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Vicesimus Knox

Winter Evenings: Or, Lucubrations On Life And Letters

Vol. I

A New Edition. In Two Volumes, Basil: Paris: Printed and fold by James Decker: fold by Levrault Freres, 1800

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WINTER EVENINGS:

OR,

LUCUBRATIONS

ON

LIFE AND LETTERS.

A NEW EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BASIL:

Printed and sold by JAMES DECKER.

PARIS, sold by LEVRAULT FRERES, Quai Malaquai.

1800.

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PREFACE.

HOWEVER I may be disposed to self-delusion, I am not so simple as to imagine that a book which has nothing to recommend itself can be recommended by a preface. I think it indeed at once a mean and vain attempt to deprecate a reader's displeasure by preliminary submission. The avowal of conscious defects, of involuntary publication, of youth and inexperience, and of inability to resist the importunate solicitations of discerning friends, is ever supposed to be insincere; and, if it is true, ought in many instances to operate in the total suppression of the work for which it means to apologize. Great pretensions and bold professions, on the other hand, justly raise the contempt of a judicious reader. The liberal spirit of learning should scorn the language of self-commendation, and leave the soft and flowing diction of puffery to the orator of the auction-room, and the stage of the empiric.

But, though every reader will justly claim a right to form his own opinion of a book, and

will certainly reject the interference of a party so interested as its author, yet a preface is for the most part proper, since custom seems to have established the expediency of it, and the omission may possibly be considered as the want of a respectful piece of ceremony. Truly unwilling am I to be deficient in respect for those whose good opinion I must highly value, and for whose indulgence I shall certainly have great occasion.

But to proceed to business without farther preamble, lest I should be thought to write a preface to a preface.

My reader on taking up his ivory knife to cut open the leaves, may perhaps ask—"What have we here? Three new volumes?—And what stupendous discoveries has the author made?—Has he descried a new planet, or fresh volcanoes in the moon?—Has he taught the use of air balloons, and the method of guiding them through the regions of boundless space?—Has he, by beating his brain during the long winter evenings, hit upon the quadrature of the circle, the perpetual motion, the longitude at sea, the north-west passage, the southern continent, the philosophers stone, or the powder for destroying insects?—Has he exploded the old-fashioned system of morals, and given Christianity the last fatal blow? Has he proved the lawfulness of polygamy and suicide, and the beneficial effects of private

vice on public happineſs?—Is the book embelliſhed with capital prints engraved by the very beſt artiſts from originals by the painters of the Shakſpeare Gallery?—Or is there any delicious abuſe of the king?—What! nothing of this?—Nothing perſonal?—Nothing but general remarks on manners and letters?—Then bring the newſpaper."

Indeed, reader, I would venture to ſay, if I were preſent, I cannot pretend to recommendadations ſo valuable as ſome of theſe, or ſo contemptible as others. I will farther confeſs, that I have no private anecdotes, no public politics, no intrigues, no theatrical hiſtory, no lives and adventures of actreſſes and their poor inamoratos; and that I come to you with nothing but a few plain remarks on men and books, made as I travelled along the road of life, with a pocket-book and pencil in my hand, to divert myſelf on the journey. Such as they are, I ſubmit them to your peruſal, hoping that, as a fellow traveller, you will partake in my amuſements with that good humor which will certainly render your journey pleaſanter to yourſelf.

"Amuſement, you ſay, is very deſirable; but, as to the amuſement of books, the world is already crowded with them." True, gentle reader; but as my volumes are not very large, there may perhaps be found a little crevice into

which, provided you are really gentle and good-natured, you may find means to squeeze them. If indeed I, an individual in the numerous host of writers, should spare you this trouble, others will certainly supply my place, and you will gain little by partial severity! As there is no law that compels a man to read, you may enjoy your repose unmolested whenever you please, only by considering every book which you have no desire to inspect, as so much harmless waste paper.

Indeed if you are, *bona fide*, determined to read none but such authors as Newton, Locke, and Malbranche, far be it from me to interrupt your profound studies, or to pester you with my crudities; but if you are "*unus multorum*," and find yourself inclined to send now and then for a book in boards fresh from the booksellers, permit me to be a candidate among the rest for the honor of a leisure hour while your hair-dresser waits upon you, while you sip your hyson, or while you recline in the corner of your chariot.

Methinks I see you relax your brow, resume your folding knife, and resolve to look into a volume for a lounge. But why, you ask, this hackneyed miscellaneous form? I answer plainly, because it was the most agreeable to myself; but lest you should think that reason

alone too selfish, I add, because I conjectured that it might be the most agreeable to you in the midst of your various studies and more important avocations. I address not my book to systematical and metaphysical doctors, to deep, erudite, and subtile sages, but to those who, without pretending to be among the seven wise men, have no objection to kill a little time, by perusing at their leisure the pages of a modern volume.

Upon the whole, I comfort myself with the idea, that if I should unfortunately fail to entertain you, I can do you no great injury, which is more than can be predicated of all books without exception. It is far better, in my opinion, to present you with a chip in porridge than a cup of poison.

You observe by this time, and I most readily acknowledge, that I had not much to say for myself worth attending to in this my preface. Indeed I entered upon it principally, as I hinted before, to show that I was unwilling to break in upon you abruptly, and without any ceremony at all. But if the preface answers no other end, it is yet sufficiently useful in affording me an opportunity of declaring, that, though I certainly should not offer you my book if I thought it quite unworthy of your notice, yet that I am convinced its own merits will not secure it a

good reception without an ample ſhare of your candor. And though I have already acknowledged that I have no great opinion of the propriety or ſucceſs of ſuch requeſts; yet, as it can do no harm, I will take the liberty of aſking the following favor: Whatever you approve in my book, pray place to my account; but all errors and defects be ſo kind as attribute to the preſs, to haſte, to inadvertence, or, pardon my freedom, to your own miſapprehenſion; and in ſo doing you will oblige me greatly.

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WINTER

WINTER EVENINGS.

OR

LUCUBRATIONS

ON

LIFE AND LETTERS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

Literature more attended to in Winter than in Summer.—Remarks introductory and apologetical.

IN the ſummer ſeaſon, the warm temperature of the air, the beauty of a vivid foliage, and the ſweet ſmiles of univerſal nature, allure men from their ſtudious retirement, and tempt them to roam in the ſunſhine from flower to flower like the butterfly; but when the days are gradually contracted, and the cold weather cauſes the ſwallow to wing her way to more genial climes, the gaudy inſect to retire to its warm and ſafe concealment, and the leaf to aſſume the yellow and ruſſet tinge of autumnal decay, and at length to drop from its parent branch, the man of ſentiment ſympathizes with the ſcene around him, ſhrinks under his roof, and into himſelf; and ſeeks that ſolace which the ſunny hill and the verdant mead no

longer afford him, at the fire ſide, in the converſe of thoſe whom he loves or eſteems; or in an elegant and philoſophical ſolitude, reading, writing, and contemplating the productions of art during the repoſe of nature.

In a climate uncertain and inclement like our own, fine weather affords a great pleaſure, and he who is not urged to exertion by his wants or paſſions, ſeems to acquieſce in it, and to require few other gratifications, beſides the enjoyment of it unmoleſted. The mind is gently lulled by it to a luxurious complacency, and finds contentment in the Epicurean pleaſure of a perfect inactivity. To baſk in the ſunſhine, or to breathe the balſamic gale of a zephyr in the ſhade, is a ſatisfaction of the ſenſual kind, no leſs delightful than pure.

But when the mind is ſo well pleaſed without exertion, it ſeldom engages in ſtudy, or ſerious reflection, unleſs it is ſtimulated by ambition or neceſſity; and this obviouſly ſuggeſts a reaſon why books are much leſs required as the amuſement of Summer than of Winter.

There ſeems indeed to be ſomething in the gariſh ſplendor of a bright ſunſhine, rather unfavorable to contemplation. One would almoſt conclude, that the powers of the mind, like vapors, are diſſipated in the warm months, and concentrated in the cold. Heat undoubtedly relaxes the body, and cauſes an inertneſs which diſpoſes the mind to partake of any diverſion which offers itſelf in the open air, rather than retire to the laborious occupations of recluſe ſtudy. Cold

has a contrary effect; and therefore the Winter favors the operations of the mind, and induces it to exert itself with vigor.

But the length of the evenings in Winter, which renders it neceſſary to find ſome ſedentary and domeſtic diverſion, may alſo contribute to render reading a more favorite amuſement in Winter than in Summer. Books enable the imagination to create a Summer in the midſt of froſt and ſnow, and, with the aſſiſtance of culinary fire, whoſe comfortable warmth ſupplies, round the parlour hearth, the abſence of the Sun, I believe the Winter is conſidered by few as leſs pleaſurable upon the whole than the ſeaſon of ſoft breezes and ſolar effulgence.

The ſtudent ſhuts the door, while the chill wind whiſtles round his room, and the rain beats upon the tiles and pavement, ſtirs his fire, ſnuffs his candle, throws himſelf into his elbow chair, and defies the elements. If he chuſes to tranſport himſelf to warm climates, to regions delightful as the vale of Tempe, or even to riot in all the enchanting ſcenes of Elyſium, he has only to take a volume from his book-caſe, and, with every comfort of eaſe and ſafety at home, he can richly feaſt his capacious imagination.

I do not mean to depreciate the delights of Summer; but as in this climate we have a long Winter, I think it our intereſt to find out every conſolation which the amuſements peculiarly ſuitable to it can innocently ſupply, and among theſe I cannot but conſider Reading as one of the

principal. The mind, the very ſoul, is deeply intereſted in this; and whatever touches with delight the interior principle, the divine particle within us, produces a happineſs, or ſtate of enjoyment, equally ſubſtantial and refined.

In the metropolis of a rich and luxurious empire, inexhauſtible ſources of amuſement are diſcovered by the ingenious activity of thoſe who ſeek their maintenance by exhibiting public ſpectacles, by ſupplying muſic, and by convening aſſemblies of the young, the gay, the fortunate. Perhaps the evening in London is ſeldom employed by people of faſhion, and their innumerable imitators, in the ſilent occupation of reading, or in the tranquil ſociety of the domeſtic circle; but in the country, thoſe who do not devote their attention to cards, find themſelves compelled to ſeek occaſional entertainment from the ſhelves of their book-room; and even in the great city, many from choice, from habit, from confinement, know no better way of paſſing away an hour in a Winter Evening, than by turning over the pages addreſſed to their reaſon or their fancy.

Admovit jam Bruma foco te? PERS.
— Poſces librum cum lumine — &
Intendes animum ſtudiis & rebus honeſtis. HOR.

For myſelf, and let the reader pardon my egotiſm on my firſt introduction, I muſt acknowledge, that, though I have no objection to cards in moderation, I have at the ſame time no taſte for them. They appear to me too dull and unideal

to afford a thinking man, who values his leisure, an adequate return of amusement for the Time they engross. In a rural retirement, what could I do in the Winter Evenings, when no society interrupted, but read or write? I have done both in a vicissitude pleasant to myself, and as my inclination or my ideas of propriety suggested. In these employments I have found my time pass away, not only innocently, but pleasantly; and most of these chapters are literally what their title insinuates, the produce of the Winter Evenings. Let me be pardoned, if I have presumed to hope that some, in the various tribes of mankind, actuated by an infinite variety of pursuits, might spend an hour in reading, as I have in writing them, with at least so much diversion, as excludes passion and vice, and prevents the pain of total inaction. I shall not presume to censure those who prefer whist, or the theatre; but some will prefer a book, and, in pursuit of variety, may sometimes take up mine.

As I am convinced that happiness chiefly consists in occupation, I will confess that the amusement of my Winter Evenings has been my principal design; but, if in the variety of my speculations, I have been led to treat of topics which at the same time afford improvement, *lucro apponam*, I shall consider it as so much clear gain, and as adding a real value to my production. Indeed, I am clearly of opinion, that whoever furnishes an intellectual entertainment, capable of filling up those hours, which are usually devoted to relaxation,

innocently and pleaſantly, though he ſhould not approach with the ſolemn air of a profeſſed inſtructor, may yet contribute much to improvement and advantage. He may occupy vacant minds, which might deviate into vanity and vice from the want of avocations. He may engage thoſe hours which might become burdenſome, or be injuriouſly and diſagreeably laviſhed in buſy impertinence.

But are there not books enough already for this and for almoſt every other purpoſe? Is not the world filled with books, even to ſatiety? Perhaps ſo; but the world is wide, and readers more numerous at preſent than in any preceding age. A liberal education is more general, and is likely to be ſtill more extenſively diffuſed.

The Engliſh language is the language of a vaſt continent of people, greatly increaſing in numbers, and connecting themſelves in commercial, and all other engagements, with all nations. Engliſh literature is of courſe the literature of America. The learning of England has long been flowing from the Thames to the Ganges. The late amicable connexion with our neighbours, which reflects ſo much honor on the liberality and wiſdom of the preſent times, will contribute greatly to extend the language and the learning of Great Britain throughout Europe. So that if writers can produce any thing worthy of attention, there is little reaſon to fear a paucity of readers.

But granting that books are already too numerous, yet let it be conſidered, that a new book

will often be read when an old one, of equal or greater merit, will be neglected. Many old books of great excellence are become ſcarce, and the great number of modern readers could not ſo eaſily be ſupplied with them, even if they knew of them and valued them, as with the multiplied copies of a new publication. Many books, though they once had a great character, and are ſtill found in libraries and catalogues, are fallen into deſerved oblivion, and conſequently a vacancy is made by their demiſe for an ambitious candidate to ſupply their place.

If novelty of publication were prohibited, there is every reaſon to believe that literature would decline. The love of fame and the love of novelty are the great incentives of both writers and readers. The profound ſcholar might indeed rejoice as he pores over the Bodleian folios, that he was not peſtered with new works too lively to attract his notice; but the liberal merchant, the inquiſitive manufacturer, the country gentleman, the various perſons who fill the moſt uſeful departments in life, without pretending to literature, would find a copious ſource of pleaſure and improvement reſcinded. Is the pleaſure and improvement of claſſes, both numerous and reſpectable, to be neglected? The erudition which is confined to a few libraries, or locked in the boſom of a few profeſſors, is of ſmall value to the public at large, and conſequently, when viewed with a liberal eye to the welfare of ſociety, of little eſtimation. It may be compared to a ſtagnant pool, large,

perhaps, and deep, but of little utility; while the knowledge which displays itself in popular works may be said to resemble a river, fertilizing, refreshing, and embellishing whole provinces through which its meanders roll their tide.

Whatever the affected pretenders to depth and solidity of science may urge, new publications will always continue to excite curiosity in a country so intelligent, so inquisitive, so free as Great Britain. In every new attempt, Expectation is on tiptoe to see, whether there is not some new improvement; and if she finds not all she promised herself, she usually finds something, or at least has been pleasantly occupied in the inquiry.

But if it should be asked and answered in the words of the Roman poet,

Quis leget hæc?—Nemo Hercule, nemo
Vel duo, vel nemo. PERS.

If this answer should unfortunately be true, I may console myself with the reflection, that my Lucubrations will not be entirely useless; because manufacturers concerned in the mechanical part of a work must be employed, and the trunkmakers supplied. Why may not one contribute to waste one's share of paper that will otherwise be wasted?

[Stulta est clementia—perituræ parcere chartæ. JUV.

One advantage will certainly attend the waste, since the consumption of paper contributes to the revenue.

It is with such affected jocularity that we writers endeavour to put a good face on a disappointment, which none, who ever thought it worth while to write, have ever considered with perfect indifference. The good opinion of readers cannot but be grateful to writers, whatever, in the pride of their hearts, they may insinuate to the contrary. Some have pretended to find a consolatory recompence for neglect in a false contempt, and by saying with the miser in Horace,

Populus me sibilat; at mihi plaudo
Ipse domi.

The philosophy, if there really be any such, which teaches an utter contempt for the opinion of all mankind, is favorable to no beneficial quality, and conduces chiefly to the increase of that pride from which it derives its origin.

Though selfish motives of every kind should be removed, which is more than in the present state can often be true; yet, whoever wishes to do good, and to afford a rational amusement, must wish to be acceptable, for, without pleasing, he will find it difficult to profit.

I will make no pretensions to that superiority which considers censure and applause with equal insensibility. I confess I shall derive a sincere satisfaction from being well received by my reader. The present business of self introduction may be a little awkward; but, before we part, I hope to obtain his confidence, and that he will not in any

reſpect be the worſe for honoring me with his attention.

Introductory papers have uſually been more embarraſſing to writers than thoſe which ſucceed them. Ceremonies of introduction are ſeldom pleaſant in real life; but to write on oneſelf, and one's own views and undertakings, however pleaſing to ſelf love, is apt to cauſe in the reader a conſiderable degree of oſcitancy. Leſt I ſhould fairly lull him to ſleep on the very firſt Winter Evening, which would be an inauſpicious commencement, I think it would be prudent to wiſh him good night, and ſay but little more about it.

I will treſpaſs on his patience but one minute: I find it good policy, like ſome of my predeceſſors, to defend my title from the attacks of witticiſm by anticipation. I deſire therefore to give notice, like Mr. Fitz-Adam in the beginning of the World, that if any one ſhall be diſpoſed to ſay, Theſe Winter Evenings are cold, or dark or dull, or tedious, that more fire or more light is wanted; the joke will be conſidered as worn out, that it will be not allowed to paſs in currency, but will be cried down like coin too light, and deficient in ſterling value.

With reſpect to my title, which is thus expoſed to the ſhafts of witticiſm, ſome title was neceſſary, and that of Winter Evenings appeared ſufficiently diſtinctive. Attic Evenings, which Gellius has anticipated, would have been too oſtentatious. It would have led the reader to expect

a greater quantity of attic ſalt than I ſhall be able to ſupply, and might have tempted him to ſay,

Quid tanto dignum foret hic promiſſor hiatu? HOR.

I believe it will be beſt to ſay nothing on the motives which induce me to bring my Lucubrations before the public eye. I might indeed talk much of a regard for the public good, and declare, like the celebrated Mr. Aſhley, late of Ludgate Hill, that it was all *pro bono publico*. But I am of opinion, that *pro bono publico* on the front of a houſe, or at the beginning of a book, is rather a ſuſpicious circumſtance. Indeed, it has been obſerved, that the motive of any conduct, rendered moſt oſtenſible, often operates with leaſt force, and that the motive, which is ſtudiouſly diſavowed or concealed, is, in the ordinary courſe of human actions, the real ſpring and the prime mover. The heart is certainly deceitful, and it is the ſafeſt method, if we would neither delude ourſelves nor others, not arrogantly to aſſume any exalted ſuperiority, but to let our good motives be evinced by our good conduct. Whatever pretences I might make on the preſent occaſion, perhaps, on a careful analyſis, it might appear, that a great portion of the moving principle conſiſted of mere vanity and a downright *ſcribendi cacoethes*. If ſo, though the infirmity of human nature may be lamented, yet the number of authors excited by ſimilar motives will always keep each other in countenance. And, indeed, why ſhould people be outrageouſly angry

with a vain and a poor writer? A man of a reſtleſs activity may, in purſuit of diſtinction, ſpend his time much more injurioufly to ſociety than in writing a fooliſh book. It is a conſolatory reflection, that a book can neither trouble nor hurt us without our own co-operation.

Un livre vous déplait? — Qui vous force a lire?
BOILEAU.

CHAP. II.

Of the titles of miſcellaneous writings, — and of titles in general.

GELLIUS, with a delicacy which may be deemed a little too ſcrupulous, is fearful leſt his title ſhould be conſidered as arrogant or affected, and therefore anxiouſly takes care to inform his reader, that his lucubrations were called *Noctes Atticæ*, ſolely becauſe they were written in Attica during a winter's reſidence in that country. He is unwilling to let it for a moment be ſuppoſed, that he intended to aſſume the merit of Attic elegance or wit, or to allure readers by the artifice of an inviting title.

After making his own apology, he proceeds to cenſure the affectation of titles aſſumed by the writers of Miſcellanies; and though his ſtrictures on them are generally juſt, yet perhaps he too ſeverely condemns ſome of them, which are not

deficient either in a decent humility, or in the propriety of their application.

I think it may afford amuſement to the Engliſh reader to view ſome of the inventions of ancient authorſhip in that important part of a work, the fabrication of a *Title Page*. Many of them have been borrowed and greatly embelliſhed by the moderns, in the hope of attracting notice; as the innkeeper invites the traveller by a gilded Bacchus, a Tun and a Bunch of Grapes, and the tempting inſcription, "Good Entertainment for Man and "Horſe."

The title of *the Muſes* was often given to poetical miſcellanies, by which the poet rather arrogantly inſinuated, that his work was peculiarly favored by the inſpiring Nine. But it was by no means confined to poetry. I believe, indeed, it more frequently occurred in hiſtory, where Herodotus had ſet the example of it, by giving each of his books the name of a Muſe. Some critics acquit Herodotus of the apparent arrogance, and ſuppoſe that theſe elegant appellations were beſtowed on his books by his ſanguine admirers.

The Graces were introduced as the titular recommendations of three orations of Æſchines, to which the beauty of their language is ſaid to have given them a juſt claim; but this title muſt not reflect on the author's vanity, as it is reaſonable to believe that it was the voluntary reward of the reader's approbation.

SYLVÆ is one of the moſt elegant, as well as commoneſt titles to the miſcellanies of the ancients.

The origin of it is the Greek, HYLE; and the authors, who first assumed it, modestly intimated by it, that they had collected a store of *timber*, which themselves, or others, might hereafter use in erecting a regular structure. The SYLVÆ of Statius are supposed to be more valuable than his finished compositions. In imitation of him many modern writers of Latin poetry have entitled the miscellaneous parts of their books, SYLVÆ; and our own Ben Jonson, alluding to the ancient title of *Sylvæ*, denominates some of his smaller works *Underwoods*. He entitles his *observations on men and things* TIMBER, which must appear unaccountably singular to the unlearned reader, and is in truth not a little pedantic. He adds, in Latin, the following marginal explanation. It is called, says he, *Timber*, SYLVA, HYLE, *from the multiplicity and variety of matter which it contains; for, as we commonly call an indefinite number of trees growing together indiscriminately*, A WOOD, *so the ancients entitled those of their books, in which little miscellaneous pieces were irregularly arranged*, SYLVAS, or *Timber-trees*.

QUINTILIAN describes the works distinguished by the name *Sylvæ*, as struck out with the impulse of a sudden calenture, *subito excussa calore*, and assigns causes for the appellation similar to those which have been already mentioned.

If the name should be differently interpreted, and understood to suggest the pleasantness and variety of roaming in a *wood*, abounding with every diversity of foliage, and displaying many a

ſweet flowret in all the beautiful wildneſs of Nature; *the Wood*, *the Grove*, or *the Foreſt*, would not be improper titles for a Miſcellany, provided it were of merit enough to anſwer the expectation of beauty and variety, which the titles might juſtly raiſe.

PEPLON, or PEPLOS, *the Mantle*, was prefixed to works conſiſting of detached pieces on various ſubjects. *The Peplon*, according to the deſcription of Potter, was a white garment without ſleeves, embroidered with gold, and repreſenting the exploits of Minerva, particularly in the battles of the Giants againſt Jupiter; but though this was originally the only ſubject, it was not retained ſo excluſively as not to admit the embroidery of other figures which had no relation to it. In proceſs of time the heroes of Athens, after an important victory, were delineated upon it with ſumptuous elegance, to be exhibited at the grand feſtival of Minerva, as an honorary reward of paſt merit, and an incitement to future. Hence aroſe the idea of diſtinguiſhing with the name *Peplon* ſuch books or poems as deſcribed the achievements of great warriors. Ariſtotle wrote a poem of this kind, and called it *The Peplon*. It comprized the lives and death of the moſt illuſtrious of his countrymen. Every hiſtory concluded with an epitaph of two lines. The loſs of the *Stagirite's Peplon* is an irreparable injury to the Grecian hiſtory, and to polite letters. It may not be improper to add, that when the Greeks expreſſed their higheſt approbation of a hero, it was a

proverbial saying among them, *He is worthy of the* PEPLON.

But the word was not applied only to the *Peplon* of Minerva. It signified the external vestment of any dignified lady; and, from the description of it, may be imagined to resemble the modern or oriental shawl. The ladies of Greece displayed their singular ingenuity in decorating it with the richest and most picturesque delineations which their manual ingenuity could produce; and the art of the weaver, the dier, and the engraver, had not then superseded the fine operations of the needle.

The poet therefore, who assumed this title, promised his readers every variety of the most vivid coloring and picturesque imagery. He called them to view a richly figured tissue, *a mantle* embroidered with gold and purple. I should think the title more particularly appropriated to the works of the Sapphos than of the Aristotles. We have many in our own country who could with equal ease and elegance produce *a Peplon* in its literal or its figurative sense.

A miscellaneous author, who wished to convey the idea of great exuberance and inexhaustible variety, denominated his work KERAS AMALTHEIAS, or *the Horn of Amalthea*, which will be more generally understood if I render it the *Cornucopia*. The pretty fable of Jupiter's rewarding Amalthea, the nurse who fed him with goat's milk in his infancy, by giving her a horn of the goat, from which she should be able to take whatever

whatever she wanted, gave rise to this title, and to the idea of *Cornucopia*, which is now familiar to the illiterate. As a title it was too ostentatious, and savoured something of the vain pretensions of empiricism.

A *Hive* and a *Honeycomb* conveyed at once the idea of industry and taste in the collector, and of sweetness in the collection. It is obvious to conclude therefore, that KERION would become the title of miscellaneous books; and if the books were merely compilations, I can see in it no impropriety. That a man should compare his *own* works to *honey*, and invite the reader to taste the *luscious store*, is a degree of self conceit which may perhaps justify the censure and the contempt of Gellius.

LIMON, or *the Meadow*, was a pleasing title to works variegated with all the colors of a fertile imagination. It gives the reader cause to expect flowers richly interspersed; cowslips, violets, blue-bells; verdure, softness, fragrance, plenty. I imagine it to have been chiefly applied to poetry. I remember to have seen a small collection of juvenile poems by that polite scholar Sir William Jones, to which he has given the title of *Limon*, in imitation of those ancients whom he admires with warmth, and imitates with taste.

To mark their miscellaneous compositions, every title which could express a collection of flowers has been adopted both by the ancients and moderns: hence *Anthera*, *Florilegium*, *Anthologia*, *Polyanthæa*; hence also the *Nosegay*, the *Garland*, the *Wreath*, the *Chaplet*, and the *Festoon*.

LYCHNUS, or the *Torch*, sufficiently pointed out a book which was to diffuse light; but it falls under the imputation of arrogance, and, like EUREMATA, *Discoveries*, (which Ben Jonson has adopted), raised expectation to a dangerous eminence.

STROMATEUS, or the *Carpet*, resembles the *Peplon*. PINAX or *Pinakidion*, the *Picture*, conveyed an obvious yet pleasing idea. PANDECTE, though chiefly applied to collections of law, extended also to miscellaneous books of polite literature, and seems intended to signify something like the monthly Magazines, as the word might be rendered in the modern style, *the Universal Repository*, or *Receptacle*.

ENCHIRIDION, *the Manual*, or rather *the Little Dagger*, was a common title to works of small magnitude comprehending things of great moment. It was the small sword, which the soldiers wore constantly at their sides for personal defence against any sudden assault. The word, applied to a book, signified a little treatise always at hand, comprehending arguments for occasional defence and constant security. The *Enchiridion* of Epictetus was a compendium of his philosophy, in a *pocket volume*, as *a pocket companion*, no less convenient to repel the gainsayers, than a pocket pistol, a thief or assassin, or than a pocket cordial to exhilarate the spirits upon any occasional depression.

But enough of ancient titles. If Aulus Gellius had lived in modern times, I believe he would

have considered the titles which he has stigmatized with the appellation of *Festivitates Inscriptionum*, modest and unassuming in comparison with some which it would be easy, though rather invidious, to enumerate in the English language. Popular theology, in the days of the Puritans, exhibited some titular curiosities; such as, *Crums of Comfort*, a *Shove*, &c. and others equally laughable, and most incongruous to the seriousness of rational divinity. I believe the authors and readers were truly sincere; but, if they had intended to ridicule what they certainly reverenced, they could not have devised a more successful expedient than the drollery of a quaint and ludicrous title page.

That works addressed to the illiterate should be recommended by a pompous title page, is not wonderful. Their sagacious editors know that vulgar minds are captivated by bold pretensions and warm professions in literature as in medicine. Since the artifice is an innocent one, and succeeds in recommending useful books among those by whom instruction is greatly wanted; while, at the same time, it is too apparent to deceive the well educated and sensible, it deserves not the severity of satire, though it must of necessity excite derision. For splendor and copiousness of panegyrical epithet, no age can produce a parallel to many of the curious titles and commendations printed on the blue covers of works delivered to the expecting world in weekly numbers. Language toils in vain for expressions adequate to the excellenee of the composition, the beauty of the type and paper,

and the ſuperb elegance of the copper-plates. Grand, imperial, magnificent, unparalleled, are the beggarly epithets which the editors are compelled to uſe from the deficiency of language. All this is laughable; but it is found, I ſuppoſe, to introduce a Bible, or a Syſtem of Geography, or a Hiſtory of England, into the family of ſome poor mechanic, who ſpends ſixpence on Saturday for an improving book, which might otherwiſe be laviſhed in riot and intemperance.

In the higher ranks of literature, I know not that any peculiar affectation in titles is obſerved to prevail. There is, indeed, too much good ſenſe in the age to tolerate either arrogance or affectation in a title page.

The only rule for the *regulation of a title* is, what common ſenſe ſuggeſts, that it ſhould be conciſe, as deſcriptive of the contents of the book as conciſeneſs will allow, eaſy to be pronounced, and eaſy to be remembered. A title page may be compared to the portal of an edifice. Who would exhibit the magnificence of Grecian architecture, the fluted column, and the ſculptured capital, at the entrance of a cottage? Pliny, who ridicules the *inviting titles*, ſome of which are already deſcribed, concludes with this lively exclamation: *At cum intraveris, Dii, Deæque, quam nihil in medio invenies! But when you ſhall have accepted the invitation, and have entered in, ye Gods and Goddeſſes, what a mere nothing you will find in the middle!*

A title may inveigle the unwary; but thinking men and posterity will form their judgments solely from the contents; and, if they are valuable, the old adage may be applied to them; "Good wine needs no bush."

If books of repute have not at present pompous titles derived from Greek and Latin, yet public fights and public places abound in them.

Pliny and Gellius would perhaps be a little severe on *Holophusicon*, *Eiduraneon*, *Microcosm*, *Lactarium*, *Adelphi*, *Rhedarium*. It would not, in this learned age, be surprising to see a barber style himself on the architrave of his peruke warehouse, *Phlebotomist*, *Odontologist*, *Chiropodist*, *Pogonologist*, and P. C. A. or *Professor of the Cosmetic Art*. It is a little affectation of no consequence; and therefore one need not exclaim with the Satirist,

—— Non possum ferre, Quirites,
Græcam urbem. ——

Indeed, the love of pretty and well sounding names extends to private life, and displays itself at the font of baptism. The names of *Dorothy*, *Deborah*, *Abigail*, *Bridget*, *Judith*, *Barbara*, *Prudence*, *Charity*, *Grace*, *Obedience*, have given way to *Carolina*, *Wilhelmina*, *Charlotta*, *Emily*, *Amelia*, and *Henrietta*. Even the good old English *Ann*, *Mary*, and *Elizabeth*, are elegantly converted into *Anna*, *Maria*, and *Eliza*. This great improvement of national taste, which is at present

visible in the lowest as well as highest class, is doubtless diffused over the kingdom by sentimental novels, where a *Deborah* or a *Bridget*, even if she were of a degree of beauty, understanding, and goodness, approaching to *angelic*, would be— A SHOCKING CREATURE! Such is the power of Names! And I will agree, that it is very desirable to have *a good name*, and I hope to see the *Emilies* and *Henriettas* of the present day, deserve *a good name* by exceeding in virtue and good housewifery, as well as in elegance of taste, the *Deborahs* and the *Dorothies*, the *Prudences* and the *Charities*, the *Loves* and the *Graces* of our great-grandmothers.

CHAP. III.

Opinantium unitas, opinionum varietas. Those who differ in opinion may be united in affection. — Of controversy. — The spirit with which it ought to be conducted.

THE variety of opinions which prevails among mankind, like the wind blowing at different times from different quarters, and with different degrees of violence and temperature, is certainly productive of a salutary agitation. The languor occasioned by a constant Sicilian *sirocco*, would not be more insufferable than the insipidity of universal consent. If all men thought alike on all subjects, their pursuits would flag like fire for want of

oppoſition; and that enlivening diverſity which appears in human life, and is found to promote the ends of ſocial union by mutually ſupplying defect, and by ſtimulating to chearful exertion, would ſink into the dead repoſe of unvaried uniformity. Tumult would be the conſequence of an exact and univerſal reſemblance of ſentiments, inſtead of that fine order which reſults from the apparent chaos, the diſcordant concord of taſte, ſtudies, ſects, parties, principles, antipathies, and predilections. All the hues of the priſmatic ſpeculum are intermixed to produce that beautiful reſult of the whole, the ſnowy whiteneſs of the ſwan's plumage.

But much evil alſo ariſes from diverſity of opinions; for here too appears that characteriſtic of every thing ſublunary, the alloy of predominant good by the partial commixture of evil. It too frequently happens that the underſtandings of men cannot be divided by difference of opinion, without a correſponding diviſion of their hearts and affections. Pride intervenes with uſurping inſolence where the appeal was made to reaſon, and where reaſon only ſhould decide. Men conſider their perſonal importance intimately concerned in maintaining the ſentiments which they have once advanced. To acknowledge themſelves miſtaken, and convinced by the arguments of an opponent, they are inclined to think an humiliating confeſſion of their own inferiority. The object of the controverſy ceaſing to be truth, becomes the triumph of victorious diſputation.

But since the reciprocal discussion of interesting questions is conducive to the discovery of truth, as the winnowing of wheat separates it from chaff; and since a difference of opinion appears to be in general salutary, and, from the nature of man, is likely also for ever to subsist, I think it worth while to endeavour the accomplishment of a purpose so valuable as that of preventing a disagreement in matters of opinion, from violating the connections of friendship, diminishing philanthropy, and souring the sweets of social intercourse.

Politics, in a free country like our own, have always been a principal cause of disunion. Every man feels himself so far interested in the conduct of a government in which he participates by his suffrage, as to be powerfully affected by it independently of his interest. He is not contented with barely approving or disapproving public measures according to the decisions of his judgement, but enters so warmly into the subject, as frequently to feel a conflict of violent emotions, seeking vent in violent language. If his decisive dictates happen to be opposed in company, angry and vindictive expressions arise in the warmth of collision. Pride is wounded on both sides by some random shaft; and they who sat down with all the cordiality of friendship, rise with a considerable degree of indifference at least, if not with the rancor of a settled animosity.

If Passion could listen to Reason, it would surely be acknowledged by the disputants themselves, a disgraceful folly to permit a difference of opinion

to disunite those whose opinions can never have the least influence on the direction of public affairs, of which they dispute. It is indeed most ridiculous to behold two poor mortals destroying happiness, under the pretence of serving the public, or zeal for the government, when their insignificance as individuals renders them totally unable to control, in the smallest degree, the settled course of national transactions. It is like two flies on the pole of a coach and six, fighting for the privilege of directing which way, and with what speed, the carriage shall advance.

But, to the honor of the present age, it must be allowed, that a disagreement on party and political subjects no longer causes those irreconcileable animosities among families, which disgraced the manners of the English, as they appeared in the last, and in the beginning of the present century. Such is the liberality of the age, that two families, who espouse the cause of opposite parties, and think differently of a new ministry or a public measure, can live in the mutual interchange of neighbourly offices without a particle of enmity. This gentleness and moderation among a people whom the fury of political rage has often enflamed to phrensy, is one of the most remarkable as well as beautiful features of the time, and reflects honor on the progress of national humanity and unaffected refinement.

Religion, properly understood, inspires every thing benevolent; yet the Christian himself blushes while he owns, that no subject of human concern

has raiſed more violent diſputes and more inveterate hatred, among its warmeſt and perhaps ſincereſt profeſſors. In this reſpect alſo, the ſuperiority of the preſent age over the paſt is ſtrikingly conſpicuous. A church of England man, a preſbyterian, and a quaker, will now ſit at the ſame table, and diſcourſe, not only on the common topics of the day, but on religion, without jealouſy, and with all the affectionate attention of cordial eſteem. Remembering that they are united as men, they forget the petty diſtinctions of ſectaries. This liberality ought not in candor to be attributed to a lukewarm indifference, but to the prevalence of that real charity, which, whatever the ſatiriſt may alledge, ſeems to have increaſed with the improvements in real knowledge. Happily for mankind, in the fluctuation of modes, benevolence and liberality are now not only entertained from principle, but become the faſhion.

Books of controverſy are at preſent leſs common, and leſs encouraged, than in the preceding age. Scarcely any thing of conſequence came out at one time, without a numerous train of letters to the author, examinations, queries, anſwers, replies, and rejoinders. The abuſe poured from men of letters, teachers of religion, profeſſors of theology, was ſuch as can only find a parallel in the ſchools of Bilingſgate. The ſubject itſelf was perhaps inſipid, and, like a taſteleſs diſh, would not be reliſhed by the majority of readers, unleſs it was highly ſeaſoned with vinegar and pepper as well as ſalt. They who enjoyed it muſt have had

coarse palates, and a digestion like the ostrich, with whom lead or dirt, it may be imagined, was no less digestible than iron.

I will trespass on my reader's patience while I give him a specimen of the controversial style of two most eminent divines writing on a most awful subject, THE HOLY TRINITY. The combatants were *Dr. William Sherlock*, dean of St. Paul's and master of the Temple, and *Dr. Robert South*, prebendary of Westminster and canon of Christchurch; both celebrated authors, both zealous professors of Christianity.

Dr. South says, that Dr. Sherlock had made use of such expressions as the following with reference to him. "*Ingenious blunderer, trifling* "*author, wandering wit, wrangling wit, leviathan, one whose risibility will prove him a man,* "*though he is seldom in so good a humor as to* "*laugh without grinning, which belongs to an-* "*other species*, videlicet, *a dog. A notable man,* "*and one that can make shift to read and tran-* "*scribe.*" And then, of Dr. South's animadversions, Dr. Sherlock says, "*They are characterized by senseless mistakes, school terms instead* "*of sense, gipsy cant, perfect gibberish, ignorance* "*and raving, an hundred absurdities and fooleries,* "*huffing, swaggering, and scolding, that it is* "*a great scolding book, remarkable for want of* "*sense*, &c."

So far the reverend Dean against the reverend Prebendary in a trinitarian dispute. Now let us hear the Prebendary against the Dean. On the

above expreſſions of Dr. Sherlock, Dr. South thus animadverts.

" *There are ſeveral more of the like Gravel* " *Lane elegancies.*"

Dr. William Sherlock, it ſeems, was born of honeſt parents in Gravel Lane, Southwark; and the great prebendary often throws the ſaid Gravel Lane in his teeth in the courſe of the controverſy, being, to be ſure, a circumſtance of great weight in diſcuſſing the doctrine of the Trinity.

Dr. South proceeds. " *All theſe expreſſions* " *have ſuch peculiar ſtrictures of the author's ge-* " *nius, that he might very well ſpare his name* " *where he had made himſelf ſo well known by his* " *mark; for all the foregoing oyſter-wife, kennel* " *rhetoric ſeems naturally to flow from him who* " *had been ſo long rector of St. Botolph's, with* " *the well ſpoken, Bilingſgate,*" (this famous ſchool of rhetoric being in the pariſh of St. George, Botolph Lane, of which Dr. Sherlock was rector), " *that, ſo much a teacher as he was, it may well* " *be queſtioned, whether he has learned more from* " *his pariſh, than his pariſh from him.*"

" *But after all,*" proceeds the great South, " *may I not aſk him this ſhort queſtion?*

" *Where is the wit and ſmartneſs of thought?* " *Where are the peculiar graces and lucky hits of* " *fancy, that ſhould recommend the foregoing ex-* " *preſſions to the learned and ingenious? No.* — " *Nothing of all this is to be found in this man's* " *words or way of ſpeaking; but all ſavour of the* " *porter, the carman, and the waterman; and a*

" *pleaſant ſcene it muſt needs be to the reader, to* " *ſee the Maſter of the Temple thus laying about* " *him in the language of the ſtairs. But what,*" continues the dignitary, " *men draw from their* " *education* (he means in Gravel Lane), *gene-* " *rally ſticks by them for term of life; and it is* " *not to be expected that a mouth ſo long accuſ-* " *tomed to throw dirt ſhould ever leave it off till* " *it comes to be ſtopped with it.*"

In one of his prefaces he interrogates, " *Was* " *it the ſchool, the univerſity, or Gravel Lane,* " *that taught him this language?*"

In another place, He who was to teach us to RETURN GOOD FOR EVIL, AND WHEN REVILED NOT TO REVILE AGAIN, goes on thus:

" *In requital of that ſcurrilous character of an* " *ingenious blaſphemer, I muſt and do here re-* " *turn upon him the juſt charge of an impious blaſ-* " *phemer; telling him withal, that had he lived* " *in the former times of our church, his gown* " *would have been ſtripped off his back for his de-* " *teſtable blaſphemies and hereſies, and ſome other* " *place found out for him to perch in than the top* " *of St. Paul's* (he was dean of St. Paul's), " *where at preſent he is placed, like a church* " *weathercock, as he is, notable for nothing ſo* " *much as ſtanding high and turning round. And* " *now, if he likes not this kind of treatment, let* " *him thank his own virulence for it, in paſſing* " *ſuch baſe reflections upon one who he might be* " *ſure would repay him, and certainly will, though* " *he has not cleared the debt.*"

And now let me ask my reader, whether he has not had a sufficient specimen of the spirit with which a *trinitarian controversy* has been conducted?

If he delights in such wit and such language, he may go in pursuit of his enjoyment either to Dr. Sherlock's *Vindication of the holy and ever blessed Trinity* (for such is the title), and to Dr. South's *Animadversions and Tritheism charged upon it*, or else to the next alehouse, where porters, carmen, and hackney coachmen assemble to regale themselves with spirituous liquor and spirited debate.

But notwithstanding this unhappy dispute, Dr. Sherlock and Dr. South were most respectable men and excellent divines. Dr. South, in particular, was an admirable wit, and a most powerful orator. I venerate the names of them both, and lament that they should thus have exposed themselves to deserved reproach. Let them who are inclined to engage in paper wars observe, to what the spirit of controversy may lead; to the disgrace and injury of the controvertists, and of that sacred cause which they both originally intended to promote: a striking instance of human infirmity. Both these men preached, and I believe in the sincerity of their hearts, meekness and benevolence.

The little religious controversy which remains among us at present is usually conducted with candor. Abuse is seldom offered; and, whenever it appears, recoils upon its author. A polemic

Christian divine is a contradiction in terms, if by *polemic* is understood, as both etymology and experience justify, a hostile soldier of Jesus Christ, contending, in the church militant, with the prohibited weapons of anger and violence for the personal glory of conquest.

It is greatly to be wished that men could be satisfied with maintaining their own principles and opinions in a dispassionate manner, and living conscientiously according to the system or sect which they may have adopted, without anxiously endeavouring to compel all others to unite in their persuasion. The most violent zeal is too often the least honorable in its motives. The violence is not derived from an honest regard for truth and the welfare of others, but from pride, ill temper, self interest, and secular ambition; and it is as ineffectual in producing conviction, as it is in itself unreasonable and ungenerous.

It is not inconsistent with charity to suspect, (what the knowledge of the human heart strongly insinuates), that a love of distinction, and a desire to be looked up to as the founder of a new sect, are the true causes of many divisions and subdivisions which too often arise in religion. Far be it from man to pronounce decisively of the sentiments of the heart, which are only known with certainty by him who made it; but when we see one man opposing with vehemence opinions and doctrines which the majority, apparently endowed with equal sense, and equally improved by education, receive with humble submission, it is

difficult not to conclude, that he forms an undue eſtimate of his own ſagacity, or is endeavouring to procure diſtinction from the ſiniſter motives of vanity and pride. But to make uſe of religious pretences in ſupport of ſordid purpoſes of any kind, is a ſort of hypocriſy which deſervedly excites uncommon reſentment.

I think the temper with which a religious controverſy is conducted is one of the beſt criterions of ſincerity; and thoſe who are duly on their guard againſt deluſion, will be cautious of inliſting under leaders, however plauſible and eloquent, who forget, in their zeal for religion, its diſtinguiſhing grace, Chriſtian Benevolence.

It has been apprehended by ſome, who reſpect the characters of both the diſputants, that there was rather too much aſperity and haughtineſs beginning to diſplay itſelf in a late controverſy between a dignitary of the eſtabliſhed church and a philoſophical diſſenter. The parties ſhould certainly beware leſt that warmth, which I believe to be an honeſt one, ſhould deviate into the virulence of party rage, injure the Chriſtian cauſe, and give occaſion to the common adverſaries both of themſelves and the cauſe, to triumph over them. Spirit and magnanimity are certainly conſiſtent with that forbearance without which Chriſtianity is but a name. In this age the old queſtion,

Tantæne animis cœleſtibus Iræ?

will always he applied by the laity to their teachers, when their teachers treat each other with contumelious

contumelious language. An offence is given by it, for which no learning or ingenuity displayed in the contest can make a recompence.

But I pass from religious to philosophical and literary controversy. It might be supposed that pursuits, which bear the name of philosophical, would proceed with the most dispassionate moderation. But here also victory, rather than truth, is the object of the contest. Practical and theoretical philosophy are often divided; and many, whose understandings have been highly cultivated, are still subject to all the irritation of irascible affections.

Every scholar will recollect the virulent controversy between Bentley and Boyle on a book which was suspected of being spurious, but which, if allowed to be genuine, is of little value. Bentley displayed wonderful learning, and great wit and acuteness in the contest; and his acrimony is almost forgiven in return for his having enriched literature with the Dissertation on Phalaris. The parts of some appear to be drawn out and improved by spleen, which operates on them like the fabulous inspiration on the poets. Dr. Bentley is an instance of it, for, I believe, none of his works are equal to his controversial. Mr. Pope also, with every muse at hand, too frequently sought the aid of indignation; *fecit indignatio versus.*

Those who are acquainted with literary history can remember controversies conducted with an excess of warmth on the metre of a comic poet, in which divines, high in character, and high in

eccleſiaſtical honor, gave a lamentable example of charity, ſuperſeded by the pride of erudition. So true is it that *knowledge puffeth up, and charity alone edifieth.* Every one knows of Biſhop Warburton's learning; but where are the teſtimonies of his humility?

The wranglings of Cambridge, and the diſputations at Oxford, are apt to give young men a controverſial turn, which afterwards influences them both in life and literature. The diſputations at Oxford are now indeed merely formal; but the wranglings at Cambridge ſtill continue, and often infuſe an acid into the mind which turns the milk of human kindneſs quite ſour.

In days of yore the logical diſputations in Oxford were the cauſe of ebullitions of rage among the academics, not leſs furious than any which have ariſen in the world of politics. In the warmth of ſyllogiſtic diſcuſſion, the ardent diſputants have been known to riſe from their ſeats, and terminate a diſpute about *quiddities* by the exertion of muſcular vigor, according to the manly ſyſtem of the Broughtonian philoſophy. This was certainly the ſtratagem of dunces; for, in theſe polemical altercations, the thickeſt ſculls were moſt likely to gain the conqueſt. Black eyes and bloody noſes were the trophies; and there is reaſon to ſuppoſe from their language, that the aboveſaid dean Sherlock and prebendary South would have had no objection to pull off their pudding ſleeves and have it out, as the belligerent phraſe is, amidſt a circle of ſpectators, at the Temple Stairs, or in Gravel Lane.

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There are no ſubjects either in literature or philoſophy, notwithſtanding the parade of profeſſors, ſufficiently momentous to juſtify, in a conteſt concerning them, the violation of the law of love. In the eſtimate of reaſon, employed in inveſtigating what is moſt beneficial to ſociety, as well as of ſacred Scripture, charity is far more valuable than knowledge; than knowledge of the moſt dignified kind, much more, therefore, than the knowledge of trifles, mere matters of taſte, and curious ſpeculation.

Whenever, therefore, a controverſy ariſes, and it is to be hoped that liberal and candid controverſies will always continue to ariſe, let each party be immediately on their guard, and reſolve, whatever may happen, to keep in view the preſervation of a reſpect for each other's perſonal happineſs and reputation; a reſpect which conſtitutes a great part of that charity which *never faileth*, and which, univerſally diffuſed, will contribute more to the good of mankind than the diſcoveries of a Newton.

A caution may indeed be neceſſary againſt indifference in the ſupport of evident and uſeful truth; an extreme into which ſome may lapſe in the laudable endeavour to avoid intemperance of zeal; but I am doubtful whether it is neceſſary to inſiſt much on this caution, as the proud and angry paſſions, under every reſtraint, will be likely to produce a degree of warmth and energy ſufficient for every laudable and beneficial purpoſe. Where a plant, from its inherent vigor,

deviates into a detrimental luxuriancy, the gardener uſes the pruning knife, and leaves the acceleration of growth to the powers of unaſſiſted nature.

Upon reviewing the miſery occaſioned by contention, one cannot help indulging the reflection that the evils of man are great without unneceſſary aggravation. In the little journey of our life, why ſhould we increaſe the inconvenience of rough roads and bad weather, by mutual ill-humor? Why ſhould we be waſps and hornets to each other; ſince the ſtings of outrageous fortune are ſo pungent as ſcarcely to be endured? Let us not, by adding ſharpneſs and venom to their point, increaſe the anguiſh of their wound; but rather let us learn to ſoften and ſweeten ſociety by practiſing, in all diſſimilarity of ſentiment, that admirable precept of philoſophy and chriſtianity, BEAR AND FORBEAR. *Veniam petimuſque damuſque viciſſim.*

I will beg leave to call the attention of all controverſiſts to the vow of Dr. Hody, a learned and amiable man. Mr. Boyle quotes it for Dr. Bentley's benefit and Dr. Hody's honor, in the celebrated controverſy on the Epiſtles of Phalaris.

FAXIT NUMEN, UT VEL ÆTERNO EGO SILENTIO INTER NON SCRIBENTES DELITESCAM, VEL SEMPER, UT VIRUM INGENUUM, LIBERALIS AC GENEROSÆ EDUCATIONIS, VERÆQUE PHILOSOPHIÆ STUDIOSUM DECET, SCRIBAM: VERITATIS UNICÆ INDAGATOR, ABSQUE OMNI STYLI ACERBITATE,

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MITIS, URBANUS, CANDIDUS, AD ID QUOD INDECENS EST ADEO NON PRONUS, UT NEC MOVENDUS: NUGARUM DENIQUE CONTEMPTOR.

CHAP IV.

More specimens of controversy — Of the style of some of Milton's Latin Works, particularly his Defences of the people of England. — Genus irritabile vatum. — Milton's desertion of poetry for controversy deplored.

FROM all who are happy enough to have a taste for poetry, and a love of liberty, whatever work is descending to future ages with the name of MILTON on the title page, cannot fail to attract regard. The vigor of his mind, and the depth of his learning, mark his works with strong features, with vigor and variety of style, with solidity and extent of knowledge.

His History of England, is perhaps an exception. A subject which one would have thought likely to kindle the fire of his genius, seems to be unaccountably deficient in his usual spirit. It is really dull. But his *Defence of the People of England*, his *Second Defence*, and his *Defence of himself*, display all the fire, the nervous, the masculine eloquence of the apologist, in a diction of classical beauty.

