never
 attending in the ingenuous Arts;—that all-pervading,
 all-performing virtue, which in one short and easy word, *Tu
 facies tibi vitam ac tibiſiſſ*, comprizes all duty, and con-
 firmates the round of moral perfection.

Indeed, the celebrated Eulogy which CICERO paſſeth on
 philoſophy, may with equal propriety be applied to MASONRY,
 duly practiſed and rightly underſtood. For in that view, it
 will be found eminently “ the improvement of youth, and the
 “ delight of old age. The ornament of proſperity, the refuge
 “ and ſolace of adverſe hours: it pleaſes at home; is no in-
 “ cumbrance abroad: it lodges with us; travels with us; and
 “ adds amuſement and pleaſure to our rural retirement †.”

With

“ Excudent alii ſiſirantia mollius æra
 “ Credo equidem, vivos ducent de marmore vultus;
 “ Orabunt cauſas melius, cœlique meatus
 “ Deſcribent radios, & ſurgentia ſidera dicent:
 “ Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento!
 “ Hæc tibi erant artes; paciſque imponere morem,
 “ Pacere ſubjectis, & debellare ſuperbos.

Æn. vi. 847.

B. J. Hall, in his *Ætæ Italæ* (p. 647.), ſpeaking of England, ſays, “ The
 “ double praiſe which was of old given to two great nations, that Italie could
 “ not be put downe for armes, nor Greece for learning, is happily met in our one
 “ Hand. Thoſe therefore that croſs the ſeas to fill their braine, doe but travell
 “ northward for heat, and ſeek that candle which they carry in their hande.”

† “ Hæc ſtudia adoleſcentiam alunt, ſenectutem oblectant; ſecundas res ornant;
 “ adverſis perſugium ac ſolacium præſent; delectant domi; non impediunt foras;
 “ pernecitant nobilitatem: peregrinantur; ruſtificantur.” And ſo alſo *Vitruius*, in
 his Preface, p. 14. finely obſerves, “ Doctum (hac in ſcientia) ſolum ex omni-
 “ bus,

With heart-felt zeal and sincerity, allow me then, right noble and worthy *Brethren*, to congratulate you on the advancement, the progress, and present state of our useful, excellent, antique, and mystic Lore! more particularly allow me to congratulate you, on this great and festive day; on this solemn DEDICATION with high pomp and song, of an EDIFICE, which does equal credit to its architect, and to the craft; and which promises a long line of stability and glory to Masonry, in this its favourite land!

And while by our sincere *good-will* and *friendly regard* each for the other;—while by our liberal and merciful *relief* of the *Brethren in distress*;—while by the establishment of an universal language and communication, for the attainment of those two important purposes throughout the earth, under the seal of most sacred and inviolable *secrecy*;—whilst thus, we seem to have amply provided for the interests of BENEVOLENCE: so let us, by every method, and by every encouragement in our power, court the LIBERAL ARTS to come and dwell amongst us: let the means of their cultivation and improvement be the frequent subject of our best and most serious disquisitions: let us endeavour to hold forth every engaging allurements, that they may approach and apply their elegant and wonder-working fingers, to finish the beauties of this well-ordered dome; and to make it, what we wish, the distinguished residence of immortal MASONRY!

An era, which cannot be far distant: for the magnificence of our building, in so short a period, thus wonderfully grown up before us, speaks in emphatic language, at once the zeal and

“ bus, neque in alienis locis peregrinum esse, neque, amissis familiaribus & necessariis, inopem amicorum; sed in omni civitate civem censeri, adversosque fortunæ casus posse despiciere.”

Vitruv. Præfat. L. vi.

the ability of its friends ; and stimulates,—with a force far beyond all the eloquence of the most persuasive *orator* ;—stimulates every noble heart to a gallant emulation, and must inspire a wish to contribute towards the perfection of so beautiful and elegant a design.

