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The Vanity of Human Wishes

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The Vanity of Human Wishes

frame #

- 1 Let Observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind, from China to Peru;
- 2-5 Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife,
And watch the busy scenes of crowded life;
Then say how hope and fear, desire and hate
O'erspread with snares the clouded maze of fate,
- 6-9 Where wavering man, betrayed by venturous pride
To tread the dreary paths without a guide,
As treacherous phantoms in the mist delude,
Shuns fancied ills, or chases airy good; . . .
- 10-13 Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find?
Must dull Suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
- 14-17 Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate? . . .
- 18-19 For love, which scarce collective man can fill;
- 20-21 For patience sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
- 22-23 For faith, that panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat: . . .
- 24-25 With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

Samuel Johnson