It is at the same time matter of astonishment and regret, that a mind so elegant, a genius so preeminently sublime as MILTON'S, should descend to the very lowest vulgarity of personal abuse. His *Defensiones* abound in jokes and sarcasms, which though sometimes severe and ingenious, are often puerile and scurrilous. His susceptible temper seems to have been heated too intensely by contest, and he became unable to discuss the subject with the dispassionate coolness of a philosopher. That fervid glow which in poetry produced a due degree of animation, kindled a flame in his political writings, which renders them too violent to be reconcileable to the just decisions of reason.

I mean not to be understood as entering into the merits of any political questions discussed in the *Defensiones;* but as considering them merely in a critical and historical view, and as curious pieces of controversial composition.

That fine piece of soft melancholy, the Icon Basilikè, raised an universal sympathy for the misfortunes of the prince whose undisguised feelings it was supposed to display with fidelity. The tide of popular fury seemed, on its publication, to flow impetuously against the regicides. Milton was supposed by his partisans the best able, and was therefore called upon by them, and urged by his own inclination to vilify this favorite book, and to diminish its popularity. As the king's book was entitled, *The Image of the King*, Milton called his answer, *The Image Breaker.*

On the other side, the son of the departed author and his adherents, were no less solicitous to defend the royal cause, and to represent the conduct of the regicides in the blackest colors of vindictive rhetoric. Salmasius, who enjoyed the reputation of being the most accomplished scholar of his time, was a professor in the university of Leyden; and in consequence of his reputation, employed by the exiled prince to write a defence of his unfortunate father. Salmasius undertook the cause, and rapidly produced, for he was a most rapid writer, a prolix treatise in Latin, to which he gave the title of *Defensio regia pro Carolo primo*.

In this work it was not easy to do justice to his subject without animadverting on the author of the *Iconoclastes* or the *Image Breaker*. He roused a lion. Milton rose with the gigantic arm of genius, and crushed his antagonist.

The title of his first defence was *Joannes Miltoni Angli Defensio, contra Claudii anonymi aliàs Salmasii, defensionem regiam.* The contempt with which he treats Salmasius, is beyond all bounds and example; and such as was by no means deserved; for Salmasius was a scholar of uncommon learning, and if he maintained the cause which he was employed to espouse, but feebly, he preserved a due regard to decency and moderation, both which were neglected by Milton.

Among other unbecoming levities, Milton condescends to the very low wit of playing upon names. He awkwardly compares Salmasius, from

the ſimilarity of ſound, to the fountain *Salmacis* in Caria, which had the fabulous property of depriving thoſe who bathed in it of half their virility, as the effeminate doctrine of Salmaſius tended, in Milton's opinion, to deprive men of their rights as men, that is of the privileges of a republic. In another book, he ridicules his ſuppoſed opponent *More*, by alluding to MOROS the Greek for a fool, to MORUS a mulberry-tree, and to *ſycamorus*, a ſycamore.

Milton is ſaid to have received a thouſand pounds for his *Defenſio pro populo Anglicano*. It was ſucceeded by his *Defenſio ſecunda*, a piece of ſtill more virulence, excited by new provocation. The idea of his being paid detracts ſomething from the honor of his zeal.

There appeared in the midſt of this controverſy a book entitled, *The Cry of the King's Blood to Heaven againſt the Engliſh Parricides*. It was attributed to Alexander More, a Scotchman, whoſe character Milton paints in the moſt odious colors. The rage with which Milton attacks him, evinces that *the Cry to Heaven* was well calculated to raiſe the popular reſentment againſt the regicides. He would not have exerted himſelf ſo vigorouſly againſt a feeble adverſary, who had thrown only a *telum imbelle ſine ictu*, a weak and pointleſs weapon. Milton had poſſeſſed himſelf of ſome ſcandalous anecdotes againſt More, and enlarges on them with all the triumph of vindictive glee. After all, *proh Deûm atque hominum fidem!* More was not the author. The book was written by

Peter du Moulin, afterwards prebendary of Canterbury, who, for the ſake of avoiding the odium which it might occaſion, had engaged More to own it, and had induſtriouſly given out that More was the writer. More had cauſe to repent of his acquieſcence when it was too late; for Milton cauſed him to ſmart ſeverely both in his *Defenſio Secunda*, and his *Defenſio pro ſe*. This man is drawn in a ſhape ſo ugly as raiſes at once both hatred and contempt. When he who drew Death, Sin, and Satan, in a ſtyle ſo maſterly, undertook to draw a caricatura, it will readily be imagined that luckleſs was the wight who ſat for the picture.

The *Defenſio Secunda* muſt be commended as a fine piece of eloquence. There is in it the *vis ignea* of genius. There is even a glimmering of that light which was to burſt forth in all its majeſty in the Paradiſe Loſt. I wiſh the dignity of the ſentiments had uniformly accorded with the magnificence of expreſſion. But this noble ſpirit, this ardent lover of freedom, often deſcends from the towering heights of eloquence to grovel in the miry ways of ſpiteful and plebeian obloquy. The vulgarity of his appellations is a little concealed by the veil of an ancient language, the ſound of which, even when it conveys ribaldry, retains its dignity in a modern ear; but if it were properly tranſlated, it would ſeem to an Engliſh reader the language of a porter, rather than of the man to whom nature had given

Mens ſublimior atque os
Magna ſonaturum;

and who was formed with powers to penetrate

——Extra flammantia mœnia mundi.

Milton, aſhamed to have diſplayed ſo much rancor on a miſtaken object, did not believe, or at leaſt pretended not to believe, but that More was the author of *The Cry to Heaven.* He therefore wrote a Third Defence, which he entitled *Auctoris pro ſe Defenſio contra Alexandrum Morum.* There is the ſame vein of ſatire in this as in the other; the ſame bitterneſs, and the ſame elegance. Notwithſtanding the unjuſt acrimony abounding in many parts of them, theſe three memorable Defences are among the fineſt Philippics of modern ages: they unite in them the beauty of Ciceronian copiouſneſs, and the penetrating force of Demoſthenic vehemence.

Every Muſe muſt weep that ſo much fire and ſo much eloquence, that the genius which could deſcribe the delicious groves of Eden, ſhould be waſted on a temporary ſubject, which, being only intereſting when parties were violent, is now ſuffered to ſleep in neglect, if not in oblivion. The fineſt writing in politics can ſcarcely give immortality. When perſons are dead and things forgotten which gave riſe to the controverſy, the elegance of the compoſition will only be attended to by thoſe who delight in fine writing as a curioſity, like the Medalliſt in coins which ceaſe to be current. The common people would prefer a halfpenny to an antique.

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In taſte, Milton had an indiſputable ſuperiority over all his antagoniſts. Salmaſius, the greateſt of them, though a moſt reſpectable ſcholar, had no juſt claim to poetical genius, or peculiar refinement of taſte. It might have been ſuppoſed that he would have been accurate in his Latinity. But Milton cenſures him ſeverely for the uſe of the word *Perſona* in a ſenſe unclaſſical. Salmaſius had ſaid, in his preface to the *Defenſio Regia;* "Horribilis nuper nuntius aures noſtros atroci vulnere, ſed magis mentes, perculit, de parricidio apud Anglos in *Perſona* Regis, ſacrilegorum hominum nefariâ conſpiratione, admiſſo." Milton aſks, in the tone of a ſchoolmaſter, after ridiculing this pompous paſſage, which is certainly not well written; "Quid, quæſo, eſt parricidium in perſona regis admittere? Quid in *perſona* regis? Quæ unquam Latinitas ſic loquuta eſt."

Dr. Johnſon rather defends Salmaſius's uſe of the word *Perſona*, and cites in ſupport of it the paſſage from Juvenal:

> Cum fædior omni
> Crimine perſona eſt.

But Juvenal himſelf did not write the pureſt Latin, ſuch at leaſt as would have been approved in the age of Auguſtus, the model of Milton; and Dr. Johnſon was not ſo good a judge of Latin words as of Engliſh; for in his few Latin *poematia* there are many unclaſſical modes of expreſſion.

This ſagacious biographer, who on this occaſion is not partial to him, accuſes Milton of a ſoleciſm

in the words which he inſultingly addreſſes to Salmaſius immediately after having chaſtiſed him for the impropriety of *Perſona*. Milton ſays, "Vapulandum te propino grammatiſtis tuis." *Vapulo* being a neuter verb, every ſchoolboy in the head claſſes will obſerve, that it will not be eaſy to find in it the future in *dus*. But Dr. Johnſon ſhould have acknowledged, if he knew it, that he was not the firſt who diſcovered this error. It was noticed long before by Vavaſſor de Epigrammate, by Crenius in his Animadverſiones Philologicæ, and by Ker in his Obſervations on the Latin Tongue. In that part of Ker's work which relates to barbarous and vicious modes of expreſſion, ſpeaking of *vapulandum*, he ſays, in reference to it, "*Pinguis* ſolœciſmus Miltono excidit; ubi Salmaſium ob ſolœciſmum exagitavit." This lapſe of Milton was the leſs to be excuſed, becauſe it happened while he was cenſuring a diſputable error in Salmaſius with an air of haughty triumph and unrelenting ſeverity. Milton, though well acquainted with the purity and accuracy of the Latin, was not ſo ſcrupulouſly cautious as not to ſuffer, in the precipitation of paſſion, many words and phraſes to eſcape him, which grammarians and critics might juſtly reprehend.

What a loſs to the admirers of polite letters, that he who could write *L'Allegro*, *Il Penſeroſo*, the Battles of Angels, and the Loves of Adam and Eve, ſhould ſuffer his life to waſte in diſgraceful and importunate controverſy, in rough and

uncultivated fields, where briars and nettles flouriſhed inſtead of flowers and laurels.

Salmaſius attributes the loſs of Milton's ſight to the labor of the controverſy; and to the diſgrace of humanity, Milton is ſaid to have expreſſed ſome complacency in the idea that his ſeverity had ſhortened the days of poor Salmaſius.

Some had conſidered the blindneſs of Milton as a judgment on him for defending the crime of the Regicides, or for ſome other atrocious offence. I cite the following paſſage from Milton's *Defenſio Secunda*, on the ſubject of his blindneſs, and the cruel imputation of it to a judicial curſe. After enumerating many great men who had been blind from no fault of their own, he proceeds:

" Ad me quod attinet, te teſtor, Deus, men-
" tis intimæ, cogitationumque omnium inda-
" gator, me nullius rei, (quanquam hoc apud
" me ſæpius, & quam maxime potui, ſerio quæ-
" ſivi, & receſſus vitæ omnes excuſſi) nullius vel
" recens vel olim commiſſi, mihimet conſcium
" eſſe, cujus atrocitas hanc mihi præ cæteris cala-
" mitatem creare, aut accerſiſſe merito potuerit.
" Quod etiam ullo tempore ſcripſi (quoniam hoc
" nunc me luere quaſi piaculum regii exiſtimant,
" atque adeo triumphant) teſtor itidem Deum,
" me nihil iſtiuſmodi ſcripſiſſe, quod non rectum
" & verum Deoque gratum eſſe, & perſuaſerim
" tum mihi, & etiamnum perſuaſus ſim; idque
" nulla ambitione, lucro, aut gloria ductus; ſed
" officii, ſed honeſti, ſed pietatis in patriam rati-
" one ſola; nec reipublicæ tantum, ſed Eccleſiæ

" quoque liberandæ cauſâ potiſſimùm feciſſe: adeo
" ut cum datum mihi publice eſſet illud in defen-
" ſionem regiam negotium, eodemque tempore
" & adversa ſimul valetudine, & oculo jam pene
" altero amiſſo conflictarer, prædicerentque di-
" ſerte medici, ſi hunc laborem ſuſcepiſſem, fore,
" ut utrumque brevi amitterem, nihil iſta præ-
" monitione deterritus, non medici ne Æſculapii
" quidem Epidaurii ex adyto vocem, ſed *divi-*
" *nioris cujuſdam intus monitoris viderer mihi*
" *audire;* duaſque ſortes, fatali quodam nutu,
" jam mihi propoſitas, hinc cæcitatem, inde
" officium; aut oculorum jacturam neceſſario faci-
" endam, aut ſummum officium deſerendum:
" occurrebantque animo bina illa fata, quæ retu-
" liſſe Delphis conſulentem de ſe matrem, narrat
" Thetidis filius.

Διχθαδίας κῆρας φερέμεν θανάτοιο τέλοσδε.
Εἰ μὲν κ' αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι
Ὤλετο μέν μοι νόστος· ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται.
Εἰ δέ κεν οἶκαδ' ἵκωμαι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.
Ὤλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν. ἐπὶ δηρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν
Ἔσσεται. ———— Iliad. 9.

Duplicia fata ducere ad mortis finem:
Si hic manens circa Troum urbem pugnavero,
Amittitur mihi reditus; ſed Gloria immortalis erit,
Si domum revertor dulce ad patrium ſolum,
Amittitur mihi Gloria pulcra, ſed diuturna vita
Erit. ——

" Unde ſic mecum reputabam, multos gra-
" viore malo minus bonum, morte gloriam, re-
" demiſſe; mihi contra majus bonum minore
" cum malo proponi: ut poſſem cum cæcitate
" ſola vel honeſtiſſimum officii munus implere;
" quod ut ipſa gloria per ſe eſt ſolidius, ita cuique
" optatius atque antiquius debet eſſe. Hac igitur
" tam brevi luminum uſura, quanta maxima
" quivi cum utilitate publica, quoad liceret, fru-
" endum eſſe ſtatui. Videtis quid prætulerim,
" quid amiſerim, qua inductus ratione: *deſinant*
" *ergò judiciorum Dei calumniatores maledicere*,
" deque me ſomnia ſibi fingere; ſic denique
" habento; me ſortis meæ neque pigere neque
" pœnitere; immotum atque fixum in ſententia
" perſtare; Deum iratum neque ſentire, neque
" habere, immo maximis in rebus clementiam
" ejus & benignitatem erga me paternam experiri
" atque agnoſcere; in hoc præſertim, quod ſolante
" ipſo atque animum confirmante in ejus divina
" voluntate acquieſcam; quid is largitus mihi ſit,
" quam quid negaverit ſæpius cogitans: poſtremo
" nolle me cum ſuo quovis rectiſſime facto, facti
" mei conſcientia permutare, aut recordatione
" ejus grata mihi ſemper atque tranquillam de-
" ponere. Ad cæcitatem denique quod attinet,
" malle me, ſi neceſſe eſt, meam, quam vel
" ſuam, More, vel tuam. Veſtra imis ſenſibus
" immerſa, nequid ſani videatis aut ſolidi, mentem
" obcæcat: mea, quam objicitis, colorem tantum-
" modo rebus & ſuperficiem demit; quod verum
" ac ſtabile in iis eſt, contemplationi mentis non

" adimit. Quam multa deinde ſunt quæ videre " nollem, quam multa quæ poſſem libens non " videre, quàm pauca reliqua ſunt quæ videre " cupiam. Sed neque ego cæcis, afflictis, mœren- " tibus, imbecillis, tametſi vos id miſerum ducitis, " aggregari me diſcrutior; quandoquidem ſpes eſt, " eo me propius ad miſericordiam ſummi patris " atque tutelam pertinere. Eſt quoddam per " imbecillitatem, præeunte Apoſtolo, ad maxi- " mas vires iter: *ſim ego debiliſſimus, dummodo in* " *mea debilitate immortalis ille & melior vigor eo* " *ſe efficaciùs exerat; dummodo in meis tenebris* " *divini vultus lumen eo clarius eluceat; tum enim* " *infirmiſſimus ero ſimul & validiſſimus, cæcus* " *eodem tempore & preſpicaciſſimus; hac poſſim* " *ego infirmitate conſummari, hac perfici, poſſim* " *in hac obſcuritate ſic ego irradiari.*"

Milton was thought by many, in his controverſial defence of rebellion, to have reſembled too much his own fallen angel, for he alſo had a powerful and ſeducing eloquence, and could make the worſe appear the better cauſe. This cenſure of Milton is too ſevere; but they who attack others with ſeverity muſt expect retaliation.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The pride of human reaſon.— Falſe philoſophy interfering in divinity.— commonly founded in pride. Human infirmity ought to teach piety and humility.

THERE is nothing of which a thinking man is ſo feelingly convinced as of his own weakneſs and fallibility. He comes into the world in a forlorn and helpleſs ſtate; and continues ignorant of his own nature, and of every thing around him, till he has been informed by long inſtruction, and the concluſions drawn from perſonal experience. Paſſions, prejudices, diſeaſes, accidents, interpoſe to prevent him from forming opinions on which he can depend with certainty even in the common affairs of life. Moſt men are ready to acknowledge this in writing and converſation, and yet few appear to act as if they really believed it to be true.

What is more common than obſtinacy? How reluctant are men to confeſs themſelves to have been in an error! One would conclude from this circumſtance that they are fully confident of rectitude. Yet this is not the caſe, and their conſcience convinces them of the fallibility, while their pride intervenes to prohibit the avowal.

But the pride of human reaſon is no where more viſible than in the writings of thoſe who aſſume the name of Philoſophers, and *Men of a liberal way of thinking*. They claim the right and

the ability of deciding on every ſubject which can fall under the human cognizance. They judge with dogmatiſm; they pronounce with authority.

Religion is their favorite topic; and in the exerciſe of their diſputatious talents, they ſit in judgment on their Maker and his ordinances. They ſee, indeed, that Chriſtianity is addreſſed to ſomething very different from the reaſoning faculty; but they acknowledge no criterion of truth but reaſon, and think at the ſame time, that none poſſeſs it in a ſtate of ſo much perfection as themſelves. According to a vulgar phraſe, they ſee further into a *Millſtone than he who picks it.*

Their uſual pretence, in their attacks upon religion, is a love of truth, and an univerſal benevolence, which cannot endure that men ſhould any longer wander in darkneſs, terrified with the hobgoblins of ſuperſtition. They reſolve, moſt generouſly, to illuminate the path by the lamp of their own reaſon, and to lay the ghoſts by *their good learning.* They riſe in their own conceit the ſolar luminaries of the moral hemiſphere.

The writings of theſe philoſophers ſeem to conſtitute that which is ſtyled in the Scriptures, Vain Philoſophy. It is that knowledge which puffeth up, and has no connexion with the charity which edifieth. The motives of theſe men appear to have little reſemblance to thoſe of real benignity of diſpoſition; for they evidently originate in the pride of reaſon; and pride is incompatible with true benevolence, though it often makes pretenſions

to it for the accompliſhment of its mean and ſelfiſh purpoſes.

That the writings of many modern ſceptics or philoſophers, as they are frequently named, originate in pride, is collected from the ſtyle of authority and deciſion, with which they pronounce on ſyſtems and opinions which the reſt of the world either readily receive or fear to reject. They muſt ſuppoſe either that they are wiſer or honeſter than others, who in other reſpects appear to be their equals or ſuperiors, who have had a ſimilar or better education, and all other opportunities of deriving equal inſtruction.

They are very fond of accuſing all men who think differently from themſelves of prejudice. They ſuppoſe themſelves elevated to that beautiful and enviable height, which Lucretius deſcribes when he ſpeaks of the happineſs of being enabled, by philoſophy, to look down and enjoy the errors of thoſe who are unenlightened.

Self, it muſt be acknowledged, after all our pretenſions to public ſpirit, is the principle of moſt of our actions. If men were openly to profeſs it, no one would liſten to their doctrines. They therefore pretend a zeal for truth, for mankind, for every thing generous, right, and good; and, when there is no danger, offer to expoſe themſelves to every inconvenience in the accompliſhment of their god-like intentions. So plauſible a prologue ſecures an audience. The philoſopher gains his object; he is diſtinguiſhed, and his vanity is gratified. If he is at the ſame time approved, his

avarice and ambition are rewarded with popular favor.

While a writer takes the part of virtue and decency, and of every thing which contributes to promote the real and substantial happiness of mankind, the world ought not too scrupulously to investigate his secret motives; but to give him credit for the generosity which he professes, and, perhaps, believes himself to feel. But when distinction is sought by attacking every thing sacred and serious, the vain philosopher ought to be punished by that which will hurt him most, universal contempt and neglect. To oppose him with argument gratifies his vanity, and rewards him for his labors. Truth was not so much his object as fame; and therefore if he raises himself to distinction, he little regards the cause which he undertook to support. He has gained the eminence. Let the ladder fall.

It is observed in all departments, that the least skilful are the most confident, and that true merit is known by no criterion so certain as by modesty. The wisest among the ancient philosophers appear to have been men of real humility. This amiable quality is very remarkable in the great Socrates; but the instance is too well known to be formally and tediously repeated.

There is an example infinitely more illustrious. The Saviour of mankind never exhibited the least appearance of such confidence as a modern prater of scepticism, who thinks blasphemy wit, and singularity wisdom.

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There is, I think, every reaſon to believe, that nothing would contribute more to real wiſdom and happineſs than an univerſal diffidence in the ſtrength of unaſſiſted reaſon. In order to produce the growth of this virtue, pride, that noxious weed, muſt be deſtroyed from the roots. Nothing amiable, nothing of true chriſtian charity, can flouriſh in the heart which is over-run by the pride of human reaſon. Philoſophers have been always diſputing on the *ſummum bonum*, and on the nature of true wiſdom. The chriſtian diſcovers, without the intervention of learning, that the grace of God is the higheſt happineſs to which his nature can attain, and that the only wiſdom is that which leads to humility and charity. God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

It is remarkable, that ſome of the greateſt philoſophers of this country were not only religious in their lives and manners, but defenders of religion in their writings; ſuch were Bacon, Newton, Locke, and Addiſon; men, whoſe principal excellence was the vigor of their reaſon. I entertain a due reſpect for the ingenuity and veracity of many among the modern philoſophers, but I do not conceive that they are better qualified, either by nature or by art, than their illuſtrious predeceſſors, Bacon, Newton, Locke, and Addiſon. If ever any man could be ſuppoſed to be juſtly proud of human reaſon, I ſhould imagine it might be the author of the Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, the diſcoverer of the True Syſtem of the Univerſe, the inventor of the Novum Organum. Some

may not chuſe to place Mr. Addiſon among theſe, becauſe he is eſteemed by metaphyſical freethinkers, rather a polite ſcholar than a profound philoſopher; though it is my own opinion, that few of thoſe who pretend to philoſophy have ſhown an underſtanding ſuperior to that which diſtinguiſhes this pure and elegant moraliſt.

Theſe great men carried their improvements to a moſt admirable height; but they never loſt ſight of human weakneſs, of their dependence upon God, of the true goſpel philoſophy, and of that love and charity which conſtitutes the trueſt wiſdom, and moſt ſubſtantial happineſs in the preſent ſtate. I would rather follow the examples of ſuch men than obtain the applauſe of every pretending wit and critic, who dictates blaſphemous witticiſms in the ſchool of Voltaire.

No philoſophy is valuable which does not contribute to render its poſſeſſor rationally and permanently happy. The knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt can alone effect this moſt deſirable purpoſe. All other wiſdom originates in the pride of man, and will prove his weakneſs by terminating in his miſery. This ſooths and calms the boſom under all the diſquietudes of a turbulent life; and when the clouds of adverſity, ſickneſs, or death impend, points out a ſerene ſky. This is the *panacea* in moral philoſophy, the remedy for all diſtempers of the mind. This is the panoply that ſhields the wearers from every enemy. Life, without the comforts of the chriſtian philoſophy, is a ſtate of

wretchedneſs; but with them, it anticipates the enjoyments of a better ſtate.

Happy are thoſe who feel the truth of this doctrine at an early period of their lives. The ſooner they begin to live to God, the ſooner they begin to taſte of real felicity. All elſe is ſhadowy and vaniſhes into nothing, at the very moment of fancied acquiſition.

But does this happineſs fall into our poſſeſſion without any efforts on our own parts? Certainly not. Much is to be done by us, and the earlier we begin, in this work, as in all others, the better we ſhall ſucceed, and the ſooner be happy. It is the grand purpoſe of our exiſtence, and ought to be the firſt and laſt labor of our lives. Habitual prayer and ſerious reading and reflection are the moſt efficacious means of giving the mind a devotional propenſity.

The pleaſures of religion are the greateſt of which our nature is capable. They are acknowledged to be ſuch by all who have felt them in their purity. Thoſe indeed who have formed wrong notions of religion, or who have been educated and introduced into life without a due tincture of it, attribute all ſuch aſſertions to hypocriſy or enthuſiaſm. Their reaſon is their god, and they worſhip it with all the attachment of real adoration. But the time will come, when they will wiſh that they had depended leſs upon themſelves, and more upon HIM WHO IS MIGHTY TO SAVE; before whom, the wiſdom of the moſt

arrogant and moſt learned philoſopher is little better than infantine imbecillity.

To know oneſelf was once deemed the higheſt wiſdom: and what can a man learn with more certainty from the knowledge of himſelf, than that he is a poor, dependent creature; and, with all his confidence in the beſt natural abilities, improved by the beſt cultivation, unable fully to comprehend the common objects which he ſees around; unable to ſecure his happineſs, or his conſiſtency, a ſingle hour; and therefore then only capable of ſecure joy and permanent tranquillity when he throws himſelf into the arms of Omnipotence.

CHAP. VI.

The tædium of literary ſameneſs — Conſtant imitation. — Affectation. — The ſame modes of varying. O imitatores ſervum pecus!

THE phyſicians call a medicine which contains efficient ingredients in a ſmall volume, and of a pleaſant or tolerable taſte, an elegant medicine. Moraliſts, who are the phyſicians of the mind, have uſually been endeavouring to render their preſcriptions palatable by the form of adminiſtering them, and to preſent their readers with an elegant medicine, a moral cathartic, gilded to pleaſe the eye, and ſweetened to ſooth the taſte.

He who writes on morality uſually gives advice; a free gift, which is the leaſt acceptable of all bounties, as, while it adds to our wiſdom, it derogates from what we value a great deal more, our pride or ſelf-eſteem. The draught is nauſeous, though ſalubrious; hence the writer endeavours to borrow ſomething from art, to render it an elegant medicine. He infuſes into the phial a little ſyrup of ſugar, or a comfortable cordial, that the patient may not make wry faces, or throw it out of the window.

No form has in England been more frequently choſen for this purpoſe, than that of diurnal or periodical papers. Doctor Addiſon, and a few others, eminent in the faculty, made them very agreeable; but *repetatur hauſtus* has been ſo frequently put on the labels by ſucceeding practitioners, that the ſalutary cordial, the *confectio cardiaca*, operates at laſt like a doſe of ipecacuanha.

Yet every mode of introducing an air of novelty has been tried by the periodical writers. Allegories, Diaries, Eaſtern Tales, Little Novels, Letters from Correſpondents, Humor, Irony, Argument, and Declamation, have been uſed to diverſify the form of conveying inſtruction. They were ſucceſsful, till the repetition of the ſame modes of diverſification cauſed a nauſea.

Occidit miſeros crambe repetita.

The Spectator himſelf talked ſo much about the fair ſex, that, as tradition informs us, his readers began to be weary, and wiſhed him to

take his leave. What his animadverſions on tuckers, petticoats, and fans, might effect, I do not know; but at preſent all ſuch papers, though they may raiſe a ſmile, ſeem to produce little attention, and no reformation.

But though the modes of conveying inſtruction may loſe their eſtimation by continual recurrence, yet inſtruction itſelf can never be depreciated if it is founded on the ſolid baſis of experience and ſound reaſon; and perhaps the beſt method of conveying it is that which is plainly addreſſed to the underſtanding, without any contrivance or laborious attempt at novelty of form, which too often terminates in affectation. In an Eaſtern tale I may be pleaſed with the language, with the imagery, with the ingenuity of the invention; but as to the moral or inſtruction to be derived from it, it would at preſent be more agreeable and efficacious if delivered in plain terms, without thoſe viſible and palpable artifices, which are now become trite.

Allegories alſo are now, from their frequency, more valuable for the diction and ſplendid figures which the fancy paints, than for their moral efficacy; which might the be better accompliſhed in a leſs operoſe and indiſtinct manner.

Evident imitation, if unſucceſsful, becomes contemptible; and even if it reſemble its original, it is ſtill conſidered, like a good copy of a fine picture, of a very ſubordinate value, and ſeldom pleaſes. Diaries of Belles and Beaus, Extraordinary Intelligence, Croſs Readings of newſpapers, are

now become ſtale and threadbare pieces of wit. Indeed, every mode of humor which the Spectator adopted has been imitated ſo often as to have loſt its grace.

The plain and unaffected manner of uttering ideas and ſentiments can never be out of faſhion; becauſe it is the very manner which nature herſelf teaches. Apparel can never be out of faſhion, though the cut of a coat, the ſhape of a ſhoe, may vary every month. The great advantage of adhering to nature in the works of art, is, that what was once excellent will always be ſo; what once gave a rational pleaſure will continue to give it, like a natural ſpring, which, though it may not throw its waters into ſo great a variety of forms as the artificial fountain of the engineer, will continue to ſupply an exuberant ſtream when the other is exhauſted or deſtroyed.

Labitur & labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

Good ſenſe, expreſſed in good language, intereſting ſubjects of learning familiarized to the curious, or rendered agreeable to the idle, cannot fail of being acceptable, though they ſhould appear in the unadorned dreſs of a direct diſcourſe; but in the imitative garb of others they are in danger of becoming ridiculous.

The very names ſigned to ſuppoſititious letters in periodical works become nauſeous by continual repetition. The Spectator has a great number of them, and they were entertaining enough for once; but who can bear, without exclaiming,

Ohe jam satis est! the never ceasing iteration of Kitty Termagant, Susanna Frost, Ralph Crotchett, Abraham Spy, Mary Meanwell, Rebecca Nettletop, Eve Afterday, which occur to me in a moment on casually opening a volume of the Spectator? Imitation of things so easily imitable becomes flat and vapid. It is better to communicate the sentiments intended to be conveyed by these characters and names without a veil, than with one so transparent and so antiquated, as neither to serve the purpose of a covering nor of an ornament.

The pourtraying of characters in Greek and Latin names, such as Curio, Gelasimus, Belinda, Opsinous, though a very convenient mode of conveying instruction, begins, from its everlasting use, to be rather irksome. It was at first a lively way of speaking an author's thoughts in the imaginary character. But the method is so common, that the natural way of addressing the reader is now more agreeable and effectual. When fictitious names were first used, the reader was sometimes, usefully for himself, deceived into an opinion, that a real character was concealed under the mask; but he now knows, as well as the author himself, that it is only an imitative trick, used when invention is at a loss to diversify the discourse.

It is the imitation, for ever repeated, of mere modes of conveying ideas, which renders periodical papers of great merit rather distasteful. Good thoughts delivered in this miscellaneous manner cannot fail of being agreeable, provided the reader

is not palled with attempts to pleaſe him by mere tricks, which he has been ſo much accuſtomed to already, as not to be in the leaſt pleaſed by them, but rather to conſider them as impediments to the main buſineſs, the diſcovery of the doctrine or opinion of the author.

The inſertion of letters from pretended correſpondents is a convenient mode of expreſſing ſome ideas and characters which an author could not ſo well, or ſo probably expreſs in his own character. It may be allowed for its convenience; but, when unneceſſary, it ceaſes at preſent to pleaſe, becauſe the artifice is viſible, and no longer leaves the reader in doubt whether the letter comes from a real correſpondent, which was the original deception. The reader knows, that he who ſends and he who receives and comments on the letter, is the ſame perſon; and if he looks at the ſignature he may give a ſhrewd gueſs what is the ſubject, as the name is commonly a compound of the epithets or words which deſcribe the character. But I muſt take care here (for *Cynthius aurem vellit*) not to make a law which will operate againſt myſelf; for, in the courſe of theſe Winter Evenings, I ſhall ſometimes have occaſion for a country or a London correſpondent, and muſt ſolicit the reader's indulgence.

Indeed the plan of diurnal eſſays has been ſo frequently purſued, as to be in danger of producing that effect which a ſatiety, even of excellence, is too apt to produce on human nature, one of whoſe ſtrongeſt appetites is for novelty.

But if affectation, and too servile an imitation, are avoided, there can be no rational objection to communicating ideas on any subject of morality, learning, science, arts, or taste, in short miscellaneous treatises. Modes may be disgustful, but truth and reason must continue to give satisfaction, whether communicated in the form and under the title of diurnal or periodical essays, or of just and legitimate systems.

Just and legitimate systems are properly addressed to one kind of readers; but not to all. They are perhaps improving and delightful to professed students; while to the general reader, they appear heavy and tedious. *Laudant illa, sed ista legunt.*

Readers may be subdivided into a thousand different classes. In a comprehensive division, they may be separated into the professional, philosophical, and miscellaneous.

Professional readers, those who read either to qualify for the assumption of a profession, or to regulate the conduct and exercise of one already assumed, require regular and complete treatises, according to Aristotle's description, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, in all the formality of method. However tedious and dull, they must go through such books as furnish professional knowledge. Their reading is a duty. They must proceed in the appointed road, like the stage coach, whatever be the weather, and whether the country, and prospects around it, are pleasant or dreary. They must drink at the fountain head, whether

the water flows copiously in spontaneous streams, or whether it is to be drawn from the well by persevering labor.

Philosophical readers, those whose abilities, opportunities, and ambition, lead them to attempt improvements in science, must also penetrate to the *interiora rerum*, and cut through rocks and mountains, like Hannibal, in ascending the eminences to which they aspire. They are not to be diverted in their progress, by listening, like the shepherd, to the purling of the streamlet, and the song of the nightingale, nor by culling the cowslip of the meadows. Their very toil is a delight; and they come forth at last Bacons, Boyles, Lockes, and Newtons.

But the miscellaneous readers are certainly the most numerous; and, as they form not only a majority, but a very respectable part of mankind, their literary wants are worthy of supply. They consist of all conditions, of the young and the old, the gentleman and the merchant, the soldier, the mariner, the subordinate practitioner in medicine and law, of those who hold places in public offices, of the philosopher and professor, in their leisure; and lastly, though not the least numerous or important, of the *ladies*. A beard was once the mark of a philosopher; but in the present age it is not uncommon to see wisdom and taste united with a fine assemblage of features in a delicate female face. Such students are not to be sent to dull libraries, to pore over folios larger than their band-boxes.

This being a commercial country, let us ſuppoſe the caſe of a merchant, whoſe education has been liberal, and whoſe turn of mind gives him a taſte for the pleaſure of polite letters. His time is much occupied by the neceſſary employments of his counting houſe. He muſt write letters, attend the Exchange, and ſee company; yet he has a love for books, and wiſhes to ſpend ſome time in his book-room. He goes to his villa in the evening, and remains there a day or two; when ſome weighty concern calls for all his attention. In a life of buſineſs, with little leiſure, and with that little liable to interruption, ſhall he read folios and dry treatiſes, in the Ariſtotelian ſtyle and regularity? He wiſhes he could perhaps; but he reads for amuſement chiefly, and he requires ſomething which he can read and comprehend in a ſhort time. What ſo well adapted as an elegant miſcellany? and hence it is that the Spectator, one of the firſt books calculated for univerſal uſe, was univerſally read, and ſtill continues in high eſtimation.

" The PHILOSOPHER teacheth," ſays Sir Philip Sydney, " but he teacheth obſcurely, ſo as the " learned only can underſtand him; that is to " ſay, *he teacheth them that are already taught.*"— For the people there muſt be a POPULAR philoſopher; and he muſt addreſs them, not like a profeſſor in the dreary ſchools of an antiquated univerſity, but like Socrates, walking among the people, and familiarizing his doctrines to the underſtanding and taſte of thoſe who are found in the ſhip, the warehouſe, the Exchange, the office,

and

and even the manufacture. Life, at all times, in every part, under every paſſion and every action, admits of moral philoſophy. It is not neceſſary that there ſhould always be a profeſſor's chair, a pulpit, a ſchool, a formal lecture; ſince at the table, in the parlour, in the garden, in the fields, there is occaſion and opportunity for familiar inſtruction. A pocket volume, an Enchiridion, or a Manual, accompanies a man in his walks, in his chariot, in the coffee-houſe, and in all the haunts of buſy man.

Miſcellanies indeed of this ſort are not without the ſanction of ancient examples, if any thing but their own utility is neceſſary to recommend them. All works which bear the title of *Saturæ*, are miſcellaneous. What are Seneca's Epiſtles but moral miſcellanies? What are Plutarch's *Opuſcula*? What Horace's *Sermones*? None of them ſyſtematical treatiſes, but popular eſſays, highly pleaſing and improving to the people at large, for whom they were deſigned. I could enlarge the liſt by the Deipnoſophiſts of Athenæus, the Saturnalia of Macrobius, and many works of the grammarians, or profeſſed literati of early ages. The mind is nouriſhed by variety of food, the *farrago libelli*, like the body by fiſh, fleſh, fowl, and vegetables.

If a writer can be ſo happy as to preſent his reader with good ſenſe, ſound and juſt reaſoning well expreſſed, his work can never be entirely antiquated; becauſe reaſon, the internal man, like the external, muſt always continue the ſame. Men may be diſguſted with the tricks of cookery,

and ſick of made diſhes fancifully ſeaſoned, and conſtantly ſerved up; but ſubſtantial food will always be reliſhed by gueſts whoſe palates are not vitiated by diſeaſe.

That form in which the ideas of a miſcellaneous writer can be moſt clearly and agreeably exhibited is certainly to be preferred; but every proper ornament of ſtyle and method may be judiciouſly applied, without having recourſe to little arts which have loſt their grace and power by being ſo frequently uſed already, as to be anticipated, and even nauſeated by the reader, who is apt to yawn over them and exclaim,

Tædet harum quotidianarum formarum.

CHAP. VII.

The little tendency of a life of letters, WITHOUT A PROFESSION, *to make a man's fortune, or raiſe him to civil honors, preferment, or favor among the great — Gloria quantalibet, quid erit ſi gloria tantum? — Its own conſolations and enjoyments are ſtill ſufficient to recommend it.*

SIR William Jones, whoſe early acquaintance with oriental learning and premature accompliſhments in all polite letters, promiſed an uncommon eminence in the maturer periods of his life, laments, in one of his laſt publications, that the profeſſion of letters, though laborious, leads to little benefit; that it contributes neither to enrich

nor elevate, in civil life, either the professor or his family. He therefore takes a tender leave of the beloved region of the Muses,

——Et desertis Aganippes
Vallibus.

offers himself a votary of wealth and honor in the profession of the law. He relinquishes the barren hill of Parnassus, and seems to be cultivating with success a richer field.

The first love is not easily forgotten; and Sir William, amidst his severer studies, still devotes some attention to his old friends the Muses, and the public will probably be gratified by many flowers of Asiatic growth, selected by his elegant taste.

But what he so feelingly lamented is certainly true. The finest compositions, the most laborious works of mere literature, would never have made him a judge, or raised him one step on the ladder of ambition. As children admire the peacock's plumage, and wish to pluck a feather from his tail; so the great, who have sense enough, admire fine writing, and derive a pleasure from the perusal. They read, are pleased; they praise and forget. Their interest must be exerted to pay the tutor of their children at the public expense; or to secure parliamentary votes by bartering for them the cure of souls, or the *otium cum dignitate* of some rich cathedral. "Such an one is an excellent poet, and I hear the poor man is in narrow circumstances; but really every thing in my gift has been engaged

to the members for two or three boroughs, and the minister's list for prebendaries has been for some time filled with the travelling companions and domestic tutors of several young lords who will have great weight in both houses. I wish I could do something for so ingenious a man; but there is nothing to be done for ourselves in parliament without these sugar-plums to give away. The church indeed furnishes plenty of them, but still they are all engaged, and the hungry mouths seem to multiply faster than the douceurs can be supplied. I wish Mr. Bayes well, and, if he publishes by subscription, he may set my name down for a copy; any thing more at present it is out of my power to do for him."

Thus the writer who has more ability, and who has perhaps been more industrious than many in a lucrative or high political employment, is considered in the light of a mendicant, and even then dismissed to his cell to mourn over the ingratitude and venality of the world.

To seek learning and virtue is one thing, and to seek preferment and patronage another. The pursuits are often incompatible; and let not him repine at the want of patronage and preferment who has been in his study and among his books, when he should have been, consistently with the pursuit of patronage and preferment, at a levee, or busy in *electioneering*. If he wrote successfully in politics, or if he managed a newspaper full of falshood and virulent calumny, he might get something, when his party should prevail in the

grand conteſt for power and profit. But poetry, hiſtory, ſcience, morality, and divinity, make no votes, and add no ſtrength to party; are every body's buſineſs, and for that reaſon, according to a vulgar remark, the care of nobody.

If he had employed his time in engroſſing deeds as an attorney, or in poſting his books as a merchant or banker, or in driving the quill in the Eaſt Indies, he might, if good fortune had attended him, have been by this time a Member of Parliament by purchaſe, and then, by voting for a number of years for himſelf, and talking two or three hours plauſibly on the right ſide for his own intereſt, have ſat down at laſt on a woolſack with a coronet on his head. As a writer on literature only, he would ſtill have continued in his garret, though the whole nation ſhould have been improved and entertained by his labors, and future generations may receive equal pleaſure and advantage from them.

The lucre of literary works falls chiefly to the lot of the venders of them; and the moſt eminent writers, who had nothing but what their works brought them, would be likely to ſtarve. There are inſtances, indeed, of literary drudges, who, undertaking mere compilations and low works of little ingenuity and invention, have gained a livelihood; but a man of genius can never ſtoop to ſuch employment, unleſs through mere neceſſity; and then being in a ſtate of ſervitude, and unable to chuſe his own ſubjects, and the manner of treating them, all his ſpirit evaporates, all his fire

is damped, and he becomes a mere hireling, seeking gain and disregarding reputation.

Publishing by subscription is, in the present state of things, a species of beggary. A man of that independent spirit which marks great abilities, had rather engage himself in a handicraft employment than solicit the subscriptions of those who pretend to despise his book, however valuable, because it has solicited their reluctant contribution. Poverty, and a starving family, may urge a man to ask subscriptions in this age, for it is certainly rather less ignominious than housebreaking, and attended with much less hazard to the person. But would not the same time, and the same ability, the same industry exerted in a counting house, or in a shop, have obtained a better reward, with less contumely? All I contend to establish is, that they who study *letters*, as mere *literati*, without a profession, will usually derive from them little to gratify their avarice or ambition. Sir William Jones's doctrine and conduct in relinquishing a life of letters for a life of business, are founded on actual observation of the living world, and the state of things in the present age.

Many contend that there should be certain public rewards appropriated by government to literary merit. I fear they would be bestowed by interest and party on moderate, or on no merit; like some of the professorships in the universities; like the Gresham professorships in London; like doctors degrees; like many sinecures, for which

the qualification consists solely in the ability to procure them.

Who is to be the judge and awarder of the prize? Contemporaries often behold living merit through the false medium either of envy or national prejudice. If a writer were rewarded by one party, another would from that moment exert itself to depreciate his character, his abilities, and his works; so that a man of real modesty and merit, who valued his fame or his peace, would often wish to decline the emolument, which would then fall to some bold and empty pretender. How much envy and detraction have been occasioned by the pensions, bestowed upon a few in the present reign? A man who gains an income equal to the best of them, in a low trade, thanks nobody but God, and his own industry for it; but the pensioned, or patronized author, has an everlasting debt of gratitude to pay, is frequently doomed to unmanly submission, and surrounded by enviers who leave nothing unattempted to lessen his happiness, and lower his fame.

Then welcome a competent mediocrity with liberty and peace. Let the man of genius love his muse, and his muse shall reward him with sweet sensations; with pictures and images of beautiful nature, and with a noble generosity of spirit, which can look down with pity, contempt, or total indifference, on patrons who have often as little sense to understand, as they have liberality to reward him.

Milton was poor and unpatronized, and so was Shakspeare. A miserable pittance bought that poem which is one of the first honors, not only of this nation, but of human nature. But is it not credible, that Milton and Shakspeare had internal delights, a luxury of soul, unknown to the dull tribe who are often rewarded with pensions, prebends, canonries, bishoprics, and which many patrons, with all their pomp and power, would envy, if they were capable of conceiving the exquisite pleasure.

Let the republic of letters be ever free; and let no bribery and corruption prevail in it. Where patronage interferes, independence is too often destroyed. I except the noble instance of Mr. Dyson's patronage of the poet Akenside.

Writing, it may be said, made Addison a minister of state. It raised Prior to public employment from abject obscurity. Burnet, Somers, Locke, Davenant, Steele, and others in former days, owed their wealth and elevation to their pen. Their success occasioned such numerous competitors that they injured each other. The public was often glutted. Patriots or ministers found other ways to effect their purposes than persuasion and argument, invective or panegyric. The prevalence of corruption, rendered the assistance of argument less necessary; but still politics are the best field for writers who mean only to serve their interest, and to improve their worldly condition.

But no kind of writing in the preſent age is peculiarly fit for making a fortune. Auctioneers, dancing-maſters, quack doctors, balloonifts, actreſſes, opera dancers, equeſtrian performers, perfumers, theſe are they whom the Britiſh nation honors with fame, or rewards with affluence.

With reſpect indeed to employing abilities on general ſubjects of morals and literature, in which no particular party or ſect is intereſted, one muſt ſay, with an ingenious writer,

" Whoever is reſolved to employ his hours " and his labor in this manner, ſhould conſider " himſelf as one who lays out his fortune in mend- " ing *the high ways*. MANY ARE BENEFITED, " AND FEW ARE OBLIGED. If he eſcapes obloquy, " it is very well.

" Triumpho, ſi licet, latere tecto, abſcedere."

And yet ſuch labors alone uſually deſcend to poſterity, and ſuch chiefly produce permanent advantage to the public. Who regards the petty controverſies of little ſectaries, or even the violent ſtruggles of public ſtateſmen and politicians, after the lapſe of half a century?

Happy are they who, free from ſordid motives,

——— Virtutem amplectuntur ipſam
Præmia ſi tollas. ———

They will not be without their reward in the final reſult of things; and, indeed, their internal ſatisfaction is more than a recompence for the want of ſecular emolument and honor.

" Man wants but little, nor that little long."

CHAP. VIII.

Of Mottoes, Quotations, Marginal Notes, &c.— Apologies for them — If not always useful, yet commonly ornamental — If troublesome or unintelligible, may be neglected.

THE laborious writers of the last century presented most of their works to the public in bulky folios, with a small letter, a large page, a narrow margin, and a great abundance of notes and citations. It was the literary fashion of the time; but the fashion is so much altered, that though the margins are now usually large enough to admit a greater quantity in notes and quotations than the text itself amounts to, yet you may read works consisting of many volumes without stumbling on a single quotation, or finding the uniformity of the beautiful page violated by one marginal comment. Formerly, as you journeyed through a book, elucidations in the margin attended your progress like lamps by the road side; but now, it may be presumed, books shine like phosphorus, or the glow-worm, with an internal lustre, and require not the assistance of extrinsic illumination.

That I approve of quotations myself, is evident from my practice; though I have not been without sensible hints, that books would be more saleable without Latin and Greek; the very sight of which is apt, I am told, to disgust those who

have forgotten the attainments of the grammar-ſchool. I cannot help it. If a paſſage which I have read occurs to my mind while I am writing, down it goes; and I have the conſolation, that if it diſpleaſes ſome, it may poſſibly pleaſe others. Of this I am ſecure: it has pleaſed myſelf; and I have honeſtly confeſſed, that my own amuſement forms a very conſiderable part of my motives both to write and tranſcribe.

But ſeriouſly, there appear to be ſome juſt objections to the faſhion which crowded the page with paſſages from various authors, and interrupted the context by references continually occurring.

The reader, it may be ſaid, either attends to them, or he does not; if he attends to them, not perhaps being able to attend ſufficiently to two things at once, he neglects the context for a time, or, at leaſt, loſes that ardor which he might have contracted in continual reading, and which probably would have contributed more to his conviction than any ſide lights derived from the commentary. If he does not attend to them, in conſequence of his opinion that they may be an impediment to his purpoſe, they might, ſo far as he is concerned, have been omitted, and the book would have been a leſs evil by being of leſs magnitude.

They are often in languages unknown to the Engliſh reader, and theſe conduce to no other purpoſe but to offend and to mortify him. I have no doubt but that many Engliſh books have been injured in their ſale and circulation by the notes

with which they abounded. Many persons of good sense, and well informed understanding, do not chuse to be reminded, on every page, of their ignorance of ancient languages, and are a little afraid of being asked by their children or others, the meaning of passages which they cannot explain.

Notes are often inserted ostentatiously and improperly. The authors seem to be more anxious in the display of their own attainments than in convincing or entertaining their readers. A few Greek words, and a little Hebrew, conduce very much to raise the admiration of the ignorant or half learned, who know not with what ease quotations are made by means of Indexes, Dictionaries, *Florilegia*, *Spicilegia*, *Eclogæ*, and Synopses.

It is, I believe, by no means uncandid to suppose, that quotations have been thus easily and craftily multiplied to swell a volume to a marketable size, and to increase the price. The artifice in this case deserves the indignation of the reader, as it resembles the fraud of the huckster, who, in vending his fruit, makes use of a measure half filled with foreign matter, or with a false bottom placed in the middle. If the context of such writers may be compared to the kernel of the nut, the notes and quotations may be said to resemble the husk, yet, by a preposterous disproportion, the husk often contains a much greater quantity than the kernel. Who can wonder if the disgusted reader, in a case like this, throws away both kernel and shell?

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But though something may be said against notes, quotations, and mottoes; yet more, I believe, may be advanced in their favor. If a reader thinks them of little use, or does not understand them, it is easy to neglect them. It is true that they occupy a space on the page, and increase the size of the volume; but these are inconveniencies of little consequence, compared with the pleasure and information which they afford to scholars and attentive readers.

A reader is often referred in the margin to another author who has treated the same subject better or more fully, or in a different style, so as to afford additional information or new amusement.

If the passage be transcribed and inserted in the volume before him, the reader is able to consider it without the trouble of recurring to his library; a pleasant circumstance, which saves both time and trouble, and, I should think, could not fail of being agreeable to the indolent student of modern times, who only reads on his sopha over his chocolate, or as he lolls in his chariot, or sits under the hair-dresser.

It often happens that the quotations constitute the most valuable part of a book, and the reader may rejoice in such a case, that he has not spent his money and time in vain; which, peradventure, he might have done, had the author inserted nothing but the production of his own brain.

Though quotations and mottoes may be very easily selected and multiplied by means of indexes and dictionaries; yet there is reason to conclude,

that a writer who applies them *properly*, muſt have read, or be capable of reading, the authors from whom they are borrowed; and, in theſe times of univerſal authorſhip, it is ſome comfort to a reader to know that his author is a little acquainted with ancient learning, and able to drink at the fountains of philoſophy. Ignorance may ſometimes wear the maſk of learning, but not conſtantly. A ſhrewd obſerver will diſcover it from the aukwardneſs of the wearer.

The more numerous the ideas which a volume furniſhes, the more valuable it is to be conſidered; as that garden or orchard is the beſt which abounds in the greateſt plenty and variety of fruits and flowers. Some of the fruits and flowers are exotic; but if the flowers are beautiful, ſweet-ſcented, and curious, and the fruit rich and high flavored, who can complain but the peeviſh and diſcontented? You entered the garden in expectation of the common productions of this climate, and you are agreeably ſurpriſed with the magnolia and the pine-apple.

The art of cookery has often been uſed to illuſtrate the art of criticiſm, and though many may prefer a plain cake, and ſay, *Pane egeo, jam Pontificum potiore placentis*, yet the majority will approve a rich one, heightened and improved with ingredients not neceſſary to conſtitute the ſubſtance of a cake, becauſe, as the logicians ſay, they *might be preſent or abſent without the loſs of the ſubject*, (adeſſe aut abeſſe ſine ſubjecti interitu;) but yet, who could with juſtice blame the cook

for adding plums and ſweetmeats? Many have not a taſte for ſuch ſweet things, it may be ſaid; but while the majority have a reliſh for them, and while it is natural, the cook muſt remain without cenſure. Let thoſe who like it not, refuſe it; but let them not condemn the compoſition.

