# ADVENTURES

IN

# THE MOON,

AND

# OTHER WORLDS.

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## IN

# T H E  M O O N,

## &c.

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# OTHER WORLDS.

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# CONTENTS.


| | Page |
|---|---|
| A Journey to the Moon | 3 |
| Mahomet and the Spider. (A Dialogue.) | 149 |
| A Letter from Posterity to the Present Age | 179 |
| Answer from the Present Age to Posterity | 193 |
| The Sleeper and the Spirit. (A Dialogue.) | 211 |
| A Dispute between the Mind and the Body | 243 |
| Alcibiades | 293 |
| Truth Released | 325 |
| A Letter from Thrasicles of Miletus to Rhodius of Athens. | |
| The two Evil Spirits | |
| Dialogue I. | 373 |
| Dialogue II. | 386 |
| The Judgment of Mahomet | 419 |

# A
# JOURNEY TO THE MOON.

Ove mirabilmente era ridutto
Ciò che si perde o per nostro difetto,
O per colpa di tempo o di fortna.
Ciò che si perde qui là si raguna.—ARIOSTO.

Je vous parle d'une des plus agréables foliès de l'Arioste, et je suis sûr que vous serez bien aise de la savoir.—FONTENELLE.

AMONGST inquisitive persons there has always been a wish to know something about the moon, its surface, its inhabitants, and their manners; and several philosophers, to satisfy this curiosity, have, with much sagacity, construed its spots into mountains, volcanoes, and other commodities which a world is supposed to want. But these travels must be considered very imperfect; for by visiting a country through a telescope, but little is to be known of its people, their manner of living, their literature, their arts, or opinions. Accordingly, while that was the only way of travelling, we knew little more of the moon than that there was one.

Amongst the other speculations on this subject, many ingenious men exercised themselves in guessing what service the moon has to discharge for the earth, since it was generally agreed impossible that our satellite should revolve round us merely for its own advantage, though it might

perhaps in some measure be consulting its private ends; and it was most commonly supposed to be transacting our business and its own at the same time.

First, then, it was supposed that the moon had been ordained with its mountains, valleys, and volcanoes, that it might give us light in the absence of the sun; and this was declared a powerful argument for the bounty of Providence, which did not forget us even in the night, when all other beings are asleep. But it was objected, that according to this, reasoning Providence is bountiful only during a part of the month; and that any argument in favour of Providence ought to last through the whole year.

To pass over all these uncertainties, I must remind my readers that our moon was at length proved to be the receptacle of every thing lost upon earth. This truth was the discovery of a great philosopher, and has nothing in it of theory or conjecture, but was attained by experiment and the strictest rules of induction. The knowledge of this must very much increase the interest with which we look at the moon; since every person has some loss to lament, and may gaze upon that heavenly body with a certainty that it contains what has been dear to him.

I had often wished that we could procure admission into the moon, in order to regain what had once belonged to us, and had amused myself with imagining the eager search that would take place; but without having the least suspicion that this could ever be really effected, since the want of air, and other conveniencies, is sufficient to discourage most travellers; besides which, the having no ground to tread upon must increase the difficulty of the journey. It cannot, therefore, be wondered, that in former times only one journey to the moon was known to have been accomplished, which is that related by Ariosto. But nothing seems too difficult for modern science; and it is well known that, by a most ingenious invention, we have lately been enabled to walk up into our satellite with safety. As I, amongst others, have accomplished this

journey, I shall give a short narrative of my adventures, for the amusement of those who have been deterred by the distance from travelling in person.

The nature of this invention is so well known, that I need give no description of the journey. I saw great numbers travelling on the same expedition; some being led by curiosity, but most by a hope of retrieving the several losses that they had met with during life. I inquired of many, what prizes they hoped to recover. Some decayed people were going up in search of the health which they had once enjoyed; a woman with a melancholy look told me she had undertaken this journey with the hope of recovering her husband's good humour, which he had totally lost, to her great discomfort. There was a lady who refused to tell the motive of her journey, but it was whispered that she went to look for her character. Many old people were going to regain their youth. There seemed a great uncertainty as to the success of all these projects; for, first, it might be very difficult to find the lost advantages, and if they were found, none knew whether they could be used a second time: all, however, had great hopes; and I saw two or three men, who appeared incurably old, and were nevertheless convinced that, as soon as they arrived in the moon, they should revoke their wrinkles, and find some contrivance for not having lived the last fifty years.

As I approached the moon, I enjoyed the splendour of the sight. Its mountains far surpass ours in size; and in the shape of the surface there is a greatness not to be found in the noblest parts of our earth. I landed in the moon upon a plain, where I found grass and trees, the particular nature of which I shall not describe, as this short narrative is not intended to include botany and natural history—subjects which I leave to those who travelled into our satellite for the express purpose of studying them. I wish that my forbearance in this instance may be imitated by some of the more confined travellers on this earth, who, in the description of a country, thinking that no circumstance or production must be omitted, are very apt to give information on subjects of which they are profoundly ignorant. A traveller, who, in his own country, has

not skill to distinguish one herb from another, is a sudden botanist on the other side of the globe, lest the book he is writing should be incomplete. Many of them involve themselves in shells, minerals, and other intricacies, on which they would not hazard a conjecture at home. He who is silent on any subject, leaves his knowledge in doubt; whereas, if he speaks, there can no longer be a question. Upon many productions of the moon, therefore, I shall avoid the indiscretion of being learned.

When I landed there, my attention was first engaged by a singular change in my sensations, through an increase of strength and activity. I had known that this change must take place, and had expected some amusement by observing it in my fellow travellers. As the weight of a body depends not on its own mass alone, but also on the force of attraction in the globe where it is placed, and as this attraction is in proportion to the mass of the globe, a man who goes out of our earth into the moon, which is much smaller, finds a great diminution of his weight. Still his muscular strength remains the same, so that he gains a great advantage in vigour and activity, and at the same time has a sensation of lightness not to be described. Though prepared for this, I could not immediately accommodate myself to the change. There was a small ditch in my way, and thinking to step over it, I sprung as far as a deer could leap. Nor could I at first regulate the effort of my muscles in walking, but every step was a great bound; and until I had had some experience, I was not able to walk with any moderation.

While I was endeavouring to discipline my movements, I was amused by the astonishment of my fellow travellers, who knew not the cause of their own gambols, and were exhibiting great feats of activity when they intended to be perfectly sedate. A number of persons were seen bounding about like balls of Indian rubber. Some of them laughed, and others were terrified at their sudden want of substance. A large man, who in his own world had also been heavy, came bounding towards me with great consternation in his face: I seized him in one hand, raised him from the earth, and twirled him round my head with as much ease as a woman finds in tossing a young child; at which his terror and astonishment were

redoubled. I endeavoured to make him understand why we were suddenly so active and so strong; but gravitation was a new study to him, for he had never had so frivolous a curiosity as to inquire the reason why he had always remained on the earth in preference to flying away from it, and accordingly I could not succeed in making his frolics intelligible. I perceived he did not believe me, when I told him, that before we reached the moon I had foreseen what gambols we should execute at our first arrival.

As I was determined to travel alone, I soon left my companions, endeavouring not to jump about. After a short practice in walking I attained a tolerable steadiness; and as my journey was to be on foot, I found great advantage in the reduction of my weight, for I soon was able to move along with wonderful speed, and scarcely ever was weary. The sense of lightness was so singular, that it was impossible to make others imagine what I felt. Not only had my whole body acquired a new ease in moving, but every limb had a strange alacrity, and I could not raise my hand without being surprised by its readiness. It seemed as if I had been newly released from fetters.

I found in myself another strange alteration, which I attributed to the same cause. I arrived in the moon early in the morning, and left it in the evening of the same day: this is a fortnight of our time; for as the moon turns only once on its axis during a revolution round the earth, it has only one day and night during our month. In this long day or fortnight I never slept, and felt not the slightest desire for sleep. I conclude that the relief from weight prevented the perpetual want of restoration which we here labour under.

Each country on our earth has a separate district in the moon, to which its lost things repair; and these territories are divided from each other by high and difficult mountains. Every thing which takes flight from the earth has a strange intelligence, which guides it to its own country in the moon. I had landed on the English domain, and now walked along in expectation of meeting with some of the lost advantages of my own world. My chief motive for this journey had been curiosity, accompanied

perhaps by that desire which makes so many travellers,—the desire of having been where others have not. But besides these inducements, I had entertained a design of bringing back some of my past pleasures, if I should be able to find them, and if they were in a condition to bear removal. Amongst the things that I had to regret, was a considerable portion of time, which I had not used with all the frugality that I now could wish. I was, therefore, in hope that this commodity, though perhaps of no very great value, would appear to me in the moon, and that I might find means of carrying it back. But I was apprehensive that I might find it without knowing what it was; for I could not imagine how time would appear to the eye, nor by what art it could be laid by and preserved.

As I walked along, being now quite alone, I heard a voice near me, and turned towards it in the hope of being informed which way to betake myself in order to find some of the curiosities that I was in search of. When I reached the spot whence this voice proceeded, to my astonishment I saw not a human being near, though the talking continued close to me. I listened, and soon discovered that what I heard was the advice of a father to his son against gambling; and then I concluded that it had repaired to the moon as having been lost. In this admonition I recognised the voice of an old friend of mine, whose son had devoted himself with great energy to the gaming table. The aged voice spoke with much earnestness and wisdom, showing clearly the consequences of play to the fortune, the disposition, and the character. The lecture had arrived in the moon with the proper tone, the pauses, and the emphasis; so that I could distinguish every shake of the head, and every blow of the withered hand upon the table. The old gentleman omitted no efficacious topic; it seemed impossible to stop a bad practice more eloquently; and I wondered how this insurmountable advice could have failed. I listened to all its arguments, its infamy, distress, and ruin; but finding at the conclusion that it began again without respite, and proceeded in the same words as before, I walked out of hearing, sufficiently advised against play.

I may here mention, that before I left the moon I met with the very young man who had undergone this eloquence; the purpose of his journey being to search for the money that he had distributed in his vocation. I told him that I knew the place where he might find what had been lost by his indiscretion. He eagerly inquired where his treasure was kept, and I directed him to the spot whence this noble admonition proceeded.

"What!" said he; "is all that I have lost collected there?"

"Yes," I answered; "every argument, every word is preserved."

"Arguments, and words!" he exclaimed; "I am looking for money."

I then explained to him that the lost treasure, which I had found, was the advice of his father; and I urged him to repair to the spot, and be fortified against future losses. He was angry with me for disappointing him; said he did not think the advice likely to be more efficacious in the moon than it had been upon earth; besides which, his father was still alive, so that he could have advice fresh from his lips whenever he was in need of it, for the old man was so munificent as never to refuse him a supply in any difficulty.

"He is old now," said the son; "but the faculty of advising commonly remains in full vigour when all others have decayed."

This meeting with the advised son occurred, as I have said, at a later period of my travels. I was now in retreat from the father's lecture, and had just walked beyond its reach, when a confused noise came towards me, which at first I could by no means interpret, for a solemn declamatory tone, and a shrill railing voice, seemed to be united in it. As the sound approached me, I heard what I should have thought a sermon, had not some angry and profane expressions been inserted in it. As it went slowly along, I accompanied it, and by a little attention was able to understand this singular combination; for in the solemn part of the clamour I remembered the voice of a celebrated preacher, whom I had often listened to. It appeared that one of his sermons, not being the cause of much virtue on the earth, and accordingly discharged, had taken refuge in the moon, where, while it was floating about in the air, and

preaching with great solemnity, it had unfortunately been entangled in the invective of a fish-woman, which no doubt had been lost by the fortitude of her antagonist. Thus these two pieces of eloquence, having by some means been involved in each other, continued with equal vehemence, and without the least chance of one being silenced by the other. I was scandalised to hear the solemn words interrupted by such abominable phrases, and waved my hat about the place in hope of separating the two harangues; but they were so confused together, that though I drove them about by disturbing the air, my efforts to disengage them were vain, and I was obliged to leave a fine moral discourse loaded with these vile execrations.

The divine and his associate the fish-woman were no sooner out of hearing than I walked into a long story, which was telling itself with great pomp and emphasis. I listened, and heard some passages, where I was sure that an explanatory finger had been stretched out. I could not, however, discover the purport of the narrative, which seemed to be wholly destitute of all the three particulars required by Aristotle,—a beginning, a middle, and an end; but it had this excellence, that it might have been undertaken at any period of it without disadvantage. I afterwards found that the tellers of long stories provide the moon with a great abundance of sound. I now heard other attempts at conversation, and amongst them many of the small enterprises which are called puns.

But now, from a different quarter, a sudden wind sprung up, which was encumbered with a great variety of sounds, and I was quite overwhelmed with the clamour. First it blew sermons for a short time, and doctrines of every sect flew past me. This hurricane of divinity was succeeded by speeches in parliament: I was entertained by a declamatory breeze on the grievances of Ireland; then came a zealous wind in defence of the Church of England, and afterwards a prolix gale on free trade. I was at first amused by the novelty of all this piety, anger, learning, and eloquence in the air; but when it was no longer new, I found the clamour intolerable; and it is certainly a discouragement to those who would visit the moon, that any breeze which rises may preach and declaim so immoderately.

I may here mention that all sounds from the earth are at first allotted to separate districts in the moon. There is the region of puns, that of speeches, of sermons, and of every other fruitless noise. To each kind of noise a valley is assigned; the surface of the moon being very much varied, and the valleys very deep. Each sound, upon its first arrival, repairs of its own accord to the valley which is its proper habitation; but when the wind is violent, and happens to blow through one of these valleys, it sweeps away many of the sounds, and scatters them over the moon. Thus the most unsuitable alliances are formed of the different sounds, and the precepts of religion are often enforced by oaths; for a violent gale having passed through the residence of sermons, and carried many discourses away with it, may blow them through the valley where the Billingsgate rhetoric is preserved, by which means an unusual energy is added to those pious compositions: and many other sounds equally averse to each other are in this manner united. But when the air becomes calm, each by degrees returns to its own habitation; and no doubt the sermon, which I had vainly endeavoured to set free from the scurrilous abuse annexed to it, would in time escape from its intemperate colleague by its own efforts, and go home to the other divines. The eloquent wind, in which I have said that I was involved, by degrees became less copious, and at last quite silent.

I now saw a young woman running towards me in pursuit of something which rolled along in the wind. As she approached, I perceived that it bore the figure of a heart; and the lady I knew to be one who had lately been very much dejected on account of a hopeless passion. She had come to the moon to recover her lost heart, and was just about to possess herself of it when the wind had snatched it away, and she pursued it with all the speed she could exert. I should explain, that things do not ascend into the moon in the same substantial form that they bear upon earth: this heart was a mere shadow or ghost, and so light as to be blown about by every breath of air. I placed myself in the way, and endeavoured to catch it; but it bounded past me, and the poor girl continued the chase.

Another young lady, who had once sung extremely well was come in search of her voice, which she had lost by an illness. She had heard it at a distance singing an Italian song with great taste, and hastened to the spot in hope that she might inhale it; but a wind springing up had swept it along singing as it flew, and in despair she heard her own sweet notes dying away in the distance.

I now saw a well-known English statesman, who had come here in search of his integrity, which he had lost in the service of his country. Without it he had found himself quite disabled in the pursuit of his designs, being no longer eloquent in parliament or dexterous in council.

Soon after this I met a very beautiful woman, but extremely pale, with whom I was acquainted. She told me that she was endeavouring to find her complexion, which she had lost very early in life, and never ceased to regret. Her countenance was so attractive that I could not forbear offering to assist her in the search, though I told her that I knew not where the lost complexions were kept; for being very lately arrived in the moon, I was not yet conversant with its geography. She said that no farther search was necessary, for she was convinced that she had discovered her complexion, though she had not been able to regain possession of it; but perhaps I by a little vigour might succeed. It had been seized, she said, and was now worn, by a young man, in whose face she had detected it; for she instantly recognised her own bloom though after a separation of some years; besides which, it evidently did not fit the face of the usurper. I inquired where the young man was to be found; and as the lady knew what road he had taken, we followed at our utmost speed and soon overtook him. He was a young man of effeminate appearance, and studied dress. It was plain at first sight that the beautiful bloom, which he wore, had no natural affinity with his features; for he had not been able to make it adhere to them with any exactness, but in several places it was separate from the skin. I observed him endeavouring by delicate touches to contrive a better alliance; but with

all these inducements he could not detain it with any confidence, nor reconcile it to his cheeks, and he seemed every moment apprehensive lest it should drop.

I asked him very courteously, whether he was quite sure that he had his own complexion on. He answered "Yes," with some indignation; upon which I endeavoured to convince him of his mistake, representing that in some places there was a separation between his complexion and his skin, and that he would never bring them to unite in any security. But as he did not seem disposed to relinquish his prize, I approached him on pretence of examining his face more closely, and grasped him by the chin; when the disputed complexion slipped off with the greatest ease, and I presented it to the lady, who applied it to her face, where it instantly fitted itself on, and seemed to be quite at home. I could not forbear smiling at the sallow cheeks of the young man, who had been thus despoiled. He remonstrated very angrily against the violence done to his face, and persisted in claiming what he called his property. I desired him to observe that the complexion was so settled and established in the lady's face, as to make a removal impossible, which was a proof that he must have been mistaken when he believed it to be his. I told him I was convinced that his own complexion, when he had it, was of equal beauty with this; and no doubt, by a diligent search, might be found, being certainly in the moon, since by his cheeks he had evidently lost it. He was not to be satisfied; but still insisted, that even if this complexion had originally been produced in the lady's face, yet by coming to the moon it had been forfeited, and became the lawful prize of any person who could seize it. I remarked, that it was now useless to dispute against the lady's right to wear her complexion, since it was immoveably fixed; and therefore, if he were determined to wear no other bloom, his only expedient was to wait till it should again arrive in the moon, and endeavour to gain possession of it a second time. He turned away with great resentment; and the lady, being now perfectly beautiful, took leave of me with many acknowledgments of the service I had done

her. I afterwards met this young man again with a fine florid bloom, to which I believe he had no right, for he turned away his head as he passed me.

After restoring this lady to her beauty, I walked on to seek new adventures, and had not proceeded far before I saw a large building, which I approached, and the doors being open I walked in. The building consisted of one vast room, the walls of which were covered with shelves, containing a vast multitude of small bottles with their corks tied down as if to confine some liquor that was ready to escape. In the room I found some persons, who gave me an explanation of what I saw.

These bottles contained the lost spirits of those, who for some melancholy reason, or without reason, had, from being cheerful, become unhappy. The bottles appeared to be filled, not with any liquor, but with a sort of vapour, which was constantly in very active motion. Each bottle had a label, inscribe with the name of the person from whom its contents had escaped, to which was added the misfortune that had caused this loss of cheerfulness.

I found a great amusement in walking round the shelves and reading these little narratives, by which I discovered the concealed sorrows of several of my acquaintance, who had become pensive without any apparent pretext, and exercised in vain the penetration of their friends. By far the greater number of these bottles were female. Many ladies had been deprived of their mirth by disappointed affection, some by unhappy marriages, others by the want of children, and several by wanting nothing. Some labels had blank spaces where the calamity ought to have been recorded; these blanks, I learned, were the histories of those whose vivacity had dropped off them without any real cause, and only because it was not of a durable kind.

The reading of these bottles alone might be a sufficient inducement to visit the moon, with those persons who excel in providing their friends with motives, and in explaining every thing in the look or manner, which is abstruse; for here, in a few minutes, such discoveries are made, as

must be unattainable by mere inquiry and sagacity; and I think that amongst all the incentives to curiosity and study, there is nothing that so much provokes research as a mysterious melancholy in one who seemingly has every title to mirth.

It appeared to me that many of the owners of these bottled spirits had become unhappy on very slight provocation. Some of the reasons assigned, I thought hardly sufficient to justify a frown of a day's duration; part of these afflictions ought rather, in my opinion, to have been received as advantages; others seemed altogether fanciful, and it was manifest that the sufferer had become unfortunate merely by the force of a lively imagination. Amongst these bottles I observed some that were empty, and inquiring the reason, I was told that they had contained the mirth of persons who, after a certain period of melancholy, had regained their happiness by fortitude, philosophy, religion, a change of wind, or some other consolation; for whenever a person, whose mirth has been under this confinement, is ready to be cheerful again, and wants his spirits back, they make so great an effort to escape from the bottle as to force out the cork, and immediately they return into the possession of their owner, performing the journey in a few minutes. When this liberation is effected, the attendants who manage the bottles inscribe on the label the length of time that the spirits had remained in prison; and the empty bottle is still left to receive them again, should they be banished from their owner a second time. This often occurs by the vicissitudes incident to many tempers, in which the being happy to-day affords no security for happiness to-morrow. By these inscriptions, I found that the spirits of some people are engaged in perpetual journeys between the earth and the moon.

Upon one of the empty bottles I saw the name of a friend of mine, who had been in great affliction from the loss of his wife. I was surprised to read on the inscription that his spirits had driven out the cork, and returned to him at an early period of his sorrow, since which time I had seen him in profound melancholy; and it then appeared evident that he was to be unhappy much longer. I thought there must be an error in the

date, but was informed that these bottles are infallible; that they estimate sorrow by the heart, and not by the countenance; and that as soon as a secret disposition to mirth returns, they certainly release the cork, though the face should remain inconsolable. It appeared, therefore, that though my friend had been so plausibly grieved, the bottle knew he was fit to receive its contents, and I had merely wanted penetration to detect his clandestine cheerfulness. I rejoiced in the discovery, having never thought that the being melancholy is so great a duty or public good as is sometimes believed. I entertained myself here in detecting the real duration of sorrow in some others for the death of friends, and I saw with pleasure how soon a resignation to the will of Heaven had sometimes taken place after the most grievous loss. Some had begun to submit on the day after the funeral; others had wept with so much despatch that, the death having occurred in the morning, and their spirits being immediately sent to the bottle, they had wanted them again in the evening of the same day.

The bottles being arranged in order according to the time when each was filled, I could easily find any cases of affliction which had come within my own knowledge; and I discovered that, in several instances, I had wasted much friendly compassion upon people so speedy in submission as to attain a Christian serenity of mind long before others had ceased to be distressed for them,—a lasting melancholy having been apprehended from the skilful gloom which was preserved.

There were many people engaged, like myself, in examining these bottles; and amongst them I found a pretty woman of my acquaintance, who had once been remarkable for vivacity, but had suddenly fallen into a pensive dejection, for which she could give no reason, except that assigned in Shakspeare,—that she was sad because she was not merry. Feeling severely the want of her former mirth, she had travelled to the moon in quest of it, where, being directed to this building, she had discovered the bottle containing her own spirits, and I found her considering by what expedient she could transfer them to herself. She had intended to carry away the bottle, and meditate some contrivance at

her leisure; but they were all fixed immoveably in the shelves, so that whatever plan should be tried it could only be practised on the spot. She consulted me in her difficulty; and remembering the invention described by Ariosto, I advised her, when the cork should be removed, to hold her head over the bottle, and endeavour to inhale the vapour which should issue forth. She stood ready, and I cut the string which confined the cork; when it instantly flew out with a loud report, and a roar of laughter rushed after it: this was the imprisoned merriment escaping, and it lasted as long as the vapour continued to come forth. The lady applied herself to it as if to a smelling-bottle as long as this violent evaporation lasted. When the bottle had ceased to laugh she raised her head, and I immediately saw that my invention had succeeded; her eyes had regained their mirth, and her mouth its beautiful smile. She walked away in great delight at finding herself happy again.