Nor can the brilliant and generous example of that illustrious NOBLEMAN, who so honourably *presides* over us, want its due effect ;—a Nobleman,—you, my Brethren, all agree with me—not more distinguished as a *Mason* than as a *Man* ! whose love of liberal Arts, and whose regard for moral virtue, are not confined to the *Lodge*, but accompany and adorn him in all the walks of life ! Under such auspices may the Craft rest happy and secure, and flourish for ever as the *Palm* !—and may this HALL, awefully dedicated to *Masonry*, to *Virtue*, to *Benevolence**, still and for ever behold each ennobling science, each ingenuous Art, smile and triumph, soften and civilize beneath its roof !—May private friendship and public virtue dignify and distinguish the heart and character of every *Mason*, who here shall form and fill the mystic *Lodge* !

And when the sacred solemn rites are done, when festive hilarity assumes his social seat, may decent politeness, and sweetly smiling innocence, for ever wreath the chaplet for his brow, crown his *breast*, and command his *song* !

And while, amidst the scientific labours of the Lodge, elevated schemes of improving Art engage and enrapture our Minds ; while holy and ancient mysteries warm the imagination with improvement's kindred glow :—while in the mournful investigation of a Brother's wants pleading pity melts our eye, and generous compassion swells the feeling breast :—while amidst the cheerful exertions of inoffensive mirth, of heart-enlarging,

* See the Ceremonial of *Dedication*.

friendly

friendly communication,—reflection shall be enabled to look back with pleasure, and impartial conscience shall find nothing to disapprove: *then, my Brethren*, may we, with comfort and with confidence, lift up our adoring hearts :—

“ AND WE DO LIFT THEM UP TO *Thee*, Great Nature’s adorable and wonderous Geometrician ! Almighty Parent of the World ! wise Former of *Man* ! imploring on this, and on all our other laudable undertakings, thy favour, thy blessing, thy aid, without which, vain and fruitless are all the efforts of feeble men !—’Tis from *Thee*, beneficent Founder of our frame, that we have received, the *heart* to feel ; the *hand* to labour ; the *eye* to behold ; the *ear* to hear ; the *tongue* to proclaim ; and all the faculties which make us *susceptible* of *moral*, partakers of *natural* good !—Teach us, then, to delight in them, to improve them as thy blessing ; and through the beauty, order, and excellence of *created* things, to view, contemplate and adore thy uncreated excellence and beauty !

Formed as thy *Temple*, and enriched with the ornaments of thy creative wisdom,—consummate Architect of thy master building, *Man* !—we look up to *Thee*, to inspire us with understanding, with science, with virtue, with all which can dignify, refine, and exalt our nature, and render the temple at least not wholly unworthy of its sacred inhabitant !—To this end, direct us to make the BLESSED VOLUME of thy instructive wisdom, the never-erring *square* to regulate our conduct † ; the *compass* within whose

† Shakespeare—that all comprehending genius,—in his play of *Antony and Cleopatra* puts a speech into the mouth of *Antony*, Act ii. Scene 3. which plainly shews that immortal Bard was one of our Brethren :

“ My *Octavia*,

“ Read not my blemishes in the world’s report,

“ I have not *kept my square* ; but that to come

“ Shall all be *done by rule*.”

circle

circle we shall ever walk with safety and with peace; the infallible *plumb-line* and criterion of rectitude and truth! Enable us to fill up every sphere of duty with exactness and honour; and by our amiable attention to all the sweet and blessed offices, the endearing charities of social life in particular, teach us to win the love of those who unite in those tender offices with us: and as fathers, husbands, friends,—as worthy *men* and worthy *Majors*,—to distinguish and exalt the profession which we boast!

And, while through thy bounty—rich Dispenser of every blessing!—our cups overflow with plenteousness, and *wine*, and *corn*, and *oil**, delight and cheer our boards: Oh, may our full hearts never be wanting in gratitude, and in the voice of thanksgiving to Thee; in liberal sentiments and succour towards every laudable undertaking; in the quickest sensibility, and readiest relief we can give to the woes and distresses of our fellow creatures—of *all mankind*;—of every *being*, Universal Lord! who bears thy image, and looks up to thy providence; who is fed by thy hand, hopes for thy future and all comprehending mercy, and can and will triumphantly unite with us,—with the general voice of *Majors* and of *Men*,—earnestly and emphatically saying,

“ Father of All! in every age,
 “ In every clime ador'd;
 “ By Saint, by Savage, and by Sage,
 “ Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!
 “ To Thee, whose temple is all space,
 “ Whose altar, earth, sea, skies;
 “ One chorus let all Being raise,
 “ All Nature's incense rise!”