While mottoes and quotations are added with judgment, and in a limited length and number, they muſt be conſidered as valuable additions or pleaſant ornaments; neither would I cenſure an author for inſerting in his works curious and valuable paſſages which he has met with in his reading, any more than the traveller who adorns his houſe, his ſtair-caſe or parlour, with the productions which he has collected in his voyages; they might indeed be ſpared; they are not neceſſary, like the bed, the chairs, and the tables, but, like paintings, they are ornamental and amuſing to the fancy, inſtructive to the underſtanding, and, in ſome meaſure, prove the traveller's authenticity.

But while I approve of judicious mottoes and quotations, I muſt join in reprobating artful and pedantic writers, who crowd their pages with Greek and Latin merely to exalt themſelves in the eyes of the ignorant, and to gratify their vanity. The affectation and crafty accumulation of ſecond-hand ſentences on one ſide, is no leſs contemptible than the ſuperficial pride of many French authors on the other, who call themſelves philoſophers, and who ſcorn to light their tapers at the torches of the ancients; who therefore write volumes without a ſingle Latin or Greek word, confidently

relying on the solidity and copiousness of their own doctrines. Heroic souls in their own estimation! But others, with a detracting voice, will whisper, that the true reason of their totally declining to quote Greek and Latin is, that they understand only their mother tongue.

Quotations have been often misapplied by sceptical and infidel writers for the most dishonorable purposes, to give weight and authority to falshood in the attack of the national religion. A late historian, who has spoiled his book by an unfair attack on Christianity, has been found guilty, by several ingenious answerers, of misquoting, misrepresenting, and mistranslating passages from ancient authors, whom he endeavoured to compel into his service as auxiliaries. But nothing is to be wondered at in one who admires *Nero* for generosity and humanity.

Quotations can then only be objected to with reason when they exceed in length and number, when they mislead the reader by misapplication, when they are neither illustrative nor ornamental, but inserted solely from the motive of pedantic ostentation, or some other sinister inducement. Objections to them arising from idleness, ignorance, or caprice, deserve no notice. They are justified by reason, and by the example of the greatest authors.

The English reader is usually desirous to see Latin and Greek quotations translated. They disappoint him; because much of their beauty and force arises from the original language. Queen

Caroline

Caroline commanded Dr. John Clarke to tranſlate the numerous and fine quotations in Wollaſton's Religion of Nature; he obeyed the Queen, and the quotations were murdered by royal authority.

CHAP. IX.

Character of Salmaſius,—King Charles's apologiſt, and Milton's antagoniſt.—"Audi alteram partem."

CLAUDE de Saumaiſe, the great antagoniſt of Milton, or Claudius Salmaſius, as he is called in his latinized name, was born at Dijon in France, in the year 1596. He was one among the numerous inſtances of early genius and proficiency. When he was ſcarcely fourteen, he was the editor of a book on the primacy of the Pope; and in the ſucceeding year, publiſhed Florus, with notes, dedicated to Johannes Gruter.

His principal works at a maturer age were: Commentarii in Auguſtam Hiſtoriam, Exercitationes Plinianæ in Solinum; Apparatus ſacer; Tractatus de Annis climactericis; Libri de Uſuris, modo Uſurarum & Fœnore Trapezitico; Defenſio Regia pro Carolo primo, & Liber de Tranſubſtantiatione, &c.

He was held in high eſteem by his contemporaries. The Venetians offered him a very conſiderable pecuniary reward, if he would conſent to read three annual lectures in public. He refuſed the offer, from motives of diffidence and modeſty.

The Dutch judged him worthy to ſucceed the great Scaliger. As a divine, a lawyer, a phyſician, a philoſopher, and philologiſt, he maintained a diſtinguiſhed place in the opinions of thoſe of his age, who were beſt enabled to form a judgment. He died in the year 1652, not without leaving an opinion in the minds of many, that his life had been ſhortened by poiſon. After his death, his manuſcripts were burned by his wife, in purſuance of his own requeſt.

His learning was profound and extenſive. To his knowledge of the learned and European languages, he added that of the Arabic, Coptic, Perſic, and Chineſe. He was ſometimes called the walking library, and the miracle of his age. The moſt celebrated ſcholars of his own time, and of that which ſucceeded it, ſpeak in high terms of his learning. The great Grotius ſays of him, "That he had rather paſs over in ſilence the conſummate learning of Claudius Salmaſius, than lower his praiſes through the defect of his own genius." Voſſius, Joſeph Scaliger, and Iſaac Caſaubon, competent judges, are warm in the praiſe of Claudius Salmaſius.

Such is the writer whom Milton has reviled in the moſt contemptuous terms, as a reptile beneath contempt, in his Defence of the People of England. He who ſhould derive his ideas of Salmaſius from Milton's book, would conſider him as a mere pretender to learning, a petty grammarian, and a character unworthy, not only of eſteem, but even of notice.

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Of his character indeed, it is affirmed that he was irritable and resentful; that he had the pride of learning, and the confidence of conscious superiority. Those who felt the weight of his merit, who were scorched by his lustre, or who dissented from him in religious and political principles, did not hesitate to load him with censure. But none of his enemies proceeded to such extremities as the great ornament of English poetry, John Milton.

The truth is, that our ardent champion for the rights of mankind was exasperated beyond measure, by Salmasius's book in defence of King Charles, which could not but reflect severely on the party which had brought that unfortunate monarch to the scaffold. But his confutation of that work would have carried with it more weight, if it had been more argumentative and moderate. It was the sudden effusion of a violent party-spirit; and proceeded less from judgment than from downright anger.

The *Defensio Regia* is acknowledged, even by the friends to the cause, to be unequal to the expectations formed of the author. It is confused and prolix. Salmasius's idea of a *King*, seems to be that of a *despotic potentate*. He considered not duly the different degrees of kingly power. He had no right idea of a limited monarchy. But an author, by no means partial to Salmasius, cannot help expressing himself thus unfavorably of Milton's answer, or *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*: "Excepit eum mordax scriptor Miltonus, sed in "quo desideres prudentiam & equitatem judicii;

" in ſarcaſmo eſt artifex, unde petulans ejus inge-
" nium ſatis ſe prodidit."

Herman. Conring. de Regn. Ang.

Salmaſius was one of thoſe writers who ſeem more ambitious of becoming voluminous, than of writing a few works of finiſhed excellence. He wrote with great haſte, but he was qualified to do ſo, as his memory was richly furniſhed. The materials, though haſtily produced, were generally of intrinſic value; and he did not often give himſelf the trouble to tranſcribe his compoſition, but ſent it to the preſs as it teemed from his prolific mind and memory.

He has confeſſedly more learning than original invention. As a work of great erudition, I admire the *Plinianæ Exercitationes in Solinum.* Solinus himſelf is an author of little value. His work is entitled Polyhiſtor, and dedicated or addreſſed to Adventus. It is chiefly geographical, and, like our modern geographical grammars, gives ſomething of the hiſtory and relates the curioſities of the countries which it deſcribes. Solinus's work fills not more than ſixty-three folio pages; but Salmaſius's Exercitationes upon it, take up near a thouſand, printed cloſely in columns. Salmaſius did not eſteem Solinus's book, though he made uſe of it as a ſubject on which to write almoſt as many annotations as crowd the pages of two large folios. Salmaſius calls Solinus *mirum nugatorem; merum miſcellionem; omnia turbantem & confundentem ſimium* *. Scaliger characterizes him as a

* " Plinium emendare, explicare, & caſtigare, his Exer-
" citationibus propoſui, ſed eo ordine quo compilavit eum Solinus;

moſt futile author. It is certain that he often quotes the words of Pliny, and applies them in a different meaning from that in which they were intended. Salmaſius knew the defects of Solinus, and therefore his choice of his work for the purpoſe of a comment, is no diſgrace to the annotator. The Exercitationes are juſtly held in high eſteem. They furniſh a great variety and quantity of information; and Hugo Grotius calls them, *immenſæ frugis opus.*

In juſtice to a very reſpectable author, I have mentioned theſe circumſtances concerning his character, and the eſtimation in which he was held by the learned of his own age. Milton's ſeverity of cenſure has rendered him an object of hatred and contempt in our country: But now, at laſt, when the rage of party-fury is no more, juſtice muſt hold the balance, and in weighing the merits of Milton and Salmaſius, muſt allot to Milton the praiſe of uncommon genius and learning united; and to Salmaſius, not indeed the praiſe of Milton's genius, but of learning, equal to Milton's, if not ſuperior.

I inſert the following impartial account of Salmaſius from a Lexicographer.

"Claudius Salmaſius, criticus doctiſſimus, "juriſconſultus & orator inſignis, filius Benigni, "ſenatoris parlamenti Divionenſis, ex matre

"quem & ipſum eadem quoque opera non ſolum meliorem facere, "verum etiam *quam malus ſit auctor*, oſtendere, pars eſt inſtituti "noſtri."

SALMASIUS, Exercit. ad 1 Epiſt.

" puriorem religionem hauſit cum lacte; ſtudiis " dein admotus, tam ſtupendos in iis fecit pro- " greſſus, ut vix decennis Græca Latinaque car- " mina feliciter conderet. Exin Pariſiis, Heidel- " bergæ, alibique verſatus, Burdegalam ſe recepit, " uxore ibi ducta. In academiam Oxonienſem " & Pariſienſem, ampliſſimis præmiis invitatus, " ut & alia in loca, Hollandiam prætulit, & " academiam Lugdunenſem per annos aliquam- " multos illuſtravit. Inde tamen a Sueciæ Regina " Holmiam ſe pellici paſſus, ibi æſtatem integram " tranſegit. In Belgium poſtea redux, cum uxorem " ad Spadanas aquas comitaretur; obiit A. C. 1652; " operibus egregiis famam adeptus immortalem."

The following parallel between Grotius and Salmaſius was drawn by D'Argonne.

" Salmaſius had a lively genius and a prodi- " gious memory. All his books are extemporary. " But he did not digeſt the ſubjects which he " treated. Whatever he gave the public, he " gave with diſdain, and as if he was in a paſſion. " He ſeemed to throw his Greek, his Latin, and " all his knowledge, at people's heads.

" Grotius, on the contrary, conſidered every " thing, digeſted every thing, and arranged it " judiciouſly. He pays reſpect to his reader. His " erudition is like a great river, which diffuſes " itſelf far and wide, and does good to all the " world. Every work of Grotius is a maſter-piece " in its kind; a thing unexampled among the an- " cients and moderns. Never did an author make " a better choice of ſubjects. He grows great with

" them, and they grow great under his pen. " *Creſcit cum amplitudine rerum vis ingenii.*"

There was ſomething in the temper and manners of Salmaſius which made him enemies; yet the moſt illuſtrious critics, as I have already hinted, are warm in his praiſe. Voſſius calls him, " Virum nunquam ſatis laudatum, ingens litera- " rum columen." Caſaubon ſays of him, " Eſt " profecto digniſſimus quem omnes boni ament." Grotius characterizes his learning with the epithet *conſummatiſſimam.* It was the poet of Paradiſe Loſt who addreſſed him by the names of fool, blockhead, and rogue. Such is the virulence of party rage!

CHAP X.

On the motives of moral writers.—Unreaſonable to expect a total diſregard to fame.—Profeſſions of philanthropy, entirely excluſive of ſelf-love, little to be believed.

REAL diamonds and gold are rare, hidden, under the earth, or in the beds of rivers; but perhaps truth, as it is more valuable than diamonds and gold, is alſo more difficult to be found in a ſtate of perfect and unſullied purity. A man ſcarcely knows the truth of his own mind, his own avowed and profeſſed ſentiments; ſo juſt is the remark of the Scriptures, THAT THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS, WHO CAN KNOW IT?

Writers, like their fellow-mortals, being frail and imperfect, are very apt to deceive themselves and their readers, in representing the motives which impel them both to compose and to publish their Lucubrations.

If you think it worth while to inspect Prefaces and Dedications, you will find many authors declare, that their chief motive is a desire to inform the understandings, or to correct the morals of the world, regardless of themselves, whether fame or obscurity is to be their final portion. They are contented to withdraw themselves so long as the public receive advantage. While the cause of truth is served, or science increased, their end is fully answered.

If man were a more perfect being than he is found to be in his most informed and improved state beneath the moon, we might believe that writers, who recommend, liberality and public spirit with much strength of argument, were themselves possessed of those qualities in a degree which taught them to forget themselves, as they sometimes profess, in their zeal to promote the welfare of the public; but few men are so elevated as to be divested of self-love. One writer may renounce money; but then perhaps he is impelled by fame: another may renounce fame; but then he is actuated by the love of lucre. If a few have written merely to inform and amend their fellow-creatures, they must have been such as were remarkably elevated and enlightened by the pure principles of Christianity. Heathen philosophy

and human learning produce not such moral heroism.

But what shall we say of those public-spirited writers who compose and publish with the liberal view of delivering us all from superstition, or of *disabusing* us of Christianity. They pretend to an uncommon share of benevolence, they are outrageously philanthropic, and, if their prefaces are to be believed, they mean only to deliver their fellow creatures from the manacles of prejudice. But from the style of dictation which they assume, and the displeasure they express on being convicted of error and fallacy, there is reason to believe that they are under the influence of pride and selfishness; of that peculiar selfishness which leads them, for the sake of gratifying their vanity, and of obtaining distinction among those of whom they affect a contempt, to hazard the disturbance of the repose, and even the destruction of the human race.

There are doubtless many men who certainly discharge the duties of life, in the civil and domestic circles, from a virtuous principle; and very often sacrifice both their ease and their pecuniary interest to the performance of them; but what man shall say that it is his indispensible duty to write, and to print his writings, for the improvement of the public? Who gave him this commission? A man may have an inclination to write his thoughts, and he may also be impelled by the fine feelings of his genius; but will any man who *publishes*, declare that, in doing so, he has no other

motive or ſtimulus whatever but the good of mankind? If he is a good man, he muſt wiſh that his productions may do good; and the hope that they will do good may have weight in prevailing on him to offer them to the public notice; but I believe there is commonly a mixture of vanity even in this laudable motive; and that, if he examines his heart, he will find in it a deſire of diſtinction as a man of letters, and a love of literary fame. He wiſhes, *ſe tollere humo*, to raiſe himſelf while he ſerves others: *Digito monſtrari & dici hic eſt.*

And allowing this to be ſo, where is the ſhame or culpability? And, ſince there is no evil in being impelled to good and uſeful actions partly by the love of fame, why ſhould authors ſtudiouſly diſavow that motive, and hypocritically declare, that they are impelled by no other principle than the deſire of benefiting their fellow-creatures? Such pretenſions are the mere cant of authorſhip; a flimſy covering, intended to conceal that which is no diſgrace, ſince it is found to be the attendant of the moſt improved ſtate of human nature.

I know of few better men and better writers than Cicero. But Cicero felt, and avowed a love of fame; and has left it on record, as his opinion, that the beſt and nobleſt natures are the moſt powerfully actuated by the proſpect of glory.

He who is ſincerely influenced in publiſhing his ſentiments by the love of God and man, without any commixture of pride and vanity, is,

I muſt acknowledge, a much greater man than Cicero; and, if any thing can give him this elevation, I repeat, that it muſt be THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST. A man who is deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of his duty *as a Chriſtian*, may be led to believe, and may, in conſequence of his belief, ſhow, by his actions, that all his *talents* are to be uſed in the immediate ſervice of him who gave them, in returning him praiſe, and in diffuſing happineſs among his creatures to the beſt of his abilities. But our gold has always a great mixture of alloy; and he who oſtentatiouſly pretends, that the ore in his compoſition is perfectly pure, is in danger of being conſidered as an impoſtor. The very pretenſion to ſo much purity is itſelf a particle of droſs, and a proof of a baſe mixture.

Let not the author, on one hand, aſſume the appearance of unattainable excellence, and let not the reader, on the other, expect or demand it. In the preſent infirmity of human nature, it is ſufficient that good is intended and produced; though the motive is not entirely free from vanity or ſelf-intereſt. But I think it would be prudent if authors would ceaſe to declare, that their publications are entirely the effect of a regard for mankind, without any wiſh for diſtinction or reward. Such a profeſſion, as it is not rendered probable by uniform experience of human nature in its moſt perfect ſtate, conduces to diminiſh the credit of the author, inſtead of advancing it, and therefore cauſes his book to

have leſs influence on thoſe whom it was intended to benefit. It ſavors of empiriciſm. The diſcerning part of mankind always expect and make allowance for ſome degree of ſelf-love in every act of ſocial beneficence.

Many people are indeed inclined to expect from authors, that perfection which they ſee recommended in their books, and are diſguſted and diſappointed at beholding in them the common frailties and infirmities of human nature*. But if you expect the moraliſt to be as good as the morals he deſcribes or recommends in his writings, then expect your phyſician to be always in health.

* Quotuſquisque philoſophorum invenitur qui diſciplinam non *oſtentationem ſuæ ſcientiæ*, *ſed legem vitæ* putet? Cic.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAP. I.

The supernatural influence of the Deity on the mind of man.—Unreasonable and unphilosophical to disbelieve it.

AS the Winter Evenings approach towards Christmas, I shall sometimes devote my Lucubrations to subjects of more importance to every one of us, than all the literature and philosophy which the world ever admired.

Τίς ἡ τῆς κινήσεως ἀρχὴ ἐν τῇ Ψυχῇ; Δῆλον δε ὥσπερ ἐν τω ὅλῳ, ΘΕΟΣ ϗ πᾶν ἐκείνω. κινεῖ γάρ πως πάντα ΤΟ ΕΝ ἩΜΙΝ ΘΕΙΟΝ. λογου δ' ἀρχὴ οὐ λόγος, ἀλλά τι κρειττον. τί οὖν ἂν κρεῖττον ϗ ἐπιστημης πλὴν Θεὸς; *What is the beginning of motion in the soul? It is evident that it is, as in the universe, God himself, and all in Him. For it is the same* NUMEN *in us, that moves all things in some sort or other; and the beginning of reason is not reason, but something which is better; but what can be better than science, but God?**

The passage from Aristotle which I have here quoted is very remarkable, and well worth the attention of every student in divinity. Scaliger, on reading it, could not repress the warm

* Translated by Dr. Henry More.

ſentiments which it excited, but burſt into the following exclamation.

QUID AIS, DIVINE VIR? ESTNE IN NOBIS ALIQUID DIVINUM QUOD SIT PRÆSTANTIUS IPSA RATIONE? AN TIBI QUOQUE NOTI FUERUNT IPSI RADII SPIRITUS SANCTI? *What ſayeſt thou, O thou divine Philoſopher? Is there any thing within us of a celeſtial nature, and more excellent than reaſon? Were then the irradiations of the Holy Ghoſt known to thee?*

TO EN ʽHMIN ΘEION. The divinity within us! An idea which approaches very nearly to the ſublime doctrines of the Chriſtian religion, reſpecting the exiſtence and operation of the third perſon in the Holy Trinity:

Eſt Deus in nobis agitante caleſcimus illo.

There is, indeed, every reaſon to believe, that God almighty vouchſafed to beſtow a conſiderable degree of religious illumination on the minds of the wiſer Heathens. The ſoul of man, whether Heathen or Chriſtian, purified and exalted by knowledge, virtue, and benevolence, could not but be a beloved object to the Father of all Truth, Goodneſs, and Mercy. God ſaw that it was good, comparatively good, and, as the emanation of his love, indulged it with the view of celeſtial truths*. But this revelation was but

* Thus the Platoniſts, by tradition or illumination, had acquired an idea of the Trinity, 1ſt, το εν, ταγαθον, — 2d, Νους or Λογος,—who was alſo the Δημιουργος:——3d Ψυχη—: that is, 1ſt, the *One* abſolutely good.—2d, The Mind or Word, the Maker.—3. d, Ψυχη, the Soul or Spirit.

partial and confined, till, in the wonderful dispensations of Divine Wisdom, it seemed good to God to send HIM who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

How does the doctrine taught us by this heavenly instructor elevate and aggrandize humanity! A particle of the Divinity we learn condescends to unite itself most intimately with our spiritual essence; and not only so, but our very bodies are rendered the temples of the divine Person. These poor frail habitations of the soul are not thought unworthy of being made the mansions of one Person in the Godhead. Mysterious, yet comfortable and animating truth! And let us never incur the danger of losing the association of this Sanctifier, Illuminator, and Comforter, by disbelieving, with presumptuous audacity, the reality of his existence, or doubting his actual operation on the minds of good men.

I know that nothing is more common than to attribute all the operations of the holy spirit to imagination and enthusiasm; and that they who at any time have made pretensions to any species or degree of influence of this supernatural kind,

Seneca's words are remarkable: "Quisquis formator universi fuit, sive ille DEUS est potens omnium, sive *incorporalis* "RATIO, ingentium operum artifex, sive divinus SPIRITUS, "per omnia, maxima, minima, æquali intentione diffusus." Whoever was the former of the universe, whether God Almighty, whether incorporeal *Reason*, whether the divine *Spirit*, diffused equally through all things, the greatest and the least, he adds, "sive *Fatum*." See Jortin's Discourses on the Christian Religion.

have been treated, by wicked and worldly men, as well as by proud philoſophers, with contempt and reſentment, as fanatical impoſtors, or fooliſh devotees. He who undertakes to maintain the reality of it, is conſidered by the vain and ſuperficial pretenders to ſingular wiſdom, as little different from a fool or a hypocrite. I fear that perſons thus diſpoſed to ridicule all idea of ſupernatural influence on the mind of man by the operation of the Holy Ghoſt, are in a deplorable condition. They ſeem to be among thoſe whoſe hearts are rendered inſenſible, and whoſe eyes are darkened, becauſe they have perverſely and preſumptuouſly refuſed to receive the truth as it is in Jeſus, with due faith and humility.

It is by no means inconſiſtent with the ſublimeſt philoſophy, independently of religion, to believe that the Supreme Being is able to act on the human mind by an inviſible and ſupernatural influence. The moſt celebrated philoſophers of antiquity have given reaſon to believe, that they thought there was a very intimate connexion between the ſoul of man and the eſſence of the Divinity: nor did it appear in the leaſt contradictory to nature and poſſibility, that he who made both the ſoul and body in a moſt wonderful manner, ſhould be able to act upon them *ſecretly*, yet *powerfully*, and in a manner ſcarcely leſs wonderful than their original creation.

I muſt confeſs I cannot help conſidering the doctrine of the Holy Ghoſt, and its operation on the

the human mind, as at once the ſublimeſt and moſt comfortable doctrine of the goſpel.

How little happineſs and perfection can I reach by my own poor efforts. I ſtruggle, but am defeated; I climb, but I fall. All is weakneſs, all is miſery. But evil is not without a remedy. God Almighty has promiſed to ſtrengthen my weakneſs and comfort my ſorrow, by actually participating in my nature, if I endeavour to render myſelf not unworthy of the merciful condeſcenſion.

The Scripture expreſſes the entrance of the Holy Ghoſt into the heart of man in ſtrong and lively language. We are born again. We become new creatures. Glorious advancement to felicity and perfection. Here is ſcope for ambition. By this union we become truly ennobled. How ſordid, how mean, how baſe do the diſtinctions on which men pride themſelves appear, on the compariſon! The true Chriſtian, whom God has bleſſed with the influence of his holy ſpirit, is the only character which deſerves the appellation of great. All other pretenſions to greatneſs appear childiſh and ridiculous. The PALINGENESIA alone can aggrandize fallen man.

Profeſſed wits and profeſſed philoſophers, both of the *minute* ſpecies, will treat this ſubject with ridicule. They are ready to denominate whatever is advanced on the ſubject of ſupernatural influence, the mere rant of enthuſiaſm. Abuſe, however, proves nothing but the levity or anger of him who has recourſe to it. Let it

be remembered by him who feels himself disposed to deride the doctrine of supernatural influence on the human mind, that it is not merely the doctrine of any mortal, but of the holy scriptures; and that its truth has been confirmed by the actual experience of many good and pious men, whose reason was in too great a degree of perfection to be easily deceived, and whose hearts would not permit them to deceive others. Is it more difficult to believe that the Spirit of God can operate on the human soul, than that a piece of stone or iron, where there is no influence or effluence *visible* or tangible, should be able to attract a needle?

CHAP. II.

Affectation of the character and conversation of a Wit or Humorist.

SWIFT, whose knowledge of human nature was accurate and extensive, observes, that there is no ambition more general than that of being reputed a Wit; and, at the same time, that a very small part of mankind can make just pretensions to the character.

All human race would fain be wits,
But thousands miss for one that hits.

Whoever has conversed much in the world will have had opportunities of observing the pretender to wit without the reality. Instead of

diffusing mirth and pleasure, which is the natural effect of true wit, the pretender to it disturbs and wearies men of sense, and extorts a laugh of approbation from none but the weak and the extremely complaisant.

The Buffoon is one of the commonest characters among the affected Wits. The tricks which he condescends to practise have usually more of oddity than humor. He may serve to create a laugh in a large and mixed company, or to come in with the fool and the dwarf after dinner: but, in the society of those who assemble for the pleasure of conversation, he is the disturber of decorum, and the confounder of all reason. He is borne with from a respect to his person, or from mere good nature; but there is scarcely a more pitiable object, than that of a man who is exerting every effort to attract the admiration of his company, and, after all, is received with coolness, or attended to with a constrained civility.

The character of the Punster is by no means so common in the present age as it was about half a century ago; but it is not extinct. Many writers, particularly the Spectator, have expressed themselves very warmly against the poor punsters. I cannot consider them of consequence enough to excite indignation. They are a harmless race. They mean no injury; and, if they can cause a laugh, they think their endeavours amply rewarded. While they attend to time and place, there surely can be no harm in them; but, on

the contrary, there must be much good in promoting mirth and good humor. The great danger is, lest they totally forget the proprieties of time and place; for the applause bestowed upon them for one good pun well applied, is a temptation to be always endeavouring to shine in the same excellence. The consequence is not only the interruption of rational and serious conversation, but the introduction of a number of bad puns, which, instead of pleasing, fatigue the hearer, and, instead of producing applause, cause a supreme, though possibly, a secret contempt.

He, indeed, who either knows not, or, if he knows, neglects the propriety of time and place, can never appear to advantage in company, or contribute to rational amusement. The affected buffoon is seldom either estimable or agreeable; though it is evident that he is desirous of pleasing by the pains he takes to exert his abilities, and by the disappointment which his looks express when his efforts fail of producing their effect. The truth is, that he cannot support a serious character, but obtrudes his oddities on those whose minds are engaged in private business of consequence to themselves or families, and who are unwilling to be interrupted by levity and impertinence. If the buffoon would reserve his exhibitions for the seasons appropriated to recreation, his attempts to please would entitle him to the thanks instead of the contempt of his associates. As he is usually good-natured, and

free from all bad designs, I cannot think he deserves that severity of censure with which the proud and sullen sometimes treat him. He who undertakes to divert others by buffoonery, descends greatly, and lays himself at the mercy of his company. Let him receive the applause of good-natured complaisance, which he will think an ample compensation for his voluntary sacrifice.

The tribe of affected wits is too numerous, and too various to admit of a specific enumeration. My paper would become a volume if I were to enter into a particular description of the Mimic, the Droll, the Jester, the Story-teller, the Practical Joker, and the many other characters which are wholly employed in displaying such qualities as contribute to excite laughter. It will be sufficient for my present purpose to conclude with a few general observations.

It is very certain that true wit and true humor, I mean such as are produced with ease and success on every proper occasion, are truly estimable. They are brilliant jewels, which sparkle to the eye, and, at the same time, are of solid and intrinsic value. I censure only the affectation of wit and humor, that constant endeavour to shine by smart sayings and odd doings, which proceeds from vanity alone unsupported by genius, and fatigues and importunes, instead of delighting the company whose notice and praise it solicits.

The persons who are guilty of this folly derive it from having heard the applause bestowed on some man of real wit and humor, and from a

desire of enjoying a similar admiration. It would be happy if they could divest themselves of a foolish ambition, which renders them disagreeable and ridiculous; and if they could learn to seek esteem rather than admiration, and to found their pretensions to it, not on jesting and buffoonery, but on good sense and common propriety.

Know thyself, was a precept worthy of an oracle. They who are acquainted with their own abilities and characters, will seldom be exposed to contempt. It is an ignorance of themselves that leads men to affect wit when nature has given only a common capacity; for surely none would willingly expose themselves to the displeasure of all around them, if they foresaw that their attempts would be unattended with success through the deficiency of natural talents. They certainly do not discover their own defect. And how shall they learn it? By observing with care the effect which their attempts at wit produce on the company. It may indeed sometimes happen that a good joke may be lost by the stupidity of the hearers; but he would pay himself too great a compliment who should conclude, that whenever his jokes have failed, the fault was not in himself, but in the audience. If what he says or does is received with coldness or impatience, and produces a derision of himself, and not a laugh at his joke, he may venture to suspect that he has mistaken his talent. If this happens often, he may do more than suspect; he

may be certain. If he has any regard to his character, and wishes to possess the esteem and respect of those with whom he is conversant, he will immediately desist from buffoonery, mimicry, punning, story-telling, waggism, versifying, and spouting, and endeavour to fill his place in society respectably, by exercising the qualities of common sense, good-nature, civility, and politeness. These will always secure him from contempt. It is not in the power of every one to shine in company; but there is not a man in the world who may not render himself respectable; or at least tolerable, by modesty, humility, attention to others, by discretion in regulating his words and actions, by a due discrimination of propriety in time, place, and persons.

CHAP. III.

The affectation of learning in conversation. — Esse quam videri *recommended.*

THERE are many persons who, though they have not enjoyed the advantages of a regular education, yet, having read the common books in the English language, make, on the slender stock of literature so acquired, an ostentatious display of extensive erudition. They are unwilling to take the trouble of severe and methodical study, but at the same time desire to be admired for their skill in letters.

Universitäts Bibliothek Rostock
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DFG

It is entertaining to obſerve the artifices of perſons who are influenced by this kind of vanity. They are very careful to know the character of their company; for if there is any one in it of acknowledged learning and real ſkill, they either ſit ſilent, or give the converſation a turn to ſubjects not at all connected with letters. They talk of a faſhionable player, or ſinger, a new invented dreſs, or the news and politics of the preſent moment. They ſpeak loud, and in an over-bearing ſtyle, ſo that a modeſt and diffident man, whoſe animal ſpirits are not ſo ſtrong as their own, is borne down by mere noiſe and vehemence. If an ingenious obſervation is made, they either treat it with ridicule, or receive it in contemptuous ſilence; and the modeſt man who made it, is diſtreſſed and aſhamed of that which ought to redound to his honor.

But the ſphere in which they chiefly exert themſelves, is the company of perſons of ſome rank and conſequence, who have more wealth than wit, and more honors than good qualities. Here they are ſure of being repaid for their exertions by good dinners, good wine, and noiſy feſtivity. They enter the room with an air of great importance, take the elbow chair unaſked, put their ſpectacles on, and, after looking round the room with the fulleſt aſſurance, deliver their opinions on the reigning topic with a tone of deciſion, and in a ſtyle of abſolute authority. It is aſtoniſhing how a company, even of ſenſible perſons, will ſubmit to a bold pretender, who

poſſeſſes a ſufficient aſſurance to carry him through all obſtacles. All liſten. He feels the force of encouragement, and proceeds. He has laid in a ſtore of hard, polyſyllabic words, and theſe he utters moſt confidently, without knowing or caring whether or not he is right in their application. The company admiring that learning which they are conſcious they do not poſſeſs, eſtimate the parts of the pretender at the higheſt rate. They celebrate him wherever they go. His character is thus raiſed, and if he is in the church, or indeed in either of the profeſſions, he will be likely to obtain preferment and rewards from his loquacity. When the diſpenſers of rewards are not qualified to judge of merit, it is not poſſible but that they ſhould be miſled by bold pretenders, and give that which is due to ſolid worth, to him who only poſſeſſes a ſuperficial ſmattering, with a prating tongue.

Thoſe who love to command the admiration of the ignorant by pretending to learning, often avail themſelves of an eaſy artifice. They learn the prevailing topic of converſation, and take care to read upon it juſt before they go into company. Dictionaries conſtitue their libraries. They have little elſe to do than to look out the ſubject of general converſation in the volumes of Ephraim Chambers.

If a comet appears, or a remarkable eclipſe happens, they read the articles Comet and Eclipſe in the Encyclopedia, juſt before they go into company, and are thus enabled to aſtoniſh the

unſuſpecting and the ignorant by the depth and accuracy of their knowledge. They have the addreſs to introduce their remarks as if they were unpremeditated; ſometimes prefacing them with an affected apology for the defect of their memories; and at others, hinting that they formerly ſtudied theſe things, but that they had not been able to look into a book on the ſubject ſince they can remember.

They are very fond of quotations, and though they underſtand neither Latin nor Greek, will yet contrive to learn of ſome ſchool-boy half a dozen verſes from Horace, Virgil, Homer, or the Anthologia; and take care to ſpout them in the company of thoſe who cannot judge of the propriety of the application. They will repeat Homer's *Ton d'apomeibomenos* with vehemence, and ſhed tears expreſſive of their ſenſibility to the pathos of the ſentiment and language. "Homer! Homer! they exclaim, read Homer in the original, and you need read no more. All other authors will appear contemptible on the compariſon. He contains every thing; all arts and ſciences, law, phyſic, and divinity." In the mean time, the pretender does not really know the letters of the Greek alphabet, and is no better acquainted with Homer in the original, than with the Polyglott.

Another common practice among thoſe who feel the impulſe of literary vanity, without poſſeſſing any real knowledge which can entitle them to diſtinction, is that of learning a few tricks with an electrical machine; or collecting butterflies,

moths, ſtones, or other phyſical curioſities. By the inſpection of dictionaries they acquire the ſcientific names; and by calling a nettle, or a dandelion, or a pebble by ſome long latinized appellation, they aſſume the pride of profound learning, and are often complimented with the admiration of their ignorant aſſociates.

They are particularly inclined to engage in religious ſubjects, and frequently endeavour to evince their learning and ingenuity by attacking the Bible, and the whole ſyſtem of Revelation. It ſometimes happens that perſons of this character will produce objections to the Bible, though they have never read it. They inſpect ſome of thoſe conceited writers, who have endeavoured to raiſe themſelves to notice by diffuſing ſcepticiſm, and produce the contemptible cavils of ſuch men as their own inventions. In the company of honeſt, ſober, unſuſpicious perſons, who are unfurniſhed with learning and experience, they ſtrike every one with wonder. They paſs for prodigies of wit and wiſdom by quoting Voltaire and Bolingbroke, and by naming ſome authors whom thoſe excentric writers mention, but whom, perhaps, they never read, or read without a ſufficient knowledge of the language to underſtand them completely.

This part of their converſation may be truly injurious, as it may communicate bad principles among the inconſiderate, and thoſe who are already not very well diſpoſed; it ought therefore to ſubject them to contempt and abhorrence.

When their subjects are merely matters of human learning and curiosity, their arrogant pretensions are innocent with respect to others, and only expose themselves to the just ridicule of all who are enabled, by their solid sense and improvements, to see the futility of their conversation.

A desire to entertain the company in which we converse, and to procure their esteem by a modest display of our accomplishments, is by no means unreasonable, or reprehensible; but let it operate in leading us to be really what we wish to appear. Let solidity of merit be first secured, and it will shine, like a true diamond, with its own lustre.

CHAP. IV.

The affectation of being miserable — False feelings — Gloomy books disapproved — Cheerfulness recommended.

THE vanity of man may justly be termed a Proteus. In the endeavour to obtain distinction, not only happiness, but misery is frequently affected.

I believe it is considered by many as honorable to possess a degree of that sensibility which is too delicate to bear the common asperities of human life; and there is a style of complaint which is thought pretty, and a sort of woe which has been indulged as luxury. If I might borrow a term from criticism for the use of ethics, I would denominate the querulous affectation of misery,

the elegiac ſtyle of life. The plaintive tone of elegiac language, and the ſoft tinge of melancholy, without any real cauſe, are very ſimilar to the converſation and ſentiments of thoſe numerous complainers who have adopted the elegiac ſtyle of life, becauſe they conſidered it as pretty.

I reverence the ſorrows of the truly unhappy. Their tears are ſacred. But thoſe who affect a ſenſibility which they do not poſſeſs, and act a woe which they never felt, are to be conſidered as ridiculous and reprehenſible, becauſe they make a mock of human miſery, and ſport with that compaſſion which ought never to be abuſed, and which was deſigned for the comfort of unaffected affliction.

I reſpect the character of Mr. Gray as that of a man of remarkable virtue, learning, and genius, united. But he was melancholy without reaſon; and, I apprehend, he was not entirely free from the wiſh to be conſidered as a man endowed with feelings unknown to the reſt of man. Every man of genius certainly has acute feelings; but thoſe feelings will lead him to high enjoyments, and will make life more pleaſurable than painful, if he will but ſubmit to the guidance of his reaſon, and alſo keep himſelf free from the affectation of ſingular miſery. Pride, and an inſatiable deſire of praiſe, will indeed often cauſe, in the votaries of fame, pangs unknown to others, and which cannot be reaſonably indulged.

Palma negata macrum, donata reducit opimum
Sic leve, ſic parvum eſt, animum quod laudis avarum
Subruit, aut reficit.— HOR.

Many poets, professedly elegiac, have pretended to uncommon wretchedness; but they deceived no sensible reader, since it was evident that their misery was no less fictitious than their mythology.

The affectation of woe is chiefly among the softer sex, in whom it is sometimes supposed to have been amiable. Pity, it has been said, is nearly related to love. But the pity must be sincere. Affected woe will only excite affected pity, which is nearly related to a passion very different from love. Beauty in tears, while those tears are believed to be natural, must powerfully call for the protection of every man not destitute of generosity; but if the call is found to have been frequently made without sufficient reason, though it may cause the attention of false and selfish gallantry, it will not raise the esteem of the estimable. She, who wishes for such esteem, will be prudent in divesting herself of every kind of affectation.

I am sorry to see a taste prevail for novels which exhibit unnatural pictures of misery, and diffuse a kind of taste for the woeful. The novel entitled *Werter*, is of a bad tendency, and cannot have failed to have given the falsely delicate, the over-refined, and the idolizers of themselves, additional encouragement in the affectation of misery.

Elegies, Elegiac Sonnets, Night Thoughts, and Contemplations on gloomy subjects, have a tendency to diffuse a shade over the imagination which shall cause in many a misery no less real than actual suffering; and they countenance more in seeking the gratification of a perverse vanity by

pretending to ſingular wretchedneſs. There is certainly a great portion of evil in the world, real and unavoidable, and it ſeems a peculiar degree of folly to increaſe it by affectation. Affectation will increaſe it; for we become in time the characters which we have habitually aſſumed. It is particularly wrong in this country, where the inhabitants are naturally inclined to a dejection of ſpirits, to indulge the imagination in giving a ſombrous and diſmal color to every thing around it. It is greatly in our power to make the horizon of our mind dark and cloudy, or ſerene as the blue ether, and beautiful as the variegated tints of a weſtern ſky in a fine ſummer evening.

It is a queſtion in philoſophy, *An quicquid recipitur, recipiatur ad modum recipientis*, Whether whatever is received (or perceived, as it ſuits the preſent ſubject better) be perceived according to the percipient's mode, or powers, or degree of perception; and I think it may be often anſwered, when applied to morals, in the affirmative. There is abſolute good in life, and abſolute evil; but they both may be in a great degree transformed by the manner in which they are viewed and poſſeſſed. A ſour diſpoſition, operating like a chemical acid, will turn the ſweeteſt cup into an unpalatable beverage; as a contented, placid, meek, and gentle mind, infuſing ſweetneſs into the bittereſt draught, will cauſe the moſt nauſeous medicine to be ſwallowed with alacrity.

To enjoy, and to be cheerful, are duties. "To enjoy," ſays Mr. Pope, "is to obey." And

though it is natural, and often unavoidable, to complain in affliction, yet to murmur, repine, and take a pleasure in complaining, while we have many reasons to rejoice, is irrational and ungrateful.

The sect of Whiners, or Grumblers (for it deserves to be stigmatized by no very honorable name,) are very proper subjects for ridicule. It is fruitless to argue deeply or very seriously with folly and vanity. You will either not be understood by them, or not regarded; but a laugh against them, is like an instrument which touches to the quick, amputates the excrescence, or pulls it up by the roots.

Real misery will, I hope, always meet with sympathy. Nature has taken care that it should affect our feelings, in order to extort relief if possible. But the affectation, whether in books, in life, or in conversation, must find a different treatment, that it may be discountenanced.

Great caution should, however, be always used not to mistake real for affected misery. It is better that many pretenders to woe should be treated with superfluous sympathy and unnecessary attention, than that one real sufferer should be disregarded.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

On bringing up children with ideas of higher ſtations, and more expenſive modes of living, than they will be able to ſupport on the death of their parents.

Quæ virtus & quanta, boni, ſit vivere parvo;
Diſcite, non inter lances menſaſque nitentes.
——— Male verum examinat omnis
Corruptus judex. HOR.

PHILOSOPHERS have often compared individuals of the human race to the various animals of the irrational creation. Some are ſaid to reſemble foxes, ſome hogs, and others aſſes; and the reſemblance has been ſuppoſed to be ſo great as to contribute ſomething to the ſupport of the Pythagorean Metempſychoſis. I believe the philoſophers would not have erred if, while they were reciting reſemblances, they had ſaid, that a great part of mankind are like the peacock, which appears to take its greateſt pleaſure, and to place its chief good, in the diſplay of its gaudy finery. As to the tranſmigration of ſouls, ſome have thought that ſo great an attention to the beautiful appearance of the body, argues ſomething in theſe perſons againſt the exiſtence of the ſoul at all; ſo that I do not pretend to corroborate from the circumſtance of their likeneſs to the bird of Juno, the whimſical doctrine of the old philoſopher.

To make a figure, to the utmoſt extent of their ability, is the ſcope of people of faſhion; as to expand the plumage of its tail in all its pride is the ſupreme bliſs of the peacock; whoſe internal qualities, and real value, (which, by the way, are in that reſpect like the vain votaries of faſhion), by no means correſpond with the oſtentatious appearance.

As the deſire of diſtinction is natural, ſo the wiſh to make a figure, even in externals, while it is limited by right reaſon, and urges not to the violation of prudence and juſtice, is innocent at leaſt, though ſcarcely laudable. But it is found in this age to lead to an expenſive mode of living, and to the affectation of a ſplendor greatly above what the rank requires, and the fortune can ſupport.

The houſe muſt be larger, the ſervants more numerous, the table more luxurious, and the equipage more ſplendid than either a ſenſe of decorum, or a prudential regard to the permanent intereſt of the family, can admit. And what is the inducement? The hope of being received into company which aſſumes the envied title of People of faſhion. The aſpirants to this honor are indeed freely received; but if it is ſuſpected that they make a ſhow without much ſubſtance to ſupport it, they are commonly held in low eſteem; and the ſubterfuges they are obliged to uſe to conceal their inferiority, renders the ſtate, which after much difficulty they have obtained, truly uneaſy. They indeed enjoy, in fancy, the

pleaſure of gratified pride, and are too rapidly whirled in the circle which they have choſen, to find leiſure for reflection. But this is a ſtate which no rational creature, who poſſeſſes the faculty of which he boaſts as his nobleſt diſtinction, can deem deſirable. And yet, for the ſake of this diſtinction, what ſacrifices are made? Health, peace, and the plenty of a competency, are the uſual price of the dear bought purchaſe. Neither do theſe oſtentatious people enjoy themſelves ſincerely; for they are conſcious of imprudence and injuſtice; and however they may attempt to ſtifle the voice of reaſon, they will ſometimes be compelled to hear it; if not at the aſſembly and maſquerade, yet on their pillows, and in their chamber, when, after all their efforts to eſcape, they are under an unavoidable neceſſity of *communing with themſelves, and of being ſtill.*

The creditors and the children of the numerous tribes who live above their rank and fortune, experimentally feel and deplore that my repreſentation is not the fiction of a declaimer. The creditors wait ſo long for payment as to loſe their profit in the intereſt, and often rejoice if they receive ten ſhillings in the place of twenty. Many of them have been reduced to beggary by ſupplying the vain with the neceſſaries of life; for it ſo happens, that thoſe who ſupply the vanities of life, are often paid with oſtentatious liberality and alacrity; while he who ſells bread, meat, and raiment, is obliged to take out a

commiſſion of bankrupt, or ſue in vain by a tedious and vexatious proceſs of the law.

The children ſuffer cruelly. They are introduced into a walk of life which they muſt relinquiſh for ever on the departure of their parents. The money that ſhould have been kept as a reſervoir to ſupply their wants during life, in adverſity, and in old age, has flowed in profuſion to furniſh ſuperfluities in the ſeaſon of health and youth. Their ſentiments, habits, pleaſures, and proſpects, are all in high life; yet their fortunes are ſuch as muſt detain them in a ſtate of dependence, if not of ſervitude. But ſuppoſing enough left to enable a large family to live in competent plenty, yet, as they have been uſed to oſtentation and luxury, that plenty which would otherwiſe have afforded comfort, and been conſidered as a bleſſing, is viewed in the light of penury and meanneſs; and that middle ſtation in which they were born, and might have enjoyed as much happineſs as belongs to human nature, is conſidered by them as a fallen ſtate. Conſequently, inſtead of feeling and diſplaying a cheerful and contented gratitude, they murmur and repine at their unfortunate condition.

I knew a family, the father of which had an eſtate of five hundred a year. There were five children to enjoy it with him while he lived, and to inherit it when he ſhould die. But his lady was of opinion that he would ſerve his family moſt, by introducing them into company and life, and forming valuable connexions. The truth

was, she loved a gay and dissipated life, and was but too successful in persuading her husband to adopt her plan. A style and mode of living was immediately engaged in, which would require, on the most moderate computation, one thousand a year. There was no mode of increasing the income, the father having no profession, and being above all trade. The whole time and attention of the family was devoted to dress, fashionable diversions, and visiting a circle of neighbours, some of whom were East India nabobs, baronets, and lords. The consequence was unavoidable. On the death of their parents, the children found that every foot of land, and all the goods and chattels, belonged to importunate creditors, who, after having sustained a heavy loss, eagerly seized every remainder of property; so that they saw themselves, literally, not worth a single shilling. They might, with much reason, be unhappy in their situation, as their hopes and prospects had once been so elevated; but their misery was much increased by their inability to render themselves useful in society, and to compensate the unkindness of their fortune by personal exertion; for they really had learned nothing but the arts of dress, and the expensive modes of fashionable life. Two of the sons were sent to the East Indies by the interest of a compassionate neighbour; one took to the highway, and, after a narrow escape, was obliged to transport himself into Africa: The daughters went into service, but being above it, were discarded with insults;

till ſick of attempting in vain, one died of diſappointment, and the other ſought diſhoneſt bread in the miſery of proſtitution. So ends the ſplendor, the luxury, the pride of a family, which, if it could have been contented with the comforts of a moſt valuable competency, might at this time have been flouriſhing in reputation, plenty, and proſperity. I have known many caſes where the miſery of innocent children has been cauſed by the vanity of unthinking parents, led aſtray by the *ignis fatuus* of vanity, aping the manners of high and faſhionable life.

But what? is there no ſuch thing as ſolid comfort with a moderate fortune, and in the middle ſtate? Muſt we for ever labor to leave the rank in which Providence has placed us, in order to reliſh our exiſtence? Muſt we be guilty of injuſtice and cruelty, in order to be happy? Believe it not. Things are not ſo conſtituted. But the votaries of vanity, though they may poſſeſs a good ſhare of natural underſtanding, are uſually furniſhed but ſlenderly with philoſophy and religion. They know not how to chuſe for themſelves the chief good, but, blindly following the multitude, ſuffer themſelves to be led, in the journey of life, by the falſe light of a vapor, rather than by the certain guidance of the polar ſtar, or the magnetic needle.

I wiſh I could induce them to conſider duly the nature and value of ſolid comfort. But we do conſider it, ſay they; we conſider what pleaſes ourſelves, and we purſue it with conſtancy. Are

you convinced, I ask in return, that what you pursue affords you pleasure? Is it not true, on the contrary, that you live rather to please others than yourselves? You certainly live in the eyes of others; of others, as vain and proud of externals and of trifles as yourselves, and in their applause or admiration you place your happiness. So long as you can display the gaudy appearance of gaiety and ease, you patiently submit to the real and total want of them. I urge you then again, to pursue solid comforts, and relinquish vanity. You ask me to describe what I mean by solid comforts. It is easy enough to conceive them; but as you desire it, I will attempt the obvious enumeration, and then leave you to your own dispassionate and unprejudiced reflection.

These, I think, afford solid comforts: *a quiet conscience, health, liberty, one's time one's own, or if not, usefully, and innocently, and moderately employed by others; a freedom from inordinate passions of all kinds; a habit of living within one's income, and of saving something for extraordinary occasions; an ability, arising from rational œconomy, to defray all necessary and expedient expenses; a habit of good humor, and aptitude to be pleased rather than offended; a preparation for adversity; love of one's family, sincerity to friends, benevolence to mankind, and piety to God.* Compare this state and these dispositions with those of affected people of fashion, embarrassed in circumstances, distressed by vain cares, tossed about by various passions and vain fancies, without any anchor

to keep their frail bark from the violence of every guſt. But it is not worth while to dilate on the compariſon; let the hearts of the deluded votaries of vanity decide in the ſilence of the night ſeaſon, when they recline on their pillows, when the lights of the aſſembly are extinguiſhed, and when the rattling of carriages is heard no more.

CHAP. VI.

Of Xenophon's Memoirs of Socrates. — The beſt ancient books, when tranſlated, diſappoint the Engliſh reader, &c. — Socraticæ Chartæ recommended.

A PERSON who ſhould walk about the ſtreets of a great city, and give his opinion on all ſubjects to thoſe whom he might happen to meet, would be thought in the preſent age a ridiculous enthuſiaſt, or a pitiable madman. Yet it is certain, that he whom the world has long revered as the wiſeſt of mortals, diſpenſed his advice in this manner, and was, while alive, the object of envy rather than of contempt, as he has been ſince his death of admiration.

Socrates committed not his philoſophy to writing, and the world would have been deprived of the ineſtimable treaſure, if his grateful ſcholars, Xenophon and Plato, had not preſerved it.

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Xenophon's *Memorabilia* of him abound with a moſt admirable morality; but it is to be wiſhed, that all paſſages alluding to a very doubtful kind of friendſhip could be omitted in the future editions of this invaluable relic of antiquity. Without this retrenchment, the mind of the reader will often be offended with ideas which cannot fail of raiſing diſguſt at all times, but more particularly in a diſcourſe abounding with the fineſt ſenſe, and with precepts of the pureſt virtue.

I hope the admirers of ancient wiſdom will pardon me, when I preſume to ſay, that many of the converſations are tediouſly protracted, and that the great Socrates, in the abundance of his good humor, trifles egregiouſly. It is however equitable to ſuppoſe that, to inſinuate his important advice with ſucceſs, it was neceſſary to avoid alarming the minds of his hearers, and that the beginning of his converſations ſhould have an air of alluring levity. This was probably in uniſon with the minds of thoſe whom he addreſſed. It drew their attention. They would have ſhut their ears againſt every thing which he had to offer, if he had begun by profeſſing a deſign to reclaim them from vice and folly in a formal harangue. They would have haſtened from him, and turned his attempts to ridicule. But his jocularity detained them, and his good ſenſe, in the concluſion, pointed out their errors, and taught them the expediency of a reformation. Yet though this may apologize for levity and trifling in the actual converſations of the living Socrates, it cannot render

them entirely agreeable to a judicious reader of modern times, for whom the artifice is not neceſſary.