There were many other people in the room who, having found the bottles belonging to themselves, were in perplexity about the means of recovering the contents; and now, having observed the success of my contrivance, they began to practise it upon themselves, so that very soon I heard corks flying and bottles laughing on every side. The first restoration of lost mirth had a violent effect upon most of the patients, and raising their heads at the end of the operation they burst into a vehement fit of laughter; some danced about very zealously, and performed other exploits. But this frantic delight sunk gradually, and in a few minutes was turned into a steady and reasonable cheerfulness. The first senseless joy from these bottles very much resembled the wild behaviour from nitrous oxide, popularly called laughing gas, which he who inhales commonly has recourse to a violent career of laughter, without being able to assign any just grounds of merriment.

Those who have seen this common experiment, may conceive exactly the extravagances acted in consequence of these bottles.

The most ridiculous frolics were exhibited by an old woman, who, having found the bottle containing the spirits of her youth, applied herself to it in order to be young again. Immediately the features of seventy were

animated by the mirth of sixteen, the old woman was intoxicated by her new feelings, laughed immoderately, danced, and sung, with many other achievements, which greatly disturbed her daughter, who accompanied her, and endeavoured in vain to control this aged vivacity.

I took notice of a lady with a very grave countenance, who was making a most diligent search amongst the bottles of that time, from which she dated the absence of her own cheerfulness, but still she was unable to find one bearing her name. I heard another lady, her companion, endeavouring to persuade her that she had always been as phlegmatic as she was then, and not at any part of her life able to furnish the contents of a bottle, so that it was vain to search for vivacity which was neither there nor in any other place. The solemn lady, however, was resolved to be lively, and not finding any mirth that she could justly claim, she prepared to invade the bottle of some other person, which, she said, would do no injury; for the person whom she should despoil might take her bottle in exchange, since it was undoubtedly there, though at that moment she could not find it. Accordingly she released the cork of a bottle which, by the explosion, seemed to have been very well provided with merriment, and she inhaled it all to the concluding laugh; but raising her head after this instigation, she remained as sedate as before, and found to her great disappointment that she could not be lively with the spirits of another person. I afterwards saw the same theft committed by others, and in every case it proved that the bottled spirits were ineffectual in any person except the owner. This might perhaps have been foretold, as we frequently see persons who have no vivacity of their own, endeavour, without success, to borrow it from others, though not out of a bottle. I speak of the emulation of those who, being solemn by birth, attempt vivacity by a strict execution of those gestures, looks, and sayings which they have observed to be the practice of lively persons, and with all their study can never contrive that those gestures, looks, and sayings shall be received as life and spirit, though in certain people they pass without dispute.

I saw an unfortunate lady in great distress: she had been endeavouring to practise my contrivance upon the bottle which preserved her spirits; but by being too slow to intercept them as they hastened out, and then by holding her head in a wrong place she had suffered the whole mirth to escape, and it flew laughing through a window as if in derision of her. The poor girl stood at the window in despair to hear herself laughing at a distance, being now condemned to hopeless dejection for the rest of her life. I had, however, the satisfaction of restoring many to a cheerful mind; and it was a great amusement to see the melancholy faces of many as they entered this room, and the happy countenances with which they left it after exhilarating themselves in this manner.

Having entertained myself here some time, I departed, and continued my wandering journey. It was not long before I came to another building which I entered, and found it full of bottles like the last. These contain the hopes, which have never been fulfilled, and to the eye they appear to hold a clear transparent liquor. Upon each bottle is the name of the person to whom it belongs, together with a short account of the hopes within, and the circumstances in which they were entertained. At the first glance on the outside of the bottles, I saw coronets, mitres, riches, and other amusements, in great abundance, which made me think, that if, as we often hear asserted, hope is the most agreeable employment of the mind, it is with great injustice that we complain of the misery of life. According to the same doctrine, we ought to rejoice that so few of the advantages within sight are attainable, because what is once gained can no longer be hoped for, and the chief delight from it, therefore, must be lost. The happiness of every man ought to be estimated, not by the number of his successes, but by the multitude of his hopes; and whatever seeming adversity he may have laboured under, yet if nature has provided him with an alacrity in hoping, he must be declared a prosperous man. For some, the most unfortunate in their undertakings, yet have through life been succeeding in prospect, and thus been fully

recompensed for actual disappointment. The office of this passion is to make men equal in happiness, since every advantage obtained must take away a hope.

Seeing on one of these bottles the primacy of England, as the hope contained in it, I looked for the name in some curiosity, to know who had aspired so high, expecting it to be some celebrated divine. The name was that of a clergyman, who had passed his whole life on a curacy of a hundred pounds a year. He had died at the age of seventy-six, and no doubt his age, poverty, and infirmities had been greatly relieved by the expectation of being primate. The office of prime minister had for many years been the hope of a man, who had been known to speak in parliament twice, on one of which occasions he was manifestly applauded. To be the greatest of English poets, was hoped for by a young man, on no other provocation than the having written some verses in a newspaper. A family of two fine boys and four beautiful girls, was the secure hope of a lady who had been married at the age of forty-six.

I found here many hopes so fantastical, and having so little regard for possibility, that they made me think less incredible a certain wish, recorded by Rabelais, which I had before thought a high strain of imagination. The projector of this wish desired that, a certain church being filled with needles from the floor to the roof, he might be in possession of as many ducats as would be required to fill all the bags, which could be sewn with these needles, till every one of them had lost either its point or its eye. This computation of a livelihood, hardly exceeds in boldness some of the designs which I observed here.

I saw an old man reading the bottle which contained his own past hopes; he laughed heartily at their extravagance, declaring that to have fulfilled them all he must have lived a thousand years, and that many of them could not have been accomplished unless all mankind had been in a confederacy to complete his schemes. Some bottles contained a vast number of hopes, the owner having had so much fertility in hoping; other persons seemed to have had no room for more than one hope at a time. I amused myself with pursuing the hopes of a man from youth to

age, and observing the variation in the different stages of life. Some of the young hopes diverted me; a girl of sixteen had been entirely occupied with the hope that the outline of her nose might improve before she grew up. Another young lady of the same age had been equally busy with the hope of her hair becoming darker.

Seeing my own name on a bottle I read my early hopes, which however I do not intend to divulge. I was surprised by the extravagance and absurdity of them; for till that moment I had imagined myself a rational man, and I could not conceive how such projects had ever been let into my brain.

I observed another old man studying his bottle and recapitulating the brilliant hopes of his youth. He lamented that he was no longer capable of transacting such visions, and declared he would try to recover the faculty of hope by drinking the contents of the bottle. Accordingly, having obtained a glass, he drew the cork and poured out the liquor, which sparkled like champagne, and he drank it hastily, seeming to think that the escape of every bubble was the loss of a hope. He finished the draught, which was about a pint, and was immediately thrown into the most violent transports. All the hopes of his life took possession of him at once, and he fancied himself about to perform some mighty exploit, though unable to conjecture what it was to be. His words, looks, and gestures were wild and incoherent; and if two friends by whom he was accompanied had not taken him into custody, he would probably have attempted some dangerous enterprise. They forced him out of the room, and I afterwards heard that it was several hours before his delirium abated; and even when he had recovered his composure of mind he remained subject to occasional visions, and from time to time is still elevated by chimerical fancies.

It occurred to me that, although the whole bottle of hope swallowed at once produced madness, yet perhaps a small quantity at a time might be drunk with benefit and encouragement in the decline of life; and I resolved to take my bottle with me for cheerfulness in old age, the bottles of hope not being fastened to the shelves like those containing lost

spirits, which I have mentioned before. On one occasion since, having been a little dispirited, I drank a very small quantity of my hopes diluted with water, and found a very agreeable elevation of mind from it.

One caution, however, is to be observed, which I learned from the example of an old gentleman, who had brought his bottle of hopes from the moon, and had recourse to it after it had stood undisturbed for some time. By standing still the several hopes had been separated from each other, so that he had poured out a single hope from the top, and drunk that alone. It appeared that the hopes were arranged according to their weight, and not according to the order in which they had entered the bottle; that which he drank first, therefore, happened to be one of his early youth. It was a hope that he might obtain favour with a certain married woman of great beauty, and, according to the most received opinion, by no means inaccessible; but, after he had prosecuted his plot for three years without an approach to success, he discreetly resolved to abandon it, and accordingly the hope flew up into its bottle. This hope, being now swallowed from the top, possessed him again with all its former vehemence. It had been perfectly suitable to the time of life when he had first entertained it, but agreed very ill with his present venerable appearance.

The same lady was no longer in sight, but he was acquainted with another of as much beauty and ambiguity, every age being furnished with such enterprises, and to her he immediately had recourse through the inspiration of his bottle, soliciting her by every known artifice, to the great amusement of many observers, and the surprise of his friends; for before this he had always conformed himself to the lapse of time, and never pretended to an indiscretion above his years. This hope continued to molest him for three weeks, during which he was indefatigable; but the effects of the draught having then passed away, he discovered the fallacy, and was in great confusion at what he had been doing. He told me that if he was to commit such absurdities through his bottle, he should prefer despair and dejection. I advised him to shake his bottle thoroughly, so as to confound all the hopes together before he poured

out a draught, whence I conceived that he would not be instigated to any single project, but obtain only a general encouragement. This he practises with great success, repeating his draught from time to time; after each dose, he is possessed with a conviction of some speedy good fortune, though he can gain no insight into the particular nature of it, and he is thus quite fortified against the melancholy of old age. It is true that to drink for hope and prosperity is not a new invention; but the complacency obtained in the manner I describe has the advantage of not being followed by any of those injuries which attend the peace of mind from a common bottle.

Leaving the House of Hopes, and pursuing my travels, I met with an old gentleman, who told me he had come to the moon in search of the time that he had lost during his life; "for," said he, "if I could recover all the hours that I have mis-applied, I should be a young man again."

"But," said I, "is it not probable, that if these hours had to be employed again, they would be engaged in the very same occupations which have brought them to the moon before?"

"No," he answered, "I believe there are some old men who lament their loss of time only because it is a loss of pleasure; but I rejoice in having freed myself from my errors. I lately undertook a complete reformation of my habits, and succeeded. I wish to regain my time, only that I might pass it all in the virtue which I now enjoy; for, alas! I have discovered the pleasure of virtue so late, that I cannot expect much time for the practice of it."

I walked on with this old man till we came to a building, which, according to the information of one whom we met, contained "lost vices." Inquiring what was meant by that expression, I was told that in this building are preserved all the profligate habits, which have been unwillingly relinquished by those, whom old age alone can reform, and who never part with an infirmity till they lose the faculty of being frail.

We entered the building; and found, as before described, a large room with innumerable shelves, on which the bad habits are kept by a singular contrivance. The vices of every man are contained in a little instrument, exactly resembling in appearance and use that ingenious toy called a kaleidoscope. On each of these instruments is inscribed the name of the libertine who has filled it. On one of them I observed the name of a man with whose past life and character I am acquainted. He once accepted very frankly of all the blessings offered him by Providence, but now lives in the strict practice of every virtue which decrepitude enforces. I took his kaleidoscope from the shelf; and looking into it, saw him carousing at a table with some companions, according to the morals of a former time, when the worship of Bacchus was more diligently prosecuted than it is now. I knew his person, though in this scene he was a young man. His colleagues I had never seen, for I believe he had buried them all by his example. Their figures in this vision were very small, but quite perfect, and all their looks and gestures faithfully exhibited; no sounds were heard, though much clamour was intimated. I could perceive that songs were sung, and stories told, with all the usual literature of such meetings. While I was entertained by seeing this company drink in miniature, I accidentally gave the kaleidoscope a turn, upon which the scene vanished in an instant, and another adventure appeared, the same man being still the hero. He was now soliciting a beautiful girl with great energy; and, from her reluctance and alarm, I supposed it to be the first interview. He seemed to make no progress while I held the kaleidoscope still; but I gave it a slight turn, which advanced his suit considerably, and a great part of her austerity was now omitted; whence I found that I must continue to turn the instrument, in order to bring his addresses to a conclusion. I therefore turned it round very gradually, not to lose any stage of the transaction, according to the injunction of Ovid:—

> Non est properanda voluptas,
> At sensim longâ prolicienda morâ.

When this exploit was ended, another took its place; and I found that by still turning the kaleidoscope, I might bring all the debaucheries of this old man in succession before me. But my curiosity did not last through many years of his life, which was crowded with incidents.

I lamented that Le Sage and Smollett had not had access to these kaleidoscopes for inspiration. If there is now any writer who believes himself their descendant, he could not employ his time more profitably than in a journey to the moon, in order to consult these little instruments, from which he may derive a fertility of adventures that he cannot possibly gain by observation of real life. The readers too of such novels, as well as the authors, may find here the best of libraries: for, by a few turns of a kaleidoscope, they will pass through a greater variety of adventures than by turning over a hundred pages; and no mortal pen can relate an enterprise with as much spirit and fidelity as one of these kaleidoscopes. I had recourse to several of them, and gained much useful information.

While I was engaged in this study of biography, I perceived the old man with whom I had entered the room very intent on the same employment. I walked up to him, and saw his own name on the kaleidoscope into which he was looking. This surprised me; for he had spoken of his past vices with so much contrition, that I imagined he would have chosen to avoid these apparitions of them, instead of wilfully distressing himself with the sight. I supposed, therefore, that he must be reviewing his life for the benefit of reproach and mortification; but when I looked into his face, expecting to see it full of horror, I observed his eye glistening with delight at the remembrance of his pleasures. He examined them one after another, pausing at each, and turning the kaleidoscope with the slowest caution, so as not to hurry the enjoyment, nor pass over any material circumstance; and while he made these confessions, there was a voluptuous joy in his face, very ill suited to his venerable appearance. I found that these visions of the past have a singular power over the owner of the kaleidoscope, reviving his former thoughts and sensations, and imparting at the moment a fancied vigour.

"I see," said I, "that you have returned to the amusements of your youth. You have here the means of retrieving your lost time."

"How so?" he inquired.

"Why," I answered, "you have only to take back with you this little instrument, and then you can be a young man in your arm-chair whenever you please. The actual performance of these things would require an effort inconvenient to you; but, having this kaleidoscope, you may enjoy any vice you wish, with no other labour than shutting one eye."

"That is true," said he; "it will be a great comfort to me in my old age."

"But," I asked, "will it not interfere with the strict temperance and virtue which you are to practise for the rest of your life?"

"Not at all," answered he, "because none of the consequences of vice will follow these repetitions; I can do no harm by looking into this little thing. I may carouse with the friends of my youth in this kaleidoscope, and awake the next morning without a pain in my head. The wine that was drunk forty years ago will now furnish a very innocent debauch; or, if I choose to prosecute a design against a village beauty, I can accomplish the plot here, and no woman on earth will lose her peace of mind by my success. I have full confidence in my reformation, I have thoroughly reclaimed myself from actual vice; but I know not why I should be so austere as to refuse my old age the comfort of these recollections, in which I find a remarkable charm." So speaking, he put his kaleidoscope into his pocket, and walked away to practise temperance.

I saw several other old men here, each of whom had found his own kaleidoscope, and was repeating the vices of his youth with great satisfaction. Under this inspiration, their venerable countenances were disfigured with a most unbecoming look of enjoyment. Every one of them carried away his instrument for the support of his declining age. It is probable that all these old men, like the one mentioned before, had for some time past been admiring their own temperance, and extolling themselves for a complete victory over the bad passions of their youth,

having become abstemious by means of seventy years, and attained a habit of refraining from all those vices which require bodily strength. Men act alike towards their vices and their friends, no one will confess himself forsaken by either. A man who finds himself avoided and discountenanced by one whose acquaintance is advantageous to him, assures himself first that the friendship is irrecoverable, and then begins to devise retaliation, endeavours to exceed the neglect with which the other treats him, and disputes his claim to the first coolness. Thus an old man, when his pleasures abandon him, pretends to priority; and being convinced by fair trial that a bad habit is irrevocably lost, he firmly demands that he and his vice shall part. This forbearance from what we cannot do resembles what is sometimes called resignation in a dying man, who, having tried in vain every expedient for remaining alive, begins to prefer death, descants on the disadvantage of being a man, and earnestly endeavours to justify his choice.

I cannot here avoid a reflection on the hard lot of virtue in being so commonly the successor of vice. When the house being torn to pieces by the riots of vice is abandoned as no longer habitable, with the foundations undermined, the roof fallen in, the furniture destroyed, and the walls tottering, it is made over to virtue, and she is desired to take possession of the ruin, and make herself comfortable for life.

Not far from the house of lost vices is a building, which contains lost virtues, and I entered it as soon as I had left the other. These virtues are not preserved in the same manner as the vices, but turned into a liquid, and kept in bottles. On each bottle is declared what virtues are within, together with the period of life or particular occasion that had caused the loss. The good qualities lost by age appeared to be chiefly benevolence and generosity, from which inconveniences men had been released at very different times, some being qualified for avarice and ill-nature much sooner than others. As I have lately made some remarks on the indecorous regret of certain old men at the decay of their vices, I must now do justice to their patience under the loss of virtue. Old men have been known to shed tears on finding themselves unable to be riotous; but

I believe none have ever wept at failing to do a generous action: and however culpable may be their discontent at missing their pleasures, they amply atone for it by a perfect resignation under the decay of liberality, and by giving up without a sigh the whole pleasure of doing good. Covetousness has been appropriated to old men from the earliest times; and when a man has nothing left except vigour in saving money, and joy in keeping it from others, it would be a great cruelty to forbid him the exercise of those qualities.

I here observed a young man seeking some particular bottle very earnestly, which having found, he took possession of it with great joy. It contained certain virtues, which had once been in the mind of his father, and had dropped out as he proceeded through life. The father, though very old, persisted in remaining alive, without considering how much pain his son suffered by this usurpation. Amongst other virtues which had failed him in his latter years, his generosity had quite decayed; and his son had very dutifully undertaken a journey to the moon in hope of recovering it. Having gained the bottle, he intended to contrive that the old man should insensibly drink this generosity with his tea, taking care to be present himself, that he might intercept any bounty which might be the consequence of the draught.

I have since heard the success of this stratagem. The young man's sister, who commanded the tea table, was easily engaged in the plot; and having supplied her tea with a portion of this medicine from the moon, she was very urgent in recommending it as composed with uncommon art, and exactly agreeing with her father's judgment. It had an instant effect; and the old man, with a sudden look of beneficence, having descanted for a short time on his own declining years, and his inability to enjoy wealth, declared he would make over to his son a considerable portion of his estate, and desired him to send for an attorney on the following morning that the gift, might be legal and secure. But when morning arrived, and the young man was punctually proceeding to execute the order, his father suddenly revoked it, having been cleared from these fumes of

generosity in his sleep. Some expedient, therefore, was to be devised for making the father's gift irrevocable before his benevolence should have time to escape.

The teapot was again corrupted, and an excuse contrived for a visit of an attorney while the medicine was in full vigour. Thus the desired deed was accomplished; and the father, at the return of his avarice, found himself strangely dispossessed of his property by his own consent.

Amongst the virtues lost by advance in life, I saw a great quantity of pity and sensibility. Grief for the misfortunes of others is one of those follies that seldom fail to be cured by age, being the benefit of experience, which, amongst other lessons, demonstrates the absurdity of claiming a share in the afflictions of another man.

I here became melancholy by seeing how ready our best qualities are to slip out of our minds; and I soon, therefore, left the building and entered another, where I found a vast room containing what at first appeared to me a collection of statues: but I was informed that what I saw was the female beauty that has been lost by time, sickness, or other calamities to which it is liable. These statues, therefore, are merely bloom and outline without any substance. In the walls of the room there are as many niches as can be inserted from the bottom to the top, in each of which stands one of these beautiful outlines, and a multitude of others placed on pedestals are distributed over the whole room. They are beautiful from posture as well as shape, being adjusted in every graceful variety of attitude and purpose; and it may easily be supposed that this room far surpasses any gallery of statues in our world.

As soon as I was in the midst of these beauties, I began to think myself guilty of an unfair examination, and of inquiring into secrets which were not designed for me; but seeing no displeasure or retirement in the lovely forms as I looked at them, I was emboldened to continue my studies.

These beautiful figures are in appearance real women, being perfect both in shape and colour; and, indeed, they seemed to have every female excellence, except the being alive. I had a great curiosity to know how

these beings would affect the touch; and, being now on terms of familiarity with them, I approached one, which looked the most indulgent of those round me, and ventured to lay my hand upon her: but never was man more disappointed in such an enterprise; for I could scarcely feel any thing; and though I proceeded to the most resolute pressure, my solicitations were quite ineffectual:—

"Frustra comprensa manus effugit imago."

The surface yielded, and when I removed my hand immediately regained its shape. I raised the whole figure from the ground, and could perceive no weight. I placed a hand on each side of the body, and squeezed it quite flat without the least resistance; and when it was loosed, it recovered itself in a moment. Putting my finger on the nose, I pushed it into the face quite out of sight, and it was restored as soon as my finger was taken away. I proceeded so far in disfiguring the lady as to hold her concealed between my two hands, and compressed into a little ball, which, when released, shot out into a beautiful woman, who had sustained no injury by the confinement.

I observed that some of these statues were mutilated, wanting arms, legs, or other appendages to the human figure. This I understood to happen when the lady retains a part of her beauty. Thus, if her arms have not lost their perfection, while all the rest has undergone some decay, a figure of her appears in the moon without arms, which however are added as soon as she has relinquished them. I saw a nose resting on a pedestal by itself, the beauty of its outline having been destroyed by an accident, while the owner was otherwise uninjured. In another place was some beautiful dark hair, being the spoils of a fever. But the most common of these particular beauties separate from the rest was the complexion, which seemed to have frequently preceded all other endowments in its journey to the moon. Each of these fragments had a pedestal, upon which was engraved the name of the lady, as amongst ancient statues we see a beard or a foot, and are told it is Phocion.

I was pleased to see the restoration of beauty to a young woman who had lost it by the small-pox. She had found her former face, which was a mere surface like a mask; and applying it to her features, perceived that it adjusted itself, and adhered to them without needing any care or contrivance. I saw some depredations committed by women, who never having been able to acquiesce in their own features would not lose this opportunity of obtaining others: and I was amused by the incoherent faces which they constructed; for whenever a feature was appropriated to a strange face, it evidently dissented from all the other parts of it. There was a girl, who never having regarded her nose with approbation, was earnestly engaged in fixing to it a new outline that she had found; but at first sight this nose was not at all to the purpose. She was adjusting it by a small mirror, and I heard her expressing her fears that it never would be made to co-operate with her chin. Another woman, endowed with long sallow features, had obtained possession of a beautiful complexion off a small face, and without any regard to the disproportion had pressed it down upon her boundless features, whence it projected and had a very ridiculous appearance. However, she walked away, seeming very well pleased with her new bloom.

