

And chase we still the Phantom thro' the Fire,
o'er Bog, and Brake, and Precipice, till Death?
And toil we still for sublunary Pay?
defy the Dangers of the Field and Flood,
or, Spider-like, spin out our precious All,
our *more* than Vitals spin (if no Regard
to great Futurity) in curious Webs
of subtle Thought, and exquisite Design;
(fine Net-work of the Brain!) to catch a Fly!
the momentary Buz of vain Renown!
a *Name!* a mortal Immortality!

Or (meaner still!) instead of grasping Air,
For sordid *Lucre* plunge we in the Mire?
drudge, sweat, thro' ev'ry Shame, for ev'ry Gain,
for vile contaminating Trash; throw up
our Hope in Heav'n, our Dignity with Man!
and deify the Dirt, matur'd to Gold?
Ambition, Avarice; the two *Demons* these,
which goad thro' ev'ry Slough our Human Herd,
hard-travell'd from the Cradle to the Grave.
How low the Wretches stoop! How steep they climb!

These