I read Xenophon's *Memorabilia* in Greek, and I was delighted with them. I read them in an Engliſh tranſlation; and I found them tedious and inſipid. The tranſlation was apparently performed with ſufficient fidelity; but it did not affect or ſtrike with any peculiar force. I have experienced effects exactly ſimilar in the peruſal of other books. To what ſhall I attribute them? Are there ſuch charms in the Greek language as are able to give a value to ſentiments which of themſelves have no recommendation? Certainly not: But there is a conciſeneſs, and, at the ſame time, a comprehenſion of expreſſion in the Greek language, which, I think, the Engliſh cannot equal. On the mind of a reader who completely underſtands the language of a Greek author, the ideas are impreſſed with more force and perſpicuity by the original, than by any tranſlation. The ancient Greek authors, it is acknowledged, paid great attention to the art of compoſition, to the choice and arrangement of words, and to the ſtructure of periods, ſo as to communicate the idea or raiſe the ſentiment intended with peculiar force and preciſion. Xenophon is known to have been one of the moſt ſucceſsful cultivators of the art of compoſition; and it cannot be ſuppoſed that all who have undertaken to tranſlate any of his works, though they might underſtand the matter, could have equalled him in the art of

compoſition for which his country and himſelf were remarkably celebrated.

The pleaſure which a reader feels in the peruſal of a Greek author, has been attributed to the pride of conſcious ſuperiority over thoſe who are not able to unlock the treaſures of which he keeps the key. This opinion has owed its origin to the poor appearance which ſome of the moſt celebrated authors of antiquity have made, when preſented to the public in the dreſs of a modern language. The Engliſh reader has read tranſlations of the claſſics, without being able to diſcover any excellence adequate to the univerſal reputation of the author. The tranſlator, though he comprehended his author, was perhaps a poor writer, unable to communicate with ſpirit the thoughts which he conceived with a ſufficient degree of accuracy. The blame unjuſtly fell on the original author and on his admirers. *He* was ſuppoſed to have written poorly, and *they* to have admired him only from motives of pride and affectation. Some, whoſe ignorance prevented them from deciding fairly, rejoiced to ſee that ancient learning, which they poſſeſſed not, deſpiſed; and eagerly joined in attributing to arrogance and pedantry all praiſe of Greek and Latin, to which they were inveterate enemies, as well as perfect ſtrangers.

But the ſuppoſition that the pleaſure which men feel in reading authors in the ancient languages, ariſes ſolely, or chiefly, from the pride of poſſeſſing a ſkill in thoſe languages, is too

unreaſonable to be generally admitted. Of the many thouſand admirers of the ancients, who, in every part of their conduct and ſtudies, diſplayed great judgment and great virtue, muſt we ſuppoſe the greater part either deceived in the eſtimate of the authors whom they read, or actuated by pride, and miſtaking the ſelf-complacency of conſcious learning and ability for the pleaſure naturally ariſing from the ſtudy of a fine author? Why is not a man, who underſtands Welch, German, Dutch, and any other language, not remarkable for literary productions, as much inclined to extol the writers in thoſe languages as the reader of Greek and Latin, if the motive for praiſe conſiſts only in poſſeſſing a knowledge of a language unknown to the majority of his countrymen or companions?

In accounting for the great eſteem in which the Greek and Latin authors are held, much muſt be attributed to the LANGUAGES SOLELY, and excluſively of thought, doctrine, or method. Many who are but poorly qualified to give any opinion on the ſubject, will impute it to pedantry, when I ſay, that thoſe languages poſſeſs inherent beauties, and an aptitude for elegant and expreſſive compoſition, to which the beſt among modern languages can make no juſt pretenſion. Till, therefore, an ancient Greek author can be tranſlated into a language equal to his own, it will be unjuſt and unreaſonable to form a final judgment of him from the beſt tranſlation.

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But, to return to Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, with the conſideration of which I began this paper. It has been uſual, among the admirers of Socratic morality, to compare it with the evangelical. I am ready to acknowledge the great excellence of it, but I ſee very clearly that it is no more to be compared to the Goſpel than the river Nile to the Pacific Ocean.

I cannot, however, avoid recommending the *Socraticæ Chartæ*, or the fine Ethics of Socrates, as preſerved by Xenophon and Plato, to every ſtudent who is deſigned for the ſacred profeſſion. He will there find a ſtore of fine obſervations, maxims, and precepts, which he may recommend with authority and ſucceſs to his people, under the ſanction, and with the improvements of Chriſtianity.

Dr. Edwards's attempt to diſcover *a ſyſtem* in the *Memorabilia* of Socrates, notwithſtanding its ingenuity, ſeems to be unſucceſsful. It reſembles the ingenious efforts of many critics to reduce Horace's Epiſtle *ad Piſones* on the Art of Poetry, to the methodical regularity of a technical recipe for making poems. Some critics, like the old gardeners, have no idea of beauty, unleſs every thing is laid out by the line and rule, the level and the ſquare.

CHAP. VII.

Of the raſhneſs of medical writers.— They ſhould read and practiſe before they pretend to teach.— Wrong to be one's own phyſician, or to read on phyſic without ſingular accompliſhments and judgment.

WHENEVER men of liberal education and long experience have preſented their medical remarks to the public, they have juſtly obtained the praiſe of ingenuity and benevolence. Fame increaſed their practice, and practice rewarded them with well-earned opulence. Who can deſerve it better than he of whom it can juſtly be ſaid, that he is OPIFER PER URBEM in his practice, and PER ORBEM in his communications to the public?

But others, obſerving that ſuch have owed their celebrity, and conſequently their fortunes, to a pamphlet or treatiſe on ſome diſeaſe, have reſolved, at all events, to write and publiſh a treatiſe as ſoon as they had bought their diploma.

In order to attract notice, it became neceſſary to *diſtinguiſh* their works among a multitude of others, by ſome extraordinary doctrine or poſition; and I am informed that things of a moſt dangerous tendency, and ſometimes certainly fatal, have been plauſibly recommended by foolhardy or knaviſh candidates for medical popularity.

AUDE ALIQUID ſeems to be conſidered as a preſcription for procuring a diſpenſary.

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The great object of such persons is to recommend something *new*, something extraordinary, something that marks a genius, either as a medicament, or as a chirurgical operation. If poison can be administered in any form without certain and immediate death, it is soon advanced to the rank of a panacea, and the inventor hopes to equal Radcliffe in riches, and Hippocrates in fame.

Time shows the inefficacy of the boasted invention; but it is to be feared that many fall victims to it before the full discovery of its ill effects, or the danger of relying upon it because of its inutility.

Whoever takes a retrospective view of medicines which have been highly extolled, and generally used, will find many of them at present in a total disrepute. Yet, if you will believe the writings which recommended them on their first appearance, their beneficial efficacy was indubitably confirmed by innumerable cases. If they were efficacious once, they are probably still efficacious; for it is not to be believed that, by any causes whatever, the human body can have undergone a total change since their introduction. But they are now perhaps pronounced by the best judges utterly inefficacious or pernicious; and there is reason therefore to conclude that they were always so; and owed their popularity and success to novelty, or to the activity, address, and recommendation of some artful professor of medicine.

But though the world might profit by uniform experience of the fallacy of medical pretensions,

yet, as there is always a new generation rising, the same arts are again practised, and practised with singular success. In nothing are men more easily deluded than in the pretensions of medical practitioners.

It must be acknowledged, that the temerity of making experiments may casually lead to improvements in medical science; but it is a cruel temerity; for the experiments are made at the hazard of life. A young man who hastily recommends to the public a powerful medicine, without due experience of its effect, which is too common in the present times, may be guilty of homicide, in a thousand melancholy instances, when he intended only to advance his own fame and fortune.

The spirit of research and adventure is laudable in young men; but when it produces works to the public which endanger health and life, it ought to be under greater restraint than the sanguine disposition of raw practitioners, inventors, and projectors, is willing to allow. But I appeal to their humanity, and hope they will condescend to submit their treatises, previously to publication, to three or four of the most eminent and oldest physicians, (or surgeons, if the subject be chirurgical,) and even after that, to express themselves with doubt and diffidence on the certainty of their discoveries. They will act humanely as well as prudently in adding *a Chapter of Cautions* in the use of whatever they recommend.

Indeed, if medical publications were read only by medical professors and practitioners, there

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is reason to hope that the rashness of a writer might be corrected by the caution and skilful experience of the professional reader. But, in these times, every man and woman reads a book in which they think themselves interested, and the sanguine pamphlet of a young physician, who is able to dress his fancies in a language tolerably agreeable and perspicuous, falls into the hands of those who are totally ignorant of medicine, both practical and theoretic, and who, imagining their own case to be exactly described in the book, take the medicine just as it is prescribed, without regard to the difference of age, seasons, or symptoms. Constitutions are thus ruined by those who speciously pretend to have discovered their preservative.

It is a sad instance of human depravity when, from motives of sordid interest or foolish vanity, men will trifle and tamper with the health and lives of their fellow-creatures, especially when their profession is to cherish health and prolong life.

But since there is no reason to suppose that rash physicians will discontinue the practice of publishing their crudities, it is certainly right to advise invalids, and all who are not in the medical and chirurgical profession, not to read any books on physic. This advice is indeed proper even when the books are acknowledged to be solid, and known to be authenticated by long experience; for, such is our weakness, especially in the hour of sickness, that we are apt to imagine every bad symptom, and almost every disease of which we read, to be our own: and the power of the

imagination in augmenting diſeaſe, is not only well known to phyſicians, but felt by general experience.

After all that can be ſaid in praiſe of medicine it is confeſſed, by the moſt ſenſible phyſicians, to be a very doubtful point, whether it has been more beneficial or injurious. It is an uncertain art. This however is not doubtful, but very clear, that in the hands of the young, the inexperienced, and the raſh, it is dreadfully deſtructive of the human race. What muſt it be then when every man is his own phyſician? When he reads a crude pamphlet on a diſeaſe under which he ſuppoſes himſelf to labor, and, without any preparatory knowledge, adminiſters boldly whatever is recommended in the confidence of ignorance, or with the ſpecious perſuaſion of a ſelf-intereſted writer. Abſtain therefore from medical books, and apply, in ſickneſs, to the beſt phyſician or apothecary within reach of your ſituation. Profeſſional men themſelves do not uſually preſcribe for themſelves or families in extreme caſes; but call in the aſſiſtance of thoſe who, with every advantage of ſpeculative and practical ſkill, have alſo the additional advantage of being able to act with a cooler and more deliberate judgment than any man can uſually exert, when his own happineſs is deeply intereſted.

Among the inconveniences attending the multitude of books in the preſent times, it is one, that every man is inſtructed by ſome intereſted divulger of myſteries, to be his own

operator or counſellor in every department. Every Man may be his own Lawyer, Phyſician Divine, Gardener, Broker, and Builder. This it might be ſuppoſed, would injure the ſeveral profeſſors; but experience ſeems to prove that it ſerves them; every man attempting every thing for himſelf, without experience, and ſolely by the partial and imperfect directions of books, renders every thing worſe; and the profeſſor is called in at laſt, and finds much more employment, than if his aſſiſtance had been ſought before the bungling efforts of ignorance had raſhly interpoſed.

CHAP. VIII.

Horæ ſubſecivæ—Or leiſure hours—Reading proper for them—Short pieces eaſy to be underſtood, reſembling converſation—Newſpapers.

THERE are fragments of time in the life of every man, in which, from inconvenience of circumſtances, he is unable either to read with continued attention, or to enjoy the advantages of ſelect company. In thoſe intervals, ſuch books are pleaſant as amuſe and inform in very ſhort ſections or chapters, in an eaſy and perſpicuous ſtyle, reſembling, as much as poſſible, the variety and familiarity of converſation.

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Many of the French books, under the title of ANA, are, I think, particularly useful for the purpose of fill ing up a vacant interval. They are lively and various. They treat of history, literature, arts; subjects which amuse, without interesting in such a degree as to fatigue or excite the mind beyond the pitch of a pleasant tranquillity.

There is a great difference in the numerous *ana*. The best I ever read are not entitled *ana* indeed; but they are exactly the same in their kind; I mean Mélanges *d'Histoire & de Littérature, par Monsieur Vigneul Marville*. The name of the author, it is said, was D'Argonne. The work abounds with pleasing anecdotes, written with grace and vivacity. The part I am displeased with is, the severe hypercriticism on Bruyere. It is ingenious but uncandid, and could proceed only from pique and prejudice. But I am speaking of amusement; and even mistaken criticism, written in the lively manner of D'Argonne, cannot but form an agreeable diversion.

Gesner recommends *ana* for the *horæ subsecivæ*, and also Choffin's *Amusements Philologiques*, Martial's Select Epigrams, Owen's, Epictetus, Bouhours's *Pensées Ingénieuses*, Phædrus, De la Motte, Fontaine, Valerius Maximus, Erasmus's Apophthegms, and all other similar and detached pieces. None of these require great attention or exertion, and yet they amuse and instruct.

Selden's Table Talk, according to the French fashion, would be called *Seldeniana*, and it is very proper for a pocket companion; *comes*

jucundus in via pro vehiculo est. Maxims and reflections, collections of poetry, letters, and fugitive pieces, with which this country abounds, are well adapted to the purpose of occasional amusement.

Indeed, the kind of books is sufficiently obvious; and it is not necessary to enumerate them They will occur to every man acquainted with books; but, after all, in the present times, they are in danger of being entirely superseded by the newspapers.

The newspapers are *Mélanges* of literature, of history, of criticism, of biography, of politics, of philosophy, of religion, of all that busy mortals are engaged in with ardor.

Quicquid agunt homines, nostri est farrago libelli.

Their original object was the communication of political news; but they have increased in number and in size to such a degree, that, to fill them all with a due variety of news, properly so called, is impossible. That source was soon dry, and other fountains were therefore broken up. There can indeed be no good objection to the deviation from the original purpose of political news, for the intention of that was to amuse by the gratification of curiosity, and if innocent amusement, of a similar kind, can be obtained in the heterogeneous matter which they exhibit, they are still valuable and worthy of encouragement.

But in pursuit of distinction and variety, in the gratification of party resentment, and as the

tools of faction, they have displayed a foul mass of falshood, malignity, and folly; such diabolical calumny and detraction as degrades human nature, and could only have been expected from the agency of infernal and accursed spirits supplying the press of a Pandæmonium.

It is therefore become desirable to turn the eye from the dunghills in which nettles and rank weeds, at once poisonous and putrid, vegetate, to the cultivated gardens where beauty and decency continue to present all that is pleasing, and to remove whatever is offensive. Such are the *Mélanges* of literature, history, morality, which I recommend as the proper amusement of a vacant hour.

The undertaking may be thought to resemble the cleansing of the Augean stable, and to require an Herculean strength, else one might endeavour to produce that desirable object, a reformation of newspapers. The dirty channels which convey polluted waters might be taught to devolve a pleasant and salubrious stream.

I believe the conductors of the newspapers, as many of them are respectable men, would rejoice to see such a reformation as might enable them to pursue their occupations, and promote their private interest, without the necessity of being instrumental to the diffusion of poison through the various ranks of society.

Suppose then that, by mutual agreement, they obliged themselves to admit nothing which could degrade dignity, or injure reputation, or

interrupt the peace of families, without ascertaining the truth of it, by requiring the authenticity of it to be confirmed by the name of the party which should desire to insert a letter or a paragraph.

This, it is true, would exclude some truth; but it would, at the same time, exclude much more falsehood and misrepresentation; and newspapers would rise in value and repute, as they would be considered as authentic and respectable records.

If the papers were not of so large dimensions, there would not be a necessity of supplying a quantity of matter merely to fill the columns; and, consequently, a more scrupulous selection might take place.

The King, and all who are put in authority under him, the Church and all its members, as well as all religious instructors of whatever denomination, should never be mentioned but in respectful terms. Their titles and honorable additions should accompany their names wherever it can be done without affectation or tedious formality. It should be considered, that newspapers go into the hands of the vulgar, the ignorant, the idle, the profligate, the thief, and the abandoned of every degree and species; and that when once these are taught to speak disrespectfully of their superiors, whether ecclesiastical or civil, much of that subordination is disturbed which was settled for their benefit; much of that restraint infringed which tended to keep them within limits. Lawless principles naturally

produce lawleſs actions; and there is every reaſon to believe that much of the diſhoneſty of the lower orders, much of the riotous and rebellious ſpirit of the times has been cauſed by the corruption of newſpapers. I ſpeak my thoughts freely, though I know the editors of newſpapers have vengeance in their own hands, and are able to repel thoſe who attack them with a laſh of ſcorpions. But the ſhield of truth is a ſufficient defence, and indeed a wound in a good cauſe makes an honorable ſcar.

Affairs of gallantry, as they are called, ſhould be mentioned, if mentioned at all, with great delicacy. The mention of them at all, unleſs in caſes of particular atrocity, tends only to confirm the impudence of parties concerned, and to increaſe debauchery by the ſeduction of example. It was lately uſual to fill half a column with paragraphs, to puff (as the phraſe is) the faſhionable courtezans of the time, and to ſerve their intereſt. It is wonderful that papers, abounding in theſe ſubjects, can find admiſſion into decent families, where there are wives and daughters of unſullied reputation.

There are ſome advertiſements ſo evidently fraudulent, and others ſo groſsly indecent, that he who aſpires at the character of a good man, and a good citizen, will find it difficult to render the publication of them conſiſtent with ſuch a deſcription.

It is not difficult to point out the deformities of the papers; for the features are prominent;

but it is unneceſſary. All conſiderate perſons muſt have conſidered them, in the ſtate in which they have often appeared, as peſts and nuiſances. I leave the ſubject with aſſuring the reader, that I have no perſonal cauſe of diſlike to them. I diſapprove them, becauſe I think them publicly injurious. They have been inimical to all order, decency, propriety, truth, moderation; to virtue, to learning, and to religion: therefore an endeavour to reform them can want no apology, and none I make. I will add only one hint to the conductors of them which may avail when others are ineffectual. Let them conſider, that by degrading newſpapers from that dignity which they might poſſeſs as pleaſant and uſeful vehicles of authentic information, they may gradually render them too contemptible for general notice. The wickedneſs of mankind, and the corruption of ſociety, partly occaſioned by them, may make ſuch an event not very probable at preſent; yet it is certain that, in proceſs of time, newſpapers may become ſo worthleſs as to be univerſally deſpiſed.

If manners do not effect the diminution of the numbers of newſpapers, laws may intervene to ſupply the place: and ſince it is the part of the legiſlature, and of all good government, to ſuppreſs every general nuiſance, it may be apprehended (notwithſtanding the clamors concerning the liberty of the preſs, the nonſenſe of the *palladium*, and the like canting language of partiſans), that the preſs may be hereafter reſtrained,

and newſpapers aboliſhed or diſcouraged by an enormous impoſt. Nothing but the revenue ariſing from them preſerves them at preſent from the limitations which they have long required, and for which the public good loudly calls.

I eſteem the courage as well as ingenuity of Mr. Crabbe, who has attacked newſpapers in a ſatirical poem abounding with truth, good verſes and good ſenſe. The motto to his NEWSPAPER is ſo appoſite, that I will tranſcribe it for the amuſement of the claſſical reader.

E quibus, hi vacuas implent ſermonibus aures
Hi narrata ferunt alio; menſuraque ficti
Creſcit, & auditis aliquid novus adjicit auctor:
Illic credulitas, illic temerarius error,
Vanaque lætitia eſt, conſternatique timores,
Seditioque repens, dubioque auctore ſuſurrit.

OVID.

CHAP. IX.

Miſcellaneous literature — Books — Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory — Health of ſtudents, &c.

§ 1. THERE were probably as many books, and perhaps as many bad books written by the ancients as the moderns; but the art of printing being unknown, and conſequently the multiplication and preſervation of books being attended with great trouble and expenſe, ſuch as were of little intrinſic value, were not tranſcribed, copies

of them were not increaſed, and they conſequently ſoon periſhed by the depredations of time.

§ 2. Half the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory now extant had been more advantageouſly forgotten than remembered. It is a maſs of folly, abſurdity and hypocriſy; yet divines of great name are often recommending it to the attention of young ſtudents in theology.

I know of few ſtudies more likely to give a diſguſt for ſacred things, and to cauſe ſcepticiſm and infidelity in a mind unſeaſoned, than the indiſcriminate peruſal of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory.

Let us receive our religion as we find it, paying great reſpect to the authority of our forefathers and of the Church; but collecting our own principles, and forming our own conduct, from the only authentic and infallible records, the Sacred Scriptures.

But if one half of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory is diſgraceful, the other is honorable to the Chriſtian cauſe, and to this let us turn our attention. Why ſhould we continue to hand down to poſterity the annals of idiotiſm and inſanity? Very little ſolid advantage is derivable from the ſtudy of ſuch ſubjects, though much oſtentation of learning may be diſplayed in it. In a field where there are gold mines, that induſtry is lamentably miſplaced which is employed in digging for lead or clay.

§ 3. It is common to devote thoſe children to learning who appear to be remarkable for imbecility of conſtitution: but a life of ſtudy

requires great health. To the philosopher, the divine, and the lawyer, a strong constitution is more necessary than to the ploughman. The ploughman may improve a weak one by his occupation; by air and exercise; but the student will increase his weakness by thought and bodily inactivity.

§ 4. Arithmetic and mathematical studies contribute to the health of the mind, after it has been long engaged in the *belles lettres*, in poetry, in oratory, in history. They brace it by the great exertion of reason, which they require, as gymnastic exercises brace the body. I knew a studious man who used to carry Wingate's Arithmetic in his pocket to amuse his leisure hours, and he said, he found it a great relief after the study of languages and polite letters. I think it is said, that Johnson thought himself relieved from symptoms of insanity by computation.

§ 5. Learning may be obtained in modern times without the learned languages; but the attainment must be comparatively slow, difficult, and uncertain. It is well worth while in youth to take some pains to procure the keys of the treasury. There are many great readers of English only who acquire a great deal of science, properly so called, and a knowledge of men, and manners, and of history; but there is something insecure and imperfect in their best acquisitions; and, if they make any great proficiency, they certainly have much more trouble than those

who have mastered the languages while they were at school.

§ 6. Abilities alone are not sufficient to make a great progress in learning. The government of the temper contributes greatly to it. Patience, moderation, coolness of judgment, virtue, and innocence enable a man to exert his abilities with ease to himself, without impediment, and without error.

§ 7. *Si quid est in libellis meis quod placeat*, says Martial, *dictavit auditor. If there is any thing good in my book, the hearer or reader dictated it.* It is astonishing how much the excellence of an oration depends on the rank, or abilities, or respectable character of the audience. A full church, a crowded theatre, a select company, rouse exertion. A man outdoes himself on extraordinary occasions. Cicero and Demosthenes would have found their flame expiring if they had spoken their orations to a thin assembly, to a careless or a tasteless auditory; but when their country hung on their lips, they drank in new portions genius, they caught fire, and shone with unrivalled brilliancy. Mr. Garrick could not read Shakspeare, or perform any part in private so well as upon the theatre. He was desired to read a most interesting play before the royal family in private; but he neither satisfied himself nor his hearers. A King could not elicit the fire, which was struck out by the pit, box, and galleries.

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§ 8. It has always been the opinion of great philoſophers, that corruption of eloquence is a ſymptom of corruption of morals. The taſte that reliſhes a corrupt eloquence muſt itſelf be corrupt, and accompanied with a mind not well regulated. The taſte in morals and the taſte in letters ariſing from the ſame ſource, it is no wonder, when the ſource is corrupted, that both the ſtreams are polluted. "Ubicunque," ſays Seneca, "videris "orationem corruptam *placere*, ibi mores quoque "a recto deſciviſſe non eſt dubium. Quo modo "conviviorum luxuria, quo modo veſtium, ægræ "civitatis indicia ſunt, ſic orationis licentia (ſi "modo frequens eſt) oſtendit animos quoque, a "quibus verba exeunt, procidiſſe."

Some critics have thought that the taſte among us, at preſent, ſeems to favor a ſtyle reſembling Seneca or Tacitus, and to prefer it even to the ſtyle of Cæſar, Cicero, and Livy; if ſo, it may be advantageous to recollect that thoſe authors were admired in the decline of morals, liberty, and empire.

CHAP X.

Honeſty and ſimplicity frequently the characteriſtic of the true poet, philoſopher, painter, and other artiſts of real genius.

MEN of genius ſee a beauty TO KAΛON unknown to others in the ſubjects which they contemplate. They become enamoured with the form, and, like other lovers, regard but little many things which ſolicit the notice and attach the heart of moſt men.

Joſeph Scaliger has ſaid, *Jamais homme ne fut poëte, ou aima la lecture des poëtes, qui n'eut le cœur aſſis en bon lieu. No man ever was a poet, or delighted in reading the poets, whoſe heart did not lie in the right place;* and Horace ſaid before him.

——— Levis hæc inſania quantas
Virtutes habeat ſic collige; vatis avarus
Non temere eſt animus; verſus amat, hoc ſtudet unum.

Poets and men of genius are frequently no one's enemies but their own. From their contempt of riches they too often fall into poverty, and live in an ignorance of that humble kind of wiſdom, which, though it makes no conſpicuous figure, contributes much to comfort. They become the dupes of deſigning men; of little minds that grovel in the mire, and who, though they cannot ſee far above the earth, yet ſee their intereſt with great acuteneſs, and purſue it with artifice that ſeldom fails of good ſucceſs, and who

look upon men employing their time in making verſes, pictures, or in reading books, as ſimpletons eaſily to be deceived, and their natural prey, as the pigeon is to the kite.

It is therefore much to be wiſhed that, in obedience to the ſcriptural rule, men of genius would endeavour to unite the wiſdom of the ſerpent with the innocence of the dove.

But as to this dove like innocence, there are who controvert, with powerful arguments, its peculiar prevalence in poets and men of genius. I rather think there is a tendency to it in them; but, as it happens in moſt general rules, there are many exceptions.

Horace ſays a poet is ſeldom avaricious; but proofs to the contrary may be brought: yet the aſſertion is, in general, true; for there are many more proofs of their want of thrift, and their contempt of riches.

The inſtance of Pindar, in the ſecond Iſthmian ode, ſuggeſting a hint to Xenocrates of Agrigentum whom he was celebrating, is cited as an inſtance of poetical meanneſs and avarice.

" *The muſe*," Pindar inſinuated, " *is not mercenary; but a wiſe man has ſaid*, " *Riches make* " *the man.*" You, Xenocrates, are wiſe,—" *verbum ſapienti.*"

This was Pindar's mode of aſking his patron for money. In diſtreſs he might make ſuch an application without being avaricious. The very want, which drove him to ſo diſagreeable a neceſſity, might be occaſioned by his contempt of money.

Mr.

Mr. Pope was, I believe, rather attached to money, and knew how both to gain and keep it. But not ſo Spenſer, nor Shakſpeare, nor Dryden, nor Otway.

It is to be wiſhed that poets, and artiſts of genius, would add diſcretion to their taſte and ſkill; for it is lamentable that they who give ſo much pleaſure to others ſhould make themſelves miſerable.

There is, after all, ſomething amiable in their ſimplicity and generoſity. It preſerves them from baſe actions. You may, in general, make a ſafe agreement with a man of genius; I mean, of true genius; for as to the mere pretenders to genius, many of them are remarkable for duplicity and knavery.

But if poets and men of genius are free from avarice, they have ſhown themſelves prone to other paſſions equally or more vicious. They have been voluptuaries in a culpable extreme; and, upon the whole, they do not appear to have ſurpaſſed the reſt of mankind in happineſs ſo much as in talents.

The pleaſures of genius, in its exertions, are certainly exquiſite; but the horrors of a gaol, and of want, or diſeaſe, muſt greatly leſſen, if not totally deſtroy them; and the applauſe and renown beſtowed upon them, however flattering to the human heart, are but a poor recompence for the aggravated diſtreſſes of private life, which often involve a wife and family. As genius muſt be ſuppoſed to have been beſtowed as a gift conducive

to the happineſs of him who poſſeſſes it, let him take care to add to it diſcretion, and that uſeful kind of wiſdom called common ſenſe. The more ſail, the more ballaſt is required.

CHAP. XI.

Sermons — Dry diſcourſes — Before the Univerſity — Before the Houſe of Lords and Commons — Inns of Court — Very little adapted to make impreſſion — Such ſhould be preſented from the preſs, not the pulpit — Faſhionable inſipidity of courtly ſermons — Fear of diſguſting, and hurting intereſt.

THE man who preaches well, and turns many from the error of their ways, is a better divine than the greateſt orientaliſt, caſuiſt, linguiſt, controverſialiſt, that ever ſpent his days in ſolitary libraries, cauſed the preſs to groan with folios of dull diſſertation, or ſat with all the heavy dignity of ſilent ſelf-importance in a profeſſor's chair. The latter may have great internal merit; but he is, in the eye of reaſon, ſubordinate to the active divine who reduces theological knowledge to practical uſe, the end for which the others learning is but a preparatory mean; and a mean, very often, totally ſuperfluous. The world judges otherwiſe, and the dull S. T. P. who never converted a ſinner, viſited the ſick, comforted the deſponding, promoted piety, charity, and peace,

is honored and preferred to the pariſh prieſt, whoſe life has been ſpent in active beneficence, in giving inſtruction, in alleviating miſery, in teaching contentment and reſignation.

The dull divine either communicates nothing, or communicates in a ſtyle or language unknown to the people, they therefore ſuppoſe him, after their manner of judging, to poſſeſs ſomething of more value than any thing which they ſee or can approach with familiarity. An air of myſtery ſecures to him a degree of veneration. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico eſt.* The good rector, vicar, or curate, reſiding among his flock, is ſeen every day, and, by familiarity, loſes that great reſpect which the other, like Eaſtern monarchs, poſſeſſes through concealment. But the latter is as much more extenſively uſeful than the former, as a guinea in circulation than a coin of an equal intrinſic value locked up as a curioſity in the cabinet of a virtuoſo.

The reſpect paid to dull divines has introduced, among reſpectable preachers, a dry ſtyle of diſcourſes from the pulpit, which, though ſubtle and learned, yet as it defeats the very purpoſe of preaching, and is totally inefficacious, in a large and mixed congregation, ought to be diſapproved.

The firſt care of theſe preachers ſeems to be the preſervation of their own dignity. I will not ſay it is the ſole care; but the conſequence is as bad as if it were; for ſome of the congregation will not liſten for want of attraction, and the reſt

receive no more information, no more impulse to virtue and religion, than if they had sat at home and read a tract of speculative divinity in the silent recesses of their book rooms. The dull matter is usually accompanied with a dull manner; and the whole effect of the *viva vox* is lost by the pride, the indolence, the affectation, or the dulness of the preacher. Think of a preacher haranguing from the pulpit a parish like that of St. James, St. Giles, Whitechapel, or Shoreditch, in the style of writing and utterance which he would use in reading a divinity lecture in the Theological School, near the Pig-market at Oxford.

Sermons before the universities may, indeed, be considered as exercises in theology, intended for the improvement of both preacher and hearer in the theory of religion. If they are in the style which rhetoricians call *exilis*, the meagre and jejune, perhaps it may be excused, as being merely didactic, designed *docere*, non *persuadere* & *movere*, to teach doctrines, not to persuade the will or move the affections. And yet when it is considered that the greater part of the audience, in the universities, always consists of young men and of the common parishioners, I know not whether this apology can fully justify the languor of a pulpit dissertation. The truth is, that on most public occasions, and before a learned audience, the preacher ascends the *rostrum* to display his own attainments and ingenuity, and that the edification of the hearers is a secondary purpose. Human nature is prone to vanity, and let him

who cenſures it in others ſet the example of a total exemption from it himſelf. But I cannot help thinking, that vanity might be more effectually gratified by a livelier and more energetic addreſs to the hearers. The impreſſion would be deeper, and the preacher's eloquence more honored: but eloquence in theſe pulpits is leſs aimed at than ingenious and erudite diſquiſition.

The dull, dry, torpid, languid, ſoporific ſtyle diſplays itſelf in all its academical grace, in ſermons at Weſtminſter Abbey before the Houſes of Lords and Commons. Theſe are commonly printed, and few things ever came from the preſs more inſipid; mere water gruel, or rather mere chips in porridge. You may read ſeveral of them, and not find the name of Jeſus Chriſt once inſerted. The name of God is ſparingly admitted. A paſſage from ſcripture might ſpoil a period, or give the diſcourſe a vulgar air. No attempt to ſtrike the imagination or move the paſſions. The firſt aim of the preacher ſeems to be to give no diſguſt to a faſtidious audience; to go through the formality, with all the tranquillity of gentle dulneſs, neither ruffled himſelf, nor rudely daring to diſturb his hearers. He is uſually, before his Maker, in a temporal ſenſe, on theſe occaſions, and muſt therefore carry his diſh very upright, and be upon his good behaviour, or he may hinder his preferment, and retard his tranſlation. A bold rebuke, a ſpirited remonſtrance againſt faſhionable vice, againſt vain babbling, againſt reviling each other in the ſenate, might fix the preacher in his place

for life, as the froſt congeals the ſtream. It is ſafer to talk about good old King Charles and King David, the Jews and the Samaritans, the Scribes and the Phariſees, the Greeks and the Romans.

Dulneſs ſeems to be conſidered as a conſtituent part of dignity; and when a great man is deſired to preach an occaſional ſermon, he aſſumes ſomething of an owl-like heavineſs of manner to preſerve the appearance uniformly majeſtic. If his diſcourſe is not underſtood, ſo much the better. It may then be ſuppoſed to contain any thing, and every thing; and, as imagination exceeds reality, the preacher's fame is likely to gain by the artifice.

I have often lamented, that at aſſize ſermons, the ſame dulneſs has been adopted. Such occaſions furniſh a very deſirable opportunity to ſtrike the minds of the common people with an awe of juſtice, with a fear of offending, with a conviction that the wages of ſin are death. But the preacher, who means to ſhow his parts before the judge and the lawyers, commonly talks about juriſprudence, Roman and Juſtinian codes, the origin of civil government, municipal laws, and ſimilar matters, prodigiouſly edifying indeed to the judge, but to the vulgar, and to the jury and other perſons concerned, unintelligible as Arabic.

Ordination and viſitation ſermons may be, perhaps, allowed ſomething of the privilege of theological lectures, though a rhetorical peroration affecting the heart might be, on ſuch occaſions, equally creditable and more beneficial; for in truth, the ſtudent does not, at that time, require a

theological lecture on abſtruſe ſubjects of divinity, but rather a perſuaſive exhortation which may ſtrike his mind with an awful ſenſe of the engagements into which he has entered, or is going to enter. He can read theology in his chamber.

Sermons before inns of court have been remarkable for dulneſs and want of animation. You would almoſt ſuppoſe the preacher to be reading one of the ſtatutes or a law inſtrument, like a clerk at the aſſizes. He ſeems to ſtand in awe of the gentlemen of the long robe, and would not be thought to inſult their underſtandings by addreſſing their paſſions. But the gentlemen, however learned in ſtatutes, precedents, and legal formalities, are ſtill but men, and might be influenced like other men, by the operation of the Word, which is deſcribed as ſharper than a two-edged ſword, in the hands of him who is duly ſkilled in its uſe. St. Paul made Felix tremble on the ſeat of judgment.

The cold manner is not proper for the pulpit, and ſhould be confined to the ſchools of logic and metaphyſics. But do I mean to ſatirize the clergy, it will be aſked, and to encourage a diſpoſition to depreciate them and their ſervices? It will be unjuſt and uncandid to ſuſpect that I can have any ſuch intention. On the contrary, I wiſh the learned, the rational, and philoſophical part of the clergy, to poſſeſs all that authority, and influence, and honor, which is due to their reſpectable characters, and to their attainments. But I have obſerved men

totally different from them; certainly ignorant, almoſt irrational, and quite unphiloſophical, engroſſing the attention of the largeſt congregations of Chriſtian people. If the better ſort mean to do good in the moſt extenſive manner, they will not deſpiſe that popularity which can alone enable them to do it. They will lay aſide pride, falſe delicacy, affectation, and diſplay their attainments and abilities in a popular manner, with a manly eloquence, and with the appearance of ſincerity as well as the reality. Then ſhall I ſee their churches crowded; for the people will certainly give them a decided preference whenever they ſhall deſcend to the taſte and underſtanding of the people. Then ſhall I no more ſee with pain, the gentleman and the ſcholar, who has had every advantage of education, neglected for the irregular mechanic.

I am aware that my interference in this manner, however good my motive, may be attributed to an improper meddling with things of which the perſons concerned are, in every reſpect, competent judges. Pride will ſpurn my hints; but, like ſeed ſcattered abroad, ſome may fall on ground congenial to its nature, and adapted to its growth. I would beg leave, before I diſmiſs a ſubject rather invidious, to refer the haughty deſpiſers of popularity to a paſſage in the book of the Wiſe ſon of Sirach, where men who are *wiſe and eloquent in their inſtructions*, are at the ſame time praiſed for their

popular manner; for it is added, that they were MEET FOR THE PEOPLE.

Dr. Eachard gives the following ſpecimen of metaphyſical preaching. " Omnipotent all, thou " art only, becauſe thou art only, and becauſe " thou only art: as for us, we are not, but we " ſeem to be, and only ſeem to be, becauſe we " are not; for we are but mites of entity, and " crumbs of ſomething: " as if, ſays he, a company of country people were bound to underſtand Suarez and all the ſchool divines.

Biſhop Butler ſeems to be the model of dry preachers in the ſuperior order. Some of his ſermons are, in every reſpect, excellent, and, as a philoſophical diſquiſitor on theology, he is admirable; but his diſquiſitions are, upon the whole, fitter for the cloſet than the pulpit. People will continue to ſlumber in churches, unleſs the diſcourſe of the preacher is level to their capacities, and unleſs he rouſes them by a judicious addreſs to their paſſions and imagination. I recommend nothing frothy, nothing puerile, nothing fanatical, but the manly force, the fire, the pathos, of a CHATHAM transferred to the pulpit. Leave Dulneſs to doze among the cobwebs of the ſchools; lulled by the drowſy hum of droniſh diſputants in metaphyſical theology.

CHAP. XII.

Unreaſonable expectation of uniform excellence in a writer's manners, writings, and ſtyle—Corneille—Johnſon—Modern biography.

THE character of Pierre de Corneille, the popular dramatic poet of France, induced thoſe who approached him to expect ſomething in his manners, addreſs, and converſation above the common level. They were diſappointed; and the like has happened in a thouſand ſimilar inſtances.

The friends of Corneille, as was natural enough, were uneaſy at finding people expreſs their diſappointment after an interview with him. They wiſhed him to appear as reſpectable when near, as when at a diſtance; in a perſonal intimacy, as in the regions of fame. They took the liberty of mentioning his defects, awkward addreſs, his ungentleman-like behaviour. Corneille heard the enumeration of his faults with great patience; and, when it was concluded, ſaid, with a ſmile and with a juſt confidence in himſelf: "All this "may be very true; but, for all that, I am "ſtill *Pierre de Corneille.*"

The numberleſs defects, infirmities, faults, and diſagreeable qualities, which the friends of Dr. Johnſon have brought to public light, were chiefly what, in leſs conſpicuous men, would be

passed over as foibles, or excused as mere peccadillos; and however his enemies may triumph in the exposure, I think he might, if he were alive, imitate Corneille and say: "For all this "I am still Samuel Johnson."

Few men could stand so fiery a trial as he has done. His gold has been put into the furnace, and really, considering the violence of the fire, and the frequent repetition of the process, the quantity of dross and alloy is inconsiderable. Let him be considered not absolutely but comparatively: and let those who are disgusted with him ask themselves, whether their own or the characters they most admire would not exhibit some deformity, if they were to be analyzed with a minute and anxious curiosity. The private conversation of Johnson, the caprice of momentary ill humor, the weakness of disease, the common infirmities of human nature, have been presented to the public, without those alleviating circumstances which probably attended them. And where is the man that has not foibles, weaknesses, follies, and defects of some kind? And where is the man that has greater virtues, greater abilities, more useful labors, to put into the opposite scale against his defects?

Biography is every day descending from its dignity. Instead of an instructive recital, it is becoming an instrument to the mere gratification of an impertinent, not to say a malignant, curiosity. There are certain foibles and weaknesses, which should be shut up in the coffin with the

poor relics of fallen humanity. *Ubi plura nitent* in a character, the *paucæ maculæ* ſhould be covered with the pall.

I am apprehenſive that the cuſtom of expoſing the nakedneſs of eminent men to every eye will have an unfavorable influence on virtue. It may teach men to fear celebrity; and, by extinguiſhing the deſire of fame and poſthumous glory, deſtroy one powerful motive to excellence.

I think there is reaſon to fear leſt the moral writings of Johnſon ſhould loſe ſomething of their effect by this unfortunate degradation. To prevent ſo miſchievous an effect of his friends communications, I wiſh his readers to conſider the old ſaying, *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis ſapit*, and to reflect that reaſon and argument do not loſe any thing of their force from the errors and foibles of a writer's conduct. Let them alſo remember the famous paſſage.

——Video meliora proboque
Deteriora ſequor.

Is it to be believed that Addiſon would have appeared uniformly great, if the taſte of his age, and the communicative diſpoſition of his intimate friends, had publiſhed his private converſation, the ſecrets of his cloſet and of his chamber.

It was uſual to write the lives of great men *con amòre*, with affection for them, and there ran a vein of panegyric with the narrative. Writer and reader agreed in loving the character,

and the reader's love was increaſed and confirmed by the writer's repreſentation. An ardor of imitation was thus excited, and the hero of the ſtory placed, without one diſſentient voice, in ſome honorable nich in the temple of Fame. But this biographical anatomy, in minutely diſſecting parts, deſtroys the beauty of the whole; juſt as in cutting up the moſt comely body many loathſome objects are preſented to the eye, and the beautiful form is utterly diſfigured.

It is ſaid indeed that not only truth, but the whole truth, ſhould be publiſhed and left naked for the contemplation of mankind; for as the anatomy of the body contributes to the benefit of human nature, by promoting medical and chirurgical knowledge; ſo the diſſection of characters tends to the developement of error, which by being thus expoſed, may be avoided.

Some advantage may be derived to the philoſopher from this expoſure, but I fear little to the multitude. I am rather induced to believe, that the abaſement of great characters, and the expoſure of defects, prevents the ſalutary operation of their good example, and of their writings. The common reader does not make refined and philoſophical obſervations. He only ſays, If ſuch men, ſo learned, ſo great, ſo celebrated, were guilty of this failing, or remarkable for that miſconduct, how can I attempt, with hope of ſucceſs, to avoid it? He gives up the conteſt, and ſhelters his ſurrender under the name and

authority of the defunct philosopher, whom he once admired, and endeavoured to imitate.

I think it was Ægypt in which a tribunal was established to sit in judgment on the departed. Johnson has been tried with as accurate an investigation of circumstances as if he had been judicially arraigned on the banks of the Nile.

It does not appear that the witnesses were partial. The sentence of the public, according to their testimony, has rather reduced him; but time will replace him where he was, and where he ought to be, notwithstanding all his errors and infirmities, high in the ranks of Fame. Posterity will forgive his roughness of manner, his apparent superstition, his mistakes in making his will, his prejudices against Whigs and the Scotch, and will remember his Dictionary, his moral writings, his biography, his manly vigor of thought, his piety, and his charity. They will make allowances for morbid melancholy; for a life, a great part of which was spent in extreme indigence and labor, and the rest in the midst of affluence, flattery, obsequiousness, submission, and universal renown.

The number of writers who have discussed the life, character, and writings of Johnson, is alone sufficient to evince that the public feels him to be a *great man*, and it will not be easy to write him down through mistaken friendship or declared enmity. It proves him to be a great man; but mortal man, however well he may deserve the epithet Great comparatively,

is absolutely but a little being; and the example of Johnson is additional proof of this obvious but humiliating conclusion. I wish, nevertheless, that his Life had been written in the manner of the French *Eloges*, and with the affection due to superior merit.

Many of his apparent friends, one may suppose, were of those who forced themselves into his company and acquaintance in order to gain credit, and gratify their own vanity. They had little cordiality of affection for him, and no objection to lower his memory, if they could raise their own names to eminence on the ruins. Many of them had been hurt by his freedom of rebuke, and were glad to gratify revenge when retaliation was out of his power. If he were alive, he would crush the swarms of insects that have attacked his character both in conversation and in writing, and with one sarcastic blow, flap them into non existence.

CHAP. XIII.

Modern satirists—Party spirit—Spirit of levelling—Attack of the King.

MR. Pope has introduced a harmony of verse which, however difficult to invent, is imitated with ease. The close of the sense in couplets, and the frequent antitheses in the second line, are features so prominent, that an

artiſt of inferior ſkill, a mere *faber imus*, is able to copy them, and to preſerve a reſemblance.

His tranſlation of Homer is a treaſury of ſplendid language; and he who has ſtudied it will not find himſelf at a loſs for ſhining epithets adapted to every occaſion. I detract not from his merit; for as the improver of Engliſh verſification, as the introducer of a brilliant diction unknown before, he has juſtly obtained univerſal fame.

But that which is laudable in him as the inventor, cannot entitle his mere imitators to any great applauſe. They may be called good verſifiers, pretty poetaſters, but they cannot rank with their maſter as a poet, or an original improver of verſification.

While they exerciſed their imitative ſkill on ſubjects not at all injurious, they might obtain approbation, and would certainly eſcape cenſure; but the candid, the moderate, and impartial part of mankind, have lamented that they have ſtolen the graces of Pope's verſification to decorate and recommend a kind of ſatire, abounding in virulent and perſonal invective.

I am ſenſible that ſome works of this kind have been extolled in the higheſt terms; but I know, at the ſame time, that the extravagant applauſe was, in great meaſure, the ebullition of party zeal, or of that unhappy diſpoſition of the human mind which prompts it to rejoice in ſeeing elevated merit or rank degraded by defamation. Take away from ſuch poems the perſonality,

the

the local and temporary allusions, and how small a portion will remain of real genius to recommend them! They would not be read notwithstanding their glare of epithet and their sonorous numbers.

It is usual with these works to rise to universal fame immediately on publication, to bask, like the ephemera, in the sunshine for a day, and then to fall into a sudden and irretrievable obscurity.

One of the principal arts of their writers is to secure attention by seizing the topic of the hour, by filling their poems with the names of persons who are the subject of conversation at the moment, and by boldly surprising their readers with attacks on the most respectable characters, or at least on persons who, from their rank and their offices, provided they are tolerably decent, ought to be exempted from virulent abuse and public obloquy. It is the interest of the community that persons of high stations, whose example is powerful, and whose authority ought to carry weight, should not be held out to the vulgar as objects of derision. If they have common failings, or have been guilty of human errors, a veil should be thrown over them for the sake of decorum, and of that beautiful order in society, which conduces to a thousand beneficial purposes.

But a spirit of levelling high characters and rank is one of the distinguishing marks of the present times. It was introduced by what is

called the Oppoſition. Unfortunately for all that is decent, and honorable, and right, it has been judged expedient that government, or the miniſters of government, ſhould be conſtantly embarraſſed by a ſtanding oppoſition. The tools employed by the leaders of this oppoſition are often ſuch as are only fit for dirty work. Unable to effect any more laudable purpoſe, they have been employed to aſperſe the characters of the temporary poſſeſſors of office, and its conſequent powers and emoluments. Not ſatisfied with attacking the political perſons, they have dared to go farther, to enter into the privacies of family retirement, and to ſpare neither age nor ſex in divulging whatever envy has ſuggeſted. The poetical ſatiriſt has been called upon as a powerful auxiliary in conducting the levelling engine. Some read and are pleaſed with verſe, who would have overlooked the invective in humble proſe. Good verſifiers have been found, and the moſt exalted perſons in the kingdom cruelly hitched in a rhyme, and thrown out to the vulgar to be toſſed about by the tongue of infamy.

Every loyal ſubject, every gentleman, every conſiderate father of a family, every man of common humanity, is hurt at the cruel and opprobrious treatment which the King, the very fountain of honor, has experienced from the hands of rhyming ruffians.

Great pretenſions to good humor, mirth, and gaiety, are made by the ſatiriſts; but the

pretenſions are a veil of gauze. It is eaſy to ſee, through the pellucid diſguiſe, the ſnakes of envy, the horrid features of malice, the yellow tinge of jealouſy, the diſtortions of diſappointment grinning with a Sardonic ſmile.

Hic nigræ ſuccus loliginis, hæc eſt
Ærugo mera.

But as a veil is uſed, as diverſion and pleaſantry are promiſed, and as detraction from illuſtrious merit is but too agreeable to moſt men, the poems are read, and do much miſchief in the ſhort period of their exiſtence.

The pain they give to individuals who are burned with a cauſtic, yet are conſcious of having given no provocation, is enough to render the practice odious in the eyes of all who conſider duly how much a feeling mind ſuffers on ſuch occaſions, and how little right a dark and malignant aſſaſſin can have to inflict a puniſhment without an offence; to bring an accuſation without coming forward as the accuſer.

The practice is injurious to the public, as it tends to diſcourage the growth of virtue and all honeſt attempts to be diſtinguiſhed by merit. Such attempts of neceſſity render a man conſpicuous; and he no ſooner becomes ſo than he is conſidered as a proper mark for ſcorn to ſhoot at, and for envy to aſperſe. A man may be afraid to exert himſelf when, every ſtep he advances, he is the more in danger of attracting notice, and, conſequently, of becoming the mark

at which the malevolent may *bend their bows, and ſhoot out their arrows, even bitter words.*

What a triumph to villany, profligacy, and ignorance, when virtuous, and innocent, and inoffenſive characters are ſingled out for that ſatire which themſelves only can deſerve.

This is a *vis digna lege regi.* Expoſtulation is in vain; and laws, which might reſtrain it, will not be duly executed, in a country where licentiouſneſs is unfortunately conſidered as eſſential to the exiſtence of civil liberty.

CHAP. XIV.

On the literary Character of Julius Cæſar.

JULIUS CÆSAR, like the greater part of men diſtinguiſhed by genius, began to diſplay his inventive powers in the pleaſant walks of poeſy. In early youth he wrote Oedipus, a Tragedy, and the Praiſe of Hercules, which I imagine was a kind of epic poem; but Auguſtus prohibited the publication of them both, leſt they ſhould expoſe any marks of juvenile imperfection, and diſgrace the Imperial family. It ſhould be mentioned alſo, as an inſtance of Julius Cæſar's induſtry, that he compiled a volume, to which he gave the name of *Dicta collectanea*, conſiſting of the remarkable apophthegms of remarkable men. Auguſtus ſuppreſſed this

alſo from a ſcrupulous regard for the honor of the houſe of Cæſar.

One cannot help wiſhing that the juvenile productions of ſo diſtinguiſhed a man had been preſerved as curioſities. Though they might not have been exempt from the defects of immature judgment, there is every reaſon to conjecture that they abounded in elegance and taſte.

At a later period, this great man wrote a poem, entitled *Iter*, or the *Itinerary*. It gave an account of his expeditious progreſs from Rome to Hiſpania ulterior; and was probably in the ſtyle and manner of Horace's *Iter Brundufium*.

I am the rather induced to believe that Cæſar wrote in the Horatian manner *ſermoni propriora*, becauſe the little ſpecimen which remains of Cæſar's poetry is in that ſtyle. It is the well-known fragment on Terence preſerved by Donatus.

Tu quoque, tu in ſummis, O dimidiate Menander, &c.

In the Dialogue of an admirable author on the Cauſes of the Corruption of Eloquence, there is a paſſage which reflects but little honor on Cæſar as a poet. Cæſar and Brutus, ſays he, wrote verſes and depoſited them in libraries; they did not make better verſes than Cicero, but yet more happily, ſince fewer knew that they made them at all. *Non melius quam Cicero, at felicius, quia illos feciſſe pauciores ſciunt.*

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Cæsar's verses, it is probable, were not very striking, as may be collected from an anecdote recorded of them by Plutarch. When Cæsar was taken by pirates, he solaced himself in his disagreeable situation, by composing orations and verses. He read his verses to his captors, hoping to receive the flattering tribute of their applause; but the hardy adventurers had no ear for verse. Cæsar gave way to a momentary resentment, called them stupid barbarians, and affirmed that they deserved crucifixion. It cannot be supposed that he revenged the mortification his pride received in a manner so tyrannical; but it is certain that, as soon as he was liberated, he ordered the poor pirates to be nailed to the cross. Crucifixion, it is to be hoped, was a punishment for the want of honesty, and not of taste.