When I had left this building and was wandering on for new adventures, I heard a confused sound, which I supposed to proceed from a valley the receptacle of some particular kind of eloquence or noise. I soon arrived at the place, and found it to be the valley containing lost advice, whence had escaped the father's counsel against gambling, which I had heard on my first arrival in the moon.

In this valley innumerable voices were striving to hinder various kinds of imprudence; and I wondered how it happens that with so much good advice in the world there is also so much folly. When I compared the excellent precepts which I heard all round me with the actions of men, I could not avoid considering why it is that we are so much wiser for our friends than for ourselves; why, in our own case, we are liable to be misled by every temptation, and usually pursue the most agreeable course instead of the wisest, while in any other person's case we find

ourselves inspired with invincible resolution, can resist the strongest temptations and make the greatest sacrifices. From this reflection I determined that were I to receive a commission to alter and reform the human race, I would contrive that, instead of being obliged to act for ourselves, we should all act for each other, by which invention there would be no such thing as vice or imprudence in the world.

While these admonitions reiterated themselves all round me, I admired the generosity with which all men are ready to give away advice; and it appeared to me that if, as some have said, this is the chief office of friendship, the fidelity of mankind is not to be disputed, since I never knew an instance of one who would withhold a largess of this kind from a friend who needed it.

I found here exhortations pronounced in all the several capacities in which men are qualified to impede others with advice. The counsel of parents was transacted in one place, that of friends in another; here the advice of husbands proceeded, and there of wives. I also heard guardians and tutors imparting discretion to those under their charge. There was besides much exhortation in a feeble voice from those who have no right from consanguinity, but are advisers by old age; it being a well known law of nature that when the faculties of a man are decayed through time so as to be of no use to himself, they become available to others. Besides these, I heard many of those universal advisers, whose vocation it is that nothing indiscreet be done by any of their acquaintance. In short, there are assembled in this place the words of all who have any kind of title to provide other people with prudence.

I listened for some time to these rejected counsels in the hope of discovering by what fault they had failed to persuade, and thinking they might possibly show what relation the adviser ought to bear to the sufferer in order to prevail. But I could draw no conclusions from what I heard. The generality of advisers succeed so far as to make their friend angry, but not to make him wise; and it is observable that the advised person, who can find any pretext for being incensed against his counsellor, always thinks it a valid reason for refusing to do what is

recommended. The skill, therefore, must be to avoid all grounds of offence. But then occurs another difficulty; for he who can find no reasonable cause of displeasure either in the advice given, or in its coming from the particular person who offers it, is still more exasperated at finding himself without the means of anger. I think it may be remarked, that the most judicious advice is the most apt to be resented; for we are displeased with counsel only when we are conscious that it ought to be followed; when we are convinced that it is mistaken, we commonly receive it with proper gratitude, because we can neglect it without self-reproach. The interpretation we put upon good advice is, that our friend, in order to show his own wisdom, has made us dissatisfied with ourselves.

From what I heard, therefore, I could not judge what relation an adviser ought to stand in towards the person advised in order to obviate this anger, which is always ready. If it be a man who by situation has some right and authority to advise, the dictation is intolerable; and if he has no such right, his impertinent interference is not to be borne.

Nor could I learn any thing as to the manner in which advice ought to be bestowed; for I heard voices in this place advising in every possible variety of style, and by their being here I knew they had failed to persuade.

Some advisers tried to make men wise by reproach, others applied entreaty, and a third class taught by alternately railing and beseeching. One voice conveyed prudence by a hint, another by resolute frankness; some pretended great alarm, which made silence impossible; and I thought that not the least plausible were the confident advisers, who had not a doubt that what they enjoined would be done: for I knew by experience that to refuse advice, offered confidently, and confront the surprise of the giver, requires great firmness. There was here, also, much of that counsel which enforces an action by showing that nothing else can possibly be done; and yet it appeared that the ingenuity of the

advised person had found another way. I heard intermitting advice,—that which revives at stated times, and much, too, of the incessant counsel which never wants renewal.

This fruitless wisdom, therefore, having been offered in all the different figures of advice, I found it impossible to conclude any thing concerning the manner, or tone of voice, the looks or nods most conducing to prudence. But perhaps an habitual adviser may not think the inquiry important, since his purpose is usually gained though his counsel should not be followed, and he succeeds in proving himself a wise man though he fails to make his friend one.

The general failure of advice is usually imputed to the obstinacy of those who receive it, but from what I heard in this place I was inclined to think that the person who gives it is as often in fault. Most of those whose counsel was here collected did not seem to have considered what advice would most benefit their friend, but what would best evince their own prudence, sagacity, or other virtue which they had to demonstrate; and they appeared very eager to have it concluded, that what they desired another to do they would practise themselves if the case were their own. Thus, there are men of courage, who, if their friend has had a quarrel, will with great intrepidity advise him to fight a duel; and he must be shot that they may show their spirit. In this multitude of voices, I heard one in a resolute tone giving counsel to a friend, who was labouring under that domestic affliction called the tooth-ache, which the adviser very courageously exhorted him to relieve by extraction, giving many hints of what he would do himself if a tooth of his gave him similar provocation. It is a great advantage that in all exigencies requiring a painful remedy there is always some man who thus freely undertakes to furnish resolution while his friend undergoes the pain.

This valley contains, also, much of that advice which I think the most discreet in all emergencies, and the least likely to be proved erroneous, which is, to recommend some expedient for which the opportunity is past. A prudent adviser, consulted in hurry and danger, will always endeavour, first, to discover something which ought to have been done

before, and which cannot be done now. Accordingly, in this valley I heard many faithful counsellors dissuading their friends from something past, and teaching them how to have prevented yesterday some misfortune which has happened to-day.

Having left this valley of advice, I entered a very large building not far from it, which I was told was a library. It consists of one room, containing all the books which are lost upon earth. The hapless volumes resort to this room as soon as they cease to be read; some had come up on the day of their publication, others had lived below a whole year, and the immortality of many had been cut off in a month.

My eye was caught by some shelves, on which were ranged a vast multitude of books, all bound alike, and on approaching them, I saw that on the back of each was the title "Similes." When I found that these volumes comprised all the fruitless similes of English literature, I did not wonder at the number of them.

I here found an Englishman of my acquaintance conversing with an Italian, who had applied to him for an explanation of this great assembly of similes. "I am conversant," said he, "with the old writers of your country, but have not much studied the moderns: now it seems to me that all the similes of your best writers collected together would scarcely fill one of these volumes. Your recent authors must greatly excel them in imagination, if they have produced such a library of similes."

"Undoubtedly," said the Englishman, "there is a great poverty of these beauties in our old writers. Similes have now invaded all our literature, both prose and verse, and make a part of every thing we speak or write."

"I have looked into one of these volumes," said the Italian, "and some of the similes appear to me difficult of application. A poet is here describing a greyhound in chase of a hare, and, in order to increase the speed of the dog, he compares it to Westminster Abbey."

"And how," said the other, "does he effect a likeness?"

"That," he answered, "is what I cannot arrive at. I have read it over many times, but cannot discover what he would wish the resemblance to be."

"That is a true modern simile," said the Englishman. "In the similes of the old writers, a natural resemblance is instantly apparent between the two things compared. Now the moderns are of opinion that when two things are in themselves similar, there is no invention shown in comparing them, but that the imagination and ingenuity of a writer are proved by his bringing together two objects obstinately unlike, and forcing them into a comparison in spite of all resistance. Therefore, as no two things could easily be more different than a greyhound in pursuit of a hare and Westminster Abbey, the poet, with a great deal of invention, has coupled them together, by which he thinks that he has very much accelerated his greyhound."

The Italian, turning round, saw another row of shelves, equally extensive, covered with books, upon the backs of which he read "Description."

"Your modern writers," said he "must excel those of former times in description, as much as in similes."

"Yes," answered his informer: "description is another beauty in which the old writers were very barren and defective. By universal consent, this is now the noblest way of writing; and those authors who are conversant only with the reason, and the passions are proved, by incontestable arguments, to be far inferior to those who treat of mountains, woods, and water. Modern literature, therefore, is overrun with trees, and diversified with hill and valley, far beyond the bleak writings of former ages. Nor are these landscapes confined to poetry. It is impossible that even a novel should succeed without several well-wooded chapters, and indeed there is scarcely any subject too austere to admit this kind of beauty: the most abstruse reasoning may be rendered more clear by a well-written grove or mountain. Any young man, therefore, who resolves to be a poet, instead of applying himself to books, and filling his mind with the thoughts of others, has recourse for his education to rocks and woods, which, in modern language, are called nature, and from these he derives

all his knowledge and poetical spirit. Indeed, he has only to roam amongst mountains, and write down the verses which they dictate. Some of our best modern poems were entirely composed at the instigation of wood and water, and without any assistance from books."

One division of this library is filled with novels, and the Italian expressed his astonishment at the number of them. "You do not consider," said the Englishman, "how many people read novels: they are the books from which our young men and women derive the chief part of their instruction. These works come out every spring with the butterflies, are quite as numerous, and live about the same length of time. There are several kinds of romance: the most abundant species, I think, is that in which the events of modern life are related with so much fidelity that in every page men and women do exactly what we see them doing elsewhere. The author is at great pains to make a true representation of society; and therefore, that he may not exceed nature, he takes care that in all his dialogues there shall be no more than that limited portion of wit and amusement which is usually found in conversation.

There is an admirable expedient frequently practised in romances of this kind. The author introduces into his narrative some of the newest incidents of society, relates them with the utmost exactness as they really happened, and describes the characters, circumstances, and persons of those engaged in them. You may easily imagine the noble exercise of mind with which readers are thus provided in recognising the adventures of the last year; you may conceive the pleasure with which they adjust the book to the real event,—how they explain the agreement to those who are not in the secret; how they praise the author for so artfully describing persons they know, even to the colour of their hair. This copying of real life is carried to its utmost perfection by some writers, who introduce not only the events and characters, but the names also with a slight disturbance of the letters, contriving, with wonderful skill, that the last syllable of the name shall take precedence, or by some other invention displacing the several parts of it, so that discerning persons may have an

opportunity of rectifying the letters and restoring the name to its true sound. It would surprise you to see the sagacity with which all these mysteries are explained in a few days after the book has appeared.

Another kind of romance is the history of some imaginary person, who is to charm the reader by the most abominable crimes. The author frees him from every restraint of morality, honour, integrity, and kindness. This monster is always in some plot, and is of so peculiar a disposition that he has no pleasure in success except with the ruin and misery of others. Murder is merely the trifling of his leisure; he merits death in every page, but with great dexterity always evades the law. By these perfections he is very acceptable to all women he approaches, and they are sacrificed to him one after another in a deplorable manner. He is commonly a wanderer, and infests many parts of the globe; but at last, having arrived at the end of the third volume, he either dies in a distraction of mind from his crimes, or is rewarded with the hand of a beautiful woman, and leads an exemplary life ever afterwards. Few novels succeed better than those with a monster. The historical novel is another kind. In this composition the endeavour of the author is to show us the true genius and character of the remarkable persons who lived at the time of which he writes: thus, if it be recorded of a great man, that he wore a hat with three feathers, you may be sure that he will wear a hat with three feathers in the novel. The author dresses him with a strict adherence to truth, and does not venture to omit a single button of history, or to introduce so much as a bit of lace that is fabulous; every ornament he wears is attested by writers of acknowledged veracity; even his shoe-buckles are facts. Sir Walter Scott having acquired great fame by historical romances, which represent the thoughts and designs of uncommon men, has instigated others to embroil themselves in the same undertaking; but since the thoughts and designs of great men are not amongst their studies, their discernment being limited to that part of the human character which is called the dress, they have contented themselves with narratives of hats, cloaks, and other parts of apparel, in which their success cannot be disputed."

"I observe," said the Italian, "that each of these novels consists of three volumes. Is that one of the modern laws of writing?"

"Yes," answered the Englishman: "it is a new discovery; and now a writer of novels produces three volumes as punctually as a pigeon lays two eggs. This is a great hardship to the lovers, who are delighted with each other in the first chapter, and might accomplish their union in a few pages, if they were not maliciously undermined by the author, who involves them in difficulties which cost him infinite thought and study, and thus are they obliged to pass through the three volumes with perpetual disappointment and vexation. I am not able to give any reason for this modern law, that every novel should be divided into three, any more than I can account for the ancient decree that comedies should consist of five acts; but it is well known that any romance in more or fewer volumes than three would be instantly rejected by the booksellers, who have a peculiar sagacity in judging what circumstances will gain a good reception for a new book. Thus the author of the 'Tale of a Tub' informs us, that a bookseller, to whom he first offered that work, assured him it could not possibly succeed unless in the following year there should be a scarcity of turnips."

At this moment I was startled by a quarto volume which flew close to my head; it had just arrived from the earth, and coming in at the window flew two or three times round the room like a bird, as if looking for a place to light upon; it then perched on a shelf of quartos, and pressed itself into a vacant space. On examining these quartos I found them to be books of travels; the one which had just flown in had arrived quite new, and full of fresh intelligence.

From this multitude of travels the Italian took occasion to admire the adventurous spirit of Englishmen, who wander about the world to increase our knowledge of it, and make a book. "These large and numerous works," said he, "must contain abundant information on the laws, customs, and natures of men."

"There are travellers," answered the other, "from whom such knowledge is to be derived; but these works being found in the moon, we may conjecture that the authors of them have not been conversant with any such abstruse studies. Many of our recent travellers go out to explore countries in which there are no laws, customs, or men to be found; they undergo great hardships, and at their return the knowledge they impart to us is, that in one place they were hot, in another cold, and in a third hungry."

When I had listened for some time to this conversation, I took a cursory survey of the several divisions in which the library is arranged, and found it to contain a great variety of works in every kind of literature. There is a collection of divinity sufficient to perplex the reason of all the inhabitants of Europe. The poets occupy a very large space; the names of some I had never heard before. The political writers, too, stretch over a great territory; there is a whole library of those small undertakings called pamphlets, which redress all abuses, and extricate the country out of every distress.

A large extent of shelves is covered with the lives of men written by themselves: this is a kind of literature much increased in modern times. It was formerly the custom of celebrated men to let posterity decide whether their actions were worthy of remembrance; but it is now the undoubted right of every one to determine this matter for himself. Our ancestors erroneously believed that praise was a good which every man must owe to the kindness of others, and could not confer upon himself: we have detected this mistake amongst many others committed by our forefathers, and it is now well known that men labour under no such natural disability as was supposed, but that any one can extol himself with much greater ease, confidence, and zeal, than any other person. Through this discovery we abound with lives written without the least envy or detraction. Johnson says, "Who does not wish that the author of the 'Iliad' had gratified succeeding ages with a little knowledge of himself?" Accordingly, the moderns resolve to avoid this culpable silence of Homer, by freely imparting to the world all their undertakings, hopes,

and fears,—all that they have done, and all that they have failed to do. Every man now imitates Julius Cæsar, and relates his own exploits. Very little renown is enough to justify a life, and indeed many have been written without any such instigation at all; for if a man has only tried to be famous, the story of his disappointment cannot fail to be instructive.

It is also a great discovery of modern times, that a man may publish his own adventures during his life. Formerly, it was thought decorous to die before the divulging of any private particulars; but, by the new invention, a man is able to combine the glory from memoirs with the advantage of being alive. It is now justly thought that a person famous by writing, or any other stratagem, would betray a culpable indifference to the impatience of mankind, if he delayed till his death all satisfaction of the general curiosity concerning his private habits; and there is hardly a writer of plays or romances so regardless of the world as to keep it in suspense with respect to the hours when he is used to write, the books that he reads, and the places where he dines.

I looked over the shelves of biography, and amongst all the authors of their own praises, I could hardly find one name that I had heard before. This gave me occasion to consider that memoirs are not so effectual a provision against the being forgotten as they are usually thought; and I could not help comparing the precaution of these writers with the device of Panurge in Rabelais, who, being at sea in a storm, and the ship expected to sink, could think of no rescue except making his will; for anxiety had not left him sagacity to discern that all the benefactions he might record must be drowned with him. So those writers, who are just about to be overwhelmed in oblivion, betake themselves with all the foresight of Panurge, to inform posterity of their virtues, forgetting that this intelligence must be included in the destruction.

Happening to look through the window of the library, I saw a great flight of new books approaching. They came in, and flew up and down in search of places. There were works of every size: the quartos soared backwards and forwards like swans, and the duodecimos fluttered about in the manner of sparrows. Being endued with a sagacity to find their

own places, they all settled themselves in the class of books to which they belonged; the several volumes of a work remained together, and one followed another in a line, like wild geese; volume the first taking the lead, and so in succession. I saw a history consisting of fourteen octavos, which made a splendid flight; and it was amusing to see them wind round the room, still preserving their order, and then light one by one upon a shelf.

My curiosity was excited by a thin book, which, having just flown in, hovered about unable to find a resting place, and seemed to be in great distress. It had first approached the district of religious writings, and, finding room, was just preparing to light when the surly volumes closed themselves together with one accord, and refused to admit the new comer amongst them. It attempted several different openings on these shelves, but still found the same want of hospitality, and wherever it appeared the divines shut up their ranks. It then flew round the room in great trouble, and I observed that as it passed the political pamphlets they opened of their own accord and offered it an asylum, but it turned away in disdain, and again made trial of the clergy; these inexorable octavos still refused, and it fluttered about appearing to be almost exhausted. I endeavoured to catch it, but it was too active to be entrapped. I then took aim at it with another book, and was so dexterous as to bring it down stunned and crippled by the blow. I found it to be a bishop's "Charge," which, instead of enforcing the topics that belong to that sort of exhortation, was almost entirely a political treatise. The religious writings, therefore, had not acknowledged it as divinity, but the pamphlets had supposed it to be one of themselves. I thought that this "Charge" was justly excluded from the religious shelves, and that it had no right to look with contempt upon the political writings, the language of which it had thought proper to assume. I therefore pushed it in amongst the pamphlets, though it flapped violently and made great efforts to escape.

As I left the library I observed two men, who were likewise quitting it, each of them having a roll of parchment in his hand, about which they were engaged in a violent controversy. I found that they had come up to the moon in search of the British Constitution, which they agreed had long ago been lost. Each fancied that he had found it, and vehemently asserted that what he carried was the real constitution, and the parchment of the other a fiction. One of them triumphantly pointed to the date, asking whether that was not the time when the constitution flourished. The other denied that there had been any constitution in being at that time, and asserted that his own date was the true one. Neither of them would give up the pretensions of his parchment, and they parted in some anger, each of them being convinced that he had the British constitution under his arm.

I next entered a valley containing the consolation which has been lavished in vain upon those stubborn people who will not cease to be unhappy at the desire of a friend. A great multitude of exhortations were proceeding here in every tone and cadence of sympathy. I heard the several topics of comfort under all earthly evils, so that any unfortunate man, who comes to this valley, may find the particular harangue suited to his case, and thus be reasoned out of his calamity.

Every saying to be cheerful by is here repeated without intermission, and the folly of being grieved under any affliction is so forcibly represented, that he who listens might wonder for what reason men are ever so perverse as to be miserable.

One person was desired to be easy, because he could not possibly have prevented his misfortune; another was told that he had no right to mourn, because his calamity might have been easily avoided. One comforter represented that, notwithstanding what had been taken away, the world was still full of happiness; while another declared that every thing in the world being utterly worthless, it was ridiculous that any man should imagine he had sustained a loss. Many were desired to console themselves with the advantage of others being in the same adversity. I also heard it urged, that Providence was certainly the best qualified to

conduct the affairs of the world, and that we had no right to remonstrate, even by our tears, against what he might choose to do. One comforter would have cured all grief by affirming that we are altogether governed by imagination, and that the being either happy or miserable is a mere act of fancy. Some were very peremptory in their consolation, and inveighed against the grief of their friend as the most reprehensible of errors. Another consolation, of which I heard many specimens, was, that adversity is beneficial, and that there is nothing so much to a man's advantage as the being in affliction. To be grieved, therefore, was said to be altogether erroneous; and the reasonable deportment under all troubles was to rejoice. It was also declared that an admirable remedy against affliction is to consider that there has been sorrow from the beginning of the world; for how can men be troubled by something which has been from the beginning of the world?

By listening to these several ways of dissuading a man from having been unfortunate, I was confirmed in an opinion which I had formed before, that nature, fearing lest fortune should not be careful enough to provide us with calamities for our good, has annexed consolation to every disaster as an additional evil. It is said in a comedy of Molière, that no sick man ought to consult a physician unless he be sure that his constitution is strong enough to bear not only the disease but the remedies also; and perhaps it would be a caution equally proper that no man in distress should have recourse to a comforter unless confident that he has patience to undergo consolation as well as his calamity.

Leaving these remedies against adversity, I wandered on, and hearing a confused noise at a distance, walked towards it in expectation of another instructive valley. I was soon met by a man who was walking in a great hurry away from this sound, and I inquired of him what it was.

"Are you a married man?" said he; "if so, I advise you to fly from those murmurs; for in that valley are collected the noises of all the wives that have scolded since our first parents. The first I heard was the eloquence of my own excellent partner, which put me to flight, as it has often done before."

Notwithstanding the warning given me by this fugitive husband, I boldly approached the scene of domestic oratory; and as I drew near I heard female reprimands uttered in every variety of English phrase, ancient and modern, whence I learned that this species of rhetoric has been cultivated in our island from the earliest times, and continued to flourish without interruption through every change of the language. These invectives having arrived in the moon, it was plain that they had all been lost upon the inaccessible husbands, and I could not help admiring the firmness of men.

I was amused by observing the different styles of eloquence; there were several florid scolds, who declaimed with great copiousness, while others railed in a brief and forcible manner. Some spoke in a style of earnest remonstrance, many abandoned themselves to invective, and not the least powerful were those who conveyed censure in a sneer. In short, here might be studied all those varieties of reproof by which certain wives are accustomed to enforce domestic peace.

It was easy to distinguish the different ranks of life to which these connubial noises belonged; for some of them expressed a well-bred displeasure in good English, while others were so disguised by a provincial dialect that I was unable to interpret them. From the great variety of accent I concluded that every county in England was scolding here.

Soon after I had left this valley, I saw at a little distance from me a gentleman of my acquaintance, who with a stick was distributing some very vigorous blows in the air, as if defending himself from a swarm of bees, yet I could see no enemy against which all these efforts were directed. As I approached him, I heard an angry voice, very loud and voluble; and I then discovered his difficulty. He had been in the valley which I have last mentioned, where was a considerable quantity of his own wife's rhetoric, which, as soon as he approached it, had recognised him by a strange instinct, and swarming round his head, had assailed him with great fury. He instantly quitted the valley, hoping to leave this attendant behind, but it adhered to him with wonderful fidelity wherever

he went, and he was now vainly endeavouring to drive it away with a stick, which instrument, whatever power it may sometimes have had to silence a similar clamour, was applied to this reproof without the least mitigation. I endeavoured to assist him in repelling it by disturbance of the air, but all we could do was to cut some of the words through the middle, and thus cause a little hesitation in the harangue. I could not forbear smiling to hear the lady's voice, which I knew very well, uttering a groundless invective upon domestic matters of very little importance. The husband perceiving my inclination to mirth, was much troubled that I should be a witness of the discipline he was undergoing. He said something about every family being liable to misunderstandings, and as the voice then entered upon a very private topic he walked hastily away, and carried his reproaches out of my hearing. I afterwards heard that he could not free himself from his incumbrance as long as he remained in the moon; but when he left it, the oratory could follow him no farther, and returned to its valley. I have been told that several other husbands who entered this valley were assailed in the same manner, and afterwards walked about the moon surrounded by these reprimands.

