

**PLEASURE, A POEM  
IN SEVEN BOOKS;  
PP. 21-243**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649672745

Pleasure, a Poem in Seven Books; pp. 21-243 by Nicholas Michell

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**NICHOLAS MICHELL**

**PLEASURE, A POEM  
IN SEVEN BOOKS;  
PP. 21-243**



# PLEASURE.

A Poem,

IN SEVEN BOOKS.

BY

NICHOLAS MICHELL;

AUTHOR OF

"RUINS OF MANY LANDS," "SPIRITS OF THE PAST,"  
"THE POETRY OF CREATION," ETC.

LONDON:

WILLIAM TEGG AND CO., 85, QUEEN STREET,  
CHEAPSIDE.

1859.

280. q. 141.

## PREFACE.

---

To trace the various sources whence, in the present life, we derive pleasure, is a task, it will readily be admitted, replete with interest.

No virtuous man lives entirely for enjoyment, and yet no wise one would be altogether debarred from it.

The Stoic and the Epicurean, by hurrying to the extremes of rigour and of laxity, have mutually committed errors. To thwart the instincts of Nature on the one hand, and, on the other, to give a loose rein to the wild steeds of our passions, are acts that evince an equal degree of folly.

What is pleasure? The question is by no means easily answered, for the objects and pursuits producing pleasurable sensations, in respective individuals, vary with their education, temperament, and tastes. Thus, one man will experience exquisite delight in the survey of works of art: another, indifferent to painting and sculpture, receives high gratification from music: the mind of a third, embracing the study of astronomy, history, or philosophy, finds pleasure in profound thought: while a fourth, from some strange perversion of the finer intellectual powers, turns coldly away from all these sources of exalted enjoyment, and seeks delight in aimless and frivolous pastimes, and frequently in intoxication and debauchery.

It is evident, therefore, that every individual, to a certain extent, will entertain his own peculiar opinion, when called on to give a definition of pleasure.

In the following poem, it is proposed less to

examine the reasons why certain objects cause sensations of delight, than to consider at once the Pleasures themselves. Pictures are presented illustrative of their character, and of their debasing or ennobling effects on the mind. The pleasure which a Napoleon derived from his victories, and a Lord Chesterfield from the fashionable frivolities of life ; the pleasure which filled the hearts of a Raphael, a Milton, and a Haydn, during the composition of some immortal work of genius ; and the sweet sense of happiness overflowing the bosom of the lover, or the devotee worshipping at the shrine of Nature, may seem, comparatively, very different emotions : nevertheless they are to be regarded in the light of pleasures, and, as such, are referred to in the ensuing pages.

Commencing with the delight we experience from a contemplation of beautiful and sublime scenes in Nature, the Poem treats of the pleasures indulged in by various races, at different periods of history ; the pleasures in relation to the fine arts—



to our actions in life—our pursuits, and, more than all, our passions; closing with the graver consideration of the pleasure that fills the exalted mind anticipating immortality, and a nearer commune with that universe, whose magnificence and glory are now but dimly comprehended.

Hues, gorgeous hues, such canvas never bore—  
Hues, meet to tint Heaven's seraph-trodden floor,  
Mingle, yet keep apart, like that fine line  
Betwixt man's meaner clay and soul divine.  
It spans the vales, and deepening, brightening, grows  
To one vast bridge, and where the horizon glows,  
Stands the refulgent base, but who shall climb  
The beam-wove side, and cross the arch sublime ?  
Oh ! Deity hath smiled the wonder there,  
Token of peace, and covenant of air !  
And framed it beauteous for His angels' feet  
To glide along, when, joyously and fleet,  
They pass to earth with messages of love,  
Or lead back happy souls to courts above.

One vision more, and thou, hard child of gain,  
Thus bursting for an hour thy Mammon-chain,  
Mayst seek again the scene black vapour shrouds,  
That solitude to spirit—busy crowds.

Turn thy charmed eye to flame-tipped western  
steeps,  
Along whose brim Day's weary chariot sweeps ;  
His horses' hoofs blaze gold ; their half-shut eyes  
Shed liquid lustre, mellowing down the skies.

Or Day seems Life upon the hills of fate,  
Defending hard his gorgeous castle-gate ;  
And Night is Death advancing o'er the scene,  
Mournfully stern, and sullenly serene.  
Yet Day lifts high his broad and brazen shield,  
Defying Night's approach, and scorns to yield ;  
And as his armour darts the arrowy rays,  
Skies burn above, and hills beneath him blaze :  
Clouds, pressing round, the conflict to behold,  
Glow on his side, and, glowing, turn to gold.  
His fiery splendours, smiles of valour, beam,  
Play on the sloping wood, and mazy stream,  
Light up wild heaths, and gild the hoary tower,  
Quiver on rocks, and warm the orphan flower.  
All Nature drinks the farewell, beauteous light,  
And basks in joy, ere triumphs strong-armed Night :  
He, in his sable robe, with ebon lance,  
Fights gravely-firm, with slow but sure advance ;  
Pale shines the moon for pity ; one by one,  
The stars come forth, to cheer their monarch on.  
As Day at length sinks conquered, sure a sigh  
Breathes from Earth's heart, and trembles through  
the sky ;  
The last faint purple speaks the struggle o'er,  
The discrowned king of waking hours no more ;