Notwithstanding this vindictive spirit, it would have been happy if his ambition had been poetical rather than political. It might have saved the deluge of blood through which he waded to empire. According to his own confession, the conquest of Gaul occasioned the loss of *one million two hundred thousand lives;* and it is supposed, that the civil wars in which he was engaged, destroyed an equal number. Dreadful effects of pride! Two million four hundred thousand lives destroyed by one man! Remarkable instance of the instability of human grandeur! for he enjoyed the peaceable possession of his power but five months!

But our present business is to consider Cæsar in the light of a scholar, not of a soldier. If his

character as a poet is disputable, his talents as an orator, and his learning and sagacity as a philosopher, are highly and justly esteemed. By a rare union of different abilities he excelled at once in the elegance of polite letters, and in the severer department of recondite science.

As an orator, Cicero places him in the first rank, and Quintilian thinks he would have rivalled Cicero, had he devoted his abilities to the rostrum or tribunal. The elegance of his language was the peculiar excellence which distinguished him as an orator. He was more Attic than Cicero; and if he had transmitted his best orations down to posterity, Cicero would not have stood alone at the head of Roman orators. Cicero himself generously extols him, and thinks him equal to those who had made the study of eloquence the business of their lives.

Eloquence was cultivated by Cæsar only in subservience to his ambition. He knew that the Triumviri, in the plenitude of their usurping power, could cut off the heads and hands of mere orators, and nail them to the rostrum. He knew, that though Cicero inculcated the doctrine that arms should yield to the gown, and the laurel to the tongue, it was the sword and the axe which, in his time, carried all before it.

Amidst all the turbulence of ambition, so extensive was his capacity, that he found both time and inclination to write two books, addressed to Cicero, on the cool and dispassionate subjects of grammatical analogy. In the dedication he paid

Cicero a great compliment, though, if we may judge from his own conduct, it was insincere. He congratulated Cicero on having obtained a laurel more honorable than all military triumph, as it was more glorious to extend the limits of the Roman genius, than of the Roman empire.

Cæsar wrote two books in opposition to Cicero's *Laus Catonis*, in which Cato Uticensis had been celebrated with all the warmth of panegyric. Cæsar considered the praise of Cato a reflection on himself, and published his answer in two orations, to which he gave the name, *Anti-Catones*. The speeches were in the form of accusations before a judge; and I believe they were conducted with temper, for Cæsar praises Cato in the midst of his invective. He was too much master of his temper to suffer it to be indecently disturbed by critical controversy, and he was sufficiently politic to know, that to deny a merit which was become notorious would injure the cause of which he had undertaken the defence.

One of the principal topics of Cæsar's satire was Cato's inebriety. But he relates an anecdote of it which redounds to the honor of Cato's general character. Cato returning one morning from a convivial meeting in a state of inebriation, was met by some young men, who were determined to see whom they had encountered. They uncovered his face, and found it Cato. They no sooner saw him than they blushed on their own account for having taken such a liberty with so great a man. You would have imagined that they

had been detected in an improper ſtate by Cato, and not Cato by them, ſo great was their confuſion. From which it is evident, that in the midſt of drunkenneſs, Cato's character was reſpectable, and retained the dignity of ſuperior virtue. Cæſar could not have done Cato greater honor, or allowed him more authority, than by relating this ſtory, in which Cato, even when diveſted of his reaſon by exceſs, was yet awful.

I imagine Cæſar, in the liberality and urbanity of a cultivated mind, conducted this controverſy in a good humored manner, and rather more for the pleaſure and amuſement of it, than from a reſentful deſire to detract from Cato, whom his enemies allowed to be a good man and a good citizen. Every one knows that he was fond of wine; and Horace ſeems to think that his virtue acquired warmth from the juice of the grape.

Narratur & priſci Catonis
Sæpe mero caluiſſe virtus.

The effect of Cæſar's knowledge in aſtronomy is felt at this hour in the reformation of the Calendar. Cæſar is repreſented in Lucan as ſaying of himſelf

—— media inter prælia ſemper
Stellarum cœlique plagis ſuperiſque vacavi.

He was a lover of the ſcience, and excelled in it; but there is reaſon to believe that in the Julian Calendar he was aſſiſted or directed by Soſigenes the aſtronomer, who had derived his knowledge from the Banks of the Nile. It is probable that ſuperſtition, and not ignorance only, prevented

the reformation from taking place before Cæsar gave it the sanction of his authority, and received in return the honor of the invention.

Cæsar's Commentaries are too well known to admit of much animadversion upon them. They are evidently formed on the model of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Their language is pure, and flows with that ease and perspicuity which has induced readers unanimously to compare it to a gentle and beautiful river, whose surface is smooth, and waters pellucid. They who lament the want of political observations in them, and of masterly strokes of animated eloquence, should remember, that Cæsar professed only to write commentaries, and not a just and legitimate history.

There is not much remaining of this great man's composition*; but there is enough to induce us to lament that he did not use the pen more than the sword In military merit, his first object, Poggius maintains, with great force of argument, that he was greatly inferior to Scipio.

Pliny the elder seems to think vigor of mind the distinguishing character of Cæsar. He means not firmness and resolution only; but a peculiar celerity and irresistible force, which can be compared to nothing more aptly than to fire. He could, at the same time, read and write, and

* Besides those already mentioned, Cæsar wrote the following works, which are lost—Nine capital Orations, besides some smaller ones, on particular occasions; several books of Epistles, at least sixteen; *Libri Auspiciorum*, *Auguralia*; and some affirm that he translated Aratus's Phenomena. Other things are attributed to him, but, it is supposed, erroneously.

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liſten with attention. He has been known to dictate ſix or ſeven letters at once to his amanuenſes. Who but muſt lament that ambition ſtole him from the Muſes? He might have ſpent all his fire in compoſing an epic poem, or the hiſtory of his country, without ſhedding a drop of blood, or breaking one widow's or orphan's heart; and with the praiſe and delight of all poſterity.

CHAP. XV.

Of the fable books commonly uſed for the initiation of children in reading — Croxall, Dodſley, &c.

I THINK it may admit of a doubt whether the preſenting of the common fables, which are called Æſopian, to young minds, is the moſt eligible mode of communicating thoſe firſt ideas which are ſaid to be of the greateſt conſequence, and of the longeſt duration.

I object not to the moral, which is excellent, if the child could find it out: but the child thinks of nothing but the narrative, and perhaps, in the childiſh age, ought to think of nothing elſe. What has the infant of ſix or ſeven years to do with the cunning maxims of the world? The great buſineſs is, at that time, to open the mind in the pleaſanteſt manner, by preſenting agreeable images, and by exciting and gratifying curioſity.

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The images of animals, dogs, horſes, bulls, peacocks, are very agreeable to children, and ſo far fables are proper for their elementary inſtruction. But the objection is to that ſhocking violation of truth and nature which repreſents the irrational and mute creation reaſoning and converſing by articulate language.

Quodcunque oſtendis mihi ſic incredulus odi.

Children naturally love truth, and when they read a ſtory, their firſt queſtion is, whether it is true? If they find it true, they are pleaſed with it; if not, they value it but little, and it ſoon becomes inſipid. But they either immediately know that a ſtory, in which a dog or a horſe is repreſented ſpeaking, is falſe; or if they believe it true, it contradicts their experience, and confounds all their ideas, ſo that they hardly know how to truſt the evidence of their ſenſes.

The reaſoning and converſation of irrational animals raiſes them to a level with the human ſpecies; and if children are to reſpect reaſon and ſpeech as moſt excellent gifts, they will honor the cock, the wolf, the fox, as much as man, or elſe degrade man to the rank of the cock, the wolf, and the fox.

Is zoology a valuable part of knowledge, and confeſſedly uſeful and pleaſing to children? Then why miſlead them in their firſt ideas of animals around them, by attributing to animals not only ſpeech and reaſon, but a thouſand actions, inſtincts, and contrivances totally different from thoſe which are natural.

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While I am writing, I open Croxall, and I ſee a print of a cat hanging by the hinder legs, on a peg, and pretending to be dead, in order to entice the mice to come down. A child of ſtrong ſenſe will ſay, How could a cat tie her hinder legs together in ſuch a manner as to hang herſelf up as repreſented, and have cats ſuch refined ſubtilty? I mention this inſtance out of a hundred others, merely becauſe I accidentally open the book at that fable. As the cat is an animal with which children are in general well acquainted, any unnatural repreſentation of it, will immediately be detected and deſpiſed.

The ſtyle and language of all the Æſopian fables now in uſe, is greatly above the comprehenſion of thoſe by whom alone they are read. Croxall's is at the ſame time a very mean ſtyle. Dodſley's indeed is a far better; but, in ſearch of fine language, he has deviated greatly from ſimplicity, and rendered his fables unintelligible to thoſe for whom they are chiefly deſigned.

L'Eſtrange's vulgarity, indelicacy, and fooliſh politics deſervedly condemn his book to oblivion. His book is a naſty book, and fit only for the jakes. I cannot admire either his or Croxall's applications. They are, indeed, ſeldom read by children, and ſerve only to ſwell the volume. They are too long, and too badly written, to ſerve for the inſtruction of young ſcholars. Two or three lines of application, in the manner of Phædrus, would have anſwered the purpoſe far better.

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As to the propriety of Croxall's language, that I may not be thought to chuſe the worſt ſpecimens, I will quote three or four lines of his firſt fable, and leave it to the reader to judge how well it is adapted to children.

" A briſk young cock," ſays he, " in com-
" pany with two or three pullets, *his miſtreſſes*,
" raking upon a dunghill for ſomething to en-
" tertain them with, happened to ſcratch up a
" jewel. *He knew what it was well enough*," &c. I ſay nothing of the abſurdity of giving children an idea that a cock " knows what a jewel is well " enough." I only animadvert on the ordinary mode of expreſſion. It aims at humor without reaching it; and is totally deſtitute of that elegant ſimplicity in which a narrative of this kind ſhould be preſented to children. It were eaſy to fill a volume with the vulgariſms and abſurdities of Croxall's Æſopian fables.

But yet, for want of a better, this book, with the help of the wooden cuts, has ſerved to entertain children. All I contend for is, that it is not adapted to the uſe of children by the author, neither is it fit for them. It is at once too high and too low for their purpoſe.

Are Gay's fit for children? I think not. They are far above their comprehenſion. They are not entirely intelligible to children under twelve or fourteen, unleſs in rare caſes of premature improvement and ſagacity. But ſome book is wanted that ſhall be in general calculated for all

children at that period when the mind, like the roſebud, is half cloſed and half expanded.

Fables are proper; but what fables? Only thoſe among the Æſopian, in which the animals do not ſpeak, and do not act differently from their nature.

But by *fables*, I mean, what the word means, *ſtories in general*, and not thoſe of Æſop only, Thoſe of Æſop, after all that has been ſaid on the propriety of children's reading them, are fitter for men than children, and were originally addreſſed to men on momentous occaſions. They are extremely difficult to be read by children, ſo as to derive the inſtruction from them which their inventors intended to convey in this artful and inſinuating mode.

I recommend *fables* of another kind, for the purpoſe of initiation; *tales* which paint pictures in the imagination, affect the heart, excite laughter, or powerfully intereſt and indulge curioſity.

If it ſhould be aſked, where ſuch are to be found, I cannot immediately anſwer; but I can ſay, without heſitation, who could compoſe them with judgment and genius. The reader will conjecture that I mean that Lady who publiſhed ſome admirable * Leſſons and Hymns for Children. Almoſt every word in thoſe books is judiciouſly ſelected, and they are ſo entertaining, that children read without conſidering them as a taſk, juſt as they ſhould do.

Studio fallente laborem.

* Published for Johnſon.

A volume of fables, by that lady, consisting of the best and most rational of the Æsopian, and of other entertaining narratives, whether with a moral or not, would be a most valuable present to the rising generation. One would almost wish for infancy again, for the pleasure of reading it, and escaping dull lessons in spelling books, dull fables in Croxall, and a hundred other dismal and dreary moralities, which have little other tendency than to make the mind loath the sight of a book, and hate those things which, properly managed, afford an exquisite delight.

CHAP. XVI.

Miscellaneous Literary Correspondence—Parnell—Beza—Augurellus—Letters.

SIR,

IN the preface to Parnell's works, Dr. Johnson professes to criticize those pieces only which were published by Pope. "Of the large *appendages*," says he, "which I find in the last "edition, I can only say that I know not "whence they came, nor have ever inquired "whither they are going. They stand upon the "faith of the compilers." A writer of a preface to this very edition should have made it his business to inquire into their authenticity, and if

if he allowed them to be admitted into the edition to which he prefixed a critical preface, ſhould have allowed them alſo a ſhare of his criticiſm. We are thankful to him for what he did, and will not blame him for omiſſion. But he diſmiſſes theſe *appendages* in a more contemptuous manner than, perhaps, they deſerve, and than he ought to have ſhown, if he had not read them.

I have taken a curſory view of them, and think they have many fine paſſages. In the dearth of good ſacred poetry, I think Parnell's worthy of regard; but what proof there is of their being genuine I know not, though I think there is internal evidence. The following ſpecimen from the Convert's Love is not unlike the ſtyle of Parnell:

While o'er the darkneſs of my mind
The ſacred ſpirit purely ſhined,
And marked and brightened all the way,
Which leads to everlaſting day;
And broke the thickening clouds of ſin,
And fixed the light of love within, &c.

I confeſs he ſometimes deviates into enthuſiaſm, and has left careleſs epithets and lines, which might eaſily be corrected without any eſſential alteration.

Your's, &c.

SIR,

PARNELL'S little poem, entitled The Book Worm, is much admired by many readers. I do not see much in it. Goldsmith mentions its being taken from Beza; and I have just been amusing myself with comparing the copy with the original. Beza sacrifices a Book-worm to the Muses.

Sed quæ victima grata? quæ Camœnis
Dicata hostia? Parcite, O Camœnæ:
Nova hæc victima, sed tamen suavis
Futura arbitror, admodumque grata.
Accede, O *Tinca!* illa quæ pusillo
Ventrem corpore tam geris voracem.
Tene Pieridum aggredi ministros?
Tene arrodere tam sacros labores?
Nec factum mihi denega: ecce furti
Tui exempla, tuæ & voracitatis.
Tu fere mihi passerem Catulli,
Tu fere mihi Lesbiam abstulisti. . . .
Quid dicam innumeros bene eruditos,
Quorum tu monumenta, tu labores
Isto, pessima, ventre devorasti?
. . . . . prodi.
Pro tot criminibus datura pœnas.
Age, istum jugulo tuo mucronem
Cruenta excipe — & istum, & istum, & istum.
Vide ut palpitet, ut cruore largo
Aras polluerit profana sacras!
At vos, Pierides, bonæque Musæ,
Nunc gaudete: jacet fera interempta;
Jacet sacrilega illa, quæ solebat
Sacros Pieridum vorare servos.

Hanc vobis tunicam, has dico, Camœnæ,
Vobis exuvias, ut hinc trophæum
Parnaſſo in medio locetis, & ſit
Hæc inſcriptio: De fera interempta
Bezæus ſpolia hæc opima Muſis.

Parnell does not offer the Worm as a ſacrifice to the Muſes. His deſign ſeems not to have the unity of Beza; but it is evidently formed on Beza's model, and there are ſeveral lines in it cloſely tranſlated.

Pope and Parnell, and indeed ſeveral poets of that age, were fond of reading and borrowing from the modern Latin poets. It is well known that Pope publiſhed an edition of ſelect Latin poems in two volumes. In the ſecond volume is the *Gratiarum convivium* of Augurellus, whence Parnell borrowed his ſpirited Anacreontic,

Invitat olim Bacchus ad cœnam ſuos
Comon, Jocum, Cupidinem.
Diſcumbit unâ Liber atque Amor; Jocus
Comoſque contra proxime,
Illis decentes ſubminiſtrant Gratiæ
Grati ſaporis pocula, &c.

The Latin poets, whom ſome of our moſt celebrated writers have imitated, naturally excite a degree of curioſity. Accept the following few particulars reſpecting Beza and Augurellus.

Theodore Beza, or de Beze, was born at Vezelai in Burgundy, of a good family, on the 24th of June 1519, and died October 13, 1605, at the advanced age of eighty-ſeven.

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He was a powerful champion of Proteſtantiſm; but with that I have no concern at preſent. I only view him as a Latin poet. I muſt however remark, that his eſpouſing a party with zeal, and ſupporting it with abilities, could not but raiſe many enemies againſt him; and he ſuffered ſeverely by their rancor. Indeed I believe he gave too much cauſe for calumny; in his juvenile poems he inſerted things which, if they were not the mere wanton effuſions of a momentary wicked imagination, ought to condemn him to everlaſting infamy. I fear they cannot be extenuated. The papiſts, on one ſide, made the moſt of them. The proteſtants, on the other, aſſiſted by his own addreſs and abilities in ſelf-defence, palliated or excuſed them. He afterwards, I have no doubt, became a good man; but ſtill there is a blemiſh on his character which no ſophiſtry can ever waſh away. I diſmiſs ſo diſagreeable a ſubject with the apology contained in the preface to the Poems, publiſhed by the author at a maturer age, and with a better judgment.

" Intellexit (BEZA) & pro certo compertum habuit, *juvenilia iſta ſua poemata*, ab adverſariis, *non tam in ſui*, quam in Dei ipſius *odium ſubinde recudi*, & hoc non tantum, ſed & *multo indigniora effingi* ac *addi*. Scripſit illa Beza *liberius quidem* ſed *juvenis* admodum. . . . Sed quamprimum Chriſti cognitione fuiſſet imbutus, & veræ eccleſiæ civis factus eſſet, nemo iſta prius, nemo ſeverius & quidem publice quam ipſe

D. Beza damnavit, & ab eo tempore omnia ſua dicta & ſcripta in ſolius Redemptoris ſui laudem direxit."

The moſt celebrated of his Latin poems are the verſes on the Birth of Chriſt, on the Pſalms, on Strabo, on Plato, and his Epitaphs. The *Devotio Deciorum*, the Death of Cicero, and moſt of the Epigrams, diſplay marks of great labor in their compoſition.

There is much falſe wit both in the Epigrams and Epitaphs; and the diction is not purely claſſical in any part of his poems, yet there is ingenuity of thought, and eaſe of language. I cannot recommend them ſtrongly to the reader's notice; but I have given them a curſory conſideration, in order to form an eſtimate of a writer from whom a famous Engliſh poet condeſcended to borrow without acknowledgment.

Beza's excellence was theological. He was a poet only for amuſement; and though he has obtained praiſe, it would, upon the whole, have been better for his character if he had never written verſe.

On account of his longevity and extraordinary abilities, Beza was called the Phœnix of his age.

He embalmed his verſes in the Latin language; elſe I believe they would, by this time, have been utterly decayed. I would quote, but I fear I ſhould be tedious though the pieces are ſhort. This epigram may ſerve to conclude the ſubject of Beza's poetry:

IN ZOILUM.

Brevem, Zoile, dicis hunc libellum,
O si possit idem omnibus videri!

The only unexceptionable edition of Beza's poetry I can recommend to the young lover of Latin verse is that printed at Geneva from copies corrected and revised by the author. It is badly printed; but may be depended upon as authentic.

Aurelius Augurellus, the other poet whom Parnell confessedly imitated, flourished in great esteem at Venice, and lived in literary employments to the age of eighty-three.

He was the preceptor of the celebrated Bembus and Naugerius.

He wrote many odes remarkable for their ease, and a few elegies with Roman simplicity; but he is said to have approached most nearly to the model of antiquity in his Iambics, which, before his time, had seldom been attempted with success.

He was one of the dupes of alchemy. After expending some time, but not much money, in the pursuit, he turned his mind to making verses instead of gold; and one of his first productions was a poem in three books, entitled *Chrysopœia*, or the Art of making Gold, in which he pretended to teach, or prove, the practicability of that alchemy which he had just renounced as impracticable.

He expresses himself darkly on the great secret. —Speaking of the stone, he says,

——— cujus secreta in parte recessit
Spiritus & crassa pressus sub mole latenter
Victitat, ac solvi vinclis & carcere cœco,
Emitti expectat.

He dedicated it to Leo the Tenth, who, though a despiser of gold himself, might have learned hence, if the art had been practicable, how to procure an abundance for the patronage of such genius and taste as those of Augurellus. He published another poem, entitled *Geruntica*. I know nothing of it, nor have I seen any other of his complete pieces but that which Parnel copied, and which is inserted in Pope's collection of Latin poetry.

Your's, &c.

CHAP. XVII.

The Effect of Songs — The Words of Songs usually sung by young Ladies — Union of good Poetry with good Music.

EVERY scholar knows that Bishop Lowth, in a solemn introduction to his Lectures on sacred Poetry, has inserted, in the very first place, and as one of the most striking instances of the power of poetry, a Greek political ballad, which used to be sung by the Athenian liberty-boys, at all their jolly drinking bouts, and by the mob and the ballad singers, in the streets and alleys of the city. The Bishop, after citing it at full length, suggests, that if, after the memorable ides of March, such a song had been given by the *Tyrannicides* of Rome to the common people to be

ſung in the Suburra and the Forum, it would have been all over with the party and the tyranny of the Cæſars. The ballad, *Harmodion Melos*, would have done more than all the Philippics of Cicero: and yet this ballad, though in Greek, is not better than many an one ſung in Cheapſide in praiſe of Wilkes and liberty. It bears a conſiderable reſemblance to ſeveral popular ſongs written by Tom D'Urfey and George Alexander Stevens, whom ſome future lecturer in poetry may call, (as the Biſhop does Calliſtratus, the author of his favorite ſong), *ingenioſos poetas & valde bonos cives.*

That the Biſhop ſhould have thought proper to ſelect a trivial ballad to ſhow the force of poetry, when he was going to treat of inſpired poetry, evinces that he deemed ballads capable of producing wonderful effects on the human heart, and therefore of great conſequence, and worthy to be ranked with the higheſt poetry.

I imagine there muſt have been a favorite tune to theſe words, which is loſt paſt recovery; for among us a popular tune and popular words are generally united; at leaſt the words will ſeldom be long popular, without a favorite tune. Words ſcarcely above nonſenſe have had a fine effect when recommended by favorite ſounds; *Lillabullero* is an obvious inſtance, and many others might be enumerated. Lord Wharton boaſted that he rhymed the King out of the kingdom by it. *Hearts of Oak are our Ships, Hearts of Oak are our Men*, is as good a compoſition as that of the old Grecian

with the hard name, and I dare say has contributed to animate many a poor creature, whose unhappy lot it was to be *food for powder.* —— *Hosier's Ghost*, *the Vicar of Bray*, and *Joy to great Cæsar*, had great weight in the times in which they first appeared.

But if political songs produce so great an effect, it is but reasonable to conclude, that Bacchanalian and amorous songs have, in their way, an influence similar and no less powerful.

Music and poetry are wonderfully efficacious on the mind when they act separately; and, when united, their power is more than doubled. They are, of necessity, united in songs, and the effect is usually increased by wine, cheerful conversation, and every species of convivial joy.

I argue, then, that if political songs have had such wonderful effects as to lead on armies to conquest, and to dethrone kings, those songs, in which the joys of love and wine are celebrated, must have done great execution in private life. It is fair, I think, to draw such an inference.

I proceed to infer, that it is of great consequence to the cause of temperance, and all other virtues, that the poetry of popular songs should be of a good tendency. For as songs may do great harm, so may they do great good, under certain limitation.

Perhaps we have not improved in song-writing so much as in other species of poetry; for the old songs are still the best, if we judge by that infallible criterion, Popularity.

But such is the love of novelty, that with a new tune there must be a new song; and, unhappily, the composers of the poetry are less excellent in their art than the composers of the music. The music is often delightful, while the verse is merely rhyme, not only unaccompanied with reason, but destitute of fancy and elegance.

But they who can write neither good sense nor good poetry, can write licentiously, and give to their insipid jingle the high seasoning of indelicate double meanings, or even gross obscenity.

If they descend not to this degradation, they yet represent the passion of love in language, which, though mere common-place, renders it very difficult for ladies of delicacy to sing their songs without the blush of confusion. Nothing is, indeed, more common than to hear young ladies say, "the tune is delightful, but the words are "nonsensical. But we never mind the words, "we only make use of them to sing the tune, "without giving them a moment's attention."

The effects of a song ought to arise conjunctly from the music and the poetry. If the words are considered of no consequence, and unworthy of attention, it is evident that much of the pleasure, perhaps half of it, is entirely lost to the singer and the hearer. But though the young lady may apologize for singing nonsense, or warm descriptions of passions which her delicacy must conceal, by saying she does not mind the words, it may be doubted whether it is possible to learn a song by memory, and sing it frequently in company,

without giving the words a very conſiderable degree of attention.

And I think it probable that indelicate ſongs have done almoſt as much harm by inflaming the imagination as novels and ſentimental letters. I do not ſpeak of ſongs groſsly indecent; for ſuch are certainly never admitted to lie on the young ladies harpſichord; but I ſpeak of thoſe which come out every ſeaſon at Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and other places of public amuſement. The muſic is charming, and the words are uſually well adapted to the mixed audience of thoſe places, but not always ſo well to the parlour, the dining-room, and ladies library.

I propoſe to the muſical ladies, or rather to the muſic maſters, that whenever a fooliſh or improper ſong is ſet to a pleaſing and excellent tune, they would ſeek ſome poetical compoſition of ſimilar metre, and of eſtabliſhed reputation, which may be ſung to the ſame tune without any inconvenience, but on the contrary, with great advantage to the tune, to the morals, to the taſte, and with an addition to the pleaſure of all young perſons, who are educated with care and delicacy.

Where young ladies have a poetical talent, which is common in this age, I ſhould think they could not employ it more agreeably and uſefully than in writing new words to tunes which are accompanied with ſuch as they cannot but diſapprove. It would be an additional pleaſure to the hearers to have, at the ſame time, a ſpecimen of the performer's ſkill in muſic and in poetry.

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I cannot dismiss the subject without expressing a wish that the composers of fashionable songs would take care, for their own sake, that the poetry should be at least inoffensive; for there are many most pleasing pieces of music rejected by respectable families, and consequently soon lost in obscurity, because the words were such as could not be sung without causing some degree of pain or shame. This is not a licentious age in theatrical amusements, nor in song-writing, compared with the reign of the second Charles. But still there is a disguised indecency which prevails in both, and which is probably the more injurious, as the poisoned pill is gilded, as the dagger is braided with a wreath of myrtle.

But, exclusively of moral considerations, every man of taste must wish to see good poetry united with good music.

The best poets of antiquity wrote the popular songs, *Poetæ melici & lyrici.* Most of the odes of Horace are love or drinking songs. Anacreon has gained immortality by songs alone. Sappho was a song writer. Great statesmen, as Solon, for instance, wrote songs for political purposes.

Many of our best poets who have obtained the rank of English classics, wrote songs; but who writes for Vauxhall? The best writers of the age need not think it a degrading condescension, when they consider the dignity of music and poetry, and how far their effects in this country are diffused. *In tenui labor; at tenuis non gloria.*

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAP. I.

The Deceitfulneſs of Hiſtory.

Ornes ea vehementius quam fortaſſe ſentis. Amori noſtro pluſculum etiam quam concedet veritas, largiare.
Cicero to Lucceius.

Quicquid Græcia mendax
Audet in hiſtoria.——

IF you have been an ocular witneſs to an affray, a fire, or any occurrence in the ſtreet, and you ſee an account of it in all the newſpapers next morning, though they ſhould all pretend to accuracy and minuteneſs, you would find them all vary in ſome particulars from each other, and from the truth, yet without the leaſt deſign to contradict or to deceive; but different reporters of the ſame facts ſaw them at different times, or in different lights, with various degrees of attention, and reported them with various degrees of fidelity, according to the variety in their powers of memory, or talents in deſcription.

In explaining ancient cuſtoms and places, there is every reaſon to believe that hiſtorians are unintentionally deceitful. It is ſeldom that neighbouring nations can know with accuracy each other's moſt familiar actions, ſports, diverſions, and places of reſort, by written accounts. Nothing

but ocular obſervation can ſecure exactneſs. I was lately much diverted with an article from the great French Encyclopédie, quoted in the notes to Mr. Maſon's Engliſh Garden. The word to be explained is Bowling-Green, ſpelt by the Lexicographers Boulingrin. "Boulin-" grin is a ſpecies of parterre, compoſed of " pieces of divided turf, with borders ſloping, " (*en glacis*), and evergreens at the corners and " other parts of it. It is mowed four times " a-year to make the turf finer. The invention " of this kind of parterre comes from England, " as alſo its name, which is derived from *boule*, " round, and *grin*, fine graſs or turf. Boulingrins " are either ſimple or compound; the ſimple are " all turf without ornament; the compound are " cut into compartments of turf, embroidered " with knots, mixt with little paths, borders of " flowers, yew-trees, and flowering ſhrubs. Sand " alſo of different colors contributes greatly to " their value."

The famous Mr. Sorbiere furniſhes the following materials for an eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian of England, in his account of his travels among us. He ſays, "that our chief clergymen, who have pluralities of benefices, make their grooms their curates; that our biſhops do horribly abuſe their juriſdiction in their excommunications and impoſitions; that they are ſo haughty, that none of the inferior prieſts dare to ſpeak to them; that they rob the church, by letting its leaſes for thirty years, getting all the money into their

own pockets, and leaving only a ſmall revenue to their ſucceſſors; that England is a country where no man is afraid of committing ſimony."

It would be difficult to obtain an exact hiſtory of the events of yeſterday; how much more of thoſe which happened a hundred or a thouſand years ago, and in times when the art of manual writing was not common, and men were prone to tranſmit to poſterity by tradition, the dreams of the night, and the imaginations of their idleneſs, as a hiſtory real and authentic.

Thoſe who wrote in the earlier periods, finding a dearth of materials, from the deficiency of written documents, ſought in the powers of invention what they could not find in the archives of their country. A book was to be made, and it was to be entertaining. The *terra incognita* was therefore ſupplied with woods and mountains according to the will of the geographer. Hence the ſtories of Pigmies and Cranes, Gynocephali, Aſtromori, Hippopades, Phanniſii, and Troglodytæ.

Herodotus, one of the earlieſt hiſtorians, writes a romance almoſt as fictitious as Don Quixote de la Mancha, but not nearly ſo ingenious or entertaining; yet he is called the Father of Hiſtory: he might as juſtly be called the Father of Lies. The Chaldæan hiſtory of Berofus, and the Ægyptian hiſtory of Manetho, are but the forgeries of Annius and Viterbo. Sanchoniathon's Phœnician hiſtory is equally deſtitute of credit,

if there is any confidence to be placed in the opinions of Scaliger and Dodwell.

Thus the very foundations on which the ſplendid fabric of hiſtory is to be erected are deſtitute of ſolidity. But they are uſually ſtrong enough to ſupport the ſuperſtructure; which is too often but a paper building, a houſe of cards, pretty and diverting to look at, but of little uſe and value, when the entertainment it affords is deducted.

It would be a juſt deſcription of the greater part of hiſtories to ſay of them, that they are hiſtorical romances, founded ſometimes on fact, but capriciouſly narrated according to the hiſtorian's prejudices, party, or miſrepreſentation, and fantaſtically embelliſhed by the falſe colors of poetry and rhetoric.

Writers of hiſtory are often in a dependent ſtate, and are ready to conceal, or palliate, or exaggerate any circumſtance or tranſaction, according to the wiſhes of a party, a powerful nobleman, or a king.

The hiſtories written by different perſons of different parties are known to repreſent the very ſame things and perſons at the ſame time laudable and execrable, godlike and diabolic.

There is a well-known hiſtorical inſtance of partiality recorded by Polybius, who was himſelf alſo extremely partial. Fabius and Philenus wrote the hiſtory of the Punic war; Fabius a Roman, and Philenus a Carthaginian. The Roman extolled his countrymen, and blamed

the

the Carthaginians in every thing. The Carthaginian threw all the errors and defects on the Romans, and triumphed in the superiority of Punic valor, wisdom, and generosity. To whom was credit due? Certainly to neither; and have we no modern Fabii or Philenii?

When I am desirous of knowing real facts, I look for them in some chronological table; but I read not a popular history, I peruse such works only when I am desirous of being *entertained* by composition, by the charms of style, eloquence, and poetical painting; or of being amused with observing the influence of party, or religious prejudice, on the mind of the writer and his admirers. The real facts are the clay which the popular historian, like a modeller, forms into various shapes, according to his own taste and inclination. To some of it he gives great beauty not its own; some he throws away wantonly or artfully, and the rest he shapes into vulgar utensils, or marks with deformity. It is a pleasing pastime to view his work, and men of taste and imagination are much delighted with his ingenuity. Weak and inexperienced persons believe him implicitly; others find real truth in him nearly in the same proportion as silver is found in a great mass of lead, or pearls in oyster-shells.

So little credit is to be given to historians, even in the recital of facts of public notoriety! how much less to their delineation of characters, and descriptions of motives for actions, secret

counſels and deſigns, to which none was a witneſs but the boſom which entertained them? Yet many hiſtorians kindly communicate all. You would think them of the privy council of all nations; though their intelligence never came from a higher ſource than the Daily Advertiſer.

Your true claſſical hiſtorian finds no difficulties for want of matter. When he finds it not, he makes it. I ſcarcely need mention thoſe fine ſpeeches in the very beſt ancient hiſtorians, not one ſyllable of which, except in a few inſtances, was ever uttered by the perſonage to whom it is attributed. Truth gives a faint outline; the hiſtorian gives ſhades and colors, drapery, action, and expreſſion. He lays on the red, the orange, the yellow, the blue, the purple, the violet, the black, and the white.

Some writers who have attacked Chriſtianity have relied greatly on the repreſentations of hiſtorians of a character remarkably bad both as men and as writers; beſides their having labored under the general imputation of miſrepreſenting truth, like every other hiſtoriographer. Whatever ſuch writers find againſt the Chriſtian cauſe in the moſt contemptible hiſtorians, they bring in triumph, and are ready to ſing the ſong of victory, or cry out *eureka* with Archimedes. But with all their pretenſions to philoſophy, they act moſt unphiloſophically in giving implicit credit to wretched annaliſts, paltry tools of paltry princes, who are known to have fabricated a great part of their ſtories, and who, when they ſpoke

againſt Chriſtianity, ſaw it with the eyes of prejudiced heathens, or envious ſophiſts, who could not bear to ſee a ſect flouriſhing on the ruins of their own wiſdom and dominion.

But it will be aſked, whether what I have ſaid againſt the credibility of hiſtory in general may not be applied to the evangelical hiſtory. I anſwer, that perhaps it might, if the credibility of that hiſtory did not chiefly depend on its internal evidence. I never yet ſaw any external evidence of it which might not admit of controverſy; but the internal proofs have a counterpart in every man's boſom, who will faithfully ſearch for it, which gives it inconteſtible confirmation. The Evangeliſts and Apoſtles were fallible men like other hiſtorians; but the Spirit of God, which operated on them, and now operates on all true Chriſtians, teaches the humble inquirer to find truth there and there only, in a ſtate perfectly pure. We may amuſe ourſelves with tinſel and paſte in mere human compoſitions; but gold and jewels are to be dug for in that mine; and happy they who know how to value them.

I will add one ſtrong internal evidence of the Goſpel Hiſtory from the preliminary obſervations to Macknight's Harmony.

" It is remarkable, that through the whole " of their hiſtories, the Evangeliſts have not " paſſed one encomium upon Jeſus, or upon " any of his friends, nor thrown out one re- " flection againſt his enemies; although much of

" both kinds might have been, and no doubt " would have been done by them, had they " been governed either by a ſpirit of impoſture " or enthuſiaſm. Chriſt's life is not praiſed in " the Goſpel, his death is not lamented, his " friends are not commended, his enemies are not " reproached, nor even blamed; but every thing " is told naked and unadorned, juſt as it hap- " pened; and all who read are left to judge, and " make reflections for themſelves; a manner of " writing which the hiſtorians never would have " fallen into, had not their minds been under " the guidance of the moſt ſober reaſon, and " deeply impreſſed with the dignity, importance, " and truth of their ſubject."

There is then no hiſtory in the world ſo artleſs as the evangelical, and none which, from its manner, has ſo great an appearance of veracity.

Though all this is not for a moment admitted by the ſceptical writer, yet, at the ſame time, every paſſage againſt Chriſtianity in ancient hiſtorians, however ſuſpicious their character, is triumphantly cited by him as a full and ſtrong and unanſwerable proof in favor of infidelity.

CHAP. II.

Of Common-place Wit and Jocularity.

Cui non ſit publica vena,
Qui nihil expoſitum ſoleat deducere, nec qui
Communi feriat carmen triviale moneta.

JUV.

THE common coin which is conſtantly in circulation among the loweſt of the people, uſually contracts a degree of filth, which renders it contemptible to the genteeler and richer orders, many of whom never touch it with their hands, or ſuffer it to enter their pockets, from a fear of defilement.

There is a common ſort of wit alſo, which, from conſtant uſe in the mouths of the vulgar, is become polluted. It is indeed, in its trite ſtate, fit for none but the vulgar, and ought, like dirty halfpence and farthings, to be chiefly confined to their intercourſe.

The wit I mean, I diſtinguiſh by the name of Common-place Wit. It might have been ſheer wit in the days of our grandfathers; but is now, from an alteration in manners and cuſtoms, no longer founded on truth and real life.

Reſpicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo.
Doctum imitatorem——

It is as obsolete as fardingales, ruffs, and square-toed shoes. It is worn out, quite threadbare, and ought to be consigned to Monmouth-street and Rosemary-lane.

One of the most common topics of commonplace wit, is a jocularity on the lord-mayor and aldermen of London as great eaters, particularly of custard. It might be true formerly that they were addicted to gluttony, and it may be true now that some among them, like other men, have set up an idol in their belly. But gluttony is not now sufficiently confined to them to justify the perpetual jokes on their gormandizing, as if it was their peculiar characteristic. Gentlemen of education and patrimonial fortune have, of late, been elected into the court of aldermen; and there is no more reason to suppose them fonder of eating when become magistrates, than when they continued in a private station. In general there is a refinement in the present age which does not allow men of fortune and rank to place their enjoyment in eating to excess, though it may teach them to indulge the more agreeable luxury of eating with an elegance of palate.

I have known aldermen of singular abstemiousness, who would sit at tables covered with every dainty, and eat moderately of the plainest food; while hungry would-be wits, who were accidentally invited, indulged in excessive gluttony. Yet the would-be wits would laugh with a grin of self-complacency at their entertainers as

ſoon as they were recovered of their own crop-ſickneſs, for giving what they called a truly *aldermanic* feaſt.

The common council and the city companies are ſtanding topics of jocularity, on account of their achievements with the knife and fork. As it unavoidably happens that ſome among them are of low and vulgar habits, and of mean minds, as well as of mean origin, a few may be obſerved to compenſate the poorneſs of their own tables, by gormandizing at a public feaſt, where dainties are preſented which they never taſted before, or where the flavor of every diſh is heightened by that fine ſeaſoner, a conſciouſneſs that it comes free of coſt. This, I ſay may be the caſe in a few inſtances; but they are not ſtriking enough to juſtify an everlaſting repetition of jokes on the worthy liverymen and common-council of the city of London.

Even if the jokes are well founded, we have now had enough of them, and let us not be overfed in one way while we are ridiculing exceſs in another.

But not only the lord-mayor, aldermen, common-council, and livery, but all the natives, and all the inhabitants of London, ſupply a perennial fountain of jocularity, under the appellation of Cockneys. Your true Cockney, one who never was out of the ſound of Bow bell, is uncommon in the preſent age. No perſons ramble more than the citizens, to Bath, Tunbridge, Brighthelmſtone, Margate, and all other

places of fashionable resort. Perhaps it would be better if there were more Cockneys. Trade would be better minded, there would be less folly, extravagance, and ruin, and the Gazette would not be so crowded with advertisements. But the Cockney was selected as an object of ridicule some hundred years ago; and so he must continue, or else the haberdashers of small wit, and retailers of old jokes, must become bankrupts for want of stock in trade.

The professions, indeed, will supply them with many articles in their way, ready cut and dried.

The clergyman, in the ideas of these humorists, is no less fond of good eating and drinking than the alderman; and why should he be? since both of them are only on a level with the rest of mankind in this species of enjoyment, which is natural and necessary, and which, with respect to guilt or innocence, may be deemed a matter of indifference. I imagine that the idea of clergymen's eating to excess might arise from the ancient custom of keeping chaplains at the table of great men, where they fared sumptuously, and, perhaps, seemed highly delighted, though even then it was expected of them that they should retire as soon as the dessert appeared.

But if the joke on the parsons was once a good one, it has now lost all its goodness, because it is stale. The parsons after all may console themselves, if the jokers can say no worse

of them, than that they love pudding. A piece of ſolid pudding, it muſt be owned, is in itſelf a far better thing than ſuch witticiſm, ſuch ſalt as has loſt its ſavour.

Thoſe jokes on the clerical profeſſion which relate to formal dreſs, great wigs, grave faces, long ſermons, are now totally unſupported by the manners and faſhions which prevail at preſent in the eccleſiaſtical *world*. The race of formal *ſpintexts* and ſolemn *ſaygraces* is nearly extinct.

The lawyers afford an abundance of ready-made jokes for little wits; but the jokes are ſo old that they ceaſe to pleaſe, except among the witty fraternity, or among the vulgar.

The profeſſion of phyſic is, perhaps, the richeſt mine of wit, which the witlings are able to find. Tie wigs and gold-headed canes are inexhauſtible; but the phyſicians of the preſent day wear neither. There is the misfortune. The barren joker procures all his ſtock from the old ſtores of deceaſed witlings of the laſt century; mere rubbiſh and lumber, which would be thrown away if it were not bought up and retailed by theſe ſecond-hand dealers in caſt-off trumpery.

The ſects, as well as the profeſſions, ſuggeſt a great deal of common-place jocularity. Preſbyterians and Quakers ſupply a delectable ſort of wit, which comes at eaſy rate, being attended with no expenſe of thought, nor labor of invention. But the Preſbyterian and Quaker of

the laſt century reſemble thoſe of the preſent but little; and the ſhaft of ridicule; which might adhere to ſome of them, would now, in moſt caſes, recoil on the aſſailant.

National prejudices are another copious fountain of petty wit. A Welſhman is no ſooner mentioned in the ſociety of jokers, than goats, leeks, and red herrings occur to his polite imagination. A Scotchman brings to mind the Scotch fiddle, famine, oatmeal, whiſkey, barren land, and want of trees: an Iriſhman, potatoes, blunders, bulls: a Frenchman, ſoup meagre, wooden ſhoes, ruffles without ſhirts, cowardice; an Engliſhman, roaſt beef, honor, honeſty, courage, riches, every thing glorious and deſirable under the ſun.

Many of theſe vulgar characteriſtics may have ſome foundation in truth; but when the ſame diſh is ſerved up with the ſame ſauce from age to age, who can wonder if the appetite for it ſhould fail?

And now I mention diſhes, What a feaſt of ready-dreſſed wit does a dinner ſupply? Suppoſe it a calf's head; then, Pray do you want brains? you have tongue enough already. A hare ſuggeſts the witty idea of being hare-brained; a gooſe is as full of jokes as of ſage and onion. The land of *Ham* abounds with ſalt, and I wiſh there were a grain of the true Attic in it. If you want ſauce, you are ſaucy enough already.

In harmleſs converſe many levities and follies; which ariſe from an ebullition of good ſpirits, and are accompanied with good humor, are not only pardonable, but uſeful, as they contribute to paſs a vacant hour with a charming gaiety of heart. But in compoſition all common place wit is inſufferable; and yet he who is acquainted with the dramatic writings of the age will recollect, that many comedies, and more farces, depend upon nothing elſe for their power of affording entertainment. The drollery of comic actors cauſes them to keep their place on the ſtage; otherwiſe it would be impoſſible to ſit at them without yawning or hiſſing. It would not be difficult to mention both poems and proſaic pieces of a ſort of humor, founded entirely on ridicule of the citizen, of the clergyman, the lawyer, the doctor, the Preſbyterian, the Quaker, the Welſhman, the Scotchman, the Iriſhman, the Frenchman, and not diſplaying one idea which is not to be numbered in the liſt of common places. The humor, in its day, was perhaps good; but it is time to relinquiſh it when it is grown threadbare; and I adviſe all would-be wits, who have no other ſtock in hand but ſuch as I have deſcribed, to get rid of their lumber immediately, and ſet up with as good a capital as they can raiſe of common ſenſe, recollecting the proverb, that an ounce of good ſenſe is worth a pound of wit. I will add, that common ſenſe will not only be a more uſeful, but a more

agreeable qualification; for, to people of judgement, nothing is more disgusting than the importunate and impertinent vivacity of a petulant retailer of old fashioned wit and humor.

CHAP. III.

Of the masculine Dress of Ladies.

GORGON, ICON, ET AMAZON!
Propria quæ maribus.

THE Spectator interfered very much in the *mundus muliebris*. I do not know whether he did not condescend too far, in meddling with the affairs of the toilette, considering that he was capable of enlarging on subjects of a kind so much more sublime and important. But trifling as dress is, he recollected what Horace says concerning the tendency of trifles to lead to serious evils, and gave it a very considerable share of his attention. The ladies in his day were not so great readers as in the present; and I always consider his making them and their dress so frequently the subject of his lucubrations an innocent stratagem to draw their attention to his book, and thus to allure them to his noble speculations on moral and divine subjects.

But if he really thought the dress of the ladies of great importance, and had lived in the present age, a great part of his papers must have been devoted to the subject.

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I think it is easy to collect, from what he has written, that he would have highly disapproved the masculine dress for which the ladies in our times have displayed a singular predilection.

There is something so lovely in feminine softness and delicacy, when free from affectation, and not caused by sickness or infirmity, that they who endeavour to hide those attractive qualities, by assuming the air and dress of a man, must be considered as ignorantly defeating their own intentions to please. Taste requires a congruity between the internal character and external appearance. The imagination will involuntarily form to itself an idea of such a correspondence; and the lady who appears in a manly dress will at first sight suggest the apprehension of a deficiency of female gentleness and grace. This first idea may be superseded by any one who takes time to consider, that the dress is not the consequence of choice, but merely an innocent compliance with a temporary fashion. Yet as first ideas are in general of considerable consequence, and not always corrected by second, I should think it wise in the female world to take care that their dress, which they evidently study with an intention to render themselves agreeable, should not convey a forbidding idea to the most superficial observer.

Silks, linens, cottons, gauzes, and all the stock of the milliner and haberdasher, which I forbear to name, lest I should only display my ignorance, have a beauty, a delicacy, a softness, characteristic of those whom they were designed

to embelliſh. Broad cloth has a ſtrength and roughneſs in it, which is of a piece with the manly character. But notwithſtanding this evident truth, nothing is more common in the preſent age than to behold ladies of the utmoſt elegance dreſſed in broad cloth externally from top to toe. I do not cenſure the riding dreſs, which pleads convenience in palliation of its maſculine appearance: but the riding-dreſs is become lately the walking-dreſs, and the dreſs to ſit at home in. It has given way to the great coat, the ſurtout, in which a lady, buttoned up with broad metal buttons, appears much like the footman behind her carriage; and, indeed, when ſhe drives her huſband or her lover in his phaeton, ſhe might very eaſily be miſtaken at a diſtance for the coachman.

" It is a charming, warm, and comfortable " dreſs, and if the lady and her huſband or lover " like it, pray what right has any body to object " to it?"

I believe it may admit of a doubt whether the men, in general, are pleaſed with it any otherwiſe than as it is the faſhion; and as they wiſh their ladies to be in the faſhion as much as their coats and carriages, their houſes and chattels. There may be a ſort of men who have given up their own manly character, and who yet think there ſhould be a certain quantity of it ſome where in the family, and ſo are not diſpleaſed to ſee it in their partners; but the generality of men, whatever they may aſſert in polite ſubmiſſion to their ladies, are naturally attached to them for

female graces, and muſt diſapprove in their hearts the leaſt aſſumption of the maſculine character.

However, let the broad cloth be confined to the uſe of travelling or going out of doors, I will only contend that it ſhould not be worm at the fire-ſide. God and Nature have made the ſexes diſtinct for wiſe purpoſes, and let not the taylor confound them. Convenience and warmth may plead for the maſculine dreſs on the journey, but that plea loſes its force in the domeſtic circle.

Is there not reaſon to apprehend that the habitual dreſs has an influence on the manners? Is it not likely that ſhe who conſtantly aſſumes a manly appearance, and a roughneſs of garb, ſhould likewiſe diſplay ſomething ſimilar in her behaviour? And may not her behaviour gradually injure her diſpoſition; ſo that in time ſhe will not only appear leſs amiable, but be ſo? I expreſs myſelf interrogatively and dubiouſly, leaving the anſwers to be made by thoſe who, when they ſeriouſly conſider, are well able to decide on points like theſe.

After all, I am far from certain that dreſs is of ſo much conſequence as the Spectator ſeems to conſider it. It is indubitable that there are excellent and moſt amiable women who follow the faſhion in dreſs wherever ſhe leads without any apparent evil. Good ſenſe, perhaps, may prevent conſequences which would otherwiſe ariſe; but aping folly may ſuffer from things which in themſelves appear innocent or indifferent.

After all, much of the ſeverity on ſingular dreſs or new faſhions, to which our eyes have never been accuſtomed, ariſes from narrowneſs of thinking, and from prejudice. So long as dreſs anſwers the purpoſe of a decent covering, and a warm clothing, the ornaments of it may, I ſhould think, be ſafely left to the diſcretion of the female wearer.

Perſons in high life, urged by the impulſe of that pride, which is as ſtrong in low life as in high, will be continually endeavouring to diſtinguiſh themſelves by external appearance. Thoſe on the next ſtep, quite down to the bottom of the ladder, will always be aſſuming the appearance of thoſe above them. Fancy and invention are put to the rack to find out new marks unattainable, if poſſible, by the ſubordinate claſſes; and nothing keeps them diſtinguiſhed ſo long as ſomething very *outré*, and apparently ugly and abſurd. This accounts for very ſtrange deviations from beautiful ſimplicity.

The deviations, however, encourage trade, and amuſe thoſe who have little to do. Let not the ſatiriſt therefore vent his ſpleen on the ladies dreſs, provided they do not confound the different diſtinctions of ſex by aſſuming the dreſs of men. I would forbid, by cenſorial authority, if I had it, all beaver hats and broad cloth, except to ſuch venerable matrons as time has honored with a beard.

How much is continually ſaid on the ſubject of head-dreſſes! It is unfair in *men*, except friſeurs, to interfere in that province. The moſt elegant women, in the moſt claſſical times,

adorned

adorned their heads with ornaments, which raiſed them ſo high as to leave it a matter of doubt whether the head was a part of the body, or the body a part of the head. The dreſſing of the hair is called by a Roman poet the *Building of a head*, and the Engliſh ladies have ſcarcely yet equalled the Roman edifices, though the painters of caricature have been extremely ſevere upon them.

Moraliſts may certainly find better employment than that of cenſuring modes of ornament, which are the natural effects of *female inſtinct*, if the old definition of a woman, of which the Spectator is ſo fond, be a juſt one, that ſhe is an animal delighting in finery.

CHAP. IV.

Of polite Preaching.

ΜΗ ΠΡΟΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ.

BISHOP Saunderſon exhibited a very good example, when he addreſſed his ſermons, ſome to the people, ſome to the court, ſome to the clergy, and ſome to the magiſtracy — *ad populum*, *ad aulam*, *ad clerum*, *ad magiſtratum*. All the different deſcriptions of men included under theſe appellations require a different ſtyle of eloquence, and that which would be perſuaſive and elegant to one may poſſibly be to the other impertinent, rude, trite, and wholly inefficacious.