As I walked along, my attention was caught by a humming sound at a distance, which, as I was told, proceeded from the valley of lost sermons, whence an accidental wind had dispersed those discourses which had already assailed me in another part of the moon. I advanced into the valley, and stood surrounded by the uproar of divinity which filled it.

Notwithstanding the vast multitude of voices preaching in defiance of each other, I had no difficulty in distinguishing the words of each, but could single out any one that I chose to listen to. In all these valleys the same peculiarity is observable, that any voice can be heard without confusion, and separately from the rest.

The sermons in this place are divided according to their persuasion; the Church of England having its own district, and each body of Dissenters being limited to one place. The sects are sometimes confounded together by the wind, but when it is calm again they are all speedily reclaimed.

Here are collected all the fruitless English sermons, that is, all which have failed to effect either of the two great ends of preaching,—the virtue of the hearers, and the preferment of the clergyman.

I heard much Christian anger uttered with great sincerity. Some of these compositions had more the sound of political speeches delivered to a body of electors than of discourses written for morality; and I imagined they must have been enrolled in the sermons by mistake.

Most of the sermons aiming at a reformation of manners which I here listened to were, as it seemed to me, guilty of wanton calumny in describing the vices of mankind; for they agreed that not one virtuous man could be discovered on the earth by the most diligent search. Had these preachers been any thing more than sound, I should certainly have remonstrated with some of them against traducing us to the moon with so much zeal.

This comprehensive invective has long been the established practice of the pulpit, and many specimens of it are found in our oldest divines. Indeed, it seems to be a common opinion, that no writing could be an authentic sermon unless it contained at least one bold assertion—that the whole world is abandoned to vice. But notwithstanding the authority of an established practice, if it were my function to make men good from the pulpit, I should certainly dispense with this rule, whatever uneasiness I might feel at the sacrifice of an old custom. To affirm the universal prevalence of vice, appears to me a most preposterous method of recommending virtue. The clergyman, in order to discourage those who are inclined to frailty, informs them that, although they gratify every bad inclination, they will always be countenanced by the similar conduct of all other men. Instead of engaging the influence of example on his own side, he exerts himself to make vice more pleasing by the attraction which there is in the practice of others. Our preachers in this might take a hint from our political orators, who, wishing to discredit any particular opinions, always represent them as embraced by a very small party. The most ignorant declaimer on politics has never endeavoured to make converts to his principles by affirming that there is not another man in

the country who entertains them: yet by this argument virtue is enjoined from the pulpit, though against all common methods of persuasion; and I can hardly conceive, that when men are reasoned with from a small enclosed place, called a pulpit, they are to be moved by arguments exactly opposite to those which affect them from any other spot. I think, therefore, a preacher would furnish his hearers with a more natural inducement to virtue if, instead of labouring to convince them that by a dissolute life they will merely conform to established custom, he endeavoured to show that vicious practices will connect them with a small condemned party.

And, besides the attraction of example, these invectives against all mankind afford another discouragement to those who would practise morality; for he who learns from a sermon that there is not a good man in the world, must conclude goodness to be impracticable. Not having, therefore, the vanity to suppose that he can accomplish what no man living has succeeded in, and having heard that no man has been able to be virtuous, he infers, that he may spare himself the trouble and vexation of trying.

The sermons to which I was now listening, after having affirmed an universal depravity, proceeded to lament the uselessness of preaching, and to wonder how men could contrive their vicious enjoyments in defiance of so many sermons. Amongst all the reproaches with which a clergyman assails his congregation, there is none more frequent than imputing to them that he does not preach with any success; and he always concludes, without scruple, that the blame of not listening effectually must accrue to them.

It is observable, that the mind and the body, being committed for safety to two different artists, and many satirical observations being made against the success and utility of both, there is this difference in the two cases,—that all reflections on the art of medicine are directed against the physician by other people; while the satire concerning the efficacy of preaching is applied by the clergyman himself to his congregation. The preacher reproaches men with not becoming virtuous by his sermons;

but a patient would think a physician very unreasonable, who should upbraid him with remaining ill in contempt of medicine. A sick man, who finds no health in the remedies prescribed, thinks himself entitled to call in question the skill of his physician: yet I believe there is no example of a profligate man complaining to his clergyman of not having been reclaimed. Now, I would propose it as a question to be considered, whether the preacher can justly claim this peculiar advantage of having his patients supposed incurable, because he has failed to cure them; whether he has in all cases a right to complain of having been heard without amendment of life, and should not rather share, at least, with his hearers the blame of their not being reformed?

Not that I would enforce against the clergy that rigorous computation of service which Lucian recommends against the philosophers who had to furnish men with virtue in his time. He relates, that a philosopher demanding payment from a young man who had attended his lectures, the guardian of this pupil interposed, and accused the philosopher of not having fulfilled the contract; "for," said he, "you engaged to supply this young man with morality; and it is but a few days since he basely corrupted a young woman in our neighbourhood. How, then, can you have the confidence to require payment for goodness which he has never received from you?" Lucian advises that this exaction of the morals, before they be paid for, should be generally practised against the providers of virtue. I wonder the expedient has not occurred to those modern statesmen who have discovered that our prosperity depends upon our obtaining doctrine from the clergy at the lowest possible price; for I think nothing could so effectually impoverish them as that all under their charge should insist upon having virtue before they paid for it: so that any one accosted by the collector of tithe should, in surprise, plead such an immunity as this:—"By what right can the clergyman demand payment for morals which he has not given me? Was I not intoxicated last night? Did I not beat my wife yesterday? Have not I taught my children to steal?"

When I had satisfied myself with the Valley of Sermons, and was proceeding in my travels, I met with a gentleman who formerly acquired considerable renown by some poems which were much read and admired. He told me, in confidence, that he was in search of his poetical fame, which he had unaccountably lost without any demerit of his own. When his works were first published, he said, they had been universally admitted as authentic poetry; yet they were now generally exploded, though every word had remained in the situation where he had first placed it. He had for some time connived at the decay of his reputation, but at length felt himself so obsolete, that he had no longer the confidence to walk into a room as a poet, but had relapsed into an ordinary man.

I endeavoured to comfort him by observing, that the same fate had happened even to the illustrious dead: Pope was once in high esteem, but is now by no means a poet according to the most received doctrine. The greatest man has genius only on permission; and how long even Homer and Virgil may remain poets, depends upon the indulgence of those writers who furnish us with taste and admiration.

The neglected poet, however, thought that the loss of fame by others was but little advantage to himself. He said, that Pope, being dead, was not embarrassed about the behaviour to be assumed in a decay of reputation; and he seemed to think that he ought at least to have been read as long as he lived, that he might have escaped this perplexity. He said he could have borne the want of success if from the beginning men had committed the injustice of not reading him; but obscurity after fame was so irksome, that he knew not what to do. To evince the outrage he had suffered, he began to enlarge upon his forgotten works, and to argue in favour of their being poetry, in which I knew not how to help him. I was, indeed, innocent of having ceased to read his poems, for I had never attained to any farther knowledge of them than the names. However, I acquiesced in his praises as plausibly as I could.

He said his downfal gave him additional regret, because he had written his own life, which he had expected to be as much read and esteemed as that of either Alfieri or Goldoni; but he now should not have the confidence to publish it. When it was written, the world had evinced a great curiosity concerning him; and now nobody asked a question about the way in which he passed his time. I expressed my sense of the injustice committed by the world in having no curiosity about him.

He told me he had learned that a building within sight contained the lost renown of Englishmen, who from greatness had fallen into the adversity that he now suffered; and he had some hope of recovering his fame there. We advanced, and entered this building, which is very similar to that described before, as containing the cheerfulness of dejected persons. In a large room we saw great numbers of phials, which, we were told, preserve the fame that has left men before their death. As they are all arranged according to chronology, my companion, by a search into that period when his reception had become less certainly that of a poet, discovered the phial that bore his name. He took it into his hand, and held it up to the light; but, although it was of transparent glass, nothing could be seen within. But now it occurred to him, that he had not recovered his fame by acquiring this phial. He knew not what measures to take, and was at a loss to conceive how the phial could contribute to the general reading of his works.

I advised him to remove the stopper, and apply his nose, to receive any virtue that might ensue. This he did; when immediately his eyes began to sparkle, and he told me that the perfume he enjoyed was the greatest pleasure he had ever felt. He then held the phial to me: but I could perceive nothing, this renown being no pleasure to any but the owner. He exulted as much as a young author during the sale of his first book, and seemed to think himself suddenly restored to his honours; repeating several times, "I am a poet again!" I hinted to him, that the consequences of this phial must be fallacious, and expressed a doubt whether it were possible to become a poet through the nose, as he now believed himself to have done; since it was hardly to be supposed that, because he had

found an agreeable perfume, men would read his poems with new eagerness. He took no notice of what I said, but exclaimed, "The tenth edition is wanted! the press cannot work fast enough! the public must have patience!" I perceived that the phial had made him delirious; but, concluding that its suggestions would soon cease, I let him enjoy his greatness without any farther interruption. He walked away; and I know not how long it was before he was undeceived.

I now took a farther survey of the room. Each phial had a label recording the name of the person whose renown it contained, the means by which he had become famous, and the cause of his losing reputation, with some other particulars. They are divided into the different classes of writing, oratory, and other contrivances for being great. I first examined the authors, who led me into speculations on the instability of a writer's fame, and on the causes by which a work full of genius last year has now no merit, and that without any apparent change, except that twelve months have elapsed.

On the labels of these phials I read the several artifices practised by authors for renown. The device of some had been obscurity, which had charmed those judges who think a passage of no value if it can be read without delay, and ascribe the greatest genius to him who can obstruct his reader the most frequently, and oppose to him the greatest number of impassable phrases.

Another way to greatness recorded here is, the combining together of words the most repugnant to each other. I saw the name of a man who had eminently practised this deception, and obtained by it a great renown for a few weeks. In every page of his writings, those words which might have been supposed irreconcileable were found side by side, to the great admiration of the public. These unusual alliances, as being imagination, were very successful; and it was thought that none but an extraordinary man could have brought together words which offered so much resistance. But these words having remained in conjunction for a few weeks, the wonder ceased, and it began to be thought that, with an ample collection from diligent study of a dictionary, this style would not

be so difficult as at first had been imagined. From observing the several stratagems for greatness, I concluded, that the most efficacious expedient is surprise. The author who can so perplex his readers, that they know not what to think, is sure of renown. And, not only in writing, but all other kinds of imposition, he who can devise some project for giving men a surprise, will be a celebrated person, until they are recovered from it. This, indeed, soon happens, for men will not remain astonished; and, as soon as their wonder has ceased, they always impute fraud to the author of their amazement, and despise him accordingly. But still they cannot take from him the advantage of having once been famous, which sometimes is sufficient for peace of mind; since ambitious men differ much in their wants; and although some, like my friend the poet, cannot live in comfort without constant supplies of applause, yet others, by having once been gazed at for a month, are cheerful and serene till death.

I saw here the names of many authors who were once famous by a contrivance which has often been practised with great success: it is not in the power of a single man, but requires a confederacy. This stratagem is no more than a secret agreement amongst certain writers to extol each other; every one in this league, therefore, continues to affirm that the others are great men, till the world can no longer avoid believing it. Sometimes a man performs this office for himself, and endeavours to be a great author on his own assertion: but it is far safer to depend on the word of an accomplice. While one, in such a combination, is eagerly prosecuting the plot by encomiums on the rest, he seems merely to be acting with great candour towards his competitors for fame; and the world admires the generous spirit in which these men of genius live together. This invention is exactly described by Horace:—

> "Discedo Alcæus puncto illius, ille meo quis?
> Quis nisi Callimachus? Si plus adposcere visus
> Fit Mimnermus, et optivo cognomine crescit."

In this room, also, I found some who had been illustrious by another kind of conspiracy—the founding of mysterious sects in poetry. For this purpose, a few writers enter into a league, and agree upon a style (if so it

can be called) in which, to prevent criticism, they take care that there shall be no meaning. The art is to give their words such a sound, that the reader shall be persuaded they signify something remarkable, though he cannot reach it; and that he shall always seem just about to understand what he reads, without ever quite arriving at the sense. So great is the charm of reading in this confusion of mind, that he who has once contracted a love of it lays aside with contempt any composition that he can understand, and derides those who had before been received as poets, and who, in truth, are so far from being so, that a plain man of competent sagacity may in any passage discern their meaning without much difficulty. It is true, that the followers of these mysterious poets, being those who read for the sake of not understanding, are a small body: but this is a cause of pride to the poets, as being suited only to a few exalted minds; and any person, who complains of not understanding what he reads, is readily answered that he is not one of the chosen few. The readers, too, are as proud of the singularity as their author, and assume a superiority over all men who insist on comprehending what they read.

——"Illud
Quod mecum ignorat solus vult scire videri."

HORACE.

Next to the phials which contain the lost reputation of authors are some which hold the decayed fame of orators; those who, in their first session of parliament, cause wonder by their eloquence; and in the second, by their silence. I also saw the names of some orators of a lower kind; those statesmen in the open air, who distribute strange noises to any who will listen, and undertake to redress the hunger and raggedness of their hearers.

I observed on each of these phials containing the past renown of exploded men the name of the merit with which he was once supposed to be endowed, and under it the true quality, which had been erroneously construed into that merit. Thus, on the phial of one of these orators to

the crowd, I read "Eloquence," as his claim to greatness; and this word, underneath, was translated into "Impudence," which was also the interpretation of many other excellencies; and I was surprised to find in how many different ways a man may be great by this single endowment. He who has not this inspiration imagines that confidence must denote the possession of something to rely upon, and ignorantly supposes, that a man cannot be assured of his own eloquence without a subject to speak upon, and words to utter; while those who are endued with this great quality lie under no such necessities, but are intrepid without any means of confidence, except their own inward vigour and alacrity.

I learned here, that this gift of impudence had been wit and humour, argument, eloquence, industry, courage, zeal for the public good, and, indeed, any other virtue convenient to the owner. However, the renown by impudence never lasts long, which seems to be the only defect of that attribute.

Having examined these phials with many reflections on the perishable nature of fame, I walked forth, and soon reached a building, which contains the good intentions that have never been executed. There is a vast accumulation of these virtuous endeavours; and I found amongst them many actions so noble, that I greatly regretted they should have been put in practice only so far as to be thought of. Some persons appeared to have entertained only two or three of these excellent projects during their lives; others had been incessantly occupied in schemes of future goodness. I found a great number of resolutions to reform voluptuous habits: many had determined to repeat a beloved vice no more after a certain time; some deferred their abstinence till the following year; and others declared that it should begin the next day. This contrivance, of beginning virtue at an appointed time, seemed to have been much practised: one man, in the month of April, had resolved that he would be good after the first of June, retaining a license for the intervening weeks.

It is a precept of Lord Bacon's, that those who are endeavouring to assume an authority over their bad habits should contrive that what they undertake at one time be neither too easy nor too difficult; since, by attempting too little, they make no progress, and by aiming at too much, they fail altogether, and are discouraged. This plan seems plausible; but I here found innumerable instances in which it had been useless: nor from these examples was I able to form any opinion as to what quantity of reformation is the most likely to be endured at one time. Some confident men had been very peremptory with their faults, and resolved to dismiss them altogether; the consequence of which was, that these faults adhered to each other, and all remained where they were. Others had been content to begin with prohibiting one little enjoyment at a time, and had found the same disobedience; while others, who had tried the moderate amendment prescribed by Lord Bacon, had succeeded no better.

There were several who, after the frequent failing of a resolution, had desisted in despair, and for the rest of their lives permitted the error to remain unmolested; but many had continued to repeat the same unsuccessful effort, and as soon as one resolution gave way, had supplied its place with another, exactly similar, so as to equal the perseverance with which the spider renews his web whenever it is swept away.

A man, who lived principally in bed, had every day entered into a determination to rise at six; one, whose health suffered by the achievements of his appetite at meals, had employed the morning of every day in a resolution to dine sparingly; a third, while he was zealously dispersing a good fortune, had not passed a day without resolving to commence a rigid scrutiny into his accounts, and to have a personal acquaintance with every shilling he possessed. A man who, by an angry temper, put both his family and himself to great inconvenience, had undertaken from that moment to be the most peaceable man alive: this resolution had wanted repairing several times every day.

Men are apt to commit the error of believing, that a resolution, once fixed in the mind, will remain there till they authorise it to leave its post. Another mistake is, the supposing that, because a certain bad inclination

is not troublesome at the present moment, it can never return. Some animals have a property which naturalists call hybernation (they remain a part of every year without apparent life); and many persons do not know that their faults are amongst the creatures which undergo this intermission. From ignorance of this part of natural history, they believe a vice to be dead, and exult at having destroyed it, when it is only taking this natural rest, from which it is to have new vigour. The bad success of these persons, who all their lives were about to be excellent men, made me reflect on the deficiency of the ancient and celebrated injunction, "Know thyself," which "e cœlo descendit," and was delivered and received as comprehending all wisdom and virtue; whereas, to know our faults, and to abstain from them, are two achievements so obviously distinct, that I wonder how they could have been confounded.

It has been said, that hell is paved with good intentions; by which all efficacy seems to be denied to these unsuccessful attempts. This judgment appears to me a little too severe; and I would allow some merit to the good that we do in prospect. The chief praise, no doubt, must be given to the inexorable man who is actually virtuous; but he who makes an effort, though in vain, must, I think, be acknowledged superior to the numbers who continue to sin with perfect resignation. Moralists usually agree, that he who intends to do ill is culpable, though he should not accomplish his schemes; and I think, therefore, it is but just, that he who designs to do good, though without success, should be allowed some portion of praise.

Pursuing my journey, I arrived at a valley, in which I saw a crowd of seeming men and women, dressed in fantastic habits, and walking up and down: but one whom I there met informed me, that this was the Valley of Lost Fashions, and that the persons I saw were only dresses which had formerly reigned. I walked down into the valley; and then perceived that these dresses had no person to guide and conduct them: yet they stood upright, as if the wearers had been within, and moved about as gracefully as they could have done under their command. The several parts of the same suit adhered together, each occupying its

proper place; and the hat hovered over, as if supported by a head. These dresses were of both sexes; and I saw every variety of apparel that has inhabited England. The dresses of the different ages were mingled together: there was the scanty and simple concealment of savage times, and the several sorts of gorgeous and cumbersome robes formerly worn in our country; in looking at which, I wondered how people could ever have been induced to involve themselves in such impediments.

I here found, not only the dresses once in fashion, but also the gestures which have been practised in former ages; for every suit of clothes retained the manner and behaviour to which it had been accustomed. There were some ceremonious clothes, which were incessantly paying homage to others, and, in particular, made very low bows to every female dress which they met. Some moved with a solemn sedate pace, and others were very lively. I observed several ladies' gowns that had a great deal of vivacity.

All these dresses conducted themselves so naturally, that I could hardly be satisfied there was not a prompter within each. Seeing, therefore, an embroidered petticoat, which walked in a very stately manner, I ventured to raise it, in order to disclose whatever might be there. To this inquiry it made no resistance; and I found that it had none of those secrets to keep, which are usually entrusted to a petticoat.

I observed a gold-headed cane walking up and down with a great deal of medical dignity and learning, and above this, at about six feet from the ground, there floated in the air a redundant wig, as being part of the same physician.

I was here convinced how many of the estimable qualities of human nature are comprehended in dress and gesture; for when I saw these suits of clothes walking about, each with its own grace and manner, I could not avoid feeling some respect for them as human beings. When the splendid apparel of a nobleman in Queen Elizabeth's time stalked

past me with a slow solemn step, I admired its profound reflection, and political abilities; and I was several times inclined to laugh at the wit of a lively coat and waistcoat.

I think, in our estimation of those suits of clothes which discharge all the duties of this life with propriety and applause, we do not sufficiently acknowledge where the true merit lies. Lord Burleigh was so sensible of the rights of dress, that in throwing off his gown, he frequently said to it, "Lie there, Lord Treasurer," as being the real officer of state.

As I was walking about amongst these actors, I was suddenly startled by a formidable oath, which was pronounced near me; and I turned round to see which of the garments was the profane one. I found, however, that they were not capable of such an accomplishment as swearing. Another oath, still more copious than the first, was uttered close to me, where there was no suit of clothes to be seen; and I then found that these imprecations were preserved here amongst the exploded fashions. I soon heard every variety of them uttered without anger, and, as it seemed, merely for the purpose of adding grace or vigour to the sentiments which they had accompanied. There were some poetical oaths, which seemed to come from a swearer of imagination, and others very concise and simple. Many were so obscure, that I found it impossible to discover their meaning; while some were intelligible enough. As swearing is now a dead language, we could not, without considerable study, become thoroughly versed in that literature. But I think it might admit of dispute, whether the suppression of oaths has been a wise or useful measure, since they certainly added great facility to conversation. It is known that, in the days of oaths, there were many who swore with much invention, but had little ability to converse in any other style; so that we may suppose there are persons who, by the prohibition of the only language they can speak, are excluded from all conversation, and must distinguish themselves by silence. Our ancestors applied oaths to a great variety of purposes: to enforce an argument, or supply the want of one; to evince sincerity; to ratify a sentiment; to gain time for preparation: they used them, also, as

invective, wit, fancy, repartee, and, indeed, as the representatives of every beauty of speech; so that, manifestly, a great loss and barrenness must have accrued to our conversation from this supposed refinement.

But in favour of this art, we may allege an antiquity far beyond our ancestors, since we find specimens of it in the oldest writings. The orators have always used it in great abundance: it was successfully cultivated both by Demosthenes and Cicero; and it is to be observed, that it remained in the modern oratory of England after it had been exploded in conversation. In both Houses of Parliament, a well-timed "Good God!" has been frequently known to have great force, and sometimes was the chief argument that a speech contained.

Whilst I was wandering amongst the departed garments, having escaped from the oaths, I heard a voice near me exclaim, "Whatever is, is;" and very soon was added, "It is impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be." I could not conjecture whence this important intelligence came, till I met with a person, who informed me, that the maxims which have passed for truths amongst men, as soon as they are exploded, arrive in the moon, and are associated with the other dismissed fashions. In what I had just heard, I recognised the innate ideas with which philosophers formerly stored the mind of an infant, supposing that, for our safety through life, we are born fully instructed, that "Whatever is, is," and provided, also, with some other truths equally useful.

I afterwards heard many other maxims, which once were undisputed: for in this Valley of Lost Fashions the air was filled with truths, religious, moral, political, and physical; and, finding here so much of the learning of our ancestors, I trembled for the fate of many things which are now undoubtedly true amongst us: for the reason of man is certainly as variable as his dress; and that secret power, which we call fashion, regulates opinions, as it does skirts and collars. Different doctrines come and go in succession, just as one form of apparel supplants another: a particular kind of dress is dismissed, not for any demerit, but because it has been worn for a certain time. By the same law of variety, that which has been true for several years is therefore not entitled to be true any

longer; and as those who abandon a particular dress can assign no reason for it, except the example of others, so, when an opinion is universally renounced in any country, the chief part of the nation know not why they now consider it false, nor why they before believed it to be true. There are, indeed, some stubborn enemies of fashion, both in dress and reason: one man prides himself on fidelity to notions which all others have deserted, and disdains to think any thing which was not thought a century ago; another, of the same character, but differently manifested, continues to dress himself with equal firmness, resists all innovation in the brim of his hat, and never deviates in his coat or his gaiters from the example set him by his father.