* See the *Ceremonial* of the *Dedication*.



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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

IT is on all hands agreed, that “ *the proper study of mankind is Man* :” To which HISTORY—on many other accounts pleasing and profitable—is universally recommended, as conducive in an especial manner. For from *it*, as from an eminence, we may leisurely contemplate *human nature*, passing, as it were, in silent, solemn review before us; and may survey and examine those various and mighty revolutions which have befallen the different inhabitants of our globe:—a prospect, which we are led to take by a kind of natural curiosity, an innate desire to know, who were our predecessors on that globe, and what were the actions and events which have dignified and distinguished their lives and characters.

But however pleasant and useful this review in many respects, I cannot but confess myself to have been often disappointed, and generally disgusted, when I have taken it. For HISTORY—it must be owned, in its usual painting—represents not *human nature* on the favourable side: Unfortunately we find
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it, for the most part, a detail of the worst human passions—of *ambition*—*lust*—and *avarice*—struggling for the mastery; trampling, in their mad contests, on rites the most sacred and social; and spreading devastation, horror and distress on the wretched human race, under the conduct of a set of miscreants; who, screened beneath the flattering and deceitful titles of heroes and conquerors, have been in general the scourge and disgrace of their species.

Amidst the confused and blood-stained scene of their ruinous achievements, it is but seldom that we get a peep at those *happier and nobler few*, who have cultivated and encouraged the generous arts of humanity and peace; who have lived but to bless and benefit their fellow-creatures; and who seem to have been born—sages—legislators—civilizers—philosophers,—to wipe off that opprobrium, which despicable *kings* and desolating *conquerors* have too justly drawn upon their kind. Were *history* replete with the silent glories and varied improvements of such truly venerable personages, what satisfaction, what perpetual advantage would it impart! That it is not,—while every page is crimsoned with battles and blood—who can fail to admire! who can withhold surprize, that amidst that variety of *historical records*, wherewith ancient and modern times have abounded, no writer—stimulated by the spirit of philanthropy,—should have stood forth the *Champion*, vindicator and historian, of “*social, civilized man*,” the calm and candid reviewer of *human nature*, in its peaceful silent progress, through every stage of improvement, to high perfection in *morals*, and in *arts*; or in one word, in all the distinguished blessings of cultivated life!—a work, which,—however to be wished—remains yet amongst the *desiderata* of literature.

That the WORK, now proposed to the Public, will come up to this idea, and fully answer this description, is what we dare not presume to affirm: the utmost which may be promised, and which is here very sincerely promised, is, that nothing shall be omitted, which *attention* and *fidelity* can effect, to render it adequate to the design; agreeable, and complete in the execution.—In the course of my reading for many years, I have had a constant eye to an undertaking of this kind; and though I
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have frequently mentioned it in conversation with my literary friends; though I had the flattering and concurrent sentiments of one of the first masters of human nature respecting it;—yet it always was rather my hope and my wish, that some able and ingenious person would be roused at length to undertake it, than at any time my purpose to attempt it myself.—Nor should I have been induced to undertake it, I am fully persuaded, had I not become a Member of “that ancient and honourable Society,” whose History and Institutions immediately confirmed me in my pre-conceived ideas, and fixed my resolution to embark in the attempt, with a zealous desire and sincere wish at once to do credit—if I might—to so noble an institution:—and much farther still, to contribute something toward the general information and improvement of my countrymen, by opening to their view, at once the most elevating, the most delightful, and the most inspiring prospect of *mankind*.

But let me be allowed to observe, that though MASONS, as peculiarly the *patrons of science*, and the *friends of morality*, will consider themselves eminently interested in a work of this kind; yet it must, it will be esteemed, as a work in which we are all alike interested as MEN: for none but the stupidly ignorant, or grossly abandoned, can be devoid of the laudable curiosity, to behold as in a glass,—*human nature*—depicted in its fairest form; and to contemplate those amiable and worthy ornaments of that nature, whose shining lives have been spent in one continued effort to polish, civilize, and bless their fellow-creatures.

Heckliffe,
Aug. 1. 1776.



WILLIAM DODD.

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