But yet this obſervation is to be underſtood with reſtrictions. There are ſome general truths which concern all congregations, and there is a plain and perſpicuous manner which is well adapted to explain and recommend them to all.

I have heard that preachers before the polite congregations who aſſemble in the modern Chapels of Eaſe (ſo called with propriety in more ſenſes than one), dwell chiefly, if not entirely on morality. They endeavour to recommend benevolence in particular, in a neat and ſmooth ſtyle, without any ſuch prominences of oratorical excellence as may diſturb the ſoft tranquillity of the gentle audience.

Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, convey ideas inſufferably unpleaſant to refined and elegant people, who loll on the cuſhions of a chapel gallery, or ſit at their eaſe by the fire. A polite preacher who ſhould very frequently talk of torments, and of a fire of brimſtone, with peculiar earneſtneſs, would be in danger of not letting his pews, and might in a ſhort time be under the diſtreſſing dilemma either of ſhutting up ſhop, or of preaching the Goſpel to the poor.

Yet if the doctrines of Chriſtianity are not preached, the chapel, though conſecrated by a biſhop, is little better than the Porch or Lyceum of the poor Pagans; where folks uſed to meet to be entertained with fine diſcourſes on ſubjects which were not intended to influence practice, but merely to diſplay the taſte, the language, the elocution of the courtly orator. Such diſcourſes

were called demonſtrative orations, becauſe they principally aimed at *ſhowing off* the orator.

The Devil is under peculiar obligations to the polite preacher; for all mention of him is precluded, at leaſt by name; much more thoſe bold and rude invectives againſt him, which the old divines, who were not men-pleaſers, poured out like a torrent, careleſs of offending either him or his adherents.

The Myſteries, the Trinity, the Reſurrection of the Body, the Paſſion of our Saviour, and all doctrines not immediately reconcileable to reaſon, are of a kind, which he who depends upon the pleaſure of his audience for voluntary contributions will uſually paſs over in reverential ſilence.

Any thing ſentimental, tender, affecting, connected with benevolence, he recommends with all the graces of florid language and ſtudied geſture, and theſe never fail of giving entertainment, which was the object propoſed in driving to the chapel door. As charity is a principal and eſſential duty of Chriſtianity, the preacher, whatever be his motive, is highly commendable for taking every opportunity of enforcing it.

But charity is not the whole of our religion; and, though it will cover a multitude, it will not, it is to be feared, cover all our ſins; and thoſe preachers are highly culpable who, for the ſake of pleaſing an affected audience with haranguing on a popular and faſhionable virtue, neglect to enforce other virtues, which want more

recommendation, becauſe they are neither faſhionable nor popular.

Is not ſelf denial a Chriſtian virtue greatly inſiſted on? But what polite preacher dares to recommend it with conſtancy and authority? He is afraid of denying himſelf the pleaſure of ſo many coaches at his chapel door every Sunday, and ſo many faſhionable dowagers dozing and nodding with all the grimace of *toniſh* life.

We are commanded in the Scripture to unite to our charity temperance, patience, godlineſs. But theſe are vulgar, ill-favored virtues, compared to ſympathy, beneficence, and ſoft ſenſibility to woe. They may occaſionally be recommended in common place arguments, but they cannot, conſiſtently with true pulpit politeneſs, be enforced by awful ſanctions, and the terrors of the Lord.

Indeed ſome polite places of public reſort under the title of places of worſhip, ſeem to be conſidered as decent lounges for a converſazione, when all other public places are ſhut up by the narrow prejudices of John Bull. They anſwer well enough the old purpoſe of going to ſee and to be ſeen; but then it is abſolutely neceſſary that there ſhould be a polite preacher, that is, one of a decent figure at leaſt, if not handſome in perſon, a good voice, and not given either to preach long ſermons, or to ſay any thing ſhocking and frightful. People of faſhion do not chuſe to have their ears wounded by unwelcome truths; and if they are to be freely told of their faults when they

go to church, and to be frightened to death by such words as Hell and Damnation, they will even stay at home and play at cards. Cards have not yet been introduced into certain chapels, but from the loud talking, and total inattention to the business of the place, it may reasonably be expected that a pack will soon be brought in the bag that used to contain the finely gilt red Morocco prayer book. A hand at whist well spread will serve instead of a fan.

Flocks will stray if the shepherd is not vigilant and active. It is true that great gentleness in the shepherd, and great compliance with weakness, are laudable; but there is a degree of both which defeats the whole purpose of preaching, by destroying the respect due to the preacher, and to his word. Whatever the preacher may be in private life, when he stands in the pulpit he is to speak as the Oracles of God, and to rebuke with all authority those who were committed to his charge; and all who neglect or despise him in his office do it at their peril.

But it may be said, that many who now attend the place of worship would absent themselves if any thing disagreeable passed in their hearing. To consult their taste, to sooth their delicate ears, is only an innocent artifice to draw them to their own good. It is right to please so long as we can also profit; but if the chief attention is bestowed on pleasing, it seems doubtful whether instruction will not be sacrificed to a capricious, and, perhaps, imaginary pleasure.

Care ſhould certainly be taken not to give unneceſſary offence. The moſt ſalutary doctrine may be conveyed in elegant and poliſhed language. Even admonition and rebuke may alſo be given forcibly, yet with an evident tenderneſs and reſpect for the perſons of thoſe whoſe conduct may fall under a general reprehenſion. Indeed, advice will be given in vain, when given without reſpect and affection: pride is alarmed, and ſhuts the avenues to the heart.

But there is every reaſon to fear that the affected preacher, whom I denominate the polite preacher by way of eminence, has no ſuch laudable view as that of enticing an unwilling audience to his chapel for their own advantage. Vanity and intereſt appear to be his motives, powerful motives in moſt men, but which ought never to predominate in him whoſe buſineſs it is to repreſs them in others by precept and example.

Old Biſhop Latimer was an inſtance of freedom in preaching, which aroſe from an honeſt heart, but perhaps proceeded to a blamable extreme. I do not propoſe the following paſſage on the dreſs of the ladies as a model, but as a curious ſpecimen of his ſtyle. The times are ſo altered that a great deal more delicacy of manner would be neceſſary to add a due dignity to ſuch freedom, and to prevent its exciting deriſion.

"There was many a jolly damſell at that "time in Bethlem, yet amongſt them all there

" was not one found that would humble her
" selfe so much, as once to goe see poore Mary
" in the stable, and to comfort her. No no,
" they were too fine to take so much paines.
" I warrant you they had their bracelets, and
" verdingals, and were trimmed with all man-
" ner of fine and costly rayment, like as there
" be many now adayes amongst us, which study
" nothing else but how they may devise fine
" rayment, and in the meane season, they suffer
" poore Mary to lye in the stable, that is to
" say, the poore people of God they suffer to
" perish for lacke of necessaries.

" But what was her swadling cloathes where-
" in she layde the King of heaven and earth?
" no doubt it was poore geare, peradventure it
" was her kercher which she tooke from her
" head, or such like geare, for I thinke Mary
" had not much fine linnen, she was not
" trimmed up as our women be now adayes. I
" thinke indeed Mary had never a vardingal,
" for she used no such superfluities as our fine
" damsels doe now adayes: for in the old time,
" women were content with honest and single
" garments. Now they have found out these
" roundabouts, they were not invented then,
" the devil was not so cunning to make such
" geare, he found it out afterward. Therefore
" Mary had it not. I will say this, and yet
" not judge other folkes hearts, but onely speake
" after dayly appearance and experience, no
" doubt it is nothing but a token of pride

" to weare ſuch vardingals, and therefore I
" thinke that every godly woman ſhould ſet
" them aſide. It was not for nought that St.
" Paul advertiſed all women to give a good
" example of ſadneſſe, ſoberneſſe, and godlineſſe
" in ſetting aſide all wantonneſſe and pride.
" And hee ſpeaketh of ſuch manner of pride
" as was uſed in his time: *non tortis crinibus*,
" not with laying out the haire artificially;
" *non plicatura capillorum*, not with laying out
" the tuſſockes. I doubt not but if vardingals
" had bene uſed at that time, St. Paul would
" have ſpoken againſt them too, like as he ſpake
" againſt other things which women uſed at
" that time to ſhew their wantonneſſe and fool-
" iſhneſſe. Therefore, as I ſaid before, ſeeing
" that God abhorreth all pride, and vardingals
" are nothing elſe but an inſtrument of pride,
" I would wiſh that women would follow the
" counſell of St. Paul, and ſet aſide ſuch
" gorgeous apparell, and rather ſtudy to pleaſe
" God, than to ſet their minde upon pride;
" or elſe, when they will not follow the counſel
" of St. Paul, let them ſcrape out thoſe words
" wherewith he forbiddeth them their proud-
" neſſe, otherwiſe the words of St. Paul will
" condemn them at the laſt day. I ſay no more,
" wiſe folkes will doe wiſely, the words of St.
" Paul are not written for nothing, if they will
" doe after his mind, they muſt ſet aſide their
" fooliſh vardingalls; but if they will goe
" forward in their fooliſhneſſe and pride, the

" reward which they ſhall have at the end, ſhall " not be taken from them.

" Here is a queſtion to be moved, who " fetched water to waſh the child after it was " borne into the world, and who made a fire? " It is like that Joſeph himſelf did ſuch things, " for, as I told you before, thoſe fine damſels " thought great ſcorne to doe any ſuch thing " unto Mary, notwithſtanding that ſhe had " brought into the world the Lord over heaven " and earth."

If a preacher in the modern chapels ſhould dare, with the freedom of Latimer, to preach againſt artificial hips, rumps, and other contrivances, ſimilar to *vardingals* in their effects, in ſwelling both the outer and inner man, he might as well ſhut up the chapel doors, and ſtick up a paper announcing a ſhop to be let. Haberdaſhers, mercers, milliners, muſt dreſs well, and carry a ſilver tongue in their mouths, if they wiſh to attract or detain cuſtomers, and polite preachers may learn a leſſon from the counters on Ludgate-hill. On the other hand, the dealers in ſilks and ſattins might adopt ſome good hints in the art of pleaſing, from prigs in pulpits.—I not only hope, but believe, that the number of ſuch is ſmall compared with the grave, the devout, the unaffected part of the clergy; but few as they are, they diſgrace the cauſe which they ought to ſupport; and as they are not apt to liſten to argument, it is fair and right to attack their levity with the weapons of ridicule.

CHAP. V.

Of indifferentiſm in Religion.

IN early ages, and long before the prevalence of Chriſtianity, we find men inliſting themſelves under philoſophical leaders, and warmly eſpouſing the opinions of ſome favorite ſect, which profeſſed the purſuit of wiſdom. To be totally indifferent on the principles of thinking and acting was conſidered as a proof either of ſtupidity and profligacy, or of a thoughtleſs and Plebeian ignorance.

But the number of thoſe who profeſs themſelves entirely indifferent concerning the religion of their country, is, in modern ages, very conſiderable. Such a profeſſion is, however, dangerous to themſelves, pernicious in the example, and utterly indefenſible.

Are happineſs, right conduct, and reaſonable opinions of ſo little importance, as to excite leſs earneſtneſs than is cauſed by the temporary concerns of commerce, of politics, of ſtudy, of dreſs, of graceful behaviour, of a thouſand purſuits and occupations, in which the greateſt eagerneſs and ardor are uſually diſplayed?

Man depends every moment on the favor of a Being who can either deprive him of life inſtantaneouſly, or render it, if continued, a torment and a burden. And ſhall he be totally

unconcerned? What is this but to ſit ſecurely with a ſword over his head ſuſpended by a ſingle hair? to ſleep when the houſe is in flames, to ſhut the eyes when rapidly travelling on the brink of a precipice?

Such are the dangers of life, ſuch its evils, and ſuch its brevity, that no man of ſenſe, who is not lulled by habitual indolence, or rendered inſenſible by habitual vice, can ſuffer himſelf to ſit down totally unconcerned on the ſubject of religion.

Yet wherever we turn our eyes we ſee many amuſing themſelves with any thing which occurs, without any apparent diſturbance, from the fear of God, the conſciouſneſs of ſin, the apprehenſion of death or of calamity. Is this philoſophy? It has no pretenſions to it; or, if it has, it is to a philoſophy compounded of madneſs and folly. It is a diſeaſe which deſerves the pity of every true Chriſtian, and ought in charity to excite his endeavours in its removal.

The terrors of the Lord, as they are beautifully termed in ſcripture, might be ſet in array to alarm the imagination. But I chuſe rather to addreſs the reaſon in the calm language of common ſenſe.

Think then, O thou that boaſteſt of thy indifference, and thou that liveſt careleſsly, that thy life, the only time allowed thee for religious duty, is every hour loſing ſomething of its allotted duration. Thy ſands are running faſt away; and thy everlaſting happineſs may depend

on thy conduct in the short space that remains of life.

In this brief existence, thou art obnoxious to many infirmities and many evils. But religion offers comforts under them, and a future happiness capable of affording a most abundant compensation, both for the evils and the brevity of this life. I ask thee, therefore, as a man of sense, acting upon principles of worldly wisdom that is, upon principles which lead thee to act that part which is the most conducive to *thy own interest*, whether thou oughtest to be INDIFFERENT, in thy dependent circumstances, to the advantages which religion proposes. If there is but a chance that they are real, thou actest the part of a weak and injudicious man to renounce them. Thou canst never prove that they are merely imaginary; and whether thou believest or not, their nature is the same, and the consequences of their truth will remain unchanged by thy denial. Weigh these things seriously in thy mind, and the result will be a full conviction that indifference in matters of such moment is deplorable folly.

I might easily make use of much argument, and much declamation on the subject; but I rather chuse to submit to thee these serious considerations, not doubting but the conviction arising from thy own reflections will be more durable and efficacious than any which might be produced by a formal address to thy reason thy passions, or thy imagination.

CHAP. VI.

Of nominal Chriſtians.

TO aſſure a man who diſplays a total indifference for Chriſtianity that he is not a Chriſtian would be to give him great offence. He was born in a Chriſtian country, of Chriſtian parents, and baptized in his infancy; he concludes himſelf therefore a Chriſtian. He would perhaps bring an action at law againſt you for defamation, if you ſhould deny it, and would prove his faith in Weſtminſter Hall.

But if, in the incorrectneſs of common language, he ſhould be allowed to retain the name, yet, in the ſtrictneſs of truth, he muſt be acknowledged to have no juſt title to it.

This nominal Chriſtianity may anſwer the ſecular purpoſe of preſerving a decency of character, ſo as to give no open offence to thoſe who are religiouſly diſpoſed, to thoſe who, in the language of the unbeliever, are weak enough to be inthralled by the ſuperſtition of their national religion.

But it can promote no other purpoſes but thoſe of the world. It muſt be offenſive to the Supreme Being, who is repreſented as jealous of his honor. It is indeed a ſpecies of hypocriſy, though not uſually ſtigmatized with the appellation.

As no man can penetrate the heart, it may be raſh to affirm that the greater part of nations profeſſing Chriſtianity are nominal Chriſtians; but, at the ſame time, it would be voluntary blindneſs not to obſerve that their external conduct and their converſation are ſuch as to render the truth of their profeſſion equivocal.

But if Chriſtianity be true, and I proceed upon that poſtulatum, the ſtate of nominal Chriſtians is certainly dangerous; and it becomes every believer to uſe his beſt endeavours, from motives of charity, to convince them of it.

How would you value a nominal friend? Mr. Such-an-one calls himſelf your friend, but will he aſſiſt you with his purſe, or his time and company, if you are in diſtreſs? No, he is otherwiſe engaged; but he is your friend, he has a great regard for you, if you will believe him. But will you believe him? will you value him?

In what light then muſt our Saviour, I appeal to your own feelings, view a nominal Chriſtian?

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CHAP. VII.

Of those Christians who have been called rational, from their Endeavour to reconcile all the Doctrines of Christianity to human Reason.

A RATIONAL Christian seems at first sight to be a most laudable character; but as many of the doctrines of Christianity are above reason, he who compels them all to undergo the examination of reason, and determines by art and sophistry to explain them according to reason alone, will be found, even when he boasts of the powers of his own reason, and of reason in general, to act most irrationally. He brings to the jurisdiction of reason that which is superior to it; just as if a judge were brought to be tried before a justice of peace, or a king before a constable. The touchstone on which the gold is tried by him possesses not qualities of discrimination sufficiently efficacious to decide with certainty.

The distinction between things above and things contrary to reason, though commonly made by divines, is not sufficiently attended to in common life.

That is above reason, the manner of whose being we cannot comprehend or perceive.

That is contrary to reason, which we can comprehend or perceive to be impossible.

But the rational Chriſtian either rejects whatever he cannot underſtand, or explains it by the aſſiſtance of ſophiſtical ſubtlety, ſo as to account for, in his own imagination, what is confeſſedly myſterious, and never intended to be ſubmitted to a judge, ſo weak, ſo fallible, ſo utterly incompetent as human reaſon.

The practice of explaining away not only the ſpeculative but the moral doctrines of Chriſtianity is too prevalent. Cunning, ingenuity, ſubtlety, ſophiſtry can find ſomething to be ſaid in defence of interpretations the moſt remote from the true, and in the ſolution of every difficulty. Thus Chriſtianity is made to bend, like a leaden rule, to the prejudices, the follies, and even the vices of thoſe who, fearing to be Chriſtians indeed, fear alſo to be ſtigmatized as unbelievers, and therefore exerciſe their ingenuity in accommodating the ſyſtem to themſelves, which they think too difficult to be received without the liberty of underſtanding it juſt as they are inclined.

In reading the Scriptures, even in the plaineſt and leaſt doubtful parts, this they ſay is figurative, this was local, this nationally applied to the Jews, this concerned the times in which it was written but not the preſent, this was ſaid merely as a menace, *in terrorem*, to ſecure obedience, or make proſelytes, this muſt be an interpolation, this is inconſiſtent with God's goodneſs or juſtice, and therefore can never be underſtood as the words ſeem to imply.

Thus

Thus Christianity becomes just what each thinks proper to make it. It is no longer a law, since those whom it ought to regulate and govern cause it to submit to their capricious interpretation.

If this kind of rational interpretation be acceptable in the eye of heaven, it is easy for those who have nothing of Christianity, as it appears in the Gospel, to obtain the rewards promised to the true Christian. But the truth is, it is all self-deception. He is not a Christian, whatever he may suppose, who explains away the most essential doctrines of Christianity, because to his intellect they are unintelligible. There are many things in the Gospel above reason; and he who is determined to bring them to the test of his reason, and at all events to submit them to it, may indeed be a subtle logician or metaphysician in the schools of syllogistic dispute, but he is not a proficient in the school of Jesus Christ.

The best lesson such an one can learn is humility. Let him modestly distrust his faculty, which is really not to be depended on in many of the commonest things in common life.

I will use a familiar example:—I see it rain in the midst of harvest time. I see the grain, which might afford sustenance to the hungry, perishing by the long continuance of a rainy season. If I apply to my reason on the subject, I might argue thus: This rain does infinite mischief just at this time. It is not wanted for vegetation, and it destroys, or greatly injures

the fruits of much labor and long expectation, to the distress of the poor, and with detriment to the health and wealth of the people. The Being, therefore, who disposes all events, must be malevolent, careless, or unwise.

My reason might carry me to this false conclusion, though, at the same time, I am convinced, in opposition to my reason, and firmly believe, at the very moment while I am reasoning, that this Being is both provident and wise in the highest degree, and that all partial evil under his direction tends to general good.

In ten thousand other instances my reason would lead me to conclusions so evidently false, that I need but see and feel to perceive their palpable falshood.

I will add another obvious instance:—I tell a plain farmer of excellent common sense, but at the same time ignorant of Science, that there are Antipodes, or persons on the globe whose feet are diametrically opposite to ours. He will not believe it. He reasons, from what he observes on this side the globe, that all bodies fall downwards; and concludes, that men, placed as the Antipodes are represented, would fall head foremost into the sky. From the conclusions of his own reason he disbelieves, unless he has *faith* in me, the existence of Antipodes; he disbelieves it as firmly as any infidel can disbelieve the most difficult doctrine of the Holy Scriptures.

If he had never seen an air balloon, he would with equal confidence deny the possibility of any man's ascending above the clouds.

A thousand phenomena of nature, and productions of art, are equally unaccountable to human reason, and would be denied to exist by those who never had ocular demonstration of their existence.

In chemistry what wonderful changes are produced! Would not men *reasoning* only, and not seeing experimentally, deny that many of the forms in which quicksilver appears, were produced from that shining liquid metal? Is the resurrection more puzzling to reason than the production of calomel from fluid mercury?

They are little minded philosophers who, after such reflections, can deny, on the strength of their reason alone, the possibility of the resurrection, and of the other wonderful doctrines of Jesus Christ.

CHAP. VIII.

Of voluntary Ignorance of Christianity, its real Nature, Causes, and Tendency.

LIFE, Death, and Immortality! Ideas so momentous to man, it might be supposed, would, of themselves, attract his closest attention; but, it appears that many are more desirous of acquiring any kind of knowledge than that which relates to the truths of revelation.

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You ſhall find men admirably ſkilled in arts and ſciences, ingenious and refined in writing and converſation, verſed in buſineſs, and capable of conducting the moſt important and complicated affairs of the world, who, though they call themſelves Chriſtians, and behave, in many reſpects, conſiſtently with that character, are yet little acquainted with the Scriptures, and very ſuperficially informed concerning the real nature of Chriſtianity.

I do not think it neceſſary that every Chriſtian ſhould be a learned theologian. A man may *be wiſe unto ſalvation* with very little knowledge; but it is certainly right that all who have leiſure to make any inquiries on intellectual ſubjects, ſhould beſtow ſome portion of their time on the ſtudy of the religion which they profeſs. Indeed, if they do not, it may be ſuſpected that they are either inſincere or not ſufficiently ſolicitous, on a ſubject of higheſt moment.

Without judgment indeed in the ſelection of religious books, there is certainly danger that reading in divinity may lead to error, and even ſcepticiſm; but no one who ſeeks will want a guide in making the ſelection. Good ſenſe, conducted by the information of public fame, will uſually point out the proper books with great propriety: but I ſhould be guilty of a culpable omiſſion if I did not recommend an attention to the Biſhop of Landaff's Theological Tracts, and to the catalogue of books which he has affixed to the laſt volume.

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The world is full of moſt excellent books on every ſubject of divinity; and he who will not, in the preſent times, underſtand his religion, may be ſaid voluntarily to cloſe his eyes while the ſun is ſhining in meridian ſplendor.

It may be juſtly ſuſpected, that of thoſe who have rejected or oppoſed Chriſtianity, few underſtood it; few ſtudied it with the attention which they would beſtow on the title deeds of a freehold eſtate.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Cauſes which increaſe the Prevalence of Infidelity and Indifference.

MAN has ſo natural a tendency to religion, that few would be irreligious without the intervention of circumſtances produced by pride and wickedneſs, and operating againſt the natural ſentiments of the human mind. The prevalence of vice, at an early age, conduces greatly to the diffuſion of infidelity; for when a young man has loſt his innocence, and the ſatisfaction of a quiet conſcience, he is much diſpoſed to liſten to any doctrine which allows him to be eaſy and vicious at the ſame time. He admits doubts and ſcruples in this caſe, which he would otherwiſe reject and refute.

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But it seems to be acknowledged, that young men, in the present age, are earlier admitted into the world, or introduced into life, as it is called, than at any former period. Imagining themselves men, before they have reached maturity of judgement, they fall into vices, which, they think, give them a manly appearance. The next step is to *justify* themselves, if possible; and this is done by renouncing, or doubting the truth of Christianity.

In accomplishing this purpose, they will never be at a loss, as books abound well calculated to diffuse infidelity, by presenting it under the veil of wit and elegance.

Writers, possessed of ingenuity and taste, but, unfortunately, destitute of sound wisdom and of goodness of heart, have, in modern times, remarkably abounded; and as, from the agreeable dress in which their sophistry appears, they amuse and entertain, it is no wonder that they have gained a numerous train of readers, admirers, and votaries. Their writings are particularly addressed to the rising generation; and what, therefore, can be expected, in process of time, but a deluge of infidelity?

It is particularly unfortunate, that those who read the writings of the modern philosophers, seldom inspect those of solid divines; that they are disgusted with the dulness and the gravity of the style and subjects of those who, despising tinsel and paint, have labored only to procure the substance and solidity of truth.

Add to this, that a religious education among young men of fortune and faſhion is become uncommon. There prevails an idea, that to teach young men the principles of religion according to the ideas of their grandfathers, is to confine them unfairly in the trammels of ſuperſtition, to render their minds narrow and contracted, and to preclude an attention to things at that age far more in character, and far more uſeful.

I have ſeen many parents anxious on the ſubject of their children's education. They would ſpare no expenſe for the acquiſition of language, dancing, fencing, muſic, and every attainment which can render their ſons agreeable in company, and ſkilful in a profeſſion. They wiſhed to ſee them qualified as orators, and *all-accompliſhed* as fine gentlemen, but they have diſplayed no remarkable ſolicitude on the attainment of religious ideas, and have even expreſſed a deſire that religion might be poſtponed to a maturer period. They have not indeed objected to a few formalities, ſuch as a regular and decent attendance at a church, or the learning of a ſhort catechiſm; but they have not ſeriouſly and anxiouſly labored the point like thoſe who were cordially anxious that it might be purſued with ardor and ſucceſs.

But the example of indifference in religion, exhibited by a parent, muſt always militate ſtrongly againſt all that is taught in a ſchool or by a private preceptor.

Whoever is acquainted with the manners of our anceſtors will acknowledge, that more regard

was formerly paid to the religious instruction of children, of high as well as of the middle and lower ranks, than in the present times. Example, parental example, did more than the best instruction alone can ever effect.

The general omission of family devotion has contributed as much as any cause to the diffusion of an indifference to all religious concerns. The houses of our nobility have chapels in them, and service used to be performed there regularly; but how few retain the practice? The example had a salutary influence on the subordinate ranks, when almost all families of respectable character were observed to preserve family worship with pious constancy. Fashionable amusements and dissipation have now scarcely left time for it, even if the tendencies remained undiminished, which it were an excess of candor to suppose. The consequence is, that not only masters and mistresses of families, but the children and domestic servants, live from day to day without being reminded of their great benefactor, and without being warned of the approach of death, and all the evils to which man is exposed.

The assembling at church is also neglected as a necessary consequence of increasing indifference; or if an attendance is kept up, it is often more in compliance with custom and decency, than from the warm impulse of a voluntary devotion.

Religious books, both doctrinal and practical, abound, but who will spend his leisure hours in reading them, when he is not duly impressed with

the importance of the ſubjects, and when he is more powerfully ſolicited by novels and ſeducing publications, which flatter his vices, and by pleaſing corrupt his imagination.

From all theſe cauſes it happens that infidelity, or an indifference ſcarcely leſs culpable and pernicious, increaſes more and more; and the inference which the clergy and all ſincere Chriſtians muſt draw is, that there is a neceſſity for peculiar exertion to ſtem the torrent. But who is able to ſucceed in ſo vaſt an enterpriſe! The conſolation is, that each acquits his own conſcience, by exerting himſelf to the beſt of his power, and that the bleſſing of God frequently gives ſucceſs to cauſes apparently inadequate.

CHAP X.

Every Man is intereſted in Theology.

Felicitatem philoſophi quærunt, theologi inveniunt, ſoli religioſi poſſident.

EVERY ſuperficial talker is ready to object prejudice againſt the ſerious profeſſors of religion. But can there be any prejudice equal to that of him who conſiders theology as a matter foreign to himſelf, fit only for bigoted and ſuperannuated devotees, and for thoſe who, from their office and profeſſion, find it a ſource of lucre? Such an opinion is equally narrow and malignant, and as unphiloſophical as irreligious.

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Theology is every man's concern, and it is his duty to ſtudy it according to his abilities and opportunities. If we are all the ſons of one father, and all bound to do his will, it is certainly the duty of all to endeavour to diſcover it. As all regard their happineſs, it is incumbent on all to ſeek to pleaſe him in whom is the ſole diſpoſal of good and evil. And though a religion is *revealed*, yet it requires the attention of its profeſſors to be able to receive the revelation according to the will of the beſtower of it. And what is this attention but the ſtudy of theology? Let it not be confined to the cloiſters of monks, or to the ſacred profeſſion alone, ſince it is every man's moſt important buſineſs to know as much of it as he can; to ſtudy it amidſt his ſecular employments, and to ſeek conſolation from it in adverſity, and ſecurity in the moſt proſperous ſtate.

It will be readily allowed that every man, the Jew and Turk as well as Chriſtian, is concerned in what is called *practical* divinity, by which little more is underſtood than moral practice. With ſuch divinity a man may be a heathen, and yet a *practical divine*. A great part of practical ethics he may certainly learn without hearing of Chriſtianity.

But I urge, that it is incumbent on every man to know ſomething of his religion *ſpeculatively* as well as practically. I do not mean that he ſhould enter into controverſial points. A little learning of this kind is a dangerous thing. *It puffeth up, and deſtroyeth charity.* It commonly leads alſo to doubt, and ends in licentious infidelity. But if

he reads and reflects at all, will he not, as a man pretending to reason, read and reflect on that which claims to be of the first importance? on that which gives a peace which the world cannot give in this state, and in the next, life everlasting? Weigh these things duly, and let not the words pass over without notice or effect from the frequency of their occurrence.

People of fortune and condition are anxious to improve their sons in all fashionable accomplishments, and are desirous that they should be learned in such arts as tend to their advancement in life. The law is studied with uncommon ardor as opening a road to the highest honors in civil life; but as to divinity, says Sir Phaeton Hunter, leave that, Tom, to the Parsons.

But both Sir Phaeton and Tom are as much concerned in divinity as the parsons, so far as relates to their spiritual state. But, exclaims the man of fashion and pleasure, it seems nonsense; I have no relish for these things. But why? Because you understand them not, and because you have never given your mind to the consideration of them. It is an old saying, *Ignoti nulla cupido*, there can be no wish for that of which we know nothing. The concerns of the man of pleasure, which he considers of so much importance, his politics, his wit, his gaming, appear nonsensical to the plain country man, who understands them not, but who is wise, like Horace's Ofellus, without rule, *abnormis sapiens*, wise by the dictates of common sense, and illuminated by

the light which God has placed in his boſom, and by the ſun of Goſpel revelation.

Many others who pretend to wiſdom and philoſophy will ſtudy every thing but theology. They will digeſt Newton; but never think of Him who made both Newton and the orbs whoſe path he pointed out, and whoſe motions he explained.

CHAP. XI.

Of Biſhop Wilſon and his Works.

Sanctus haberi! JUV.

IF one were deſired to exhibit to ſceptics or infidels a ſpecimen of human excellence produced by the influence of Chriſtianity, I know not whether it would be eaſy to find a more finiſhed model than Biſhop Wilſon. His whole life appears to have been an uniform tenor of goodneſs, unequalled and unrivalled by any of the philoſophers who are the pride of antiquity, and who are cited as inſtances by modern ſophiſts when they wiſh to extol reaſon and depreciate revelation.

His piety, charity, diligence, and vigilance, were truly apoſtolic; and I make no doubt but that he deſerved to be canonized better than many of the holieſt ſaints in the calendar, the marble ſteps before whoſe ſhrines are worn by the knees of adoring pilgrims.

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He rendered the beauty of holineſs eminently conſpicuous; and I think no man of ſenſibility can read his life without being charmed with the lovely picture. Indeed he muſt be confirmed in wickedneſs to a moſt deplorable degree if he does not find his heart meliorated by it. Such a life, ſince example is confeſſedly more efficacious than precept, might poſſibly convert the wicked and unbelieving from their errors more certainly and expeditiouſly than any oral or written inſtruction. I recommend it to the attention of all, as likely to promote their Chriſtian improvement more effectually than any other piece of biography which I can at preſent recollect. Many great divines have adorned this country by their lives, no leſs than their learning, but there have been few who have not devoted a conſiderable portion of their time and abilities to mere erudition, to controverſy, or to politics; but Biſhop Wilſon was entirely a Chriſtian aſpiring at no honor or happineſs but that which aroſe from the diffuſion of good, and the performance of his duty as the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt.

There is no doubt but that he could have written with an oſtentation of learning, and in a ſtyle adapted to the taſte of refined hearers; but he was ſuperior to the arts of ſeeking human applauſe, and nobly relinquiſhed all claim to elegance for the ſake of ſimplifying his writings, and adapting them to the underſtandings of thoſe to whom they were immediately addreſſed. This

instance of generous condescension argues unquestionable sincerity, and reflects greater honor on a Christian bishop than any fame which could have been obtained by laboriously emulating the graces of a Pagan eloquence.

Though his sermons have none of the rhetorical graces, they are yet eloquent, for they are persuasive: and they are persuasive, because the character of the writer is such as gives them the stamp of truth, the greatest charm in the composition of sermons. It reflected honor on the ancient rhetoricians, that, as a primary requisite to successful oratory, they required the orator to be a good man. They knew that an esteem of the orator has more weight in the mind of a thinking hearer, than any ingenuity of argument, which an hypocrite is often as well able to invent and utter as an honest man. They knew that the best arguments would avail little from the tongue of him who was known to have no principle, and consequently who was ready to defend or recommend any thing which the exigency required, in opposition to truth and to his own conviction. They therefore laid peculiar stress on the moral qualification of unaffected goodness in the accomplished orator. A poor composition with this quality in the orator, would tend more to produce persuasion, or conviction, than the finest words and sentiments which were ever combined without it; and it is to the goodness of Bishop Wilson's life that his

plain discourses are principally indebted for their power over the hearer and reader.

I must acknowledge that they display no marks of genius either in the expression or invention, and that nothing would enable them to produce a powerful effect over a learned and elegant audience but the appearance of sincerity. At the same time I think them judiciously adapted to the use of those who, for want of other opportunities, stand most in need of instruction from the pulpit, the plain Christians who compose the majority of a rural congregation.

The goodness of his heart gives indeed the chief recommendation to all his works; though at the same time, it must be allowed, that perspicuity and plainness are beauties not always so easy as they appear to be, not only because it requires some effort to express ideas so as to be perfectly intelligible to the meanest intellect, but also because it is difficult to repress that pride of heart which leads to a contempt of whatever is familiar, and an affectation of abstruseness and sublimity; difficult to restrain that self love which leads the preacher and writer rather to display his own taste, learning, or acuteness, than to labor faithfully in the improvement of his disciples.

The instruction for the Indians, and the little treatise on the Lord's Supper, have done more good in the world than the finest compositions formed in the schools of eloquence. How little is the merit of pleasing the imagination and taste,

compared to that of purifying the heart, and rendering that temple of the Holy Spirit fit for his reception.

If there were many inſtances of Chriſtian perfection equally conſpicuous with Dr. Wilſon's, I believe, the amiableneſs of their appearance would make many proſelytes to the Chriſtian faith, and do more to engage the careleſs and the ſceptical than the moſt labored argumentation. Providence raiſes from time to time ſuch examples of human excellence, and cauſes them to ſhine like lights in the firmament; and happy they who are favored with grace to aſſiſt them in following the guidance. Happy they who feel comfort from ſuch plain books of piety as thoſe of Biſhop Wilſon, and whoſe devotional taſte finds a pleaſure where their claſſical taſte can receive no gratification. Happy they who catch the pure and gentle flame of ſuch a man's devotion, and imitate him in piety to God and beneficence to man.

Greatly as I eſteem the good biſhop, I cannot beſtow a general panegyric on him, as if I approved his errors, for errors he had; and was he not a man? I think his favorite topic of inflicting the puniſhments of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline, in frequent and common caſes, argues ſomething of an intemperate zeal, and of ſeverity rather wonderful in a man of his exemplary benevolence. He appears to me to be miſtaken in this point, whether I conſider the ſubject of penance in a political or a Chriſtian light. Tyranny will never

never increaſe the number of converts in a free country; and men will readily deſert a church where the mere infirmities of human nature may expoſe them to great ſuffering and public infamy; and I believe it will be difficult to point out any paſſage in the goſpel that will juſtify the ſeverity of eccleſiaſtical puniſhment; but the biſhop meant well, and was, I believe, free from any evil paſſion, when he ſtrenuouſly recommended the infliction of penance. His error was in his judgment, not in his heart; for I believe his heart was incapable of error, if it is poſſible to be ſo in the preſent ſtate of human nature.

CHAP. XII.

Of ſaying Grace—Antiquity of ſome religious Ceremonies at Table—Decency, propriety of them.

Reverentia menſæ. JUV.

SIR,

I AM an old man, and have reſided in a village above a hundred miles from London during the laſt forty years; but I was lately tempted, partly by curioſity and partly by buſineſs, to ſpend a month at Chriſtmas with an old friend at the weſt end of the town. I was very much pleaſed with many improvements which I obſerved, and, as I am not moroſe, I think I was not inclined to be querulous at any thing without

cauſe. But there is one thing which gave me much offence, and I dare ſay you will allow that it is unjuſtifiable. I obſerved that the good old practice of begging a bleſſing on the refreſhment of a dinner, and returning thanks for it to Him who is the author and giver of all good, was become unfaſhionable.

I have been laughed at more than once at ſome very elegant tables to which my friend introduced me, for ſtanding up and expecting the maſter to ſay grace both before and after meat. I found it impoſſible to continue the practice at another man's houſe, with a whole circle around ready to ſtare with ſurpriſe, or laugh with ſcorn. I was therefore contented with a ſilent ejaculation; but though I conformed outwardly to the canons of faſhion, I entered a ſecret proteſt againſt it then, and beg leave through your means to make my proteſt public.

Give me leave to inform thoſe polite gentlefolk, who have dropped the practice with an idea of its being ſuperſtitious, vulgar, puritanical, that a conſecration of the table was obſerved religiouſly by the politeſt nations of antiquity.

The ancient Greeks eſteemed the table HIERON CHREMA, or a ſacred thing; and Cleodemus, in Plutarch, calls it the ALTAR OF FRIENDSHIP AND HOSPITALITY.

The firſt offerings they made to the gods, and called them απαρχαι, or firſt fruits; and at the concluſion of the feaſt they poured out σπονδαι or λοιβαι, libations of wine.

They were unwilling to partake of the meal till a part of the provision had been offered to the gods, in order to sanctify the whole. Even Achilles, whose impetuous spirit was not prone to the weakness of superstition, would not eat when the ambassadors of Agamemnon disturbed him at midnight, till he had ordered his friend to make the oblation.

Θεοῖσι δὲ θῦσαι ἀνωγει
Πάτροκλον ὃν ἑταῖρον, ὁ δ' ἐν πυρὶ βάλλε θυηλάς.

Ulysses also, as Dr. Potter observes from Athenæus, when in the den of Polyphemus, did not neglect this duty of pious gratitude.

Ενθάδε πῦρ καιοντες ἐθύσαμεν ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ
Τυρῶν αἰνύμενοι φάγομεν.

Dr. Potter adds, that "in the entertainments of Plato * and Xenophon we find oblations made; and to forbear the mention of more examples, the neglect of this duty was accounted a very great impiety, which none but Epicurus and those who worshipped no gods at all, would be guilty of," *apud Epicurum* ὀσπονδὴ, οὐδ' απαρχη τοις θεοις.

I do not see any reason why those who, like Epicurus, refuse to honor God according to the dictates of natural gratitude, and the universal practice of the most *polished* people of the world, should not be numbered among the disciples of

* Μετὰ γὰρ τὸ δειπνῆσαι σπονδὰς τέ φησίν ποιῆσαι, ϗ ΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΝ παιωνίσαντας τοῖς νομιζομένοις γέρασι. Athenæus, lib. 4. Casaub. pag. 179.

Epicurus, and be ſuppoſed, without any violation of charity, to ſay in their hearts there is no God.

I could produce a great number of examples from the claſſics to prove that the dinner was ſeldom enjoyed without ſome mode of conſecration, even among thoſe heathens to whom we are inclined to conſider ourſelves as greatly ſuperior. And ſhall thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians neglect this inſtance of piety? Eſpecially as Jeſus Chriſt has given many examples of it in the Goſpel, and the people to whom it pleaſed God peculiarly to reveal himſelf, practiſed it from the earlieſt antiquity. I mentioned the practice of the *polite* heathens in the firſt place, becauſe I imagined this example would have the moſt weight with thoſe who chiefly value themſelves on *politeneſs*, of which they ſometimes conſider the neglect of the *graces* at table, as an honorable teſtimony. But I will now add ſome examples from the practice of the Jews, which in this particular, have as much *politeneſs* in them as thoſe of the Greeks and Romans, and ought to have much greater authority in a Chriſtian country.

The maſter of the family among the Jews, as ſoon as the gueſts or the family were ſeated, premiſed a general admonition to prayers, and a conſecration of the dinner preceded. The whole company then ſung a hymn, which is extant in a book, entitled *the Order of the Bleſſings and Pſalms*, and the maſter then ſaid the following

grace: "Bleſſed be the Lord our God, the King of the univerſe, who feedeth the world by his goodneſs, and by his grace and mercy giveth nouriſhment to all fleſh; by whoſe bounty it cometh to paſs that food never yet hath failed, neither will fail his creatures. It is he alone who giveth exiſtence to all things, and preſerveth them, and doth good to all, and giveth food to every being that he hath created. Bleſſed be thou, O Lord, who feedeſt all things."

He then conſecrated the wine and bread in a form ſimilar to the preceding. This longer proceſs was however, only obſerved at formal dinners, and on ſolemn occaſions, a ſhorter being uſed on common days: and it is recorded that the maſter of the houſe ſaid grace before meat, and one of the gueſts returned thanks. Perhaps it would be too great a refinement to ſuppoſe that the buſineſs of returning thanks for a dinner ſupplied at his expenſe, was declined by the maſter from motives of delicacy. Sometimes however the maſter returned thanks, and the company made a reſponſe. The maſter ſaid, Let us return thanks to God, becauſe we have eaten of the creatures which belonged to him; and the gueſts reſponded immediately. Let God be praiſed, of whoſe bleſſings we have eaten, and by whoſe bounty we live.

The primitive Chriſtians, imitating the example of the Jews, and more particularly of our Saviour, were ſtrict in the performance of thoſe pious duties which conſecrated the table,

and in returning thanks to God for the daily ſupply of neceſſary ſuſtenance. Chryſoſtom frequently mentions the benediction of the table made uſe of by the Monks in Ægypt. In the Horologium of the Greek church, the whole form of the benediction is thus deſcribed:

Before the dinner is placed upon the table, the hundredth and forty-fifth pſalm is read aloud, and it no ſooner is ſerved up, than the prieſt repeats, O Chriſt, our God, bleſs our meat and drink; for thou art holy now and for evermore. Amen. And after having taſted it, they all riſe up and ſay, Bleſſed art thou, O God, who pitieſt us and feedeſt us from our youth; thou who giveſt food to all fleſh fill our hearts with joy and gladneſs, that, always being ſatisfied, we may abound in every good work, in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, with whom, to thee, be glory, honor, power, and worſhip, together with the Holy Ghoſt. Amen. After dinner, the following is the form of thankſgiving: Glory to thee thou holy one, Glory to thee, O King; ſince thou haſt given us food to our comfort and joy, fill us alſo with the Holy Ghoſt, that we may be found acceptable in thy ſight, and not aſhamed when thou ſhalt render to every one according to his works. Then the hundredth and twenty-ſecond pſalm is read; after which—As thou waſt preſent in the midſt of thy diſciples while at ſupper, O thou Saviour, giving them peace, ſo come alſo to us and ſave us. Then follows a part of the twenty-ſecond pſalm, "The poor

ſhall eat and be filled, they ſhall praiſe the Lord who ſeek him," to the end. *Kyrie Eleiſon*, Lord have mercy upon us. The whole concludes with this little prayer: Bleſſed be God, who hath pitied and fed us with his rich gifts; may we enjoy his grace and loving kindneſs now and for evermore. Amen.

I imagine that the whole of this long grace was only uſed on extraordinary occaſions; but there is no doubt but a part of it conſtituted the daily formulary of conſecration and gratitude.

Far be it from me to recommend a prolixity approaching to that of the Greek church, or to that of the college graces, as eſtabliſhed by our pious anceſtors, who, according to the complaints of the hungry ſcholars, uſed to inſiſt on long graces, and at the ſame time give but ſhort commons. I think long prayers on ſuch occaſions particularly unſeaſonable. But I have produced theſe examples to ſhow that the table has been conſidered by all people, from the earlieſt ages, as a *ſacred thing*, and that they have ever thought it expedient to ſanctify a meal by a previous conſecration of the food, and a ſubſequent act of thankſgiving for the refreſhment received. I infer, from the antiquity and univerſality of the practice, its propriety. It could not have been ſo ancient and univerſal, unleſs it had been alſo right and reaſonable.

That it is right and reaſonable, I believe many of them who neglect it will not ſeriouſly deny. But profligate men of faſhion have ſet the example

of omiſſion, and they who are determined to follow the faſhion in all its follies, think themſelves obliged to omit a duty both eaſy and uſeful. They ought not to ſuffer faſhion to ſuperſede duty and decency: but they aſſert, that, ſuch is the power of this arbitrary tyrant, they cannot do what they ought. A bad excuſe indeed, and ſuch an one as will ſcarcely be accepted for an omiſſion injurious to themſelves, to their children, their ſervants, their neighbourhood, and to the cauſe of religion.

There is indeed ſomething ſo brutally thoughtleſs and ungrateful in partaking of plenty and pleaſure, in faring ſumptuouſly every day, without feeling or at leaſt expreſſing gratitude to the giver of all good gifts, that one would wonder how perſons pretending to elegance and ſentimental refinement, can poſſibly pardon themſelves the impious ingratitude. Indeed, hovewer genteel they may appear, and however elegant their faſhionable manners, yet while they ſit down daily to their meals, like the brutes that periſh, they muſt be numbered among Horace's *Epicuri de grege porcos*, hogs of Epicurus's ſty, and inſtead of ſoup in a China terrene, it would be a proper reproof to ſerve them up offal in a trough.

Your's, &c.

A RATIONAL FORMALIST.

CHAP. XIII.

On the literary Character of Dr. Goldſmith.

Ingenii largitor venter.

THE old ſaying, *vexatio dat intellectum*, I am ſorry to obſerve, ſeems to have received ſome confirmation from the inſtances of many ingenious men, *digni meliore fato*, worthy of a better fate. To the diſtreſſes which poets have felt are often attributed the fineſt of their poems; but, perhaps, it may be juſtly urged, that their induſtry, and not their abilities, was increaſed or excited by diſtreſs. This indeed is partly true, but not entirely. They muſt have had abilities inherent in them or they could not have been excited, according to that common obſervation, that it is impoſſible to get blood out of a ſtone; but, at the ſame time, there is every reaſon to believe that their abilities were actually improved by that thoughtfulneſs and attention which diſtreſs has a tendency to produce.

And yet, with reſpect to poetry, a diverſity of opinions prevail on the effects of diſtreſs; for while the author in my motto ſays, that hunger gives ingenuity, another informs us, that

Anxietate carens animus verſus facit, omnis acerbi
Impatiens, nec de lodoïce paranda
Sollicitus; ſatur eſt cum dicit Horatius, Euœ.

That the mind muſt be free from anxiety in order to make good verſes, nor be troubled with

the care of procuring a rug. Horace has his belly full when he calls on the name of Bacchus with all the frantic enthuſiaſm of poetry.

I am afraid Juvenal, who is rather given to declamation, wrote on this ſubject without a due attention to actual experience: for in his time, as well as ours, poverty ſeems to have had a favorable influence on poetry. Many inſtances may be produced of this truth in the annals of modern literati; and I believe we may add to the number the name of Oliver Goldſmith.

From his want of attention to that œconomy which dunces often pay, and are very happy in conſequence of it, he ſpent his life in penury. But his mind was rich, and diſpenſed a portion of its opulence to provide ſuſtenance for its partner. To his diſtreſſes the literary world is indebted for a few very fine compoſitions. In the ſchool of affliction he learned to feel, or at leaſt to exerciſe thoſe feelings, which his writings expreſs with ſo much ſenſibility. His genius was called forth by want; and when once he began to feel his ſtrength, he relied on it for ſupport. He who writes for ſupport will often write when neceſſity urges, rather than when genius impels, and the conſequence will be a great inequality.

Goldſmith, though a good writer in proſe, appears to me to owe his moſt ſolid reputation to his poet ry.

Edwin and Angelina is one of the moſt popular pieces in the language; perhaps it ſtands next in the favor of the people to Gray's delightful Elegy.

Universitäts Bibliothek Rostock
http://purl.uni-rostock.de/rosdok/ppn863523129/phys_0268
DFG

Its general reception proves that its beauties are generally felt, and need not be pointed out by the ſubtle remarks of critical refinement. The language and ſentiments are delicate. The ſentiments came from a tender heart, and the language was dictated by a moſt elegant taſte. Who but muſt lament that he who felt ſo tenderly, and wrote ſo ſweetly, often wanted a ſhilling to provide him with his daily bread. But he was compaſſionate to every child of misfortune, and generous beyond the rules of prudence.

For to the houſeleſs child of want
His door was open ſtill,
And, though his portion was but ſcant,
He gave it with good will.

In the Traveller he adopts a different ſtyle of poetry; but in the ſtrong and nervous language of a Dryden, a Tickell (or of an Addiſon, in his letter to Lord Hallifax), he exhibits the ſame fine vein of exquiſite ſenſibility.

The firſt ten lines conſtitute a poetical paragraph not often exceeded in magnificence of ſtyle and tenderneſs of affection by any verſes in the Engliſh language; and the ſubſequent paſſages are ſeldom inferior in ſtrength, and often exceed it, in imagery. The whole breathes a manly ſpirit, and a love of human nature, of liberty, and of his country. It is one of thoſe poems which, among the numbers which daily ſink in the gulph of oblivion, will glide along the ſtream of time to late poſterity. It is formed to be placed in the rank of claſſics, becauſe it addreſſes at once

the imagination and the heart. Such feelings are raiſed by it as muſt pleaſe always and univerſally; and this is indeed the effect of all the works which live and flouriſh in ages diſtant from their production, when the arts of conciliating favor and exciting attention, and when partiality and perſonal intereſt operate no more.

Next in reputation to the Traveller ſtands his Deſerted village. The ſubject did not require ſo nervous a ſtyle as the Traveller; but it required ſweetneſs, tenderneſs, ſimplicity, and in theſe moſt delightful graces it richly abounds. The poet every where diſplays a zeal for the happineſs of mankind in the lower ranks of ſociety, and a deteſtation of that pride, vice, and luxury, and of thoſe deviations from nature and primitive ſimplicity, which enormous opulence contributes to introduce.

The verſification has in it ſomething original. It is excellently adapted to the ſubject, though it is unlike that of Pope, Dryden, or any predeceſſor. There is ſomething in its flow remarkably pathetic. It came from the heart, and the imagination only added the beautiful tinges of a poetical coloring.

The public who, in a length of time, are always found to decide with ſolidity of judgment, though often too haſty in their firſt applauſe, have ſelected all the more ſtriking paſſages of the poem, and almoſt committed them to memory. The village preacher, the village ſchoolmaſter, and the village alehouſe, are drawn with

affection, and have recommended themselves to the attention of every sympathizing reader.

I have known fastidious critics of reputed learning, who pretended that they could see no superior excellence in these poems, and suggested that the popularity of a poem was in their minds a suspicious circumstance, and led them to conclude, *prima facie*, that it was of little intrinsic value. But it may be fairly concluded that such persons, actuated by envy, undervalue what they have been unable to obtain; and, like the fox in the fable, stigmatize, as unworthy their endeavour, the grapes which they cannot reach.

Men of logical and mathematical heads are apt to view a poem principally with an eye to its plan, and to the mechanical circumstances of method, and the regular disposition of the component parts; but such persons have indeed no juster idea of real beauty, than a common stone-mason or bricklayer, who works by rule and line, of the magnificence of a fine piece of architecture.