It has been an eager study, with some writers, to trace the progress and succession of opinions in past ages, and to explain how one prevalent notion has been naturally derived from another; but in such speculations there is usually this imperfection, that they stop at the present time, instead of proceeding to deduce future opinions from the present. For it is singular, that men who have sagacity to demonstrate that the maxims prevalent in one age must unavoidably have followed those in the preceding, yet from our present doctrines can derive no opinions at all for the future; and can no more invent maxims to be entertained five years hence, than a milliner can invent dresses to be worn at that time.

In this assembly of the deceased fashions I found many ancient and venerable maxims, which served our ancestors for truth; and some of them, I thought, might have been retained amongst us with advantage, though many had certainly been dismissed with justice. I began to think of catching a few of these past truths which I most approved of, and turning them out in England; but was informed that they would immediately return to the moon. Besides the ancient truths, I found here some which had been born and had died within my own memory, and some which had been truths one year, and delusions the next.

The noise of these contending opinions, each as positive as its antagonist, each enjoying its short popularity, and thus succeeding and undermining each other like statesmen, could not fail to make me

consider with regret how very little of real durable truth there is in the world. However, we have this consolation, that if truth is not to be found on the earth, its place is amply supplied by belief, which is an excellent substitute for it.

Belief has, indeed, many advantages over truth; it serves equally well to stop inquiry, and satisfy the curiosity which harasses mankind; and it may be attained without the labour and search by which truth must be pursued; for it happens fortunately that it is as easy to believe as it is difficult to know. He, too, who follows truth with a life of meditation, can seldom arrive at any firm conviction, but is continually perplexed by doubt; while the resolute believer is not disturbed in his tenets by the slightest distrust. Besides this, the truths that we can reach are but few, and the greatest part of nature is inaccessible to inquiry; while the knowledge of him who believes is unlimited: he finds nothing obscure, but is admitted into all the secrets of the universe. This, too, must be considered, that he who, after great labour, fancies himself possessed of a truth, may, upon further discoveries, see his hypothesis taken from him; but the believer, who has a resolute mind, can by no art or reasoning be deprived of his belief. It is also a great evil of truth, that we must receive it as it is by nature, and not as we would wish it to be. On the other hand, we have it in our power to believe whatever we desire; and in our plans of the universe may take care to admit nothing to our disadvantage. This flexible nature of belief is well understood by those reasoners who, when they would refute a doctrine, consider it sufficient if they prove it to be pernicious; whence, without hesitation, it is to be false. For the reasons I have assigned, my advice to all persons is, that they leave the perplexities of truth, and resort to belief, as of much greater ease, certainty, and serenity.

The place I visited after the territory of fashions, was a house preserving the female characters that have been lost. They are kept in bottles; and upon the label of each is recorded the accident or temptation under which the character was let go; and I found much amusement in this enumeration of the disasters incident to the female reputation. One

character had entered the bottle by surprise, another by perseverance; society had been fatal to some, and solitude to others; some perished by flattery, others by argument; here I saw a character lost by thoughtlessness, and there by contemplation.

While I was reading the narratives of these accidents I observed a lady whom I knew to have incurred this important loss, in search of the bottle that contained her own reputation, which having found, she seized it very eagerly, when immediately it dropped from her hands and was broken. The character flowed out, resembling quicksilver in appearance, and the lady in great anxiety endeavoured to collect it, but in vain, for it escaped with the utmost agility whenever she touched it.

From this house I proceeded to another, filled also with bottles, containing the lost popularity of statesmen. I here found a well known politician who has occupied a place in the English cabinet. He told me in confidence that he had been sent to the moon to regain the lost popularity of his party. It had escaped from them, he said, in a very singular manner, and without any misconduct of theirs. He soon found the bottle he was in search of; but these bottles being fixed to their shelves he had contrived a plan for catching and detaining the popularity, which he had been told would issue forth as soon as the cork should be removed. He produced a paper bag, composed of an act of parliament, which had been designed for endless popularity, supposing that if he could once enclose the lost popularity of himself and his colleagues in that bag he could carry it back without any danger of losing it on the road.

Just as he was about to release the prize, and with much preparation was holding his bag ready to catch it, another statesman of a different party entered the room, and advancing to the spot produced a bag, with which he also stood ready to dispute the possession of this valuable popularity. His bag also was made out of a parliamentary bill, but it had not yet been passed, and he seemed to be confident that it would be strong enough to secure the captive.

But the first invader of the bottle seeing this new competitor desisted from his undertaking, and began to remonstrate against the interference. He said the popularity, that he was going to regain, belonged to himself and his colleagues, and no other party could have a just claim to it; their rivals, he added, ought to invent a popularity for themselves, and not attempt to steal that which others had made by their own industry. He affirmed, too, that the bag which his adversary had brought was made of paper stolen out of his desk.

To this the second politician answered, that the popularity in this bottle was not the property of one party rather than another, but the prize of any who could gain possession of it. "You and your colleagues," said he, "have devised a convenient maxim, that whoever obtains the good will of the public is usurping something that belongs to you. You have bespoken for yourselves every benefit to the country that can be thought of, and any other man who attempts to do good is encroaching on your rights. You declare yourselves the authors of every useful law that any man may hereafter propose; you are the sole proprietors of the people's applause, and nobody can acquire approbation except by defrauding you."

In the midst of this dispute, a third statesman, armed with a bag, came to claim the contents of the bottle. He derided the pretensions of the other two, saying that no party could have popularity by just means except himself and his friends, and whatever portion other men might enjoy they must have gained by deceit. However, he was convinced that the bags of the other two would be incapable of holding the popularity, and that his own would succeed, for he said it was made out of some admirable laws. I looked at his bag, and saw it was composed of blank paper, for the laws he spoke of were yet to come, being only in his intentions, and the paper kept vacant for them.

After some farther dispute it seemed impossible that these claims to the bottle should be settled by negotiation; and the only agreement that the three statesmen could arrive at was, that the popularity being let loose should remain in the possession of any one of the three to whom it

should be allotted by that kind of justice called a scramble, which is a mode of arbitration very useful and decisive in adjusting many political contests.

The three politicians, therefore, standing watchfully with their bags, the cork was drawn, when a loud shout of English huzzas rushed from the bottle. This was the popularity; and the first of the three statesmen lost no time in placing his bag over the mouth of the bottle, when it was instantly torn into a thousand pieces by the wild shout. The second politician had placed his bag immediately over that of his rival, to provide for this accident; but the precious huzzas escaped through it with the same ease as through the first, and left it a similar ruin. The third statesman laughed triumphantly, and held out his bag with great confidence; but not a single cry would enter it, and the whole clamour flew through an open window, and was heard gradually becoming more distant. The three baffled statesmen ran to the window, and listened eagerly to the retiring uproar, imagining sometimes that it approached them again. When at length it had quite died away, they began to dispute in which bag it ought to have been enclosed, and continued the debate for some time with much argument and anger.

As I walked along, looking for new adventures, I was surprised by the sight of a church, with a parsonage house near to it, the scene having an appearance entirely English. I approached the house, wondering at so exact a copy of things in my own world; but when I had come close to it, I was still more astonished to see the house shrink suddenly, and convert itself into the dress of a bishop, the roof dwindling to a wig, and the walls becoming robes; at the same instant the church was increased into a cathedral, which I recognised as the cathedral of Worcester. While I gazed in wonder, the cathedral underwent another change, and in a moment was that of Canterbury. Immediately afterwards the bishop's robes raised themselves, and stood upright as vigorously as if they had enclosed a real bishop, while the wig hung over them as if supported by a head. The robe then stretched out its right sleeve as being in the act of oratory. I had a great curiosity to understand this mysterious

transaction, and fortunately I met with a person who was able to explain it. He told me that all this was merely a vision, which had passed through the mind of one of those contemplative persons who are usually called castle builders; that fortunate race of beings, who, if they are left alone but a few minutes, can bring to pass whatever they wish for. He said the moon was amply supplied with such meditations, the name of the dreamer being always to be found upon the figure which he had sent there.

On learning this, I approached Canterbury Cathedral to look for the name of the person who had built it, and I found inscribed over the door the name of a young clergyman whom I knew. He had taken orders without either money or interest, and did not seem likely to benefit Christianity, otherwise than by wearing a black coat. Having, therefore, time for meditation, he had been busy in making the only kind of provision for himself that lay in his power. When I saw his name I could easily interpret his vision: in the beginning of it he had been settled in a country living, which was the church and parsonage house that had first drawn my attention; from this, by some celebrated works on divinity, he had been raised to the bishopric of Worcester, and thence transferred to Canterbury with a remarkably rapid promotion. The robes and the wig were now evidently addressing the House of Lords. In this office the lawn sleeves performed many explanatory and convincing gestures; and the wig supporting itself in the air, at a suitable distance from the robes, duly executed all that significant nodding and trembling by which such a wig usually defends the church. The dress, indeed, had every perfection of oratory except meaning. While this eloquence proceeded, he who had attained all this preferment was probably wandering solitary and neglected.

I now found that I was in the territory allotted to these castles; and proceeding a little farther, I was surrounded by visionary sights, the several objects changing every instant as the dream went on. In the midst of these chimeras I observed a beautiful woman seated, and was surprised by her not taking the least notice of any thing round her; but

on going behind her I saw a name inscribed on the back of her neck, and so discovered that she was herself a castle. The name was that of a young lady endued with a very homely person, who being unable to acquiesce in the face and shape imposed upon her, had secretly provided herself with another form more to her taste. What I now saw, therefore, was the figure which she had appointed to personate her in her imaginary actions. This elegant apparition was a dark beauty when I first observed her, but soon after became suddenly fair, the lady in the course of her dream having chosen a new complexion. She was at first in an evening dress; but in an instant a riding habit grew over her, and she was on horseback with a very graceful seat. Soon after she resumed the evening dress and was dancing.

At the same time I saw a lawyer's wig and gown, and by the eloquent gestures of the sleeves and the forcible nods of the wig, I perceived that it was pleading a cause. This was the apparel of a young lawyer, which, finding no employment in court, was frequently exercised in the imagination of the wearer.

While I was examining these visions a sudden wind sprung up and swept them away. Canterbury Cathedral glided along in a very majestic manner, and the wig and gown continued to argue as far as I could see them. Amongst the fictitious actions here, which I had time to observe, were many pairs of young men and women engaged in very agreeable conversation. These were the dreams of those hapless persons, who, unable to obtain a real accomplishment of their tenderness, have recourse to imagination, where no accident or prohibition can interrupt their interviews. But I must here warn those who practise such clandestine meetings, that since the road to the moon has been opened their private meditations are no longer safe. An action only thought of has formerly been judged secure from the most inquisitive; but now, when all have access to the moon, where the tenderest visions are thus exposed, it will be advisable to dream with great caution. I here saw two or three young ladies of my acquaintance engaged in confederacies of which the world has had no suspicion, and the apparitions bore an exact

resemblance to the ladies themselves. It is true that in one of these chimerical scenes of tenderness two figures must concur, and, therefore, it cannot be known which of the two has transacted the vision; but a probable conjecture may often be formed by those who know them. I have thought it right to give this warning to the builders of castles, who have hitherto been secure against curiosity, and in all their forbidden meetings have enjoyed an exemption from the common danger of discovery. Their privilege of secrecy is now lost; and henceforth, when they wish to retire for the customary enjoyment, they will do well to remember that all they are to think of must be acted also before the eyes of profane and satirical observers.

The castles being blown away from me, I walked forward reflecting on the happy lot of those who build castles, and are thus enabled to determine what events shall happen to them. There are many persons so dull, that through life they have no incidents except those which really occur; and if an advantage, which they desire, does not actually take place, they are quite unable to obtain the enjoyment of it. These persons cannot conceive the life of a castle builder. He is the only man who can set fortune at defiance, being entirely the master of his own destiny. He does not, therefore, distribute prosperity to himself in that sparing and imperfect manner which fortune always observes: he is subject neither to delay nor disappointment in his undertakings; and instead of needing the labour and perseverance which are necessary to others for success, he can accomplish all that he wishes in walking about, in sitting still, or at full length. The best gifts of fortune are not comparable to his fictions; for in real life there is always something defective to impair the happiest lot, but he who lives in vision takes care to exclude every circumstance that could disturb his serenity. It is to be considered, too, that an actual event can happen only once, but in imagination the same fortunate casualty may be repeated as often as it is wished for. It has always been a complaint that the successes of life are followed by satiety; but an able builder of castles is never satisfied. Those who are subservient to real occurrences are perpetually stopped in their designs by an obstacle

called impossibility, but this is no impediment to a true visionary: he can recover a fortune which has been squandered, recall a lost friend to life, and restore ruined health to vigour. It is true that those who devote themselves to the pursuit of these fancies are soon disqualified for the real affairs and successes of life, but so great is the happiness by a proficiency in dreaming that they can willingly relinquish all other advantages.

I was now attracted by the loudest valley that I had yet heard, and was told by one whom I met, that it contained the disputes of conversation, so that I no longer wondered at the great eagerness and confusion of voices. I soon arrived at the place, and walked into these controversies, which are divided into separate districts according to the subjects of them.

I first found myself in the political disputes to which every place of resort and conversation throughout England had contributed. Clamours on public affairs were assembled in this spot from the clubs of London, the coffee-rooms of all the towns in the kingdom, the dinner tables of country gentlemen, and innumerable other places where men talk for the welfare of their country; and since every Englishman is both a statesman and an orator, it may be imagined there is here a noble exhibition of eloquence. I heard with some amusement these voices talking with all the zeal of men engaged in a public duty; for most of those who are politicians in private believe that their country cannot prosper if they are silent. I listened to several of those who are statesmen out of history, and in their reasonings about present events always argue two hundred years back. I heard the dispute of two voices, which contrived to embroil Hampden in all the transactions of the present time. There were many other reasoners who combated on the events of former ages with as much zeal and anger as they could have done on the laws which concerned their own property. Indeed, few Englishmen are neutral readers of history: almost all enrol themselves as party men in all contests since Elizabeth, and with great fidelity adhere to their friends in every page. A true Englishman is persuaded that his own credit depends

on the reputation of certain statesmen of past times, in whose designs he is so deeply engaged that he must share their praise or ignominy, and he is defending his own character when he decries their adversaries, who must be villains before he can be an honest man.

After listening to these historical disputes, I advanced a few steps, and found myself in modern times, where all the late vicissitudes were debated with much indignation. I heard animadversions on certain politicians, in voices which by an earnest sincerity of tone betrayed suffering for the want of office.

I amused myself here with observing the several arts of controversy which are practised by private disputants, and perhaps are in greatest perfection on political subjects, such as a louder voice than the adversary may be willing or able to arrive at; a sudden anger, which may make him silent from fear or decency; the not hearing any thing that he says, a resolution which must baffle the best reasoner; the beginning to talk while he is in the crisis of his argument. I found here an admirable expedient for making an argument unanswerable, which is to repeat it till the adversary is tired of answering it. Another artifice, much practised in this place, was, that when one disputant had urged something inconvenient, the other, with great confidence, would say something wholly foreign to the question, as if in answer, and then the surprise and silence of the first, while he considers how this can be applied to the subject, must be construed into a defeat.

There are other arts, perhaps, not less victorious than these, as a contemptuous silence, and disdaining to argue any longer; a smile of superiority, a look of having much more to say were it worth the trouble, a pretended yielding to the adversary, as if encouraging him to talk, and expose his ignorance.

Being tired of politics, I wandered through the valley, and heard innumerable subjects debated. I here found a proof that nature leaves no creature altogether without defence; for when she does not empower a man to argue, she enables him to be angry.

I had occasion to consider the extravagance of those philosophers, who from time to time have embraced a singular project of bringing all the world to one opinion, for I observed here how naturally our friend, by maintaining one side of a question, provokes us to undertake the other. And yet this wild design of making men unanimous is still entertained by certain persons, who believe that they are appointed to think for all the world, and that mankind have nothing to do but think after them. It is true, they allow, that men are now stubborn; but the age of thinking alike will arrive.

I remarked, in this valley, that there is nothing so efficacious in prolonging and enforcing a controversy as for men not to know what they are disputing about. There were also many instances of another endless way of reasoning, when two disputants agree without suspecting it, and in different words contend vehemently for the same thing.

I found in this valley a great number of what may be called domestic disputes, being those contests in which some families pass all their leisure and retirement. I listened to some of these, and greatly admired the invention of the reasoners, and their vigilance in seizing opportunities for a difference of opinion. I heard a lady and six daughters debating whether a certain person had grey eyes or hazel: the mother and two daughters contended for the hazel, while the four others supported grey. Both sides maintained their own hypothesis with great vehemence, dexterity, and strength of argument. Each reasoner insisted on her own superior opportunities of information, for one had seen the eyes most frequently, but another had viewed them in the most advantageous light. Neither party could gain a proselyte from the other. I heard another family disputing with equal earnestness, whether a certain person, lately dead, had been good-natured or not. I listened to several other controversies of the same kind, as acute, angry, and useful, as many famous disputes amongst scholars and divines.

Being at last quite weary of all this wrangling, I continued my journey, and soon reached a building that contains lost experience, being the opportunities which men have neglected of becoming wise at their own

expense. Over the door is a statue representing Experience. It is the figure of an old man, expressing very significantly the pretence to wisdom, from a long life, appearing to be in the act of imparting caution, and asserting a title to know more than others, from having lived longer. This figure reminded me of several old men whom I have known to gain great confidence in their own opinion from a long seclusion, supposing themselves practised in the conduct of life by a continuance of infirmity and decay, and concluding that by an absence of twenty years from the world they must understand it better than those who are still conversant with it. Most old men need to be told that the being alive is not experience, and that the longer their old age has been, the more time they have had to forget.

I entered the building, and found one large room of the same appearance as I have before described, being full of bottles, which preserve the wasted experience. Each bottle had a label giving a history of its contents. This room made me consider how erroneous is the common opinion concerning the efficacy of experience. It is usually said, that we are not to be taught by what happens to others, but only by what befalls ourselves, yet I think most who reflect on their lives must confess that the warnings they give themselves are to little purpose. To prove the vanity of experience, I would have any man consider how often he has failed to effect that improvement in his own character or conduct, which he now promises himself shall be very soon concluded. When we have every day endeavoured not to do a thing, and have yet done it every day for some years past, we are still convinced that to-morrow it really will be omitted; such is the authority of experience over our judgment. A stone, says Aristotle, being thrown up a thousand times does not learn to ascend. In many laudable endeavours, men benefit no more by experience than the stone, but still come back to the same place. I think, therefore, it may be said that experience has just force enough to make men lament that they are doing wrong, but not enough to make them do right.

In this room I saw many persons examining their own bottles, where they found the follies which they had diligently repeated after learning the bad consequences of them. They all were struck with melancholy at finding how many occasions of becoming prudent they had neglected. Gamblers found here the frequent losses and turns of fortune which had warned them of ruin, and in defiance of which they had proceeded with admirable resolution. The spendthrift was reproached with having still forgotten the want and difficulty which many times in his life had admonished him of the habits by which he was now a beggar.

I read with some amusement the histories on many of these bottles. One of them containing the wasted experience of a friend of mine, a member of parliament, records his endeavours to be an orator. Though every experiment has been conclusive in favour of silence, he still persists in his design of being the first orator in the House of Commons. Next to this bottle is one, which proves that experience has no greater force against poetry. It belongs to the author of a yearly volume, the reception of which every year has bid him desist from being a poet, but has not retarded the composition for the year following.

I observed a gentleman of my acquaintance studying attentively the label of his own bottle, which was covered with a long narration of neglected warnings, for he is thoroughly conversant with almost every enterprise of imprudence. He told me that he should take possession of his bottle, and carrying it to the earth make use of it to resist temptations; for he had seen another man drink a small quantity out of his bottle, by which he was immediately inspired with experience, and resolute against all follies. My friend, therefore, intended to have recourse to his bottle upon every urgent occasion, and so keep himself prudent as long as its contents lasted. I have since inquired the success of his scheme, and learned that at first, on the approach of any dangerous allurement, he applied himself to his bottle, and by a few drops mixed with water was quite fortified against it, having a painful remembrance and awe of former evils. While the influence of his draught continued, he remembered only the satiety and weariness of pleasure, with every

inconvenience and shame of his several transgressions. These visions of prudence soon passed away, and each separate temptation required a new draught. But when the first charm of temperance was over, another difficulty occurred; for when an opportunity of being frail was expected, it required as much firmness to drink from the bottle as to resist without drinking. He still, however, continued this excellent medicine; but took care to be austere only when there was no occasion of enjoyment, and when any pleasure was near, he carefully abstained from the bottle. Timing his draughts thus judiciously, he still benefits by past experience.

Not long after I had quitted this house, I arrived at a valley which yielded a sound quite different from all the rest, not resembling either the human voice or any instrument that I had ever heard. Being told that it was the valley of Cant I did not wonder that it should give an unintelligible noise. I entered the valley, and found myself in the midst of these sounds, which I had been unable to interpret, and I then discovered that they were the religious tones which have prevailed in England since the first introduction of cant. There were no articulate words, but only tones in every variety of zeal and devotion.

I found here a gentleman very learned in antiquities, who was delighted with this multitude of noises; for he said that the most eloquent and faithful historian being unable to describe a sound, we have had no real knowledge of the tones of different sects, though we read much about them, but here he had found the authentic whining of every persuasion in past times. He listened attentively, endeavouring to assign the tones to their respective ages, which he imagined himself able to do with great exactness, though I knew not by what rules he was guided. He declared he should catch specimens of all these sounds, and shut them up in a box, so as to have by him all the tones in which our ancestors have served God, and thus supply a great defect in history.

I did not stay long amongst these strange noises, which at different times have served as piety, but passing further into the valley, I found cant under another representation. I was surrounded by a vast multitude of faces, or appearances of faces, which hovered in the air without being

allied to bodies, or any other visible support. These faces were employed in the different contortions and grimaces which have been thought acceptable to God by adherents of the several sects. I was not a little amused by the violent endeavours of these faces; I saw features let out to an immoderate length; eye-brows with wonderful skill conveyed to a place far remote from that where nature had settled them: and eyes most ingeniously put out of sight without the lids being shut. Some of these artists had great advantages from nature in uncommon gifts of ugliness, and others had by industry supplied their natural defects in that endowment.

Being soon satisfied with this morality I left the faces frowning for their faith, and walking on saw a crowd of hands in the air performing their office also in the rites of cant. Some pairs of hands appeared to be preaching, and others praying; some were held upwards for a time, then stretched out, probably to the conviction of all who listened; some were clasped together with a violent effort of the muscles.