A poem is indeed the more perfect the more regular its plan; but there are graces beyond the reach of art, and these will fully compensate, when they abound, for the want of mechanical regularity.

Dulcia sunto.

Let poems give pleasure and they will be read, while critics rail unheard and unregarded.

Goldsmith is buried in the Poets-Corner, and he is chiefly to be considered as a poet; for though

his profe is animated, and contains many fine images expreſſed in vivid language, yet it is incorrect and unequal, the haſty production of neceſſity working againſt inclination.

His Citizen of the World has, with many good papers many abſurd ones, and many written in a careleſs manner. It will never hold a diſtinguiſhed place in a ſelect library.

Some of his Eſſays are beautiful. There is a delicacy of phraſe, and a tenderneſs of affection in many of them, and the author has attempted humor on ſeveral ſubjects with ſucceſs; but here alſo is ſomething of inequality, incorrectneſs, and abſurdity.

His Vicar of Wakefield I think the beſt of his proſaic writings. It ſpeaks to the heart, and cauſes ſuch an intereſt, as leads the underſtanding to connive at ſome degree of improbability.

The Hiſtories of Greece, Rome, and England are merely compilations, haſtily finiſhed for the temporary ſupply of money; and though they are not without animated paſſages, cannot be raiſed higher in the ſcale of literature than the rank of ſchool-books.

Goldſmith had a great taſte for natural hiſtory and wiſhed to write ſomething in the manner of the elder Pliny. But he had not a ſufficient ſhare of ſcience to qualify him for the performance. In his *Animated Nature* he therefore had recourſe to compiling, and, I believe, deſcended to mere tranſlation. What he wrote himſelf diſplays his genius to advantage, but not his

accuracy; and, upon the whole, he appears to have been more ſolicitous to write an entertaining than a ſolid book. It may pleaſe and improve ſchoolboys and ſuperficial readers, but ſcholars and philoſophers will rather chuſe to draw from the fountains which ſupplied his ſtream, and which, it muſt be confeſſed, in the preſent caſe, often runs in a ſhallow current.

Want made him write much, and rather on ſubjects ſuggeſted by his paymaſters than by the unbiaſſed feelings of his own genius. The lumber of the compilations will ſink in the gulph of oblivion; but the poems will glide on to poſterity. Their ſtyle and pathos have been well imitated by Mr. Crabbe in his Village; nor is the loſs of a Goldſmith unſupplied by a Cowper.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAP. I.

Of the Names introduced by Engliſh Writers to diſtinguiſh the Characters which they deſcribe.

SIR,

SOMEBODY, I think, has very properly taken notice of the odd names which Dr. Watts has uſed to diſtinguiſh thoſe characters, which he introduces to illuſtrate his moral inſtructions. The characters are commonly grave; but the names are often ſuch as give them ſomething of a ludicrous air. He was a man of learning, judgment, and angelic goodneſs; but I know not whether his *taſte* in literary matters has not been too highly appretiated. I do not recollect the fictitious name which was ſelected as an inſtance of abſurdity; but in looking for it, I found thoſe of Polonides, Polyramus, Fluvio, and Credonius, all of which are ſtrangely uncouth. Such are alſo in the ſame book, Jocander, Poſitivo, Scitorio, Scintillo, Thebaldino, Niveo and Plumbinus.

If writers mean to give their characters the appearance of truth, they ſhould not ſelect ancient names for living perſons, much leſs names formed by their own capricious invention, and ſuch as never were given to men of any age or country.

country. We know, indeed, that the name is a maſk; but the maſk of a reſpectable character ſhould be neither a monſter, nor a caricatura.

Ficta voluptatis cauſa, ſint proxima veris.

Let all fiction which is intended to pleaſe, approach as nearly as poſſible to reality.

I own I am not pleaſed with the generality of our dialogue writers, who give their perſons Greek and Roman names, though at the ſame time they make them talk like Engliſhmen, and allude to modern cuſtoms, manners, and places. There is an incongruity in theſe which leſſens much of the entertainment which the dialogue might otherwiſe afford.

Why may not modern names be admitted into modern dialogue? You will ſay perhaps, Palæmon and Philander, Eugenius and Euſebius, have a prettier ſound than Smith, Johnſon, Walker, Benſon, Hudſon. The Latin and Greek languages have a prettier ſound than the Engliſh, and therefore you may for the ſame reaſon write the whole dialogue in the ſame language. It is another plea for adopting Greek and Latin names, that as the Romans did not uſe the ceremonious ſalutations of the moderns, a great deal of trouble is avoided by omitting the unmeaning modes of addreſs, Sir, Madam, Your Grace, and My Lord, which ſome imagine neceſſary when they introduce a converſation between ſuch perſonages as Mr. Smith, Mr. Johnſon,

Mrs. Melvill, Lord Clarendon, and the Duke of Kent.

But I think these ceremonious appellations may be omitted with less violation of probability and propriety than is caused by introducing Greeks and Romans talking about the doctrines of Christianity, the laws of our country, and other subjects, on which they could not be made to converse without a violent anachronism.

When the subject relates entirely to antiquity, ancient names are not improper; indeed, as the ancients may be supposed better acquainted with such subjects than the moderns, the mind is pleased with the propriety of introducing them as the interlocutors.

But while the matter is good, it is not right to cavil at trifles which are no more than forms. Perhaps my remarks are hypercritical: that they may not be tedious, I will here conclude them.

I am, SIR,
to borrow one of Dr. Watts's names,
Your humble Servant,

POLYRAMUS.

SIR,

I am a great lover of learning, but not having had the advantage of a liberal education, I am totally unacquainted with the learned languages; and I lament the defect as a real misfortune. I hear much of their excellence, and you may

ſuppoſe it a great mortification to me, that I am unable to read thoſe books which have been celebrated as the fineſt productions of the human intellect. I endeavour to compenſate my defect by reading Engliſh authors; but I often ſtumble upon Latin mottoes and ſentences, which I ſuppoſe to contain ſome jewel, too precious to be expoſed to vulgar view, and locked up in a caſket of which I have not the key.

But I am not only puzzled and mortified with mottoes and ſentences which I do not underſtand, but often with odd names of characters in moral writers, and of perſons who converſe in fictitious dialogues, which, I have no doubt, contain ſome ſignificant meaning, which I am at a loſs to unriddle.

Dr. More in his dialogues introduces the following perſons; Philotheus, Bathynous, Sophron, Philopolis, Euiſter, Hylobares, and *Cuphophron*. Every one of theſe is expreſſive of the character introduced; but I ſhould have been quite in the dark about them, and have wondered at their oddity, if the Doctor had not obligingly explained their meaning in one of the firſt pages in his volume. I wiſh the example had been followed by many others, who introduce me into the company of perſons whoſe characters I do not know, becauſe I do not underſtand the meaning of their crabbed names.

I humbly conceive that it would be quite as well if writers ſuffered the characters to open themſelves to the reader in the courſe of the

converſation; and I ſee no good reaſon why chriſtian and ſurnames of honeſt Engliſhmen, may not be given to perſons who come forward to talk on ſubjects which they muſt underſtand far better than the wiſeſt of the ancients; I mean ſuch as Dr. More diſcuſſes, the attributes of God, and his Providence in this world; but in truth, I find, on inquiry, that theſe names are not the names of ancients. They occur not in hiſtory, but are compounded of words that never met before, to expreſs ideas which can only be underſtood by thoſe who are acquainted with the learned languages. Such names appear to me to have no more propriety than ſome of thoſe which in the times of fanaticiſm were uſed by the Puritans, ſuch as, Praiſe-God Barebones, Make-peace Heaton, Kill-ſin Pimple, and Fly-debate Roberts; the names of a jury impannelled in Suſſex during the uſurpation of Oliver Cromwell.

I acknowledge, however, that the ancient and high ſounding names adopted in Engliſh dialogues, give a dignity to the diſcourſe; but I, who am a mere Engliſhman, wiſh to ſee Engliſhmen introduced without being aſhamed of their names, and do not know why the names of Clarendon, Temple, Raleigh, and a thouſand others equally well ſounding, might not anſwer the purpoſe as well as names borrowed from Greece and Rome: And, as to the ſignificancy of the above mentioned compound appellations, what ſhould I be the wiſer without an explanatory table for ſuch names as thoſe in Dr.

More's liſt? What muſt I think of *Cuphophron*? I ſhould not know the ſenſe; and I am ſure I could not admire the ſound. Few Gothic names are of more difficult pronunciation.

But I ought not to judge, as I profeſs myſelf no ſcholar. I only ſubmit to you my complaint as an Engliſh reader. I ſhall be much obliged to you to deſire gentlemen who write dialogues, and introduce ſtrange names as exemplifications of their inſtruction, either to give modern names, or ſuch as are known in hiſtory, or elſe to add an explanatory table.

I am, Sir, Your's, &c.

AN ENGLISH READER.

CHAP. II.

Of Caligula's Attempt to aboliſh the Works of Homer, Virgil, and Livy.

THE tyrants who oppreſſed Rome in the decline of her empire were not ſatisfied with depriving men of their civil rights, but often attempted to chain the mind in ſervitude, and to domineer with abſolute control, where they certainly had no claim to pre-eminence, in the republic of literature. One of the moſt ſingular and barbarous attempts upon record was that of Caligula, who formed a deſign of aboliſhing

the poems of Homer, and had nearly accomplished his purpose of banishing from all the libraries of his time, the busts and the works of Livy and Virgil. He could not bear that the noble efforts of genius, breathing a spirit of liberty and virtue, which he could not but hate, should continue to diffuse such sentiments as must teach all who imbibed them to detest him as a monster.

The following is the account given by Suetonius: "Cogitavit etiam de Homeri carminibus "abolendis. Cur enim sibi non licere, dicens, "quod Platoni licuisset, qui eum a civitate, "quam constituebat, ejecerit? Sed Virgilii & "Titi Livii scripta & imagines, paulum abfuit, "quin ex omnibus bibliothecis amoveret; quo-"rum alterum ut nullius ingenii, minimæque "doctrinæ; alterum, ut verbosum, in historia "negligentemque carpebat *."

Flagitious as was his reign, I know not whether any thing he could do, would have been more injurious to mankind than if he had succeeded in extinguishing these glorious lights. The atrocious malignity of his immoral and tyrannical actions was confined to his own age, but this would have descended to posterity, and continued the effects of his despotism long after the great teacher Death had humbled his pride, by reducing him to the dust, not distinguishable from the poorest wretch whom his insolence despised, and his cruelty persecuted. Indeed his design was impracticable, for, with all his power,

* Sueton. Calig. cap. 34.

he could not have prevented ſome votary of taſte and genius from preſerving in ſecret the noble relics of theſe illuſtrious ornaments of human nature.

I have no doubt but the ſame diſpoſition which could form a wiſh to aboliſh Homer, would have rejoiced, if it had been poſſible, to have extinguiſhed the ſun, or to have dried up the ocean. Such tyranny exhibits a melancholy monument of human wickedneſs, and at the ſame time furniſhes a ſalutary warning to the world not to truſt enormous power in the hands of a fellow creature. Human nature retains ſo much of inherent malignity, that he who poſſeſſes power uncontrouled will be in imminent danger of imitating and nearly reſembling the parent of all evil.

Dic mihi, ſi fueris, tu leo qualis eris.

But the wicked never want the artifice of giving to their malice ſome colorable pretence. Caligula alledged that he ſhould be juſtified in the abolition of Homer by the example of Plato, who baniſhed the poets from his imaginary republic. But what was Plato's motive? a deſire to preſerve the morals of youth, whoſe ideas he thought were corrupted and diſtorted by an initiation into the ſtrange myſteries of fiction, inſtead of the knowledge of ſubſtantial and practical realities. He did not mean to aboliſh their works, or to preclude men, whoſe reaſon was mature, from the ſtudy of them. He only

thought as many others have thought, that on the minds of young men, the ſlaves of paſſion and fancy, they might operate in the ſame manner as novels and romances have been obſerved to do, in firing the paſſions and miſleading the imagination. But was Caligula's motive for their expulſion a fear that they might diffuſe corruption? No ſuch apprehenſion ever agitated his boſom. His fear was leſt they ſhould teach a virtue to which he could never attain, and raiſe a ſpirit inimical to his manners, his perſon, and his tyranny. He muſt have known that, among all the perſons deſcribed by Homer, he was worthy only to be ranked with ſuch wretches as Therſites. Before himſelf could ſhine, he knew that all true glory muſt be ſhaded, as the ſun muſt retire, before the feeble light, which ariſes from a foul vapor, can become viſible.

But he aſſigns a reaſon for the expulſion of Virgil and Livy. Virgil, ſays he, has no genius, and a very ſmall ſhare of learning; and Livy is verboſe in his ſtyle, and negligent in his narrative.

Caligula muſt be excepted againſt as an incompetent judge both of learning and genius; for it requires a conſiderable ſhare of both to form a juſt opinion of the degree in which they are poſſeſſed by a writer. If Virgil had not genius, he would not, I think, have continued ſo long the delight and admiration of all who have read his works with taſte. He has Longinus's criterion of genius, the united voice of various ages and nations, in his favor. He has Caligula,

and a few other men of debauched taſte, againſt him, which is almoſt as great an honor as the general approbation.

The truth is, he has a remarkably happy union of genius with learning; and he has alſo a judgement to guide him in the conduct of both, with that propriety which enables him to delight at once the reaſon and the fancy. Genius without learning often delights the fancy, but the judgement muſt in the mean time ſleep, or the pleaſure will be diminiſhed and interrupted.

Whoever has read the works of Virgil in the excellent edition of Heyne will want no argument to convince him that Virgil did not deſerve the ſtigma which Caligula would have fixed on him,—*minimæ doctrinæ;* and whoever has ſenſibility will feel the falſhood of the detracting ſpirit that dared to aſſert of him that he was *nullius ingenii.* It muſt ever be a ſingular honor to ſuffer detraction from ſuch men as Caligula.

It is very eaſy to aſſign a reaſon for his diſlike of Livy. A moſt arbitrary tyrant and moſt profligate man could not but wiſh to deſtroy the works of an hiſtorian who exhibits the aſſertors of liberty, and the virtuous patriots of a virtuous republic, in ſuch colors as muſt at once excite love and lead to imitation. Caligula's charge of verboſity in the ſtyle of Livy is utterly groundleſs. He expreſſes himſelf with a noble brevity, and with that conciſe dignity which evinced that he had a Roman ſoul, ſuch a ſoul as was adequate to the noble undertaking of a Roman hiſtory.

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The other charge, that of negligence in his account of facts, originated from the malignant wish of the tyrant to diminish the credit of an historian who related deeds of so bright a splendor, as must render the page in which his own should be recorded, foul indeed. Time has unfortunately done much to accomplish the nefarious wish of Caligula, in the destruction of the works of Livy; but enough remains to delight every man of taste, and warm the bosom with magnanimous sentiments, and the generous ardor of public virtue.

It is greatly to be lamented when Princes, instead of patronizing genius, endeavour to repress its aspiring vigor. Such a conduct arises in such men as Caligula from envy and malice; but a neglect of genius is occasioned in others by ignorance, and a total deficiency of taste for works which the world applauds. Even Hadrian, we are told, wished to abolish Homer's works, and substitute in his room the poems of one Antimachus. He thought it was time to leave off admiring old Homer, that he had been admired long enough, and that he should gratify the passion for novelty by introducing in his place a modern versifier. He puts one in mind of the rough warrior who told the captain, to whose care he had consigned some fine pictures which he had taken as spoils, that if they were lost or injured they should be renewed at his expense.

Men of sense look down upon such emperors, when they dictate in matters of taste, with as

much contempt as the emperors can do on the meaneſt of their vaſſals. When learning is diffuſed throughout a nation, the works of taſte and genius will flouriſh independently of the ſmiles or the frowns of princes.

CHAP. III.

Of ſome Paſſages in Eraſmus on the Happineſs of Marriage. — Remarks.

AMONG the marks of modern profligacy may be enumerated the reluctance with which young men enter the marriage ſtate. Their affections are in vain ſolicited by any charms beſides thoſe of lucre. The times ſeem to be paſt, when in the prime of life virtuous love led young men to ſelect a companion for the amiable qualities of her mind and perſon, independently of all pecuniary conſiderations. The loveliеſt of women may now pine in hopeleſs celibacy; for, if they cannot purchaſe a huſband as they would purchaſe a gown, with the contents of their purſe, they may live and die without one. In vain has nature given them the vernal cheek, and the eye of ſenſibility, if fortune has refuſed her more brilliant gifts. Young men gaze indeed like children at the peacock, and turn away without any tenderneſs of ſentiment, or at leaſt without any wiſh to poſſeſs the beauty which they admire, on honorable conditions.

It is indeed obſervable that young men of the preſent age too often conſider marriage as an evil in itſelf, and only to be engaged in when the pecuniary advantages attending it afford a compenſation. For the ſake of the good, it ſeems, they ſometimes condeſcend to accept the evil. A moſt inſulting opinion, and no leſs unreaſonable and untrue than contumelious; for marriage, prudent and affectionate marriage, is favorable to every virtue that can contribute to the comfort and happineſs of the individual, while it moſt eſſentially ſerves ſociety.

I was thinking on this ſubject when I accidentally opened a little book by Eraſmus on the Art of Letter Writing. He gives models of letters on various ſubjects, and, under the appearance of affording hints in a didactic way for the uſe of ſtudents, contrives to recommend ſeveral moſt uſeful things with great force of argument, and in a very entertaining manner. I happened to open the book in the place where he is writing a perſuaſive to marriage, and I was ſo well pleaſed with ſeveral of his topics, that I determined to ſelect a few of them for the conſideration of my readers. I mean not literally to tranſlate, or to give the whole of his perſuaſive. There are parts in it which one cannot entirely approve, but there are others which every heart, that is not ſpoiled by faſhion and falſe philoſophy, muſt admire.

Is there any friendſhip, ſays he, among mortals, comparable to that between man and wife? For the love of you ſhe has ceaſed to value the

tenderneſs of parents, brothers, ſiſters; to you alone ſhe looks for happineſs, on you ſhe depends, with you ſhe wiſhes to live and to die.

Are you rich? you have one who will endeavour to preſerve and to increaſe your property. Are you in narrow circumſtances? you have one who will aſſiſt you faithfully in the purſuit of gain. If you enjoy proſperity, ſhe will double your happineſs; if you are in adverſity, ſhe will conſole you, ſhe will ſit by your ſide, ſhe will wait upon you with all the aſſiduity of love, and only wiſh that ſhe could appropriate the misfortune which gives you pain. Is there any pleaſure to be compared with an union of hearts like this?

I muſt add the next paſſage in his own words.

Si domi agis, adeſt quæ ſolitudinis tædium depellat; ſi foris, eſt quæ diſcedentem oſculo proſequatur, abſentem deſideret, redeuntem læta excipiat.

She is the ſweet companion of your youth, and the pleaſant ſolace of your old age.

What can be more odious (he proceeds) than that man, who, as if he were born for himſelf, lives for himſelf, heaps up riches for himſelf, ſpares for himſelf, ſpends for himſelf, loves no human creature but himſelf, is beloved by none.

How will you value your happineſs (he adds)

—— Ubi quis tibi parvulus aula,
Luſerit Æneas.

qui tuos tuæque conjugis vultus referat, qui te BLANDA BALBUTIE PATREM APPELLITET.

I know, ſays he, that you will object that all this happineſs depends upon the diſpoſition of the

wife more than on the marriage ſtate. A marriage may be thus happy if the wife be good; but ſuppoſe her ill-natured, ſuppoſe her unchaſte, and ſuppoſe the children undutiful. Believe me, the bad huſband uſually makes the bad wife. You certainly have it in your power to chuſe a good one; but what if ſhe ſhould afterwards be ſpoiled? Eraſmus confidently replies, A good wife may indeed be ſpoiled by a bad huſband, but a bad wife is uſually reformed by a good one. FALSO UXORES ACCUSAMUS. No body, he aſſures us (I am afraid too confidently), ever had a bad wife but by his own fault. And with reſpect to children, good children, ſays he, are uſually born of good parents; but however they may have been born, they commonly become juſt ſuch as they are made by education.

But why, continues he, do you ſo anxiouſly enumerate the inconveniencies of marriage, juſt as if celibacy were totally free from them, or as if any mode of human life were not ſubject to evil and misfortune. If you would have no inconvenient circumſtances in your ſtate, you muſt leave this life. *Sin intra humanam conditionem animum cohineas, nihil eſt conjugali vita, neque tutius, neque tranquillius, neque jucundius, neque amabilius, neque felicius.* But if one can reſtrain one's deſires within the boundaries of happineſs which belong to human nature, there is no ſtate ſafer, more tranquil, pleaſanter, lovelier, nor happier than the conjugal.

Though Eraſmus is ſeeking hints to ſupply the young letter writer with matter for his compoſitions, yet I cannot but think that he ſpoke his honeſt ſentiments, becauſe he ſpeaks with warmth, and, I believe, meant obliquely to cenſure thoſe unnatural inſtitutions of the Romiſh church, which tend to diſcourage marriage. He is very copious on the ſubject, and advances many arguments which I have not room to tranſcribe, and which indeed will appear to much greater advantage in the original. I muſt not conceal that he has alſo a diſſuaſive from marriage; but it really contains no argument which is valid, or which is worthy of repetition.

I am of opinion, that the reluctance of young men of fortune to enter into the ſtate ariſes not from any ſettled conviction of the unreaſonableneſs of the inſtitution, but from profligacy, thoughtleſſneſs, falſe ideas of pleaſure, and a want of rational ideas of human life and the nature of human happineſs. But, whatever is the cauſe, the effect is certainly unhappy both to men and women. Men, indeed, in conſequence of their libertiniſm, gratify their natural deſires in the haunts of vice; and ſo much the worſe, for they thus add ſin to miſery. Women are often kept in a ſtate of celibacy, for which nature never deſigned them, and to which, I may ſay, without attributing to them indecency or immodeſty, they are in general not much inclined. It is happy, however, that reſerve and virtue ſo far prevail among them, as for the moſt part to prevent

them from forming improper connexions, in consequence of being prevented from making a matrimonial alliance by the disinclination of the men. It is to be hoped they will still preserve their dignity by preserving their innocence; but their case is hard, and nothing which a wise legislature can do to alleviate it should be omitted. Many nations have taken great pains to encourage marriage, ours places some obstacles in its way, which, though often salutary in the higher classes, are perhaps injurious in the lower.

A reformation of manners, among the young men who lead the fashion, would contribute most to the encouragement of marriage; for where libertinism greatly prevails, celibacy; which is favorable to it, will be predominant. Perhaps, if women were instructed in useful as well as ornamental arts, and were less expensive in dress and diversions, the rest might be left to the natural operation of their beauty and agreeable accomplishments. As the small-pox is in great measure defeated, they certainly never appeared more beautiful than in the present time, and accomplishments were never pursued with more ardor, or advanced to higher perfection.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of drinking Health at Table.

Tarde Cyathos mihi das; cedo ſane; bene mihi; bene vobis. PLAUTUS.

SIR,

I LATELY addreſſed to you a few obſervations on the omiſſion of grace at table, and I now beg leave to add ſome remarks on another omiſſion which faſhion ſeems to recommend, but which is countenanced neither by the examples of the ancients, nor by reaſon, nor by a ſenſe of propriety. I obſerved, on my viſit to my old friend in London, that the friendly practice of drinking health at dinner was in moſt of the faſhionable families very much on the decline, and in many totally omitted. Indeed the omiſſion ariſes from a principle which ſeems very much to prevail in the preſent age, and which aims at the abolition of all forms and ceremonies, as meaning nothing, and at the ſame time giving trouble and excluding eaſe. Forms and ceremonies undoubtedly have their utility, or they would not have been univerſally retained in every age and nation which hiſtory has recorded. But allowing ſome forms to be without meaning, I cannot ſuppoſe, unleſs I throw a ſeverer reflection on the friendſhip and hoſpitality of modern times than I chuſe, that the drinking of health is, without exception, a ſenſeleſs and empty ceremony.

A man of a warm and friendly heart uſually feels a ſentiment of cordial kindneſs when he holds the cup of refreſhment in his hand, and wiſhes health and happineſs to his friends who are partaking around him of the ſame innocent and neceſſary pleaſure.

The cuſtom prevailed among the Greeks, who carried the elegance which they diſplayed in the polite arts to the table and ſocial circle, aſſembled to enjoy the pleaſures of the palate and of diſcourſe. Homer, indeed, has given the model in the firſt book of the Iliad, who ſays of the gods at their feaſt,

Χρυσείος δεπάεσσι
Δειδέχατ' ἀλλήλους.

The manner of drinking to each other reſembled what is called among us *pledging*. The perſon who drank to his friend was ſaid προπίνειν, or to drink firſt. He drank a part of the cup, and than handed the reſt to the friend whom he had named. The words which paſſed on the occaſion were προπίνω σοι καλως, to which the perſon ſaluted λαμβάνω ἀπό σου ηδεως, which may be thus freely tranſlated. I have the honor to drink to you.—I pledge you with pleaſure.

It was alſo the cuſtom, after due reſpect paid to the gods, to drink to abſent friends; and, as an emblem of ſincerity, it was eſtabliſhed as a law never to dilute the wine drunk on this occaſion.

I ſhall not trouble you with various proofs that the cuſtom of drinking health is juſtified by

the example of the politeſt people of antiquity. It would be eaſy to collect them from the writers on antiquities; but the inſtance alledged is ſufficient for my purpoſe, and will ſerve to confute thoſe who hint that the cuſtom is unpolite.

There is ſurely ſomething peculiarly brutal in ſitting down to meals without ever thinking of God or man, neglecting the grace, and omitting the form of wiſhing health and happineſs to thoſe who ſit at the ſame table. We have ſeen that it is contrary to the practice of antiquity, and of almoſt all people in the world, who, though they varied in the forms, agreed in the eſſential points, in giving glory to God on high, and teſtifying good will towards men.

Your's, &c.

A RATIONAL FORMALIST.

The omiſſion of drinking health is by no means general; but as it has been countenanced at the tables of perſons of faſhion, it may probably deſcend to their imitators in lower life, and in time become univerſal. My correſpondent has therefore very properly expreſſed his diſapprobation of it. It certainly diſplays ſomething of ſelfiſhneſs, and it is contrary to the general ſenſe of the moſt enlightened and poliſhed people. It can only be juſtified with certain qualifications and reſtrictions. It is troubleſome, in a large company, to drink the health of every gueſt reſpectively, and troubleſome formalities ought

not to be ſcrupulouſly adhered to, when they contravene the very purpoſe of the meeting, which was certainly to promote cheerfulneſs and eaſe.

But forms, not evidently and intolerably burdenſome and fooliſh, are certainly to be retained, as they conſtitute thoſe outworks which often preſerve the interior parts from aſſault and deſtruction. The drinking of health is ſignificant of that good will which ought to prevail among fellow creatures, happily enjoying the bounty of their common Parent and creator; and though it may be attended with a little trouble, yet there is a great decency and propriety in it, and to bear the trouble may be conſidered as an exerciſe of benevolence.

I cannot help expreſſing a ſentiment of pity, or rather of contempt, for perſons who think to recommend themſelves as genteel and ſuperior to the vulgar, merely by ſuch eaſy means as the omiſſion of decent and reaſonable ceremonies I ſuppoſe they mean to claim the merit of being ſuperior to prejudice; but I think they are under a very ſilly prejudice when they think themſelves wiſe enough to be juſtified in contradicting the common ſenſe and common practice of mankind; and when they ſuppoſe ſingularity alone can give them merit, and cauſe them juſtly to plume themſelves on conſcious ſuperiority.

Obſerve at table that fine lady, and fine gentleman by her ſide. How they lift their eyebrows, and ſmile with ineffable contempt. Heavens! has there been any moral turpitude, or any

groſs violation of decency committed? None. But, you muſt know, that yonder gentleman, who is juſt arrived from the country, where he has reſided for a long time, drank to the lady in ſmall beer, and ſtood up to ſay grace, and to make a bow to the maſter of the houſe. He might have ſworn profanely, talked indecently, or drank intemperately, and if he had but the cant of faſhion, they who now deſpiſe him would have admired and careſſed him as a *good man*.

CHAP. V.

Of trifling Amuſements as the Reſource of old Age.

IT ſeems to be a natural concluſion from the ſhortneſs of life, that none of it ſhould be thrown away; and it is therefore thought wonderful that there ſhould be many contrivances to abbreviate the duration of what is confeſſed already to be too much circumſcribed. Now paſtimes of all kinds are conſidered as contrivances to wear away time without reflection, and are therefore cenſured by ſevere philoſophy, as arguing abſurdity in man, who is forever lamenting the brevity of his exiſtence. But, as man is conſtituted, it muſt be denied that the time ſpent in amuſement is always thrown away; and, perhaps, it will be found to lengthen rather than to abbreviate our duration.

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It contributes, when under the reſtraint of moderation, to confirm health and exhilarate the ſpirits; both which effects not only become cauſes of long life, but alſo enable a man to act with vigor and efficacy in the employments of a profeſſion, and in the common duties of ſociety. It not only renders life more comfortable, but more uſeful.

It is, however, true, that in the vigorous ſeaſons of youth and health, ſome ſerious and momentous employment ſhould be engaged in, which may ſerve ſociety, advance the intereſts of a family, or elevate the meritorious individual in the ranks of civil life.

But in old age, when theſe ends ſhall have been accompliſhed, and * infirmities begin to increaſe, the active mind will ſtill require an object, and the object ought to be of ſuch a kind as agitates moderately, not like the ſtorm, but like the gentle breeze of a fine ſummer evening.

Hobby-horſes are very deſirable at all ages; but neceſſary in old age, when the ſources of amuſement begin to fail. It was this which induced the ſenſible and experienced Geron to keep an aviary. He had relinquiſhed a buſy life, and retired from London to a little country town, where, though there was an agreeable neighbourhood, there were few diverſions but thoſe

* Solve ſeneſcentem mature ſanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum ridendus & ilia ducat.
HOR.

of cards; which, notwithstanding he liked them very well, could not occupy all his time and attention. They are chiefly a winter and an evening amusement, and he wanted something, besides reading, for the summer and for his mornings. He therefore built a little room in his garden, and fitted it up with admirable contrivance as an aviary. The building of it, the conveniences, and the improvements, which he was continually adding, caused him much pleasure: and it soon became an object of high ambition to breed the most beautiful Canary birds. He succeeded in his attempts, and more than once carried the prize given by a society of bird-fanciers for producing a bird of the finest plumage. He taught many bulfinches to pipe a tune, and made them presents to his friends as instances of singular favor. He reared nightingales from the nest, and attended them with all a parent's solicitude. The delicate, the elegant woodlark was one of his first favorites, and he listened with fresh delight when his birds warbled their morning melody, which he fancifully considered as songs of gratitude and love to himself in return for protection.

But that he might secure variety, which is necessary to add a zest to amusement, he has added several other hobby-horses to this his first favorite. He has acquired a taste for tulips, and prides himself on making a more beautiful display of this gaudy flower in the month of May than any florist in his vicinity. I called it

a gaudy flower; but I ſpeak like an inelegant ſpectator when I uſe a contemptuous epithet in mentioning it: for, though to a common eye a bed of tulips preſents only a glare of vivid colors, to a connoiſſeur it exhibits peculiar elegance as well as finery. Geron views them with the affection and complacency of a lover.

The garden affords him many ſources of amuſement. He attends not indeed to the olitory, and his ſtrength will not permit him to take an active part in the labors of horticulture. But he has a ſmall green-houſe, to every part of which he gives a daily attention; and its various beauty amply repays him, as indeed nothing is more grateful, in return for care and labor, than the vegetable world.

To add to his amuſements, he has ſtocked a fiſh-pond in a meadow adjoining to his little garden; and, inſtead of taking out all the fiſh at once by emptying the pond or drawing it, which is the uſual practice of country gentlemen, he makes a rule that no fiſh ſhall be caught out of it but by angling, which he thinks the only fair method of fiſhing among thoſe who fiſh for diverſion. His ſtrength will not permit him to follow the piſcatory ſport in the river, as he can neither ſtand long, nor walk a great way; and he has the ſenſe, wherever he cannot accommodate the nature of the diverſion to himſelf, to ſubmit himſelf to the nature of the diverſion.

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He has many little amuſements in the houſe, as well as in the aviary, the garden, and canal. As he is properly diſpoſed in religious matters, the reading of the Scriptures, with a comment, and of pious books of the beſt characters, fills up both agreeably and uſefully an hour or two every day; but more eſpecially when the weather is rainy, or in any reſpect inclement.

Viſits, and cards in moderation, contribute to enliven his time in an agreeable viciſſitude; and the conſequence of his wiſe diſtribution of his leiſure hours, he enjoys a cheerfulneſs which contributes, perhaps, more than any thing elſe, to health and longevity.

His neighbour Bibo ridicules his amuſements as trifling and puerile. Bibo is nearly as old as Geron; but he is not yet free from youthful vanity. He is an old beau, ſportſman, gameſter, and bottle companion; but his infirmities often prevent him from acting in theſe characters; and when on a good day (as he calls it, whenever he is tolerably well) he attempts them, he never acquits himſelf to his own ſatisfaction. Old age, and the depredations of time, are his great complaint. He has no reſource in himſelf, and cultivates no taſte for domeſtic and harmleſs diverſions. He mopes over the fire in the morning, and the bottle in the afternoon. Melancholy and bodily diſeaſe, increaſed by indolence and exceſs, accelerate the evils, and aggravate the pains of age.

How happy would Bibo have been if he had condescended to give up the gravity of the gamester, and the affectation of the beau, and adopted a taste for some innocent hobby-horse, which he now despises as too childish and unimportant to deserve his notice.

CHAP. VI.

Of the little Arts practised to gain the Appearance of Consequence at public Places, &c.

SUCH is the natural pride of the human heart, that there is scarcely any trifling distinction which can attract notice that will not be pursued with eagerness, and fill the possessor's bosom with self-esteem.

One of the easiest, and therefore the commonest method of drawing attention by trifles, is that of talking loud at all places of public resort. There is something so spirited in it, so charmingly careless, and it gives such an air of superiority, by seeming to despise all the hearers as if they were no more than stocks and stones, that it seldom fails of exciting not only notice, but some degree of admiration.

I have heard many a fine gentleman and lady, while they were strutting up and down a crowded walk, question each other on the last night's ball, or their engagements to dinner, in a

voice so loud as silenced the rest of the company, and caused a general hum of inquiry, Who are these? Thus the end was answered. The spectators were awe-struck and brow-beaten, and the happy pair marched off in triumph, like a king and queen of Brentford, till the next morning, when they returned to make new conquests. From their volubility and vehement loudness, they acquired, among many silly listeners, the character of people of infinite sense and spirit.

Another method of gaining notice and admiration, is to swear and swagger at inns, or at any other place where we are among our inferiors, or are unknown. It is, to be sure, wonderful to observe how respectful a reception he meets with who, with a cockade in his hat, which is also judiciously cocked over his eye, with a stick in his hand, and an oath in his mouth, enters an inn and calls about him with a voice like that of the men who cry peas and beans in the streets of London. There have been generals, admirals, colonels, and captains, who never appeared so formidable, and displayed so much prowess, as in storming an inn in a country town. And the petty gentry, who imitate such heroes, consider themselves as personages of great consequence when they break the bell-wire by the violence of their ringing, frighten the landlady with their fierce looks, send the waiters scampering like men beside themselves, and, with their oaths, set the whole house, yards, and stables in an uproar.

Knocking vehemently at a door, especially if it be done according to the latest method invented by people of fashion in the squares, adds very considerably to personal importance.

Singularity in dress is one of the commonest modes of seeking distinction; but by singularity I do not mean a deviation from the established fashion, but an obedience to it carried to an extreme. An enormous pair of buckles has given many a young man a degree of confidence which no learning or virtue which he possessed could ever have supplied. A hat, a coat, a shoe, of a shape, or size, or color, exceeding the ordinary bounds, have fixed the eyes of a whole assembly, and gratified the ambitious wearer with the most heartfelt satisfaction.

Some, rather than not be noticed at all, will endeavour to draw the eyes of their fellow creatures upon them by such profusion and expenses, as cause an execution in their houses, and force them to elope. Hunted by bailiffs and creditors, it is still some consolation to them that they are the reigning topic. Vices are often practised with a desire of being rendered remarkable; and many plume themselves as persons of the first consequence, if their profligacy causes them to become the subjects of paragraphs in a newspaper.

Vanity indeed operates with so violent a force on some minds, that it seems to contradict itself, and defeat its own purpose; for, in pursuit of

notice and distinction, it will even industriously seek contempt.

As the desire of fame or distinction seems natural in man, I contend not against it; but I wish it to operate in urging to acts of singular beneficence and social utility, rather than spend its force in trifles, follies, vanities, and vices.

Of the greater part of these ambitious persons whom I have just described, it may, I believe, be said that they would act wisely to avoid, instead of seeking distinction, for they seem to be of that character to which the emphatical words of an elegant political writer may most justly be applied—" a character which will only pass without censure, when it passes without observation."

If men find themselves insensibly impelled by the ambition of their nature to seek distinction, let them learn to seek it by arts and virtues which embellish life, and diffuse happiness or convenience through the ranks of society. If they cannot do this, let them contentedly acquiesce in an innocent obscurity.

CHAP VII.

Of making a ſplendid Appearance for the Sake of obtaining Succeſs in a Trade or Profeſſion.

———Purpura vendet
Cauſidicum; vendunt amethyſtina. Juv.

IN the eye of reaſon there is certainly no neceſſary connexion between oſtentation and excellence. Can the keeping of a chariot be a proof of pre-eminence of knowledge? Certainly not. But ſuch is the world, that the phyſician on foot ſtands no chance of being employed if his rival rides in his chariot.

The preference of the medical profeſſor who makes a faſhionable appearance to him that does not, has been always remarkable; ſo much ſo, that it is almoſt a proverbial queſtion, What is a doctor without his chariot? Formerly large wigs, gold headed canes, full trimmed coats, and ſolemn looks, were conſidered as natural ſigns of profound knowledge. They indeed are voluntarily laid aſide by the gentleman themſelves; who ſeem to think it no diſadvantage to appear young in perſon, and eaſy in manners. But ſtill the appearance of faſhionable life, of ſervants and equipage, is a very powerful recommendation to favor.

The ſame unreaſonable aſſociation of the idea of ſuperior excellence, wherever a ſplendid

appearance is made, ſeems viſible in almoſt every other art, trade, and profeſſion.

And this it is which forms one of the moſt frequent excuſes, in young perſons, for launching out, as they call it, or living beyond their income.

In the lower orders of mercantile life, a young man begins trade with his little patrimony, or with the gift of a living parent, who, perhaps, diſtreſſes himſelf to raiſe a ſum which, though moderate, might, under proper management, grow, like a handful of ſeed, to a large quantity. A ſhop, or rather a *warehouſe* (for, as Juvenal ſays,

———hic vivimus ambitioſa
Paupertate omnes———

and every thing muſt now have a magnificent name), is hired at a conſiderable rent. It muſt, in the firſt place, be fitted up not only neatly and conveniently (for neatneſs and convenience are mean ideas), but elegantly, and in the neweſt taſte. The door poſts are adorned with ſculpture, and the name and trade exhibited on a tablet adorned with a profuſion of gilding and paint. The counters, the drawers, the ſhelves, are mahogany; and the maſter and miſtreſs are every day attired by the moſt faſhionable hair-dreſſer, and deſcend (which is but rarely) from the ſumptuous dining-room to ſtand behind the counter, juſt as if they were going into a drawing-room, or the preſence chamber.

Connexions are ſought with the utmoſt diligence. To promote them, viſits are paid and received with all the formality of faſhion. The glaſs in the dining-room is ſtuck round with gilt cards of invitation to dinners, ſuppers, balls, and aſſemblies.

Well; all this is very pleaſing; but how goes on buſineſs in the ſhop,—in the warehouſe? I beg pardon. O, the ſcrubs mind that. Mr. and Mrs. Diaper are too much engaged in dreſſing in the morning and viſiting in the afternoon to mind the ſubordinate buſineſs of the ſhop. The clerk, the journeyman, the apprentice, and the porter are hired purpoſely for that buſineſs; but let Mr. and Mrs. Diaper alone; they know what they are about, they are promoting trade, by making connexions and *cutting a figure*. There is no ſucceeding in the preſent days without cutting a figure.

But the misfortune is, every one is *cutting a figure* to the utmoſt extent of their pecuniary abilities; and the connexions which Mr. and Mrs. Diaper make are themſelves making connexions for the ſake of advancing their intereſt. None of them have a fund ſufficient to ſupport the expenſes of the faſhionable life which they affect; and, in the courſe of a few years, they all, in their turn, *cut a figure* in the London Gazette.

But in higher life, in profeſſions and employments which might juſtly claim a right to genteel life

life, it is usual to go beyond the line of moderation and propriety, with the delusive idea that the greater figure a man makes in the external circumstances of a fine house, a luxurious table, a splendid equipage, a tribe of servants, the more likely he is to succeed, and to be aggrandized. In the mean time he himself is sapping the foundation of his own greatness, and the visionary fabric soon falls to rise no more.

These ambitious persons, who hope to raise themselves by affecting a rank they cannot support, are well described in the celebrated fable of the frog and the ox. They and their families, after a short struggle, become ridiculous and pitiable. But the misfortune is not confined to themselves; for though their magnificent appearance gained no credit with their superiors, yet it caused them to be trusted by their inferiors, by poor tradesmen, who supplied them with many articles both necessary and superfluous, in the hope of serving themselves and feeding their families. These are usually great sufferers; for being poor and of little consequence, they stand the worst chance of having their demands satisfied. The debts of honor, and the expenses of fashion, must first be paid; but the butcher, the baker, and the brewer may come in perhaps for sixpence in the pound, when their customers are gone abroad to live genteelly at Lisle or Brussels.

To make that appearance which our rank requires, provided our purse can pay the expenses,

argues a proper ſpirit. But it is ſurely folly, as well as wrong and robbery, in purſuit of a phantom, to expend on luxury and vanity, the property of thoſe who, in the courſe of their honeſt callings, have given us confidence, and intruſted us with what was neceſſary to our ſubſiſtence, or what we conſidered as conducive to our proſperity.

Children brought up to expenſes and habits which they cannot ſupport, often rue the folly of parents, who, catching at the ſhadow of honor or wealth, let go the ſubſtance, their own happy and independent competency.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Impudence as a Recommendation of Boys, and a Proof of Parts in them.

I WAS once viſiting in a family at Chriſtmas, when the eldeſt ſon, a fine boy about twelve years old, came home from ſchool for the holidays. As he entered the parlour, which was full of company, inſtead of paying his compliments to them with the eaſe and ſufficiency of a maſter of the ceremonies, he hung down his head, bluſhed violently, and ſeemed loſt in confuſion.

Good God! exclaimed his mother, I ſhall never be able to endure this. Is this the education

of Dr. ——'s ſchool. I do inſiſt upon it, my dear, turning to her huſband, that Henry ſhall go no more to a ſchool where, after three years, he has not learned how to make his *entrée* into a room with tolerable decency! What will become of my poor child! I ſhall be aſhamed of him—a diſgrace, a downright diſgrace to the family!

The boy's confuſion, it may readily be conceived, was not diminiſhed by this paſſionate and unmotherly reception. He burſt into tears, and was immediately ordered to leave the room. After a few remarks on the aukwardneſs of ſchoolboys, the company ſat down to whiſt, and poor Henry was ſent to bed.

I had an opportinity very ſoon after of inquiring into the character of the boy, and I found, that ſo far from being ſtupid, as ſuppoſed by his mother, he was the very beſt ſcholar in his claſs, and had already written one or two pretty copies of verſes on the Spring.

As I am as fond of making experiments in morals as a natural philoſopher is in pneumatics, hydroſtatics, or chemiſtry, I determined to watch the progreſs of the boy, and to ſee whether he was likely to become, as his relations haſtily concluded, an aukward and ſtupid man. I found he continued to improve in every accompliſhment at his ſchool, for his removal from it was over-ruled by the advice of a ſenſible clergyman, who had great influence in the family. He went to the univerſity with a great character, which

he ſupported, and is now a very polite gentleman, an excellent ſcholar, and a moſt reſpectable man.

This event led me to lament the prevalence of an idea, that modeſty, diffidence, or baſhfulneſs in boys is a ſign of ſtupidity, and on all accounts ought to be removed as ſoon as poſſible.

The fineſt roſe that ever exhaled fragrance and expanded beauty was once a roſe-bud; and had the roſe-bud been torn open with violence in its ſtate of immaturity, would it have ever become a beautiful and perfect flower?

Nature, in a ſtate of imperfection, is not aſhamed of bluſhing. She is conſcious of her imbecillity, and is not afraid to own her diffidence; and while ſhe labors to ſupply her defects, conceives none to be diſgraceful that are unavoidable.

Prudence ſuggeſts the caution, that we ſhould beware of diſturbing nature in her own proceſs, which was undoubtedly preſcribed by the God of nature.

That fine ſenſibility which cauſes an efflorescence in the cheek of the ſchoolboy is, I think, a favorable preſage of every thing amiable.

That early ripeneſs which diſplays a manlineſs of behaviour at the infantine age, is like every thing premature, of ſhort continuance, and of little ſolidity.

But faſhionable parents are diſguſted with manners in their children diſſimilar to their own. They are all eaſe and familiarity. As to diffidence

and blushing, some of them had rather be convicted of an atrocious crime. But their children blush and appear aukward in a circle of polite company, that is, of company formed upon the model which happens to be the reigning taste among the rich and idle. Take the boy from his books and from his masters, if he is thus aukward; for there is no tolerating such an unlicked cub in one's presence.

Have patience, Madam, I would take the liberty of saying, the bud will expand in due time, and fruit will appear; but if you touch the bloom, in order to force it open before its time, it is very likely that you destroy the possibility of fruit.

Diffidence wears off when the mind becomes conscious of a sufficient degree of strength to support confidence. With respect to confidence without merit to support it, though often valued in the world, and particularly in the law, I hold it in great dishonor. It may push its way to employment and opulence, but it is scarcely consistent with a good mind, and without a good mind what happiness is to be found in employment and opulence.

Sincerum est nisi vas quodcunque infundis acescit.
HOR.

People who value themselves on knowing the world are very apt to insist on effrontery as a necessary virtue to go through the world with success, or rather to recommend it as the substitute

and ſuccedaneum of every virtue. But I never hear theſe perſons boaſting of their knowledge of the world, and the value of worldly wiſdom, but I think of ſome paſſages in Scripture in which it is not held in ſo high eſtimation — *The children of this world are wiſer in their generation than the children of light;* but it ſhould be remembered, that the wiſdom is not that which is from above, but that of the ſerpent, that of the accurſed ſpirits, originating and terminating in evil under the fair ſemblance of good.

CHAP. IX.

On Genius for Converſation being diſtinct from a Genius for Compoſition.

I HAVE known men remarkably lively and well informed in converſation appear to great diſadvantage on committing their thoughts to paper, and others who wrote learnedly, elegantly, politely, and acutely, ſo dull, and apparently ſo weak in converſation, as to be conſidered as very unpleaſant and uninſtructive companions. And I have obſerved this ſo often, as to be led to think, what may appear paradoxical, that a genius for writing and a genius for talking are different in their nature.

It appears to me that ſuperficial men talk moſt fluently, and, in mixed companies, moſt agreeably. They are uſually gay and cheerful, for

their ſpirits are not exhauſted by deep thought, nor drawn from the things before them by abſence. But gaiety and cheerfulneſs will give them, in the convivial hour, a charm which the profound ſcholar, who utters his thoughts with gravity and heſitation, can never diſplay.

A man of a ſuperficial mind and little genius has no diffidence ariſing from thoſe delicacies and ſenſibilites which often cruelly diſtreſs the really ingenious. What he thinks, or has read, or heard, he utters with the confidence of an oracle; ignorant of objections, and fearleſs of miſtake. His confidence gives him credit. The company is always diſpoſed to liſten with attention when any man ſpeaks with the aſſurance of undoubting conviction. Attention gives him additional ſpirits, and he begins to enjoy the greateſt ſhare of converſation as his right, and at length overpowers with volubility and emphaſis the ſilent or gentle diffidence of modeſt merit.

Ignorant and ſuperficial admirers, finding a voluble ſpeaker juſt calculated for the meridian of their underſtandings, are highly delighted with him as a companion, and cry him up as prodigy of parts and abilities.

Their voices uniting in his favor procure him, perhaps, ſome profeſſional or official employment in which compoſition may be neceſſary. He writes; and the wonder is no more. How are the mighty fallen! *Quantum mutatus!*

Applauded in the circles of a tavern club, he ventures to publiſh. A fatal venture! for he who

appeared, in converſation, a giant, becomes, when approached in the cloſet, a pigmy or Lilliputian.

I wiſh to prevent miſtakes, by preventing the haſty formation of an idea of a man's intellectual talents or genius ſolely from his pleaſantneſs or vivacity as a companion. Conſtant experience proves it to be a fallacious criterion. Men of great thought, ſolid judgment, and well-digeſted learning, are able indeed to ſpeak to great advantage on great occaſions; but they are not ſufficiently intereſted in trifling or ordinary company; and without pride, or any intention to ſlight, naturally retreat from nonſenſe and levity to the pleaſant indulgence of their own contemplation; therefore they ſay but little, and that little often from civility rather than becauſe they are ſtruck with what paſſes, or impelled to ſpeak by the intereſting nature of the queſtion, or the manner in which it is diſcuſſed. In the mean time a feather will tickle and excite a fool.

It is wrong therefore, I conclude, to form a deciſive opinion of a man's profeſſional abilities from what appears in common converſation. The only true criterion is the exerciſe of thoſe abilities in ſome act of the profeſſion. Judge of the companion in company; but of the lawyer's abilities at the bar, or from his written opinion; of the clergyman's from the pulpit, or the preſs; of the phyſician's from the repeated ſucceſs of actual practice; judge of the merchant from his punctuality and payments, from his behaviour

and appearance at the Royal Exchange, and not from his volubility at the King's Arms or the London, nor even on the huſtings and in the council-chamber of Guildhall.

It is an erroneous judgment which is often formed of children as well as men, when thoſe are ſuppoſed to have the beſt parts who talk moſt. Exceſſive garrulity is certainly incompatible with ſolid thinking, and is the mark of that volatile and ſuperficial turn, which, dwelling upon the ſurfaces of things, never penetrates deeply enough to make any valuable diſcoveries. But as no rule is without exceptions, ſome great thinkers, it muſt be confeſſed, have been alſo great talkers.

No one man can unite in himſelf every excellence. He who excels as a pleaſant and lively companion may be deficient in judgment, in accuracy, in a power of attention and labor; and he who excels in theſe may want the verſatility, the gaiety, the cheerfulneſs, which are neceſſary to render the communication of ideas in a mixed ſociety agreeable. Men aſſociate in the convivial hour of leiſure from their profeſſional or commercial employment, more for the ſake of paſſing their time with eaſe, and even mirth, than of being improved or leſſoned by the ſage remarks of grave philoſophy.

Addiſon, who could write ſo agreeably on all ſubjects, was not an entertaining companion unleſs the circle was ſelect. Samuel Johnſon loved company becauſe he found himſelf attended to in it as an oracle of taſte and wiſdom, but he could

not be said to possess companionable *agrément*. His character ensured him respect previously to his speaking, and what he said justified it; for it was original and solid; his authoritative tone and manner compelled acquiescence, even if conviction was not produced; but, after all, he was not what the world calls a pleasant companion. I could mention some of his contemporaries of far inferior merit, and more circumscribed reputation, who diffused joy and information wherever they went, and were beloved at the same time that they were admired. They also have written books; but their books are not to be compared to Johnson's. Their books were forgotten or despised, even while their conversation was sought and enjoyed by all ranks of people.

But as universal excellence is desirable, it seems right that men should labor to supply every defect, and therefore I wish that writers would cultivate the art and habit of conversation, and conversers on the other hand endeavour to obtain the solidity and accuracy of writers; and thus the advantage derived to hearers and readers will be augmented.

CHAP. X.

The Hill of Life. A Vision.

A GENTLE ascent led to a lofty eminence, and on the summit was a level plain, of no great extent. The boundaries of it could not indeed easily be ascertained; for as the ascent on one side was easy and gradual, so the slope on the other continued almost imperceptible, till it terminated at once in abrupt declivity.

At the first entrance of the hill, I observed great numbers of infants crawling on beds of primroses, or sleeping on pillows formed by the moss. They frequently smiled, and their sweet countenances seemed to express a complacency and joy in the consciousness of their new existence. Many indeed wept and wailed, but their sorrow, though pungent, was short, and the sight of a pretty leaf or flower would cause a smile in the midst of their tears; so that nothing was more common than to see two drops trickling down cheeks which were dimpled with smiles. I was so delighted with the scenes of innocence, that I felt an impulse to go and play with the little tribe, when just as I was advancing, I felt a wand strike my shoulder, and turning my eyes on one side, I beheld a venerable figure, with a white beard, and in a grey mantle elegantly thrown round him,

" My ſon, ſaid he, I ſee your curioſity is raiſed, and I will gratify it; but you muſt not move from this place, which is the moſt advantageous ſpot for the contemplation of the ſcene before you.

" Yon hill is the Hill of Life, a pageant which I have raiſed by the magic influence of this wand, to amuſe you with an inſtructive picture.

" The beauteous innocents whom you ſee at the foot of the hill preſent you with the idea of angels and cherubs, and of ſuch indeed is the kingdom of Heaven. Simplicity and innocence are their amiable qualities, and the more of them they retain in their aſcent, the happier and lovelier ſhall they be during the whole of their journey.

" But raiſe your eyes a little ſpace. You ſee a lively train intent to learn, under the ſage inſtructors who accompany them, the eaſieſt and ſafeſt way of aſcending and deſcending the hill which lies before them. They often run from the ſide of their guides, and loſe themſelves among the ſhrubs that bloſſom around them. Some give no ear to inſtruction, and conſequently are continually deviating among thorns, thiſtles, nettles, and brambles. Their errors are at preſent retrievable, and few fall in the pitfals with which the hill abounds. Joy illuminates their countenances. Theirs are the ruddy cheek, the ſparkling eye, lively ſpirits, and unwearied activity. They retain a great ſhare of the innocence with which they ſet out, and therefore they are cheerful. Enviable age, if reaſon were mature! But folly, wantonneſs, frowardneſs of temper, and ignorance, greatly

interrupt and ſpoil their enjoyments. Fruits of delicious taſte grow around them, and flowrets of the ſweeteſt ſcent and moſt beautiful color ſpring beneath their feet. But they ſoon grow tired of this lower part of the hill, and ambitiouſly aſpire at higher eminences.

"Behold them a few paces higher. They advance with eagerneſs, and many of them forſake the guides which have conducted them thus far in their aſcent. They haſten in their courſe, nor do they adhere to the direct road, but deviate without ſcruple. Some indeed return, but the greater part climb the hill by paths of their own choice, full of difficulty and danger. The pitfals which are placed in every part of the hill are in this part very numerous, and not eaſily to be avoided by thoſe who forſake the high road. There are indeed no parts of the hill in which a guide is more neceſſary than here; nor any in which the travellers are leſs inclined to ſeek his aſſiſtance.

"You ſee the beauty of the bloſſoms. You hear the muſic of the birds. All nature ſeems to conſpire in affording delight; but too many of the travellers preſerve not that innocence and ſimplicity which are neceſſary to give a taſte for the pleaſures which are allowed. Inſtead of plucking the flowers which are known to be ſafe and ſalutary, they deſire none but ſuch as are poiſonous. The aſpiring nature of the travellers leads them to continue the aſcent, and by this time you ſee they have reached the level ſummit, where you obſerve a prodigious crowd, all buſy in purſuit of

their ſeveral objects. Their faces are clouded with care, and in the ardor of purſuit they neglect thoſe pleaſures which lie before them. Moſt of them have now loſt a great ſhare of their original innocence and ſimplicity, and many of them have loſt it entirely.

"And now they begin to deſcend. Their cheerfulneſs and alacrity are greatly abated. Many limp, and ſome already crawl. The numbers diminiſh almoſt every ſtep; for the pitfals are multiplied on this ſide of the hill, and many of the travellers have neither ſtrength nor ſagacity to avoid them. Many delightful ſcenes remain. Fruit in great abundance grows around them. But the greater part, you may remark, are careleſs of the obvious and natural pleaſures which they might reach and enjoy, and are eagerly digging in the earth for yellow duſt, on which they have placed an imaginary value. Behold one who has juſt procured a load of it, under which he is ready to ſink. He totters along in haſte to find a hiding-place for it; but before he has found it, himſelf is hidden from our eyes, for lo! while I ſpeak, he is dropping into a pitfal. Moſt of his companions will follow him; but you ſee no one is alarmed by the example. The deſcent is become very ſteep and abrupt, and few there are who will reach the bottom of the hill. Of thoſe few not one advances without ſtumbling on the edge of the pitfals, from which he can ſcarcely recover his feeble foot. Ah! while I ſpeak, they are all gone."

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And is this a picture of life? said I; alas! how little do they seem to enjoy it? Surely, some error must infatuate them all. O say, that I may avoid it, and be happy.

"My son, said my benevolent guide, do not hastily form an opinion derogatory from the value of life. It is a glorious opportunity afforded by the Creator for the acquisition of happiness. Cast your eyes on yonder plain, which lies at the bottom of the hill, and behold the horizon."

I looked, and behold a cloud tinged with purple and gold, parted in the centre, and displayed a scene at which my eyes were dazzled. I closed them awhile, to recover the power of vision, and when I opened them, I saw a figure in which majesty and benevolence were awfully united. He sat on a throne with every appearance of triumph, and at his feet lay a cross. And I heard a voice saying, "Come again, ye children of men." And lo, the plain opened in more places than I could number, and myriads of myriads started into existence, with bodies beautiful and glorious. And the voice proceeded, "In my Father's house are many mansions. Ye have all fallen short of the perfection for which ye were created; but some have been less unprofitable servants than others, and to them are allotted the more exalted places of bliss; but there remain mansions appropriated to all the sons of men. I have redeemed the very worst of them from the tyranny of death.

Riſe therefore to your reſpective manſions. Enter into the joy of the Lord." He ſaid, when the ſound of inſtruments ſweeter than the unpurged ear ever heard, rang throughout heaven's concave. And the glorified bodies beneath roſe like the ſun in the eaſt, and took their places in the ſeveral planets which form what is called our ſolar ſyſtem. I was tranſported with the ſight, and was going to fall on my knees, and ſupplicate to be admitted among the aſpiring ſpirits, when, to my mortification, I thought I was ſuddenly placed on the ſide of the hill, where I had to climb a ſteep aſcent, I wept bitterly, when my guide remonſtrated with me on the unreaſonableneſs of my tears, ſince none were to be admitted to glory who had not travelled the journey which I had ſeen ſo many others travel. "Keep innocence, ſaid he, do "juſtice, walk humbly," He ſaid no more, but, preparing to depart, touched me with his rod, and I awoke.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

On the prevailing Idea that moderate Learning and Abilities are sufficient for a Clergyman.

Επιστημη Επιστημων. NAZIANZEN.
Ex quovis Ligno fit Mercurius.

IF there happen to be a boy in a family unlikely, from deficiency of parts, to make his way in the world, he is commonly selected by his prudent parents for the church; but the idea that little more is requisite to form a clergyman than a black coat and a good living; is so dishonorable to the religious establishment that I shall think myself very properly employed in controverting its truth.

I acknowledge that honesty without learning and abilities is a better qualification for the sacred profession than learning and abilities without honesty; but I contend that they are all three indispensibly necessary in every one who enters the profession, with ideas superior to those of an ensign when he obtains a pair of colors, or a midshipman when he procures a commission; or indeed of a tradesman when he hires a shop, or of a mechanic and laborer when they undertake a job with no other view than to earn the hire.

If, indeed, a man is aukward and unskilful in the practice of a mechanical art, few or none employ him, and himself alone is the only sufferer; but it happens in the church, that he who has neither learning nor abilities often has the most money, with which himself or his friends purchase him an ecclesiastical employment; and they who are immediately concerned in the manner in which he acquits himself in it have it not in their power to eject him for disability, or to find convenient opportunities of supplying his defects by having recourse to a substitute. They must be contented to be instructed by his precept and example; for, however deficient and erroneous, these are the best they can procure in the legal and regular course.

But if the care of a parish, and that a very large one, be a most important charge, if the moral and spiritual safety of thousands may depend on the parson's exertions, surely it is criminal in parents to select the least able and promising among their children to fill this office.

But I know it will be urged, and with great appearance of reason, that in this age, when printed sermons abound, it is easy to select proper ones without danger of detection, and that if the clergyman reads them and the prayers audibly and distinctly in the church, and maintains a decent character out of it, he is a no less useful and accomplished parish priest than if he had the learning and abilities of a Clarke, a Tillotson, a Sherlock, a Secker, or a Jortin.

It is very true, that by reading the pious discourses of others properly, he may do much good; but is it likely that he will read them properly if he is unable to write any himself, that he will enter into the spirit of them, that he will feel and communicate the holy flame of fervent yet rational devotion? And with respect to his maintaining a decent character out of church; if he does so, he is so far to be honored, but if he is destitute of clerical accomplishments, of a taste for books, and a love of learning, there is danger that from want of proper and professional employment, he will not maintain that decency of character. Having nothing to do but merely to read in the church, he will be idle, and idleness affords many temptations to violate decency of character. Is it not likely that he may commence a beau, a man of fashion, a man of pleasure, a gamester, a drunkard, or a horse-dealer? When there is no natural turn for the profession in which a man is placed, and no acquired talents to render him pleased with himself in the exercise of it, there is great danger of his having recourse to something either as an employment or a recreation very foreign to the decency of character which his profession requires him to support.

But, after all, is mere decency of character sufficient in the teacher of a whole parish, in the comforter of the sick, in the guide to heaven? Decency of character is supported by all his more respectable parishioners, by tradesmen, by

mechanics, by ſervants. Something more is reaſonably expected of him who ſupports the *perſona eccleſiæ*, who was anciently called, as an appellation of reſpect, the PARSON, and who ſtill has the epithet *reverend* * prefixed to his name, as appropriated to his profeſſional character.

He ſhould ſupport a dignity of character as well as a decency. But no artifice, no external pomp will ſupport it. It muſt ſupport itſelf by real ſuperiority. But what ſuperiority is naturally expected as a prime requiſite in a public inſtructor? Is it not ſuperior knowledge of thoſe things in which he undertakes to give inſtruction? But can this ſuperior knowledge be acquired without application? And is it likely that he who was ſelected by his parent for the church becauſe he was A DUNCE ſhould apply at all, or if he ſhould, that he ſhould apply with ſucceſs?

A man who finds himſelf in a profeſſion for which he is conſcious of his being unqualified, feels himſelf uneaſy. He ſeeks refuge in amuſements unbecoming his profeſſion; and I have no doubt but the reaſon why ſo many clergymen are ſeen taking delight in unclerical occupations is, that they are ſelected for a learned profeſſion without any propenſity to learning, and perhaps becauſe they were ſuppoſed to be dull of apprehenſion.

* Cui mens divinior atque os
Magna ſonaturum des nominis hujus honorem.
HOR.

Nothing is more common in the country than to ſee clergymen devoting the greateſt part of their time to hounds and horſes, dreſſing in the extremity of the jockey's or ſportſman's prevailing faſhion, taking the lead or acting as maſters of the ceremonies at aſſemblies, conſpicuouſly active at horſe-races, exceſſively attached to cards and backgammon, and foremoſt in every thing which the more ſerious part of their congregation conſider as vanity.

They may certainly amuſe themſelves with ſeveral of theſe things, and at the ſame time be very worthy men; but yet as theſe things have an appearance of levity, and lead them to aſſociate with looſe and profligate characters, they give offence, and prevent them from doing that good for which alone their profeſſion was inſtituted. No good can be done by a preacher totally deſtitute of authority; but authority is founded on opinion, and nothing, except vice, deſtroys that opinion in religious affairs ſo effectually as the appearance of levity.

I cannot eaſily reſiſt the impulſe which prompts me to inſert a paſſage deſcriptive of a modern curate in the performance of one of the moſt ſolemn parts of his duty, from a well-known poem, entitled The Village. Speaking of a ſick and dying pauper, the poet adds,

> But, ere his death, ſome pious doubts ariſe,
> Some ſimple fears, which bold, bad men deſpiſe.
> Fain would he aſk the pariſh-prieſt to prove

His title certain to the joys above;
For this he ſends the murm'ring nurſe, who calls
The holy ſtranger to theſe diſmal walls;
And doth not he, the pious man appear,
He, " paſſing rich with forty pounds a year?"
Ah no! a ſhepherd of a different ſtock,
And far unlike him feeds this little flock.
A jovial youth, who thinks the Sunday's taſk
As much as God or man can fairly aſk;
The reſt he gives to loves and labors light,
To hields the morning, and to feaſts the night;
None better ſkill'd the noiſy pack to guide,
To urge the chaſe, to cheer them or to chide.
Sure in his ſhot his game he ſeldom miſt,
And ſeldom fail'd to win his game at whiſt.
Then, while ſuch honors bloom around his head,
Shall he ſit ſadly by the ſick man's bed,
To raiſe the hope he feels not, or with zeal
To combat fears that even the pious feel?

Though moderate abilities and moderate attainments, with a good heart, and a decent character, may make a very valuable pariſh-prieſt, yet I can never allow that the ſtudy of divinity, as ſome ſeem to inſinuate, requires only moderate abilities and attainments. It certainly affords ſcope for the greateſt talents, and when intended to be carried to any conſiderable degree of perfection, it requires profound and extenſive erudition.

To be a Chriſtian philoſopher, a phyſician of the ſoul, it is neceſſary to have ſtudied the Holy Scriptures, in the firſt place, with great attention, and in the ſecond, that wonderful microcoſm,

the heart of man. As anatomy is neceſſary to the ſurgeon, ſo is the knowledge of the paſſions, the temper, the propenſities, and the alterations which age, proſperity and adverſity, effect in the mind, neceſſary to him whoſe office it is to reduce thoſe who have erred, to afford rational comfort to the afflicted, and hope to the deſperate. To enforce the doctrines of religion he muſt be an orator, he muſt be furniſhed with polite learning, with elegant diction. He muſt have every aſſiſtance which a liberal education can beſtow, and which long and attentive reading can obtain. And ſhall a parent think himſelf juſtified in ſelecting the weakeſt of his children for an office ſo important? He who acts ſo unreaſonably, probably renders the child unhappy, while he inſults the national religion, and that God whom it was eſtabliſhed to honor.

If the parent thinks he perceives in any of his boys a remarkable ſhare of abilities, he reſolves to bring him up to the law, and all his worldly-wiſe friends commend him for not throwing away ſo fine a boy by placing him in the church. I am fully convinced, that no department of the law requires the noble faculties of the mind in ſo great perfection as the paſtoral office. The law chiefly requires AUDACITY AND SOPHISTRY, to both of which the church is greatly ſuperior. The law requires the little wiſdom of this world, the wiſdom of thoſe children of the world who are wiſer in their generation than the children of light; but divinity towers above ſuch meanneſs,

above lawyers and their ſubtleties, above every other profeſſion; for to be a divine, properly and fully accompliſhed is to be all that philoſophy can give, with the addition of the pureſt and ſublimeſt religion.

It would afford me much ſatisfaction if any thing I can ſay ſhould induce the ſerious Chriſtian to devote the very beſt of his children to the ſervice of the God who gave them, and not impiouſly to conſecrate to the ſervice of the altar him whom, from want of parts, he thinks incapable of any uſeful ſervice. I ſuſpect that man to be inſincere in his profeſſion of Chriſtianity who dares to inſult it ſo groſsly.

It is to be wiſhed that the patronage of livings were chiefly, if not entirely, in the biſhops; for private patronage, in the preſent age and ſyſtem of principles and manners, is highly injurious to the cauſe of Chriſtianity. The biſhops might ſometimes be miſled in conferring benefices, by gratitude to their patrons; but I am ſure they would for the moſt part diſpoſe of the cure of ſouls, far better than eſquires, who conſider the living in their gift as a mere proviſion for ſome lubberly boy who is educated as a fox-hunter; or who, in default of a younger ſon, put it up to ſale, and knock it down with the hammer, like lands, tenements, goods, and chattels.

Nothing ſurely conduces to injure Chriſtianity ſo much as a contemptible miniſtry; and it muſt of neceſſity be contemptible, when half

the parishes in a kingdom can exhibit individuals among the laity more learned and more decent than the parochial priest, their authorized guide, whom they pay, and whom they ought to revere.

CHAP XII.

On Etymology.

WHEN one considers the great sagacity of Plato, Varro, and Cicero, one cannot but wonder at their absurdities in the province of Etymology. The ancients, in general, must indeed be esteemed children, compared to the moderns, in the science of verbal derivation. Few of them appear to have been ambitious of that character of linguists which has been one of the first objects among modern scholars; and when they attempt to give the history or etymology of words, they often renounce that judgment which has rendered their other efforts of ingenuity invaluable. The Stoics were remarkably absurd in their etymologies.

I verily believe that their forced and unnatural derivations brought the whole science into disrepute. Such etymology as the great Cicero's, if I may be pardoned when I say it, is for the most part truly contemptible; but etymology in the hands of our own countryman Skinner becomes at once an useful and certain science.

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With reſpect to its utility, I am ſure that no man can underſtand technical terms, or even the common language of books and elegant converſation, without tracing the meaning of words to the well from which they have flowed through various ſoils and endleſs meanders; often diſcolored in their channel, and obſcured in their wandering; but at the ſame time ſtill retaining ſomething of the original ſpring, which none can accurately diſtinguiſh, who has not drawn water at the fountain.

Some of the moſt celebrated etymologiſts of antiquity entertained a doubt whether *cælum* might not be derived from *cælo*, to engrave or adorn with ſculpture, becauſe the ſky in the night exhibited the appearance of a work of art, ſtudded with gems, or beautifully engraven with figures. Varro and Cicero ſeem to doubt whether this is not the true derivation, though I think common ſenſe will immediately decide, that the word is derived from *koilon*, a concavity.

Let a modern ſcholar, or man of common ſenſe, judge of Cicero's etymologies in the following inſtances. Saturnus is ſo called *quia ſe ſaturat annis*; — Mavors, *quia magna vortit*; — Minerva, *quia minuit, aut quia minatur*; — Venus, *quia venit ad omnia*; — Ceres, *a gerendo fruges*; — Neptunus, *a nando*; — though with this laſt Cicero ſeems diſſatisfied, as he introduces Cotta ridiculing Lucilius, for admitting it in argument. *Quoniam*, ſays he, *Neptunum a nando appellatum putas, nullum erit nomen, quod non poſſis una litera*

explicare, unde ductum sit, in quo quidem magis tu mihi natare visus es, quam ipse Neptunus.

Most of the celebrated etymologists have indulged themselves in far-fetched and fanciful derivation; and this has given some occasion to the facetious to deride the whole science. The famous etymology of the word *hot* has contributed much to dishonor it; from *calidus*, said the scorner, comes *halitus*, from *halitus*, *hatus*, from *hatus*, *hotus*, and from *hotus*, hot. A joke of this kind will frequently injure an estimable thing much more than an argument. Perhaps nothing has deterred students from learning Hebrew so much as the famous lines in Hudibras:

> For Hebrew roots are mostly found
> To flourish best in barren ground.

There is a conjectural and there is a certain etymology; the former may furnish innocent and ingenious amusement; but the latter is really necessary to accomplish not only scholars, but artists and practitioners in chemistry, physic, surgery, architecture, almost all the terms of which are Greek words, very little changed in sound, though anglicized, in orthography.

And indeed, in the present state of our language, enriched as it is by words from the Greek and Latin, it is not easy, if one is utterly unacquainted with etymology, to hold a conversation with well educated persons, without danger of exposing ignorance, and committing absurdities. Much reading of good authors, and much converse

with ſenſible company, will enable a man to gueſs at the meaning of exotic words, with wonderful ſucceſs; but he will yet be inſecure; he will walk on dangerous ground, if he knows not the real original meaning of the expreſſions which he ventures to utter. He muſt loſe much of that pleaſure which ariſes from the confidence of conſcious rectitude, and he muſt often excite the deriſion or the ſilent contempt of his more enlightened aſſociates. If he enters on the ſubject of ſcience, (and who would wiſh to exclude it from converſation?) he will often totter and ſtumble. He will not only err in the meaning, but in the pronunciation, in the length or ſhortneſs of ſyllables, which in many caſes can be determined only by the root. No accuracy of language can be expected, where etymology is unknown.

But beſides its uſe, I think etymology, as a matter of amuſement, well worthy of cultivation. If the collector of ſhells, foſſils and medals, and the admirer of tulips and birds, is thought to ſpend his time in rational amuſement, why ſhould the curious inveſtigator of words, merely as matters of curioſity, be thought to miſpend his time in a trifling and uſeleſs occupation? I am of opinion, that though the gratification of his curioſity ſhould be his only object, he will often make diſcoveries, greatly conducive to the advancement of knowledge, and accuracy of language.

I was lately much entertained with looking into a very ingenious little book, written by Meric Caſaubon, *de quatuor linguis*. He employs

a great part of it in tracing to the Greek fountain the derivation of old Engliſh words, which come to us through the Saxon channel. Though ſome of his etymologies prove that the warmth of purſuit led him, like many diſcoverers, to ſee the object of it in imagination, when it exiſted not in reality; yet he has collected a great number of words, where the reſemblance of the Engliſh and Greek is ſo ſtriking and complete, as to carry with it the fulleſt conviction of an original conſanguinity.

He quotes a liſt of Greek and Engliſh words from a book ſuppoſed to be written by Camden, and entitled *Paralipomena Anglica*, in which there is a very remarkable ſimilarity. I tranſcribe ſome of them in Engliſh characters for the entertainment of the Engliſh reader: *Axine*, an ax; *aſter*, a ſtar; *achos*, ach; *graſtis*, graſs; *elaſſon*, leſs; *era*, earth; *thera*, deer; *thraſus*, raſh; *thura*, a door; *kaleo*, to call; *karabos*, a crab; *klimax*, a climbing; *kreko*, to creek; *kuriake*, a kirk or church; *kuſai*, to kiſs; *lapto*, to lap; *lychnos*, a link; *mene*, the moon; *mule*, a miſt; *neos*, new; *holkas*, a hulk; *holos*, whole; *orchatos*, an orchard; *outhar*, an udder; *pato*, a path; *poterion*, a pot; *polos*, a foal; *rabdos*, a rod; *rakos*, a rag; *ranis*, rain; *rapizein*, to rap; *raſtone*, reſt; *ſkaphe*, a ſhip or ſkiff; *ſkoptein*, to ſcoff; *ſtrophos*, a rope; *ſtronnumi*, to ſtrow; *titthos*, a teat; *phaulos*, foul; *charme*, a ſkirmiſh.

Meric Caſaubon adds a great number of inſtances of his own diſcovery, which ſeem to prove, that many of the Saxon words of our language

were derived from the Greek, being firſt curtailed, and duly gothicized, to aſſimilate with northern words; but ſtill retaining enough of the parent's ſhape and features to evince that they are lineally deſcended from Greek families.

I was a good deal diverted with one of his etymologies, and I ſhall introduce it for the entertainment of my readers, without pretending to determine on its propriety:

"*Oikogenes*, domi natus & educatus. Παννυ "σφόδρα οἰκογενὴς apud Platonem, genuinus Athe- "nienſis, Anglis A COCKNEY; qui in urbe natus, "raro aut nunquam foras extra natalitia Pomœria "pedem extulit, rerum omnium, preterquam "urbanarum, plane expers & ex mera inſolentia "ſtultus & incredulus admirator."

Fanciful etymology, though very amuſing, is held as a ſcience in no higher eſteem than judicial aſtrology and the interpretation of dreams, which is conducted according to every one's whim or conjecture, without any ſettled rule to determine deciſively.

But there is an etymology which is certain, at leaſt as certain as human knowledge and human affairs are uſually found to be; and to this all languages muſt be greatly indebted for their accuracy. And indeed I am much inclined to believe the general affinity of languages, and to give more credit to conjectural etymology than the ſceptical and ſcornful have uſually allowed it. All men were certainly united in one language for a conſiderable time after their creation; and after

the building of Babel there was confeſſedly a confuſion or intermixture of the various tongues on the face of the earth; which circumſtance conſtitutes the foundation of conjectural etymology. That confuſion ſtill remains; and it is a very honorable and rational exerciſe of human ingenuity to diſcover the various veins and ſtrata as they lie irregularly diffuſed throughout the mighty maſs of univerſal language. Ridicule has been very improperly thrown both on the ſtudy of antiquities and etymologies. Even the truth of revealed Scripture has received additional confirmation from ſuch etymologiſts as a Bryant, whoſe learned volumes always appeared to me to ſuggeſt ſome ſtriking proofs of revelation derived ſolely from etymology.

CHAP. XIII.

Of a Mode of Puniſhment among the Romans.

SIR,

IT was a part of the ancient military diſcipline among the Romans, to order a delinquent to undergo phlebotomy; and this was originally intended, as Aulus Gellius ſeems to think, rather as a remedy than a puniſhment, *quaſi minus ſani viderentur omnes qui delinquerent*, with an idea, that all who miſbehaved were therefore to be conſidered and treated as invalids or unſound.

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I was ſeriouſly conſidering this method adopted by the wiſe Romans, and I could not help thinking that the remedy might be extended to delinquents in modern times in other profeſſions and employments of life as well as in the military.

Suppoſe the caſe of a knowing young man, who is not eaſy till he has picked a quarrel, or diſtinguiſhed himſelf by a nocturnal riot in a college, or in Covent Garden, in the lobbies of the Theatre, or in the rural retreat of Vauxhall, or in a duel in Hyde Park. As his irregularity is uſually attributed to the warmth of his blood, I ſhould think the lancet might be uſed with the greateſt probability of ſucceſs. A few ounces quietly let out in the ſurgery, might prevent the effuſion of great quantities by throwing bottles, by the ſtroke of the watchman's ſtaff, or the ſword of ſome antagoniſt equally hot-headed.

It is uſual to call perſons who are too eager in their purſuits *ſanguine;* for ſuch ſurely no cure can be ſo certain and well adapted as phlebotomy.

There is a paſſion which aſſumes the name of love, but inſtead of promoting the happineſs of its object, regards neither its peace or good fame, while it licentiouſly ſeeks its own gratification. It has nothing in it of the tenderneſs, the delicacy, the purity of love, but is very violent, and ſeems, by the ſymptoms, to partake of the nature of a fever. I believe in this caſe copious bleeding, with a cooling regimen, would not fail of effecting at leaſt a temporary cure.

There

There are numerous tribes of ſchemers, projectors, garreteer politicians, who peſter themſelves and the public with their crudities, but who might be brought to their ſober ſenſes, if the blood which flows in too great quantities to the brain were drawn off by a well-timed and powerful revulſion.

You authors, Sir, excuſe my freedom, often ſtand in great need of phlebotomy. You have a thouſand flights, fancies, and vagaries, which can be attributed to nothing but the irregular tide of your blood. You ſwell with pride and vanity, and think to reform the world from your garrets; but the world goes on as it pleaſes, and you have nothing but your labor for your pains. I think I could lower your pride and vanity by my lancet, and teach you an humility that perhaps you will never learn in the books of philoſophy, and which would ſave you a great deal of needleſs trouble.

In a word, all poets, religious enthuſiaſts, balloniſts, lottery adventurers, ambitious ſtateſmen, and choleric orators in the Britiſh or Iriſh parliament, may, I am convinced, receive great benefit from the phlebotomizing ſyſtem of morality. And I intend ſoon to offer myſelf to the univerſities as a profeſſor of moral phlebotomy. How convenient and expeditious a proceſs will it be! No occaſion for preaching, reading, and contemplating; for whatever diſorder you labor under, only repair to the artiſt who ſhaves for one penny, and bleeds for two, and you may be

reſtored to health. Adieu. I ſtop ſhort, leſt you ſhould think I want bleeding myſelf.

Your's, &c.

AN ETHICO CHIRURGICAL OPERATOR.

Though my correſpondent has treated the ſubject ludicrouſly, yet I have little doubt but he meant to convey inſtruction, and I ſhall take occaſion from his letter to recommend bodily temperance as conducive to the government of the paſſions and imagination.

The irregularities of youth are oftener cauſed by exceſs than by that natural ebullition of blood which is often alledged in their excuſe. But allowing as much as can be required to the impulſe of the blood and ſpirits, yet it will be ſtill true, that extravagances of behaviour will probably be much aggravated by intemperance in wine; for indeed, to add the heat of wine to the heat of youth, what is it but to add oil to the fire? Yet at no age do men indulge in wine ſo freely as when, according to their own confeſſion, their blood is already too much inflamed by its natural fermentation. If, inſtead of adding to the flame, young men would manage it with diſcretion, and even damp it ſometimes, it would probably continue to burn with a temperate, yet ſufficient warmth, to extreme old age. But the ardor of youth, raiſed to a fever by wine, not only urges to acts of folly and madneſs, but burns the vital ſtamina which were intended by nature for long duration. I by no means go ſo far as to recommend

either phlebotomy or cathartics to a young man who is under the influence of a violent paſſion; but I may venture to ſuggeſt, that he would find the conqueſt over himſelf greatly facilitated by abſtinence from wine, and by moderation in diet. His reaſon might have an opportunity of aſſerting that aſcendency which ſhe ought to claim, and will probably poſſeſs, when the delirium of intemperance is once abated.

The errors of the imagination are very much increaſed by intemperance. During the fever which it occaſions, man is apt to dream and miſtake his viſions for realities. How many lives have been ſacrificed to ſuppoſed affronts and injuries, to affronts never intended and injuries never committed. But they appeared in the hour of convivial exceſs, not only as real, but of the greateſt magnitude, and in the moſt ugly colors. If the offended parties would allow themſelves time to cool, and ſpend the next day in abſtinence, or at leaſt in ſtrict temperance, I think the phantom of imagination which appeared like a giant would dwindle to a dwarf, or diſſolve into nothing, like a cloud in the azure expanſe of heaven, which melts into air, and leaves an undiſturbed ſerenity. Temperance would effect what argument would attempt in vain; and ſuch influence has the body over the mind, that there is often no method of reducing the peccant humors of the mind ſo effectual as that of duly arranging the frail manſion in which it is deſtined to dwell. It is a moſt unhappy degradation,

when the mind is governed by the body, over which it might, by the exertion of its native powers, exercise, for the most part, an absolute dominion.

To cure the mind through the medium of the body is by no means a new process in mental medicine. The fasts, and the mortification of self-denial, which are recommended in the church were certainly intended to promote sanctity of life, by purifying the body, which in revelation is honored so far as to be called the Temple of the Holy Spirit. After all our efforts, the humiliating experience of frequent failure must convince every serious man, that he must submit himself to the supreme physician, the physician of souls, who, if he will, can make us clean; and that he will do so, if we ask as we ought, with sincere faith and piety, there is every reason to hope and believe, from the consideration of that attribute in which he is known chiefly to delight.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Methodism—Causes of its Prevalence.

SIR,

I HAVE the misfortune, if I may call it such, to have obtained in my neighbourhood the appellation of a Methodist. Whether I deserve it or not, or if I do, whether there is any disgrace in it, I must leave you to judge, after having heard how the stigma came to be fixed upon me.

I live in the country, in a large parish, and my house is three miles distant from the church. The road is always bad, and in winter almost impassable; the living a very poor one, and the church consequently supplied only once a fortnight. The person who supplies it is a gentleman, who wears a striped grey coat, white waistcoat, leather breeches, belt, and jockey cap, and they say he is really a clergyman, though from his appearance I should have supposed him the squire's groom in his Sunday clothes. He reads with the utmost rapidity; and indeed I do not wonder at it; for he rides thirty miles on the day, and does duty, as he terms it, in five different churches. His sermons are but ten minutes long. He allows no psalm singing, to save time, and his hunter is brought to the church porch the moment he descends from the pulpit, and so he vanishes till that day fortnight.

It may be reaſonably ſuppoſed that his preſence is not much revered, and that his miniſtry is not ſuch as is likely to make proſelytes. The truth is, ſcarcely any attend the church at preſent but the pariſh poor, and two or three ſuperannuated perſons who live cloſe to the church yard. The reſt of the pariſh, which is populous, crowd to a meeting of devout people, who aſſemble twice every Sunday in a little neat building near my houſe, erected for a place of worſhip by voluntary contribution.

I firſt reſorted to this place merely to gratify my curioſity, but, like the rake of antiquity, converted by the philoſopher whom he went to deride, I received ſome impreſſions, for which I hope I ſhall be the better during the whole of my exiſtence. The preacher is a very ſober and moral man, and ſo zealous and earneſt in his prayers and exhortations, that it is impoſſible not to be affected by him. As to peculiar doctrines of divinity, I do not ſwerve from thoſe in which I was educated by my parent, a ſerious clergyman of the Church of England; I only endeavour to imbibe the ſincerity and piety of my paſtor and fellow diſciples. I do aſſure you that the decency and fervor of devotion which appears all around me are ſuch as cannot fail of communicating themſelves to all who are within the ſphere of their influence. And then the pſalm ſinging is truly delightful. Upon the whole, I never go to this place but my heart burns within me, and I return full of ſentiments of awful

reverence to God, and of good will to man. I am ſure I am no enthuſiaſt. I am ſure I have adopted no tenets inconſiſtent with reaſon and Chriſtianity. I am ſtill a member of the Church of England; but from the want of a fit opportunity of improving myſelf in Chriſtian virtues at the pariſh-church, I have had recourſe to a Methodiſt meeting, againſt which I know there are a thouſand prejudices, but from which I alſo know I have been enabled to advance in faith, hope, and charity.

I own I was prepoſſeſſed in favor of the people who compoſe this congregation from the good which I know they did among the poor, among the very loweſt and moſt abject of mankind, who ſeem to be neglected by ſome as if they were beneath all attention. They give a great deal of money in alms, they employ the women and children in knitting and ſpinning; they have eſtabliſhed two ſchools, one for girls and the other for boys, in which many uſeful things are taught, together with the principles of what they call vital religion.

I mean not to ſlight the Church of England; I only lament the unfortunate circumſtances of many pariſhes, which ſeem to render theſe irregular aſſemblies in ſome degree neceſſary for the purpoſes of Chriſtian piety. I do not like to be ſtigmatized as a ſectary; but if to do good to all who are in diſtreſs and want, if to endeavour to live up to the pattern of Chriſtian perfection, if this is to be a Methodiſt, I hope God will always

give me grace to glory in the appellation, whether my fellow creatures shall affix to it the idea of good report or of evil report. Adieu.

ANTONINUS PIUS.

SIR,

I HAVE a complaint to make of an evil, which I believe is at present extensive in its influence, and likely to increase.

I live in a country town, which is rather populous. The living is a good one, and the rector resides upon it, supporting his character with great dignity both as a man and as a clergyman. He is an excellent scholar, and devotes much of his time to study, which gives him weight and authority in the minds of his people. He is hospitable, and visits every one; but not without that delicacy and reserve which he justly deems necessary to support his importance, an importance which he wishes to possess for no other purpose but that of doing good the more effectually.

In the church he is, as he ought to be, a most venerable and authoritative teacher. His looks are those of benevolence and wisdom. His voice firm, loud, and wonderfully expressive of devotion. His sermons are practical and plain, and delivered with authority. He is justly beloved by all, except those who are hurt by that excellence which renders their want of it the more

conſpicuous, or thoſe who have been ſeduced from his church by arts which are not to be approved.

And this leads me to the ſubject of my complaint. Notwithſtanding his natural endowments, his great learning and acquirements, his exemplary piety and charity, his powers of eloquence, and his indefatigable diligence in the duties of his profeſſion, there has ariſen a ſect in his pariſh which detracts from his character, and by cenſuring his doctrine as not ſufficiently evangelical, endeavours to draw away his congregation, and is, in a few inſtances, ſucceſsful. Several rich men of no education, and who are no judges of his exalted character, have ſeceded from the church to a Methodiſt meeting, and, by their example and their intereſt, have drawn many of the poorer people after them.

The preacher at the Methodiſt meeting is an ignorant enthuſiaſt of the loweſt order. He ſcruples not to rail at the church and its miniſters with undiſguiſed virulence. He has ſown the ſeeds of diſſention in a pariſh remarkably well united by love and good neighbourhood, and he has driven ſeveral honeſt laborers to a ſtate of diſtraction bordering on inſanity. Some of the worſt characters as to honeſty, ſobriety, and diligence, are among the warmeſt of his followers; and, inſtead of being improved by his inſtruction, it is remarked, that they have been idler at leaſt ever ſince they have been under this infatuation. Their families have ſuffered want; for they have

been so much engaged in what they thought heavenly things, as to deem labor for lucre and bodily food a mean and unnecessary degradation.

The number of Methodists in our parish is at present but small. The reason is, that our present rector is singularly well qualified to keep his congregation to his church, by his talents, virtues, and respectable character; but he is declining in life and in health, and I am greatly afraid that under the conduct of a less able or less zealous successor, the venerable church of our forefathers will be deserted, and the barn of the merciless mechanic, who deals damnation every Sunday to the great delight of his poor infatuated hearers, crowded even till

——rumpant horrea messes.

In the mean time I will take the liberty of suggesting to the clergy of the established church peculiar exertion and vigilance, extraordinary zeal both in the church and out of it, wherever the Methodists are likely to gain ground. They succeed by dint of vehemence and ardor. They seldom have learning or eloquence in tolerable perfection, and therefore if the regular clergy display equal vehemence and ardor, they must triumph over them. I am a zealous friend to the church, and cannot see without pain the congregations stolen away by the ignorant and artful enthusiast. Adieu.

EUSEBIUS.

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CHAP. XV.

Of Senſibility as it appears in Piety to God and Benevolence to Man, diſtinguiſhed from that falſe Tenderneſs which is deſcribed in many Novels, and which gives riſe only to Gallantry and Affectation.

THERE ſeems to be a faſhion in virtue as well as in vice. There was a time when learning was the faſhion among the ladies at court, and the hours which are now ſpent by them under the hair-dreſſer, were devoted to the peruſal of Plato in the original language. Chaſtity was once the pride of all who aimed at the character of people of faſhion, and courage, honor, generoſity, gravity, and heroiſm, the ornaments ambitiouſly purſued by courtiers and fine gentlemen.

The quality chiefly affected of late is ſenſibility; and the affectation has been greatly increaſed, if not introduced by the taſte for novels. The ſentimental comedies, and the affecting tragedies in which love and the diſtreſſes it occaſions when diſappointed, are feelingly deſcribed, have alſo contributed greatly to diffuſe it.

When it is genuine, and not increaſed to a degree of weakneſs and effeminacy, it is certainly amiable. True tenderneſs or compaſſion is one of the moſt honorable diſtinctions of human

nature. He who cannot feel as a man when an object presents itself naturally formed to affect the human heart, displays a disposition not only odious, but such as may lead him to actual and premeditated cruelty.

But while I honor the reality, I must despise the affectation. And there is reason to suspect that much of the sensibility of which we hear and read, is affected, because it seems to operate partially and ostentatiously. It seems to display itself chiefly in gallantry, and in such acts of pity as are likely to be known, celebrated, and admired in the realms of fashion. If any lady or lady-like gentleman can find at a watering place a distress similar to any thing in some fashionable novel, it is surprising with what pathos it will be described, and with what assiduity relieved; but if a distress equally afflicting occurs in the obscure village where the mansion-house stands, no notice is taken of it, or no more than a regard to common decency requires. The reason seems to be a fear that the case is so obscure that the sensibility which alleviates it will never reach the ears of those who tread the paths of fashionable folly.

And if a gross passion operating in a corrupted heart prompts to an unlawful amour, it is often obeyed by the parties with little shame, and with a great deal of complacency and self congratulation, on their being possessed of such a sensibility, which irresistibly tempts them to say,

Curse on all laws save those which love has made.

Bad paſſions, and bad actions the conſequence of them, have always been common, and will continue to be ſo in the preſent condition of human nature; but to boaſt of them as doing honor to the heart, under the name of *lovely and delicate ſenſibility*, is peculiar to the faſhionable of the preſent age. Mr. Sterne and Mrs. Draper have too many imitators. A goat is a perſonage of as great ſenſibility and ſentiment as moſt of them.

If the pretenders to extraordinary ſenſibility really poſſeſs it in a degree which renders its fine impulſes utterly irreſiſtible, why does it not appear uniformly, and in other affairs as well as thoſe of love? The Chriſtian religion recommends charity and univerſal benevolence; but the perſons who aim at the epithet faſhionable as the moſt enviable diſtinction of humanity, are by no means equally zealous to obtain the character of good Chriſtians. Many of them, I believe affect the character of poſſeſſing too much ſenſe to be ſeduced by any thing which they call a popular mode of ſuperſtition. When they are at their ſeats in country villages, and far from the tribe whoſe admiration they ſeek, do theſe perſons of *exquiſite ſenſibility* employ their time in ſeeking objects of compaſſion in the cottages of poverty and miſery, and their money in the diffuſion of comfort? Alas! they too often take the opportunity of practiſing a moſt rigid œconomy at home, to the excluſion of all bounty, that they may have abundance at the next Bath

ſeaſon. Charitable ſubſcriptions are indeed very common at Bath, Brighthelmſtone, and Tunbridge, and many are delighted in ſetting down their names, not forgetting their titles; but is there not in the mean time many a poor family pining in want near their houſes and eſtates at home, who never receive any thing from them, becauſe there is no ſubſcription-book, no maſter of the ceremonies, and none of the fraternity of faſhion to obſerve.

Does the ſenſibility to which they pretend in love diſplay itſelf towards their huſbands, wives, children, and in *all the tender charities of private life?* I rather doubt it, becauſe I obſerve that Lady——, ſo celebrated for ſenſibility, is ſeparated from her huſband, and never ſees her children; becauſe Sir—— never gives a farthing of the fortune he acquired in the Eaſt Indies to his poor relations; becauſe my Lord——is never at home, where he has a moſt amiable wife who pines in ſolitude, and in vain laments his abſence. Is it neceſſary, to the excitement or gratification of this boaſted ſenſibility, that the object ſhould be unlawful or clandeſtine? If ſo, and experience ſeems to prove it ſo, it can have no pretenſions to praiſe; for it is inconſiſtent with honor and generoſity.

True ſenſibility, equally remote from weakneſs and affectation, will feel the ſentiments of devotion with no leſs vivacity than thoſe of love. It will, I believe, be oftener warmed with an attachment to virtue than to vice. It will be

delicate and reserved, rather than forward, noisy, and ostentatious. But has the sensibility which is assumed at public places, or by the slaves of fashion, any of these characteristics? Is it not, on the contrary, rather inclined to libertinism in religious principle, very far from scrupulous in moral conduct, bold, busy, and conceited? It has indeed every appearance of vanity; and, if there were not danger of confounding it with real sensibility, the honor of our nature, it ought to be universally exploded with ridicule.

That sensibility alone which produces piety to God and benevolence to man has the indisputable mark of a genuine excellence. Vice and vanity will produce the other sort, which has every sign of a counterfeit, and like the base coin which, in the hands of the interested, is taught to emulate gold, ought, if possible, to be cried down by public authority. It too often passes current in the world, not without great injury to society: for honor paid to false virtue robs the true of its just right, and contributes, by lessening the rewards of truth, to discourage its appearance.

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CHAP. XVI.

Of the illiterate Fine Gentleman—military Man, &c.

THERE is a paſſage in Menander, frequently noticed by the moderns, which affirms, that the gods themſelves cannot make a polite ſoldier, It has been juſtly obſerved, by thoſe who have quoted the paſſage, that the ideas of the ancients muſt have differed from thoſe of the moderns on the ſubject of politeneſs, or of the military order; for no profeſſion is ſuppoſed to be ſo polite, in modern times, as the military.

But perhaps, in the preſent queſtion, the true idea of politeneſs is not aſcertained. If it means the graces of external behaviour only, the ſoldier of modern times has often a juſt claim to it; but if it means the poliſh of a cultivated mind, he will often be found greatly deficient. For though it be true, that the various company which he may ſee in the courſe of his campaigns, or in winter-quarters, may give him a knowledge of the living world, of the prevailing manners and the faſhionable modes of addreſs, yet it cannot give him a knowledge of the hiſtory and nature of man, nor ſuch a comprehenſive, liberal, and ſolid turn of thinking as can ſupply the want of education. As he muſt live much among ſtrangers, he finds it neceſſary to make himſelf agreeable in his manners; for otherwiſe

he

he would often want those comforts of hospitality, which in his wandering condition of life are particularly desirable. But if he had laid in a store of ideas by education, and subsequent reflection, his company would be more sought, and he would find a satisfaction from a due degree of rational self-esteem, to which, with a mind totally destitute of literary elegance and philosophy, he must be a stranger.

But though in consequence of long habit, strong parts, and much observation, he may acquit himself with wonderful success in the ordinary converse of the day, and be esteemed a man of sense in the conduct of business, yet he will discover his defect, his want of education, whenever he is obliged to have recourse to his pen to communicate his knowledge. He will then no longer be able to conceal inelegance and inaccuracy by external grace, nor to compensate the defect of clearness, precision, or argument, by vehemence of action or vociferation. He will often spoil good sense by bad expression, and cause contempt by blunders occasioned through ignorance of orthography. Nor let it be urged that, in his profession, he will have no occasion to write; for every gentleman must, in the ordinary affairs of human life, write letters; and professional men are often obliged to write more formally on professional subjects.

It may not be desirable that soldiers in general should value themselves on learning, or make it their chief ambition to excel in letters. The arts of peace, and the duties of a state of war, are so different in their nature, and require dispositions so different, that it is not easy to excel in the one without a neglect of the other; though Julius Cæsar, Raleigh, and many others, afford instances to prove that an excellence in both at the same time is possible and honorable. But in general, it is to be feared that literary ambition and employments, carried to any great length, might have a tendency to enervate the soldier, to give him a distaste for the hardships which he can scarcely avoid in his profession, and to render a manly mind rather effeminate. Letters are only to be pursued collaterally with the grand professional object. They must not rival it, and much less supplant it.

A competent knowledge of letters in the soldier is all that I maintain to be necessary; such a knowledge as enables him to speak and write like a man of liberal education; such a knowledge as enables him to seek and find amusement in his leisure hours, in polite literature, and improvement in moral philosophy, in the knowledge of himself, and of the various duties arising from the different relations and connexions of social and civil life.

It is to the want of knowledge and taste that much of the improper behaviour of military

upſtarts is to be attributed. Feeling themſelves deficient, and unable to ſupport a converſation on rational ſubjects, or to acquit themſelves with credit in ſerious and important buſineſs, and at the ſame time, from the pride of their profeſſion, very unwilling to acknowledge inferiority, they find nothing remaining but arrogantly to claim, by noiſe, ſwaggering, bluſtering, and bullying, that attention, which they have no other method to ſecure. They cannot perhaps converſe rationally, or behave decently, but if you dare to ſhow them that you think ſo, by the expreſſion of a natural contempt, they can pull your noſe, break your head with a candleſtick, or run you through with the unhonored ſword which never knew an enemy but at a tavern or coffee-houſe. The leſs a man excels in intellectual, the more he is inclined to exerciſe his brute force; but can a profeſſion make peculiar pretenſions to politeneſs, with juſtice, which is ready to give up its claim to rationality, without which there can be no real poliſh, though there may be a gloſſy varniſh, which, in the eyes of the inexperienced, paſſes for the genuine luſtre?

But though the military profeſſion furniſhes many inſtances of illiterate fine gentlemen, of thoſe who call upon mankind to admire and applaud them for accompliſhments and graces merely perſonal, yet it by no means monopolizes the ſpecies. And indeed, in juſtice to the profeſſion, I muſt acknowledge, that the reaſon why ſo many

illiterate persons are found in it, is not that the profession, which from much leisure in modern times furnishes peculiar opportunities for improvement, makes them so; but that it finds them so; for who are often selected for the army? They who are blockheads in their books, careless, idle, extravagant, and for that reason said to be fit for nothing else. Add to this, that young men often obtain commissions so early in life, as to be weaned from their books too soon, to have a turn of mind given them utterly incompatible with study, and that even those of the best abilities and dispositions are often sent to the regiment before they could possibly have made an advancement in learning sufficiently great to continue its effects on the subsequent periods of life.

But illiterate fine gentlemen, I repeat, are by no means confined to the army. There are some to be found in almost every department; though they are not so frequent in this country as they were before the Spectators appeared. At the close of the last century, and the commencement of the present, your very fine gentlemen considered learning as a disgrace, and with fine estates, fine clothes, fine titles, they were content with minds as unfurnished as those of their valets or their chambermaids. They could scarcely write a card or letter on the most common affairs, not even an invitation to a dinner. It was a work and a labor; and, when finished, it was scarcely legible, from the badness of the hand-writing and the

incorrectneſs of the ſpelling; and by a ſtrange perverſeneſs, a letter of this kind was ſuppoſed to bear the marks of peculiar gentility. Beaus of thoſe days, for of them I ſpeak, were indeed blockheads; but, as if they were not really ignorant enough, they took pains to diſplay their freedom from what was then contemptuouſly called clergy, book learning, and pedantry.

The very name of pedantry was artfully contrived by an aſſociation of confederated dunces, to convey ideas of terror; and indeed the ſcholars in the univerſities had given too much reaſon for confounding learning with pedantry, by their ſcholaſtic jargon, and their attention to a philoſophy, which was of no uſe in ſociety, and which, while it prevented men from acquiring the agreeable and graceful accompliſhments, ſupplied them with nothing of ſolid utility to compenſate aukwardneſs and pride.

But the caſe is now totally different. Men of rank and fortune bring up their children with care, and beſtow upon them every improvement which their capacity will receive, and there is often found in the genteeleſt and moſt elevated circles of ſociety, the union of the fine gentleman with the polite and well-accompliſhed ſcholar. So that the illiterate fine gentleman will not now be kept in countenance, even in the regions of high life, where he once thought himſelf ſecure from contempt, and really was ſo from the irrational and undiſtinguiſhing ſcorn of pedantry.

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If a man is illiterate from misfortune, he is an object of pity, but not of contempt, while he does not give himself airs of superiority, and look round for admiration. But in the present age, the fop without education, knowledge, taste, and a power of conversing with sense and spirit, must find a society of fops equally ignorant with himself, if he would avoid derision, or if he hopes to gratify his vanity.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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diffusing mirth and pleasure, natural
effect of true wit, the prete disturbs
and wearies men of sense, an augh of
approbation from none but nd the
extremely complaisant.

The Buffoon is one of t est cha-
racters among the affected Wi s which
he condescends to practise more
of oddity than humor. He r create
a laugh in a large and mixe , or to
come in with the fool and the dinner:
but, in the society of those w for the
pleasure of conversation, he rber of
decorum, and the confounde n. He
is borne with from a respec on, or
from mere good nature; but rcely a
more pitiable object, than th who is
exerting every effort to attrac tion of
his company, and, after all I with
coolness, or attended to with ied ci-
vility.

The character of the Punst means
so common in the present a about
half a century ago; but it is Many
writers, particularly the Specta pressed
themselves very warmly agains nsters.
I cannot consider them of co nough
to excite indignation. They a s race.
They mean no injury; and, ause a
laugh, they think their endeav ward-
ed. While they attend to place,
there surely can be no harm it, on

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