As soon as I had walked out of the district of hands, I found the air darkened by a flight of religious tracts, a crowd of which hovered round me in the air. When I appeared amongst them they rushed to me and opened themselves before my eyes that I might read them, struggling and contending with each other for the preference. Many of these tracts had been great travellers, and bore on the outside the names of the places they had visited. Some of them had preached in the East Indies, others in the West; and I felt a pride in considering how great a part of the world we supply with cant; nor is there the least fear of our stock being exhausted.

In another part of the valley I found a book recording the designs of cant, which are not yet completed. The first I cast my eye upon was a project to suppress eating, drinking, and breathing on a Sunday, particularly amongst tradesmen. Rabelais mentions some people whose practice was to breakfast on yawning; but this proposed law would make it serve for breakfast and dinner too on one day in every week. It appeared that the authors of this design have great hopes of persuading parliament very

soon to enforce yawning on Sunday, and also of inducing people voluntarily to devote fifty-two days of the year to that laudable exercise, most advantageous to the public and most pleasing to heaven.

After this valley I came to another, whence issued a great uproar, which I found was the debates of parliament. I was soon in the midst of them, and heard a formidable din on various subjects, together with the many sounds of acquiescence and dissent. English orators will be pleased to find their speeches preserved in this manner; for it may spare them the expense and solicitation by which they must obtain a place in certain volumes for what they have said. I observed here several renowned senators who listened with exemplary attention to their own harangues. The speeches are preserved by this valley more faithfully than they can be by printing; for they are uttered without the loss of a single hesitation, repetition, or any other beauty with which they were first delivered. A speech, by losing these delays loses much of its length, which is now acknowledged the chief merit of oratory, as appears by the practice in both our houses of parliament. Cicero being asked which oration of Demosthenes he thought the best, answered, "The longest." All speeches are now estimated by the same rule, but our English orators far excel the ancients in duration; and we have many who, on any important subject, are at least two hours more eloquent than Demosthenes. In judging of speeches by their length there is this great convenience, that there can be no dispute about the superiority of one to another; for when speeches were praised according to the force of reasoning, choice of words, and other particulars once in esteem, it was impossible from the difference of taste in men that they should agree which of two speeches had those merits in the greatest perfection; but now the preference between two orations can make no question, provided the clock be carefully consulted.

I may mention in this place a project which I have devised for greatly improving the debates in parliament, and freeing the despatch of business. In explaining my plan, I must confess that it is borrowed, having been practised in the following case with great success. A married woman once complained to a female friend of the bitter and incessant

disputes between herself and her husband, and asked advice about the means of avoiding them. Her friend answered that she had in her possession a certain water, of singular virtue in preventing quarrels between married people, and she would give her a bottle of it, with instructions for using it to that excellent purpose. Having filled a bottle with the peaceful liquid, she presented it to her friend, desiring that whenever her husband was beginning to be angry and contentious, she would fill her mouth with this water, and keep it there till he had become perfectly quiet. Soon after, the wife came back to have the bottle replenished, and to thank her friend for the miraculous cure and peace effected in her household, for the water had put an end to all disputes. Now I have been informed by a great chemist that the water of the Thames has the same wonderful property; and my contrivance is, that every member of parliament, at the beginning of each debate, should hold a sufficient quantity of it in his mouth, until the question be passed. I am convinced that this practice would infinitely improve the deliberations of our senate, by preventing the delays of business, and the perplexing of many subjects.

In the building which I next entered, the lost friendships of English people are preserved. I found a large room filled with urns of a beautiful shape, each of which contains a past friendship. On the outside of the urn is inscribed the cause which alienated the two friends, the duration of their kindness, with some other circumstances. I became melancholy at surveying this great assemblage of urns, and reflecting on the instability of friendship. When we lose our kindness towards a friend, we commonly pass into the contrary emotion, and entertain something like aversion towards him. Two men thus altered cannot meet without uneasiness; and I believe most people very early in life can name several whose presence reproaches them in this manner.

There is often no reason to be assigned for these separations: we formerly loved our friend without knowing why, and now his voice, his countenance, his gestures give us offence, which is equally inexplicable.

We may be mortified that our judgment in reasoning is so liable to vary at different times of our life; but perhaps this want of firmness in our affections is still more lamentable.

It is said by Swift that every man is born with a certain portion of friendship, which he is to distribute amongst those he lives with, so that he cannot give to one without taking from another. I think there is some truth in this observation; and it may explain the cessation of many friendships, which otherwise would be very mysterious. There are some who pretend to have an unlimited stock of this commodity, and are liberal in bestowing it upon all who approach them; but this alacrity in loving only confirms the maxim of Swift: for the little value of the kindness, which in this case falls to the share of each, proves that friendship is not to be so divided.

On many of these urns I read the causes of estrangement. Some friends had lost their kindness for each other by being too long separate, others by being too long together; some by having different interests, and others by pursuing the same thing.

Lord Bacon says that admonition is the chief office and benefit of friendship; but I found here numberless instances of friends having been divided for ever by too faithful an execution of this office.

In wandering about when I had left the house of friendship I approached a valley, which I learned was the receptacle of lost vanity, and I was surprised to hear of such a place, because I had always thought that this endowment is never lost, but remains with a man till his death. Having often seen it in full vigour after the decay of strength, memory, benevolence, and almost every faculty, I had supposed that where it once is it must be inseparable from a human being, and consequently that it wanted no asylum in the moon.

I had always thought it the chief mitigation of old age, that whoever is in that difficulty, though he should lose every other ease, can still keep his vanity, which is certainly the principal comfort of life.

But I found there was here a valley full of this excellent attribute without any loss to the owners; for the vanity kept in this place is the fruitless ostentation of those who erroneously believe themselves admired, and are at the pains to assume a superiority which is altogether groundless.

When I arrived at the edge of the valley, I saw first a crowd of what I conceived to be young men employed in very singular movements; but on walking amongst them, I found they were only the outsides of men, or rather apparitions. They were all dressed with exact propriety; and I soon discovered that these shadows represented the elaborate behaviour of that race of men who claim greatness from a superiority in moving about. Each of these figures was engaged in executing the gestures peculiar to it in walking along a street, in entering a room, in bowing, and in every other momentous transaction. They went through their arts very rapidly, so as to make a great confusion in the different duties and situations of life. Their gestures passed from the park to the opera, and thence to a ball-room without the least delay, the exploits of each place being performed with wonderful despatch. Many of these figures smiled perpetually, and some with great skill. It was a ridiculous thing to see them bowing without any provocation, and performing other gestures, which there was nothing to justify.

They had no voice, but they moved their lips, and greatly excelled in conversation so far as it is a beauty to the eye. But all the gifts exhibited here had been lost by the dulness of mankind, the superiority of these men being of such a nature that no one could discover the grounds upon which they reasoned.

I had a wish to take one of these actors a prisoner, thinking he might be an useful warning to certain young men of my acquaintance. I therefore seized the one of greatest pretensions, and compressed him till he was concealed within the palms of my hands, but, notwithstanding this restraint, I felt him endeavouring to continue his exercises. I then suddenly let him go, when, being instantly restored to his size and shape, he began without delay to renew the practice of his accomplishments. Supposing, therefore, that he would not lose his energy by a temporary

confinement, I again pressed him into a small compass and secured him in a pocket-book. When, at my return to the earth, he was released to his right dimensions, he retained all his vigour, and still he goes through his manœuvres without cessation.

When I advanced farther into this valley I found it filled with a great variety of characters, innumerable shapes of people being engaged in a rapid exhibition of their several kinds of vanity, all being transacted in silence, for none of the apparitions could speak. I was amused by the loftiness and pretence of these shadows: here and there I saw a learned lady dictating to all round with authoritative gestures, nodding with great erudition, and sometimes stretching out an instructive finger. Several shapes of young men wandered about quite unable to suppress their greatness through having spoken once in parliament. The authors, too, are very abundant here: I remarked the appearance of a man which seemed to labour extremely with its dignity, and I discovered that the person whom it represented had fought a duel the day before. One figure sat with a look of greatness, but quite immovable: this was the ostentatious reserve of one of those men who would impose their silence upon the world as learning and superiority, and so much mistake the reception given them as to construe dislike into respect. This error, indeed, is not at all uncommon: every one must know people who fancy themselves universally esteemed only because they put a visible constraint on every company they enter.

When I looked at the great crowd assembled here, all believing themselves admired, and all really despised, I could not help considering how very little admiration there is in the world, and how many are in pursuit of it. If we except the few solitary men of remarkable genius, who in the vast crowd that is left obtains any real admiration? Still the belief of being admired is what gives life all its spirit. Mankind is in a perpetual plot to obtain applause, and yet every one prides himself on detecting vanity, and denies to all others what he expects from them. He who in

conversation hears any thing ostentatiously spoken remarks the vanity of it to his neighbour, who secretly imputes to him an equal vanity for pretending to this quick discernment of a fault.

Being now told that I was near the valley of lost labour, I walked towards it, expecting a very large collection of curiosities, if here were the efforts of all those Englishmen, who have been laborious to no purpose. The end of the valley, where I entered, was occupied by a vast crowd of students. Innumerable shapes or apparitions of men were here reading for future eminence, being destined to no other reward than the remembrance of their industry. Each of them fixed his eyes on his book with great zeal, removing them from time to time as if to enjoy a vision of his future greatness. I could not avoid some melancholy thoughts at seeing the pale resolute faces of these persons, who had given up their health and pleasure for the sake of disappointment, and I considered how much endeavour there is in the world, and how little reward.

These shadows appeared to be of various ages, some not arrived at manhood, and others far advanced in life, representing the different periods at which men desist from trying to be great. Some had given up renown as soon as they became men, others did not despair to the end of their lives, but in their old age were still preparing to be famous in spite of experience. He who means to be eminent usually fixes an early time for the first appearance of his genius: the time arrives, and his genius has not yet appeared, but this is no just cause of despair; for he has only fallen into the common error of expecting a too hasty success, and he gives a new allowance of time with the same confidence as before. In the mean time he has a comfort, that early fame is often pernicious, and his greatness will be more secure by beginning later. He is also encouraged by the celebrated men who were unknown till long after his age,—a reflection which has supported many a pensive candidate for fame. These hopes and alleviations occur at certain cheerful moments, but there are many hours when the hardship of not being famous is bitterly felt. And despair, though often deferred, must come at last, in which emergency consolation is to be sought in the notorious injustice of the

world, and its ignorance of merit. The sufferer in this disaster has not mistaken his own abilities, but the judgment of other men: he has failed, not from a deficiency of true genius, but from the want of some dexterity, or fraudulent art, without which genius cannot be manifested. Thus a man encourages himself in his youthful hopes by the sagacity of the world, which insures success to real ability, and afterwards in his despair he comforts himself by the dulness of the world, which denies all opportunity to genius. After the final disappointment, therefore, he is still a great man in secret, and corrects the injustice of the world, by privately maintaining himself in his true rank. I believe it is little suspected how many of these concealed men of genius there are.

Having passed through these laborious readers, I came to a company of writers equally industrious. A crowd was here afflicted in the composition of books never to be read. Amongst these authors, I saw two or three of my acquaintance, whom I had never suspected of such practices, so carefully had they concealed their infirmity, intending, probably, to surprise the world with the sudden appearance of a great work; but through the inexorable temper of booksellers, or some other impediment, the surprise had never occurred.

The sight of these unsuspected writers confirmed an opinion I have long had, that the clandestine authors are a very numerous race. And whatever mortification there may be in finding that what we have written is not to be a book, yet a writer of this kind has great advantages by his concealment; for his work, not spreading beyond himself, he is sure of unanimous approbation, and is the only author who can securely write without censure. Besides which, while his works are confined to his desk, he may assign that to himself as an excuse for their not having been read; but he who by publication has given men an opportunity of reading him, which they have declined, has no justification. To my friends, therefore, who must write, I recommend secrecy as the best art to defend their works from censure, ridicule, neglect, feeble praise, and other calamities incident to a book.

In examining these appearances of authors, I observed that there were some of every rank in life; many of them betrayed that they could not be clothed without difficulty, while several seemed to belong to the highest order of society. All gave proofs of being affected by the force and merit of what they were writing; some appeared ready to weep for the distress which they were causing in a romance; and others were much diverted by their own wit. I saw two or three authors who could not contain their laughter at every new sentence that came from their pens. The works were of various kinds, with which all these persons were trying to enrich the world. I looked over the shoulders of some, and saw poems and novels, politics, history, divinity, and every other undertaking.

Leaving the authors, and advancing farther into the valley of lost labour, I saw a crowd of young men, who with much energy were throwing their bodies into many different postures. At first I could not imagine the purpose of this peculiar diligence, but soon discovered that these young men were in the practice of oratory, and that all the strange attitudes I saw were for parliament. As I approached the orators, I found they were reciting speeches to these gestures, each having a mirror before him, to direct that part of eloquence which lies in the arms and legs. All of them argued vehemently with their limbs, and I lamented that so many convincing gestures should have been lost.

After seeing many other lost labours, which it would be tiresome to enumerate, I left the valley, and before I had gone far, observed a pretty woman, with a disconsolate countenance, sitting to rest herself, as it appeared, from some fruitless search. I asked whether I could assist her in finding what she wanted, and she gladly accepted of my aid, informing me that she was in quest of her husband's affection, which she had unaccountably lost, two years after their marriage, and had vainly attempted to regain. She had been told that somewhere near the place where she now sat there was a receptacle for the lost affection both of husbands and wives, but she had not yet succeeded in finding it. I

comforted her with observing, that a place which should contain all the lost love of married people must be of considerable extent, and therefore easily found.

We walked on together, and making inquiries, were directed to a large building where the affection which has dropped out of the bosoms of married people is preserved in the shape of small hearts, white and shining, like alabaster. On each is an inscription, recording the fault of the wife or husband, by which it had been lost. On one male heart I read "Decay of beauty," that being the wife's misconduct, by which this heart had been estranged from her. Almost every heart alleged some excellent reason for the ceasing of affection, such as a hasty temper, jealousy, dulness, vivacity, scolding, growing old, the having been married *two* years, with many other equally good causes for the discontinuance of domestic kindness. On some of the hearts was a blank, and no reason assigned for the alienation, which intimated that the affection of the husband or wife had not been extinguished by any violence, but had gone out of itself.

I saw a considerable number both of men and women searching for the hearts that they desired to regain. There is no name on any of these hearts, but all people were enabled to discover that which had once loved them, by a very singular property in the heart; for when they took hold of that which had formerly entertained a kindness for them, it instantly began to beat and palpitate violently, though to the eye it appeared common alabaster; but if it had never felt any passion for them it remained perfectly still.

There was an old man who seized every female heart that he met with; and as I came up to him, I heard him mutter, "This certainly beats a little." He then requested me to feel the heart, which he held in his hand, and give my judgment whether there was any thing amounting to a real palpitation while he held it. I could not perceive the least motion, except from the trembling of his hands, which greatly mortified him. He told me he had been married late in life to a young woman, who had very soon become extremely cool towards him, though he had done nothing to

displease her, and always spoke to her with the greatest kindness. I represented to him that unless he was quite sure he had once been really possessed of her heart it was vain to search for it here; but he declared he was confident that when he married the lady her heart was his own, though it escaped from him in so singular a manner soon after. He then continued to try all the hearts in his way, imagining a palpitation in each.

One male heart was vehemently disputed by half-a-dozen women, each of whom pleaded a lawful claim to it, and, indeed, it actually beat whichever of them held it, thus owning a passion for them all. One of them was wife to this heart; but her right was contested by the others, on the pretence that the palpitation of the heart when she touched it was much weaker than when it was held by any of them. There were many other hearts, both male and female, which, having been pluralists, were disputed by many competitors, each of whom was able to produce a real palpitation.

I was informed that somebody had invented a method by which these hearts might restore the lost affection; and as the wife whom I accompanied had found the heart of her husband, I explained to her the invention, which she has since practised with complete success. According to the direction given her, she dissolved the heart in a certain liquid, and, keeping it in a bottle, secretly mixed a small quantity with whatever her husband drank. The effect was, that after the first draught he intimated some return of kindness, which still increased as he proceeded through the bottle; and when he had drank the whole heart he had resumed all his former affection.

When I had left this building, I soon arrived at another which contains groundless fears. I entered it, and found, as in many others, a spacious room filled with bottles, containing the apprehensions that have troubled mankind without necessity. On studying the labels of these bottles, I thought the fears of men little less wild and visionary than their hopes; and it appeared to me that the worst calamities of life are those which are never to happen. Moralists have often praised the concealment of the

future from man as a most ingenious invention against approaching evils; but since we are so much tormented by evils that are not coming, I think this ignorance is but an imperfect security.

I diverted myself in reading the terrors with which these bottles are stored. Every gale of wind supplies them with apprehensions from those who are at sea; and I was surprised to observe how many people there are who, in a thunder-storm on shore, are fully convinced that the lightning will choose their persons in preference to every other spot where it could light. Great numbers in a trifling sickness had suffered all the horrors of approaching death. I knew not before how many there are who use the precaution of being always uneasy, and have so much foresight as to lose all the comfort of life.

One part of this room is assigned to public fears, which are contained in large urns. These are the apprehensions which have seized a great part of our nation from time to time. There is great variety in the nature of them. At one time a small party of men are suddenly convinced that all the rest of the nation are soon to be mad by agreement at the same instant, leaving only themselves in possession of reason: every thing they see tends to a general insanity; and by the expectation of this event they are much harassed, as is reasonable. Sometimes those who are earnest in religion apprehend that the people, at a stated time, are going to disbelieve Christianity and abolish it. And sometimes the farmers of England are seized with a belief that parliament, instigated by a bad ministry, intends to pass a law forbidding the practices of ploughing and sowing, to the manifest injury of agriculture.

These epidemic fears are so frequent in England that every body must remember a great number of them. Sometimes they seem to invade the country of their own accord, and at other times are contrived by the invention and industry of certain statesmen,—for one of these terrors has often power to ruin or secure a ministry; so that the great wisdom of state in England is a skill in prompting and regulating fears. I know not whether there is more art or fortune in the beginning and progress of a fear: very able men often undertake to be the authors of one without any

success; and in spite of the reasoning with which they tell the world to be afraid, not a man will consent to feel any alarm. Sometimes a most plausible apprehension is invented, and sent into the world with the countenance of eminent men, and every other advantage for its promotion, and yet it can obtain no credit, but is almost immediately lost, while, at another time, a terror is obscurely raised, and, although without probability, favour, or any arts of advancement, it is instantly spread and established.

It is vain to oppose a successful fear: a wise minister attacked by one will enrol himself under it, and be as much terrified as any body. These apprehensions differ much in duration, the life of some being only a few weeks, and others lasting for many months, or even for some years.

I have said that the public fears are kept in large urns, with this difference from the private fears, that a bottle contains the apprehensions of only one person, while an urn holds the terror of a whole party, each public fear having an urn to itself. Every urn is inscribed with the name of the fear that it preserves, and is larger or smaller according to the numbers who have been possessed by its contents. On one urn I read "Popery," on another, "Revolution."

But while I was reading the names of these past disturbances, a fearful clamour rushed into the room, sounding like the sudden shout of a vast crowd, but incessantly repeated. I found it was a public terror newly arrived from the earth, and the guardian of the room made haste to secure it. He brought an urn, the size of which he had determined by his ear, and enticed the uproar into it by a proceeding very similar to the art which inveigles a swarm of bees into a hive. This clamour was the repetition of a single word by thousands of voices. What the word was I shall not disclose; for since it has very lately been a prevalent fear, some excellent persons not yet dispossessed, on learning its departure to the moon, would be distressed by the fatal security that has befallen us.

It is possible that a skilful statesman might employ these urns in his service by letting out some terror judiciously chosen at a time favourable to its progress. I am not able to say whether it would prosper a second time, or return instantly to the moon, as having been discharged, but I think the experiment worthy of being tried by any administration that wants aid. Great care and judgment would be required in the selection of a fear for release, lest it should turn against its deliverers.

I next entered a building filled with the unavailing projects of Englishmen, and spent a short time in examining these enterprises, which are political, moral, religious, mechanical, and chemical. The collection has been much enriched by recent contributions. Many excellent designs of the present age for the benefit of England and the rest of the world are here honourably preserved. I saw numerous projects for making morality: every virtue had some contrivance to be practised by; and these schemes appeared very easy of execution, requiring nothing for their success except the universal concurrence of mankind in receiving them.

I found here plans for dispensing with all laws, and extinguishing crime by a general resolution of men in favour of virtue, for preventing the birth of children by argument, for discontinuing war throughout the world, for converting all nations to the true religion, that is, the religion of the projector.

Amongst all the noble schemes that I saw here, I most admired those which were not content with the improvement of England, but designed the good of the whole world, such as the plan last mentioned, for including all the inhabitants of the globe in one religion. The means of effecting so great a work were not described, but the inventor of this unanimity was said to have devised so infallible a project, that for spreading truth over the earth he required nothing but a steam vessel, and undertook by a few tons of coal to convince all mankind.

I saw many other English schemes for the welfare of distant nations, so that not a people was to remain vicious, ignorant, or oppressed. In examining these ample designs, I felt a secret pride in the noble spirit of some amongst my countrymen; and it appeared to me that nothing has been so much improved in modern times as the virtue of humanity. Men were formerly satisfied with relieving the distresses which they saw and heard; but there is now a large body of men in England who busy themselves with the troubles of distant nations, and consider all sufferings on the farther side of the globe as their own calamities. It is well known how many persons of all ranks in England pined away under the lashes inflicted upon the negroes in the West Indies. Others could not be cheerful as long as Greece was under the dominion of Turkey; and another party, who were not concerned either about Greece or the negroes, regarded themselves as the most unfortunate of men because in India widows sometimes burned themselves at the funerals of their husbands. How would one of the ancient moralists admire the dismay which has been caused in England by the conflagration of an old woman in the East!

It is observable that one who is thoroughly inspired with this remote pity disdains to do a kindness in his own hemisphere, and despises that superficial humanity which makes us supply the wants of those who are immediately round us. He can only pity at a distance, and feels compassion in proportion to the number of leagues that intervene between him and the sufferer. He can see with firmness the starvation of those who live near him, but shudders to think that a man may be hungry two thousand miles off. Thus he claims a share in the misery of every man at a sufficient distance: a lash inflicted on the other side of the Atlantic makes a mark upon his back—he is flogged with the negro, enslaved with the Greek, and burned to ashes with the Indian widow.

I had now been wandering in our satellite almost a fortnight, according to the earth, and almost a day according to the moon, for I arrived there in the morning, and the day was now almost ended. I have not related all that I saw, but selected a few of the most remarkable places that I visited;

nor have I instructed the world in what manner I provided for my own personal comforts, according to the practice of many travellers, who rescue every one of their meals from oblivion, and never eat or drink without recording it. I have also omitted all mention of the moon's inhabitants, because they are to be fully described by other travellers.

When I left the House of Projects, I was informed that I was very near to the Valley of Lost Time, and I hastened towards it, that I might observe whatever was there, before it should be dark. I descended into the valley, and found myself surrounded by the sounds of innumerable clocks. These sounds did not proceed from any visible mechanism, but lived in the air like the other preserved clamours. They are the ghosts of minutes and hours that have perished. It was remarkable that in this confused clamour, every man knew his own time, and could distinguish the hours he had lost when he heard them struck; yet he knew not what it was that discovered them to him: all were alike in sound; only at the striking of particular hours, he was seized with a conviction that he heard his own time.

There were many persons in the valley, and I observed that some of them heard their own lost hours with great emotion. They turned pale, trembled, and were overpowered by the reproach. And not only could a man discern his own losses amongst these sounds, but knew what particular hour or minute of his past life he was listening to, which very much aggravated the rebuke. Men heard the striking of the very crisis which might have saved, enriched, or advanced them. In some men the emotion from these sounds continued a long time, others soon recovered themselves.

I saw two or three running about in chase of their time with a hat, as a boy follows a butterfly. The hours were very nimble, escaping by an irregular flight, and the pursuit was long continued in vain. At last one of these men succeeded in the capture of a portion of time, which he had followed with much perseverance. The chase being finished close to me, I heard the stifled hours striking under his hat. As he had been present in the room of lost spirits when I had shown the means of recovering mirth

from the phial containing it, he had contracted a high opinion of my skill and invention in rendering available these regained prizes, and he now earnestly consulted me about the means of making the time under his hat serve the purpose which it ought to have been applied to before. He told me he was a London tradesman, and not very prosperous, through the misapplication of three particular days which he now had in captivity. A few years ago he had been in pursuit of a rich widow, from whom though he had extorted no promise, yet he had been convinced that she was waiting only till a decorous time had elapsed since her first husband. But this confidence ruined him: he was absent three days with some friends; and on returning to his vocation found the lady had so much resented his neglect of office as to supply his place with another candidate, whom soon after she married. "Now," he continued, "I have caught these three days, and here they are, but still I know not how to make them answer my purpose. However, since you, sir, could restore a lady her spirits out of a phial, perhaps you can restore me my widow from under a hat."

"I fear," said I, "your case is beyond my skill; for I know not how the noise under your hat can by any artifice prevent the widow from having been married as you remember. Whatever use you make of these sounds, I fear you must still have misemployed the three days and lost the widow. It appears to me, that the only way of retrieving lost time is to make better use of what remains; I therefore advise you to make diligent search for another rich widow, and when you have found one, remember you are not to have a respite of three days."

"So, then, I have come to the moon in vain," he said; "and I may as well let these three days go again, after I have taken so much trouble to catch them."

"No," I answered: "a contrivance occurs to me by which, perhaps, they may be useful."

"What is that?" he inquired eagerly.

"You may shut them up in a box," said I, "and always keep them by you, to remind you of former neglect, and enforce vigilance in case of another widow." He seemed to think this an ineffectual invention for correcting his former mistake; however he carried away his three days with a discontented face.

Another man, who had stood in dismay, and quite overcome by the striking of his lost hours, hearing what I said, declared he would try the same expedient, and keep his misemployed time in a box for the sake of prudence and industry in time to come; and immediately he betook himself to the chase.

I saw a pretty young woman in pursuit of some portion of time, which she seemed to consider a valuable opportunity. It led her up and down at her utmost speed: but at last, as I stood in its course, it was entangled in the skirts of my coat; I seized it before it could escape, and presented it to her. It was a single hour: she accepted it with joy; but I could not prevail upon her to tell me what advantage she had lost with this hour. This young woman, and some other persons, followed their time very earnestly with a confused notion of benefit from it, when it should be caught, though without any plan for applying it to a real purpose. The truth was, that most of those who heard the striking of their own hours, by awe and regret from the sound, were incapable of thinking accurately, and were driven by a desire of retrieving the past they knew not how.

Without any such reproach, it was impossible to stand in this valley, and hear the destruction of time all round, without sorrow for the waste of this commodity. There was a reasoning in the place not to be opposed. I considered that time and money being the two things most earnestly desired in our world, the ingenuity of men is chiefly exercised in devising arts for the waste of both. It appeared to me also that amongst all the errors in the plan of a human being, the most fatal is that the present moment should be so much the most plausible instant of our lives, and capable of persuading us to whatever it chooses. By universal agreement and practice, the present time is for ease and enjoyment, the future for abstinence, resolution, and insatiable industry; and since the present

moment is only one, while our future moments, by the blessing of Providence, may be many, we judge that this distribution of time is greatly to the advantage of industry and virtue, and we seem to be treating ourselves with admirable severity, when we allot no portion of our lives to pleasure, except the present moment; but in this computation it is forgotten that life is made of present moments. The bargain, however, is concluded; and pleasure exacts the observance of it by still claiming the present moment, while industry, abstinence, and other virtues included in the agreement, stand waiting for their turn with helpless simplicity.

While I was engaged in these thoughts, I first heard the striking of my own lost hours, which impressed upon me a horror that I cannot describe. I knew each particular hour as I heard it, and remembered the abused opportunities which I had long before ceased to lament. I stood in the persuasion and despair of having lived in vain, and no more thought of inquiring into the grounds of this trouble and conviction, than we do in an anxious dream. Suddenly I was seized with a desire of recovering what I had thrown away: I reproached myself with wandering for amusement in the moon, and resolved to return without delay, in order to use my remaining hours with rigorous frugality. I instantly set out, and travelled with great zeal, nor did I lose the impression from the sound of my lost time till I had nearly completed the journey.

At last, however, the illusion left me, and I was able to regard time as the frivolous bauble which I have always considered it, except under the deception of this valley. For however scrupulously we may turn every moment to advantage, our most probable conclusion in every undertaking is, that we are labouring to provide ourselves with repentance; and to me it seems that a secure contempt of time, and an easy trifling with that portion of it called human life, is the only adequate remedy against the common lot of man, who, according to a celebrated author, "is born crying, lives complaining, and dies disappointed."

Is it not a great folly that we, who know we are immortal beings, should always perplex ourselves about the hurry and use of time? For when we have before us such a supply as eternity, it is surely absurd to be sparing of hours and days.

I regret that by this groundless consternation my travels in the moon were so prematurely ended. I design another journey, and hope it may produce something more worthy of being read than this imperfect narrative.

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# MAHOMET AND THE SPIDER.

## A DIALOGUE.

(*A Cave in Mount Hara.*)

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MAHOMET SPEAKS.

I begin to be very much tired of this cave, and my thoughts grow so dull, that I have added only one line to the Koran during the last two days. Yet here I must stay; for if I go out, and live amongst men, they will never allow me to be a prophet; my doctrine will not be received unless it comes out of a cave. Such is the nature of men: provided they have not seen me for a month, and know not where I have been, they are convinced of my intelligence with heaven, and do not consider that any man might hide himself for a month, and so be a prophet. If they see me write, they will not receive my words as revelation; but whatever I compose out of their sight is unquestionably inspired. Certainly this solitude is irksome. My only companion is that spider on the wall. I begin to think he is the happiest of the two: it has never occurred to him to be a prophet, and write a Koran, but he keeps his web in repair, and eats flies, like other spiders.

SPIDER.

Are you already weary of your mission?

MAHOMET.

Great God! what do I hear? Surely it was the spider that reproved me in a human voice!

SPIDER.

Yes, it was I who spoke; and my exercise of this faculty, by no means common in a spider, may renew your diligence by showing the protection of God. But pray recover from your alarm: in the course of your mission you have met worse dangers than a talking spider. The truth is, though you have seen me mending my web, and catching flies, I am, nevertheless, far from being a spider, but one of the most important angels in heaven, who have been sent to watch over you in this concealment. I have been grieved to see you make so little progress for the last two days: you have remained with your eyes fixed, and seemingly in thought, but your meditations have not increased the Koran.

MAHOMET.

It is true, thou sacred angel, or spider, whichever I am to call you, for my thoughts have been troubled by doubts.

SPIDER.

What have you been doubting about?

MAHOMET.

I was prepared to write a chapter enjoining prayer. I was going to command all men to kneel at certain times for prosperity, obedient children, and long life; but when I revolved the matter in my mind, I could not help acknowledging to myself, that prayer is a very ineffectual device, for a man may pray every hour in the day, and fail in all his undertakings. What multitudes of prayers are offered, and how few accomplished! With what confidence then can I bid men improve their fortunes by prayer, when so little sagacity is required to see that praying does not regulate events?

Men will be apt to reason concerning the blessings they want as I reasoned about the mountain. Having called it several times without observing in it the least preparation for complying with my request, I concluded that the ordinary exertion of my own legs would be a more effectual expedient for reaching it, than any entreaties; and so a man, who has tried to grow rich by prayer will be convinced that human industry is far more efficacious.

And not only is the event men pray for withheld, but the very contrary is often sent. A man asks for an increase of wealth, and accordingly loses what he has; he begs a long life for his son, and the boy dies on the following day. Men might almost be tempted to pray against their wishes, in hope of having them fulfilled. These things have stopped the Koran. I have thought of cities broken into for desolation, while the inhabitants pray for defence; of the merchant a sudden beggar by storms, while he raises his hands to God for a blessing on his ships; of the infant that dies while the mother prays it may be an honoured man; and then, when I would have ordered all men to pray, and be safe, the pen has dropped from my hand. Thus my thoughts concerning the goodness of God have been disturbed: how might he increase the happiness of men by yielding to their prayers! and his refusals seem the more obdurate, because, as it appears to our comprehension, he might give men all they ask without any inconvenience to himself.

SPIDER.

I find you are still impeded by the infirmities of an earthly mind. But I was sent here for your inspiration, with power to show you some of the secrets of the world; and I will now reveal to you sights that may help to explain these difficulties.

MAHOMET.

To find such sights we must certainly leave this cave, which is extremely wanting in incidents. Your stratagems against the flies are the only events that I have observed since I have lived here.

SPIDER.

We shall not confine our observations to this cave, which, as you say, is barren of adventures.

MAHOMET.

Then if we are to go abroad, is it advisable that you should travel in the disguise of a spider, or will you not take a more convenient shape?

ANGEL.

Am I a spider now?

MAHOMET.

God is great! I see the beautiful form of an angel descending from the web. How little did I imagine it was an angel that I saw spinning and catching flies!

ANGEL.

We are going to leave the earth, and soar far away. Now that we are out of the cave, take my hand, and we shall mount without an effort. We are soon in the sky; look down, and see what a noble sight the earth is!

MAHOMET.

I see many different countries and tribes of men.

ANGEL.

Your task is to bring all those nations to the same belief?

MAHOMET.

I fear that will be difficult; for I never yet could induce any two of my wives to think alike. You know that I have eleven; and in every dispute they never fail to invent eleven opinions, of which each takes one.

ANGEL.

God will give you the faculty of persuasion. You will be great while you live, and after death still greater, being employed to govern the world.

MAHOMET.

I have heard before of the authority to be given me after death, and have thought with some alarm of rising out of my grave governor of the world; for, as I understand the office, it must require great experience: and if without previous instruction or practice I shall be expected to regulate day and night, summer and winter,—if the fruit, the trees, the corn, must grow by my art,—if, at the moment I awake, I shall be required to rain, to hail, to thunder, and to lighten in proper places and at the right juncture, —if at sea I am to make a calm and storm alternately, and to drown a part of those who sail with exact judgment,—if, besides this, I am to advance and to ruin empires, to be present at every battle, and conquer on the just side,—if, in the midst of all this business, I must every moment be at leisure to hear the prayers of all mankind with perfect equity,—if I must also know at every moment what every man alive is thinking of, which I believe is one of the functions of Heaven,—if I am at proper intervals to furnish an earthquake and a comet, to say nothing of the moon and stars, which must every night be kept in their places,—if, in short, every thing that happens in the world is to be done by me, I fear that for some time there must be great disturbance, for with my present knowledge I should certainly be a very unskilful providence: an active colleague should be given me at first.

ANGEL.

Fear not; nothing too difficult will be imposed upon you. But now look down upon the earth.

MAHOMET.

We are at a great distance from it; and yet I see clearly the figures of men, and what they are doing.

ANGEL.

Your eyes are strengthened for that purpose. You have now more than mortal sight, otherwise all would be confusion.

MAHOMET.

I see many on their knees, of whom, perhaps, not one will obtain what he prays for; and I see men engaging themselves in numberless undertakings: they are all full of hope, yet how few will accomplish what they attempt! This it is that troubles me: if God is good, why does he not grant to every man his desire?

ANGEL.

You may try that way of governing the world if you please: I can give you for the time an absolute power over the whole human race.

MAHOMET.

Then I grant to all human beings the accomplishment of their present wishes. But what do I see? Every mortal upon earth has fallen down, and seems to be dead!

ANGEL.

Yes; the whole human race is in a moment destroyed. This is the accomplishment of men's wishes.

MAHOMET.

Did men wish to be dead?

ANGEL.

There was not one who was not wished dead by some other, and thus, by your comprehensive kindness, all mankind have died together. Had not you had a particular exemption, you would have been included in the general fate.

MAHOMET.

Is it possible that such should be the hatred of men towards each other?

ANGEL.

It is not hatred which has caused this universal destruction. One man has wished the death of another that he might succeed him in his riches; another has desired the decease of a friend that he might gain possession of his widow, being a beautiful woman. Some, indeed, wish the destruction of their friends from pure hatred, but the chief part of mankind would put others to death without the least anger or dislike. You may see, however, that the wishes of men interfere a little with each other, and that to comply with them all would not be the most humane way of governing the world.

MAHOMET.

I confess my error; but how is this loss to be repaired? Will God create a new race?

ANGEL.

No; I can recall these people to life. There! you see them start up, and resume their employments, quite unconscious of having been dead.

MAHOMET.

And I suppose they have again begun to wish each other dead with the same vigour as before.

ANGEL.

No doubt. But come, I have more to show you: we must ascend to the threshold of heaven itself.

MAHOMET.

The earth has almost disappeared; we must be travelling very rapidly.

ANGEL.

Yes; angels never lose time in a journey; and we are now arrived at the place where the prayers of mankind find an entrance into heaven. We are in the midst of them, as you may hear. They are from all countries; and you have now suddenly the gift of understanding all languages, that you may give them audience.

MAHOMET.

What a clamour! I hear the names of various blessings, in different tones of entreaty; but it is impossible to distinguish them. All mankind seem to be praying at once.

ANGEL.

When a prayer is uttered upon earth, it immediately flies up to this place, where the crowd of petitions wait to be admitted into heaven. To avoid confusion, they are let in one by one, and each, till its turn comes, remains here, praying incessantly, as you hear. I am going to knock at this door, and when it is opened, we must hasten through, lest any of the prayers should slip in with us. There, we are now within the threshold of heaven, and can no longer hear the clamour. When I open this other small door, the prayers will come in one after another; and power is given to you to grant whichever you may think just. But I must tell you, that when there is more than one prayer from different men, concerning the same event, they come together, that you may reconcile them as well as you can. The door is open; now listen.

FIRST PRAYER.

Grant, oh God, that my wife, Hafna, may bear a son.

MAHOMET.

This prayer, at least, is innocent, and can injure no man.

ANGEL.

Stay, before you comply with it, hear the next.

SECOND PRAYER.

Grant, oh God, that Hafna may be childless; then the wealth of her husband will descend to my children.

ANGEL.

Now grant these two prayers,—let Hafna have a son, and let her be childless.

MAHOMET.

It seems there is as much contention amongst the wishes of men as amongst my wives.

FIRST PRAYER.

May a north wind blow over the Egean sea, that my ship may return.

SECOND PRAYER.

Oh, let a south wind blow steadily on the Egean sea, to bring home my son.

MAHOMET.

I paused in expectation of hearing that the east and west winds also might be useful on the Egean sea.

ANGEL.

Here are two prayers coming from a man and his wife.

MAHOMET.

Surely they will agree better.

FIRST PRAYER.

Oh God, may it soon please thee to take my wife into heaven, for whithersoever I go her tongue followeth me.

SECOND PRAYER.

Oh God, may it please thee to conduct my husband into heaven, for upon earth he is useless and grievous.

MAHOMET.

Well, this worthy pair agree exactly in their wishes for each other.

ANGEL.

You have placed yourself there to be prayed to, that you might correct the severity of Providence, and you have not granted one prayer yet.

MAHOMET.

I have heard enough already to learn that the prayers of men must be disappointed.

ANGEL.

If you begin to distrust your project of benefiting the human race by compliance, and do not like your office of hearing prayers so well as you expected, you shall give up the post, and I will then show you the way in which the fate of prayers is decided.

MAHOMET.

I am ready to resign my power, and would rather see how the wishes of men are disposed of by Divine Wisdom.

ANGEL.

I must shut the door, then, and keep the prayers out for a minute. You must know that this is one of the duties which the angels perform, without a visible interposition of God, though all is secretly guided by his power and wisdom. Here is a net, which I fasten over the small door, so that it hangs as a bag, and every prayer that enters the door must fall into it.

MAHOMET.

What! can a prayer be caught in a net, like a fish?

ANGEL.

You shall see: open the door, and shut it again as soon as the first prayer has passed.

PRAYER.

Oh God, may I obtain the command of a province.

MAHOMET.

What a miracle is this! I see a bird flapping in the net, and not a prayer; yet no bird came through the door.

ANGEL.

Words may assume a visible form at the command of God. That bird is the prayer, which you heard ask for the command of a province. This net has the power of enduing a prayer with wings, and all the appearance of a bird.

MAHOMET.

But what advantage is there in the change? I should have imagined the words would interpret the man's wish more clearly than the bird. If a man asked me for a province in good Arabic I should at least know what

he wanted, but if he only sent me a bird, I think I should hardly understand the solicitation.

ANGEL.

You will see that the prayer in its present shape is better qualified to succeed than when it was only a sound. Look into the great urn that stands near you.

MAHOMET.

It is filled with little scraps of parchment.

ANGEL.

On each of those scraps, which appear to be parchment, is written the name of some human being now alive, and also the name of some blessing or advantage, such as his circumstances and the course of events may bring within his reach. When the prayer of a man, having become a bird by this net, gains possession of the parchment inscribed with what it prays for and with his name, it carries the prize down to him, and he obtains the enjoyment of his wish. I will now let out this prayer which flutters impatiently in the net, and is eager to carry back a province in its bill. You see it is no sooner at liberty than it soars round the mouth of the urn by a sure instinct. It has dashed down, and is bringing out the prize: I will catch it, that we may examine the province before it goes. Here you see on one side is written the name of a Greek, on the other, "A province under the Emperor." But this is not all that the parchment is charged with: it is closely folded up, and inside are written the consequences to this Greek of governing a province. I will open it that we may see whether the bird is carrying him so valuable a gift as he believes. Inside are these words, as the fate of the governor, "Falsely accused to the Emperor of extortion; recalled, and put to death." I fold it up again and restore it to the bird, which seizes it eagerly, and has flown off through another opening.

MAHOMET.

But how is the bird to enforce execution of the parchment?

ANGEL.

It repairs to the man from whom it proceeded as a prayer, stands on his head, and fixes the parchment to his forehead, where it firmly remains. The bird then takes wing again, and soars round the man till it dies in the air. This parchment on the forehead of a man gives him authority over events, all obstacles yield before it, and he soon attains his wish. The parchment adheres to him till every thing written in it has been fulfilled, and then drops off. This governor of a province will retain it till his death, which it is to effect.

MAHOMET.

But I have never seen a man with a parchment on his forehead, and a bird flying round his head.

ANGEL.

These things are not subject to mortal eyes: you are now in possession of a divine sight, which I shall take from you at your return to the earth. But I have adjusted the net again,—let in another prayer.

PRAYER.

Oh God, grant that I may become emperor after the present sovereign, and I will reign with virtue and the happiness of all.

ANGEL.

This is a Greek, who begs to sit on the throne of Constantinople.

MAHOMET.

And he promises good government as an inducement to God to elect him. If promising were a sufficient title to success, every man might claim the empire.

ANGEL.

There are many suppliants, who in praying enter into certain engagements very advantageous to heaven, but the agreement seldom is observed when the prayer has been granted. This prayer for an empire flutters eagerly in the net; we will let it out to search the urn.

MAHOMET.

It soars round and round, and looks disappointed.

ANGEL.

There is no parchment belonging to it in the urn, which its instinct has discovered. It will soon die, its embassy being finished.

MAHOMET.

It has suddenly vanished as it flew.

ANGEL.

That is the death of a prayer, it leaves no remains behind. Let in another.

FIRST PRAYER.

Oh God, may I obtain the beautiful Julia in marriage.

SECOND PRAYER.

Let me marry Julia, oh God, or I perish.

ANGEL.

These are two rival prayers from Rome. The last of the suppliants threatens to die, if God does not effect his marriage with Julia.

MAHOMET.

Here are two birds in the net: how shall we settle their claims to the parchment?

ANGEL.

Let them both out together.

MAHOMET.

They are fighting over the urn.

ANGEL.

Yes; one will kill the other. Sometimes we have a combat of a dozen prayers, which fight till only one is left alive, and the survivor carries off the parchment, if there should happen to be one.

MAHOMET.

One of these birds has disappeared.

ANGEL.

It is dead, and the other has gained possession of the parchment. I will seize him, and examine the lot, which has busied these two competitors. It says that the successful lover is to be poisoned by his wife two years after marriage. Now you see that those are often the happiest whose emissary finds no prize for them in the urn. Let us hear the next suitor.

PRAYER.

Oh God, restore to me my property, or who will praise thy justice upon earth?

MAHOMET.

That is a very reproachful prayer.

ANGEL.

Yes; the Supreme Being is often required to interpose on pain of losing all reputation for equity. See how the bird pecks the net, and struggles to reach the urn. You may observe, that each bird in behaviour and importunity corresponds with the words of the prayer it sprung from. I will let him out: he finds no parchment; then Providence must undergo the imputation that has been threatened. The prayer dies in great anger.

But as you have now learned something of the management of these prayers, you shall hear some petitions of a different kind. The prayers that you have heard were all sincere, and offered with a desire of accomplishment; but there are also hypocritical prayers, the success of which is not wished by those who utter them; they come to this other door. The contrivance of the bird and the urn is not practised with them, but they are let in, and very soon perish.

MAHOMET.

But do men ever pray for what they do not wish to have?

ANGEL.

Very often; they ask what they ought to wish for. I will open the door to a few of these pretenders; now listen.

FIRST PRAYER.

Oh God, grant that I may every day increase in virtue.

SECOND PRAYER.

Oh let strength be given me to withstand the wife of my neighbour Ali, for she is beautiful.

THIRD PRAYER.

May I have resolution to abandon my intemperance in drinking.

FOURTH PRAYER.

May God make my enemies happy.

MAHOMET.

What admirable prayers! But I observe that they are pronounced with very little importunity: a man does not pray for temperance so fervently as for the death of his wife.

ANGEL.

These prayers are called virtue by those who utter them. There are many who think that to pray for virtue is equivalent to the practice of it, and they therefore pray to be good in preference to being so, as the less troublesome undertaking of the two. If these devout people believed there was any danger of their prayers being heard, they would be very cautious of praying for virtue, but they think God is not likely to force goodness upon them because they ask for it; they have full confidence in their own fidelity to pleasure, and rest secure that they can still be as voluptuous as they please, though they should pray every hour to become austere. Thus the man whom you heard asking aid against the wife of his neighbour Ali considers that he has not the less chance of success in his pursuit of her by praying against it, and he hopes, too, that his prayer may be some little atonement for the actual sin. But I think for the present you have heard enough, and can now justify God in listening inexorably to so many prayers.

MAHOMET.

But still there is a difficulty: I have seen that many prayers are rejected, and many are fulfilled with ruin, so that I am at a loss to discover the utility of praying at all; and it seems to me that if men lived by their own endeavours without prayer their prosperity would not be lessened. To

what purpose or benefit, then, should I enjoin prayer in the Koran, and how can I recommend it? If I order men to pray, and tell them that they will be equally fortunate without it, I think they will hardly take the trouble; and if I affirm that by prayer they may be rich, of long life, and the parents of many children, I shall be guilty of a great deception.

ANGEL.

But men must be deceived for their welfare: they must believe in the prosperity from prayer, that there may be religion in all they do. You talk of deception—man is born to be deceived: the child is deceived by its parent, subjects by the king, worshippers by the priest, and all mankind are deceived by God. Man is cheated by his senses, his imagination, his reason: from his first hour to his last he is under illusions, without which he would not be a man.

MAHOMET.

I believe it is so; then why should I scruple to assist in the conspiracy?

ANGEL.

It is true that fraud and deceit are censured amongst men, and it must be so for the intercourse of human life; but as we are now a long way from the earth, and cannot be overheard, I may say plainly that sincerity is a private virtue only, and that men cannot be prosperously ruled without being deceived.

MAHOMET.

I am impatient to deceive them.

ANGEL.

I will conduct you back to your cave: at a future time you shall see more. Take my hand, and we will descend.

MAHOMET.

How rapidly the earth increases in size! There is the Red Sea, that is Mecca.

ANGEL.

There—you are now in your cave again, and may resume your studies; I hope with more progress.

MAHOMET.

Are you going back into your web?

ANGEL.

No; I shall not dwindle into a spider again, but shall still watch over you unseen, and be at hand to instruct you in any emergency of the Koran.

MAHOMET.

Before you leave me, there is still one question that I would propose to you.

ANGEL.

Ask what you will.

MAHOMET.

First, then, I inquire, whether God foresees with certainty all the future actions of men.

ANGEL.

Undoubtedly he does.

All that men are to do, then, is already certain, being foreseen, and no man is free to perform an action or not. Now that men should hereafter be punished for doing what they cannot avoid is a kind of justice so mysterious that I confess I am quite unable to see the force or excellence of it; and all men are in trouble to understand this difficulty. I was lately questioned about it by one of my friends, and being without an answer, I had no expedient except to assume suddenly a face of deep meditation, as not having heard him, and in reverence he forbore to repeat his question. This contrivance for silencing inquirers may once be successful, but my followers will not always receive a fit of musing as a satisfactory explanation; and if you do not supply me with a better answer concerning destiny, they will begin to think that my knowledge of the matter is not very profound. I confess that I know not how to approach the subject, and all my thoughts only convince me how ignorant I am of it. However, I have supposed that I could not be altogether silent on this topic in the Koran, and that if I could not make it clearer, I must at least make it more mysterious. Accordingly, I have written something to show that men are at liberty, and subject to fate at the same time; and if my disciples can find any meaning in what I have said they must have uncommon sagacity. Now by giving me an insight into this dark subject you will greatly increase both my knowledge and authority.—God is great! the angel has suddenly vanished, and that just at the juncture when he was to have explained liberty and fate. This expedient resembles mine when I had recourse to musing as an explanation. What! is this matter unknown even to the angels? Well, I must rest in ignorance, and look the more confident when questions are asked. And now to the Koran again.

# A LETTER FROM POSTERITY TO THE PRESENT AGE.

I know not with what indulgence or resentment you, who are the reigning sovereign, may receive advice from your intended successor, but since your actions may tend to my advantage or trouble, I conceive myself entitled to declare my opinion of your conduct.

Though I have received many messages and injunctions from you, I have never before attempted an answer; and indeed the Present Age has hitherto always supposed itself secure from the reproaches of Posterity, and has been able to boast of its benefits to future times without fear of contradiction. You know that during your life I am confined to an island remote from your territories, and I have till now forborne from writing to you, because I have been told that no ship from this island could reach you. Having, however, found at last an expedient, by which, perhaps, a messenger may arrive at your court, I have resolved to send you a few observations, though without any absolute certainty that you will ever read them.

Although the seas between us are acknowledged impassable to a ship from my country, you have imagined them safe and easy to those which sail in the contrary direction, and leave your dominions for my island. But in this you are greatly mistaken; for of the innumerable ambassadors, whom you despatch to me, a few only arrive, and from them I receive a melancholy narrative of multitudes perishing by the rocks and other perils of the voyage. And besides the natural toil and

danger of these seas, I learn that many of your messengers are lost by want of preparation and skill, by ignorance of the sea, and by faulty ships. It is said that some of your packets founder as soon as they have left the harbour, many in the middle of the voyage, and some within sight of my island. The ruins and fragments cast up on my shore from time to time inform me how many expeditions you fit out for destruction.

However, I have learned something of you from the few more skilful adventurers who have accomplished the voyage; and as from their information I find that you are imposing duties upon me, for which I am not likely to have either time or inclination, I shall make a few remarks upon these labours, which you think yourself entitled to leave for me.

In many particulars, I believe you only fall into that mistake, common to every age, of expecting too much observance from your successor; but in addition to that, you may perhaps have other errors of your own invention. I understand that upon the most trifling event you please yourself with considering what posterity will say about it. Now, while I gratefully acknowledge the care you take to supply me with conversation, I would represent to you that you can hardly expect me to decline all enterprises and employments for the sake of having full leisure to talk of what you have been doing. You seem to think it but reasonable, that when you are dead I shall be occupied incessantly with considering your exploits, and celebrating your praises; but you forget that I shall always have my own exploits to consider, and myself to praise. It is impossible that I should undertake in your behalf all the study and research which you impose upon me without neglecting altogether my own affairs, my hopes and dangers, and that only in order to make you famous. This, I think, cannot be expected; for although men will endure great labours for their own renown, no person has been known to forfeit his ease, pleasure, and reputation for the fame of another.

I am told that you expect me to understand the affairs of your reign much better than you do yourself. I am to discover infallibly the nature of every event, to expose the fraud of every intrigue, and to manifest the true origin of all that now passes before your eyes.

When there has been some mysterious transaction, in which there is guilt and blame without any certainty of the person upon whom it ought to fall, you desire your subjects to be under no concern, and not to perplex themselves with conjectures, for Posterity will inquire into the matter, and disgrace those who deserve it. Yet I should have thought you must have better opportunities of information about what is now passing than I am likely to command when all concerned in the event are dead. But I believe the advantage which makes Posterity infallible is, that none remain to contradict whatever he may choose to conclude. But before you can be sure I shall arrive at just decisions upon all events in your reign, you must know whether I shall be at the trouble of examining them at all; and I cannot help suspecting that I shall be more attentive to the most trivial occurrence which I see passing than to all the events which were seen by you.

I have learned, also, that you act with the most wanton caprice in distributing honours and rewards amongst your subjects. The clamorous become great; the good, the silent, and the useful remain obscure: and it is said that to excuse the little pains you take in discovering and advancing true merit, you often allege that Posterity will rectify all your mistakes concerning the characters of men. This seems to me a singular kind of justice; and I cannot think that a man of merit is adequately rewarded by the hope of its being acknowledged after his death that he ought to have been famous while he lived. But I warn you that I shall not think myself under any obligation to adjust the claims of your contemporaries. This is one of the most unreasonable tasks that you impose upon me; you find it difficult to distinguish the good and bad qualities in that multitude which is soliciting your notice, and therefore transfer the decision to me, as if the characters of men were most easily discerned when the means of information are lost. I am expected not only to furnish honour for all whom you have unjustly kept in obscurity, but also to degrade those whom you have exalted without reason, and

you seem to think that you atone sufficiently for raising so many undeserving men when you charge Posterity to deprive them of their honours.

I am told that by this uncertainty in assigning honours, and this custom of referring all kinds of merit to my decision, you have taught great numbers of busy men, whose names can never reach my ear, to expect what they call justice from me. When there have been two competitors for a public honour, the unsuccessful one invokes my aid, and desires that I will not fail to expose the arts of his adversary and to manifest his own probity, when the truth is, that I am never to hear of the dispute, and therefore cannot reasonably be expected to settle it. I find that I am become the common refuge of all the unhappy men who are disappointed in their hopes of your favour. He who was to have been an orator and statesman, but instead of that dies unheard of in a wretched garret, entreats me with his last breath to make him as great a man as he ought to have been.

But I hear that of all those who expect my praise the most numerous and most confident are the authors. The scribbler, who has been guilty of a tiresome volume which you have refused to read, still writes with the same industry as at first, for he has patience, and can wait for the applause of Posterity. He who has had the good fortune to be read and commended by you has no reason to suppose that I shall be less pleased by his work; and he whom you have censured or refused to read is but the more confident of my applause from your known neglect of merit. Thus either to fail or to succeed assures an author of favour with Posterity, whence I must regard with despair the library that I am expected to peruse.

It is said that almost all your subjects are authors, so that he who has not written a book is accused of affecting singularity; and I hear you read the living writers with so much industry that very few complain of being overlooked. Now I am credibly informed that there is only one writer of

your whole reign whom I am likely to study: I conceal his name, that each may believe it to be himself, and the vigour and hope of your authors may not be diminished.

But I must inform all of your contemporaries who, either from their writings or their actions, are confident of my future praise, that when I come to the throne, a man of but moderate abilities, provided he be alive, will engage more of my notice and conversation than the most renowned of your dead subjects.

But my neglect is not the only thing which these ambitious men have to fear; the loss of their names and actions at sea being a still greater impediment to immortal fame. Every one of your authors, as I have been told, sends his works to sea in full confidence that they will reach my island and be eagerly studied by me. Many even undertake to foretell my impression and opinion from particular passages. These books, from which I am to obtain my knowledge, usually attain the bottom of the sea almost as soon as they set out.

I hear that you are very punctual in transmitting to me intelligence of all you do, and that when you are doing nothing you take care to inform me of that also, and despatch a copious narrative of every day, whether any thing has happened in it or not. I have already told you the fate of these valuable communications; they are lost by the storms and rocks. But from time to time a man is born in your dominions with a genius to overcome all the difficulties that separate us. He is versed in the characters and events of your reign, and also knows my disposition, what things I wish to know, and what I should reject, and he has skill to preserve him from being destroyed and forgotten in the seas through which I am to be reached. Such a man from the rocks in his way gathers the fragments of letters that you have sent by unfortunate voyagers, and judges what intelligence is worthy to reach my island. From these rare adventurers I obtain all the knowledge I have of your reign.

There are, indeed, many divers in my island, who pretend to give ample and exact information of you, but they find little belief. These artists, by constant discipline, have extraordinary skill and patience in remaining under water, where, as they wish me to suppose, they discover innumerable histories from your lost ships, which they read with great diligence beneath the waves, and then rising up write what they have learned, and present it to me. The writers who thus look for facts at the bottom of the sea are very apt to contradict the most authentic intelligence that I have received from your ablest ambassadors; but I give very little attention to their discoveries.

As I have now explained to you how rare and imperfect is the information that I receive of your reign, you may understand that your claim to my incessant praise and study is not likely to be complied with.

But whatever intelligence of your proceedings you may contrive to give me, I cannot promise that laborious attention to them which you require; and I think you the more unreasonable in demanding so much of my admiration, because, as I am told, you show no such respect for your predecessor, but are wholly occupied by your own projects. It is said that you never speak of him without derision; and that any person who would recall one of his maxims is ruined in your esteem, and ridiculed by all your court as a man of an understanding too slow to go on with the course of the seasons. Now, if you think that an Age deceased is thus at the mercy of its successor, I cannot understand what peculiar merit in you is to secure you from the same treatment during my reign. I am told, that in your eyes the chief virtue of all things consists in being new. A book just from the press has wit and spirit, which after a short time are not to be found in it. I understand that a volume six months old is thought to have lost all its vigour. Men, also, as books, attain with you a sudden eminence, but soon discover that their renown has left them with their novelty.

If my intelligence is accurate, you estimate opinions by the same rule. A man who would be thought to reason justly must insist upon something which never was imagined before: in all matters relating to the

government of your dominions you disdain to think any thing that was thought twenty years ago; and indeed I believe that by your command, the same thing very seldom is true for two years together. And it seems that whenever you order your subjects to do or think any thing new, you imagine yourself conferring a great benefit on me, for instead of regarding your various decrees as the amusements of a day, you believe that your wildest fancies will last for ever. In all your inventions you are dreaming for Posterity, and every absurdity you commit is for my use.

I find you have invented a new phrase, "the spirit of the age," said to be of admirable use in silencing those men of immovable minds, who obstinately retain a maxim because they remember it true at a former time. In every dispute, as I hear, this phrase is both wit and argument; no man is able to refute it, nor even to reason against it for a moment; and if an intrepid disputant sometimes ventures to call its authority in question, he acts on pain of being ridiculous for the rest of his life.

Now, since every doctrine must wait for your permission before it can be true, since you have assumed this right to reject every past notion, and supply from your own stock all the wisdom that your people want, I wish to be informed what shall prevent me from being equally absolute in my turn.

I advise you, then, to give up the frivolous amusement of making discoveries for my use; I intend to make discoveries for myself, and believe I shall follow your example in liking my own truths best, for the sake of their author. But, while I desire you to forbear recommending opinions to me, I would not discourage you from prosecuting your triumph over the defenceless notions of antiquity; for a living disputant has so great an advantage over one who is dead, that in any controversy with your predecessor I think you cannot fail to be victorious. Only remember, that when you are dead I shall argue against you with the same advantage; and I know not how you can expect that, having your example before me, I should use that advantage with moderation.

# ANSWER FROM THE PRESENT AGE TO POSTERITY.

Your letter has reached me; and as I find that through imperfect intelligence you have contracted a very wrong opinion of my character, I shall endeavour to correct your mistakes. Having been told of certain prevailing follies, you impute them all to me, and would make me the author of all absurdities committed by my subjects. If, when you come to the throne, you shall undertake to be the inventor of every thing that is said and done in your dominions, you will make yourself answerable for more follies than you will find ingenuity to defend.

However, the distance between us may easily excuse your mistake; for those by whom I am surrounded are very apt to give me the honour of all the extravagant designs that become public; and, indeed, I cannot blame their credulity, for when every scribbler calls himself "the Present Age," and every projector affects to be acting under my orders, I can hardly expect that my true actions shall be always distinguished. Perhaps I might be pardoned, if, in the multitude and confusion of exploits and opinions which are said to be mine, I were sometimes, myself, to doubt what it is that I am really doing and thinking. I therefore readily excuse your misconception of my character, and shall now endeavour to give you a juster notion of me.

First, I shall say a few words of the unfair use of my name, that you may see the reason of my being so much misrepresented to you, and also may be warned of the usurpation which your own name will inevitably suffer

when you occupy my place. My subjects are extremely desirous of discovering my will, and would commonly obey my slightest commands with perfect alacrity. There is a great emulation amongst them to be the first in learning my sentiments upon every occasion, and imparting them to others. But this excessive loyalty, instead of making my people obedient to my government, only induces them to believe the numberless impostors, who recommend their own inventions in my name, and thus, while my subjects are committing the wildest follies in action and opinion, they imagine themselves submitting to the wisdom of their sovereign.

The greatest part of these fictitious laws are propagated by those who write, and who are almost as numerous as you represent them. My people judge and reason by means of works, called Reviews, which are published at certain times, each of them containing doctrines adverse to those of its rivals. Every one of them affirms solemnly that I am its editor; derides the pretence of all the rest to my protection, and declares me the guardian of itself alone. Every reader pretends to know my style, and can trace it in his own Review. The truth is, that a few of the writers in these works have sagacity and opportunity to discover my real sentiments, while the others publish their own fancies as my decrees.

In addition to these Reviews certain works are published every morning and evening, that contain a faithful history of that portion of time which is called a day. Of all these, likewise, I am the professed editor: each of them claims to itself my real labour, and imputes to the others the dishonest use of my name. Each, therefore, has its sect of believers; who are convinced that they read what has been corrected and authorised, if not written, by me.

There are other compositions of a singular kind in which I am often suspected of being engaged. You must know that, in the towns of my dominions, those who are desirous of instructing their countrymen have a custom of writing their thoughts upon the walls in large letters, and liberally allowing them to be read by all who pass, so that in times of commotion every wall abounds with political wisdom, expressed in a

brief, sententious style. The walls are attentively read by crowds of students; and many have no other education. There is a great variety in the style and subject of these works in the open air: religious sects are exploded, taxes are condemned, public spirit is inculcated; and there are satirical walls, which often concur to ruin some odious statesman by wit and ridicule. Sometimes the remarks of a wall are answered by that on the opposite side of the street, so that those who pass between them may see the whole controversy together. There is hardly a town in my dominions destitute of this literature. Such is believed to be my zeal for composition, that I am often supposed the author of these inscriptions. Many are the persons who receive every thing that is said upon a wall as a manifestation of "the Present Age;" and it is confidently believed that I wander about in disguise to cover the walls with knowledge, or at least that my emissaries write up sentiments by my order. Thus, when any idle boy may prescribe the opinions of the age with a piece of chalk, you cannot wonder at the extravagant doctrines which pass for mine.

I am made answerable for the outrages of innumerable books, which I have never seen; for the common stratagem to obtain readers for a book is to publish that I am the author of it. The most obscure writers endeavour to give authority to their works by declaring that they write only what I enjoin, although they have never been in my presence, nor obtained the least authentic information of my thoughts. In this manner the wildest fictions are imposed upon the country as maxims of "the Present Age."

My indignation is often roused by the insolent confidence with which my name is assumed. The most ignorant scribbler, who is kept alive by nonsense, will allege that he has a commission to divulge my sentiments; and if any person thinks fit to call in question what he is teaching, he exclaims against the audacity of those who presume to dispute with "the Present Age."

You will now readily suppose, that the phrase, which you justly ridicule, "the spirit of the age," was not invented by me, but by some of these pretenders to my confidence, who seem to find it so useful, forcible, and

conclusive, that I think they will not soon let it fall into disuse. It is one of those epidemic phrases, of which a few are always in force to argue for those who cannot reason without them. There are several such incontestible sayings now in great authority, besides the one you have mentioned, though that I think is the most absolute. These significant phrases, which usually are not extended beyond two or three words, are abstracts of all knowledge and experience, and of vast advantage in the principal business of life, which is dispute. For not being burdensome to the mind, but easily carried about, and ready for use on all occasions, they are far more exercised than any elaborate reasoning, and they enable men of scanty education to be as ready, as copious, and as positive as those of the greatest learning, so that they have made all persons equal in argument; and thus abolished the unjust advantage which has been enjoyed by men of ability. A treatise plentifully supplied with these phrases is sure to have great success, and a politician, who makes frequent use of them, cannot fail to convince the world of his integrity.

You have been rightly informed of the exploits achieved by that formidable phrase, "The spirit of the age." Such is the eloquence of those words that there is no outrage against common sense which they cannot justify. In all the strange propositions which they are employed to maintain, it is impossible to discover any general principle or uniformity. In truth, this "spirit of the age" is a mere sound, which by universal consent is allowed to be full of argument, and may be used by any man who can speak articulately or write legibly. All which can be understood is, that those who make frequent use of this phrase ascribe to me an unlimited power over law, morality, custom, and reason. They empower me to invent a new right and wrong whenever I am tired of the old. Thus, because a ridiculous phrase has by some ingenious artist been constructed with my name, all the absurdities which this phrase may commit are supposed to be my decrees.

After what I have said I hardly need tell you that in imputing to me a corrupt taste in literature, and a neglect of every book not perfectly new, you are still confounding me with a part of my subjects. I am publicly reported to have read with delight innumerable works of which not even the names have reached me; and frequently it is said, with as much truth, that I have ordered a book to be carefully kept and recommended to you after my death.

I am supposed to be as absolute over literature as over law and government; and frequent edicts are published in my name declaring what is to be wit and sublimity for the present time. It is imagined that I have it in my power to deprive any former writers I please of all their beauties, and leave them utterly worthless; which seems a singular expedient for enriching the world; and yet I am sometimes believed to practise it. Thus not long ago a few of my subjects who write conspired together to prevent Pope from continuing to be a poet. In this design they made use of my authority, and affirmed that I had dismissed his works from my library as being poetry no longer. They said that in this I had been determined by their persuasion; for that, in an interview which I had granted, they had brought me to their opinion; and that from that time Pope had been no poet by unanswerable arguments. The truth is, no such interview was granted them; and I have never ceased to read Pope with pleasure and advantage. But this confederacy against him had some success: the discovery that we had one poet less than we had imagined was received with great exultation; and many persons acknowledged that the pleasure they had hitherto supposed themselves to find in his works was a deception, and not real pleasure.

The greatest part of my subjects endeavour to regulate their studies by mine; to read the books that I read, and be amused by the passages that amuse me. A reader would be ashamed to laugh where he supposed me to have read with gravity; and whatever entertainment a book might give him, if he were told that I had not read it he would instantly lay it aside. Yet this correspondence of our studies is altogether imaginary; for these conforming readers are unable to obtain any true intelligence of what I

am doing. Thus, by my supposed example, the writings of Pope could no longer please; for there being this emulation to follow me, and this ready belief of whatever is reported of my studies, those who design that former poets shall have no genius need do no more than command in my name that the words which once were full of thought and meaning shall henceforth mean nothing.

I now proceed to another of your complaints against me; which, however, every former Age has equally incurred. You accuse me of distributing honours unjustly, of neglecting true merit, and signalising the unworthy. In vindication of myself I beg you to consider by whom this charge against me is advanced. You will easily believe that it proceeds only from those who have been disappointed in their pretensions to my favour, since the men whom I have promoted cannot reasonably be expected to complain of their own success. Now, if, when you occupy my place, you shall make it your practice to consult the pretender himself about his qualifications, and advance every man who can attest his own merit, you will certainly be surrounded by a large crowd of illustrious persons. It would be an admirable invention for providing against a scarcity of great men during your reign. But your ingenuity in devising employments and honours must be greater than mine if you can find preferment for all who are men of merit by their own conviction.

It is known by experience that one great poet in every age is more than nature supplies; for although certain favoured periods have had two or three, there are long intervals of time without any. Yet I believe that in the course of my reign there have not been fewer than twenty writers of verse, who, in defiance of nature, have required of me that they may be great poets; and so insatiable are they, that not one of them is content to be less a poet than Milton. My rejection of these writers is called a prejudice against living poets, which judgment is said to be entirely mistaken: for Milton was once alive. Those who plead a right to all other

honours exceed equally the places to be occupied, whence you can understand how it happens that I am so generally believed to have no justice or sagacity in distributing rewards.

It is true that, through the multitude of undeserving persons who assail me, a man of real merit, if he be unknown to those who are in my confidence, is unable to gain access to my favour without patience and delay. But ability, with perseverance, is sure to succeed at last. Sometimes, however, an indignant man of genius, who has obtained my notice after many attempts, can hardly forgive me his long obscurity, and seeks revenge by satirical reflections on my sagacity. But men of genius are often too arbitrary in their expectations. He who is conscious of superior endowments, but has not yet been able to manifest them, is incensed against the world because it has made no search for him; and he thinks that all men of sense ought to have been engaged in inquiring into his capacity. Though if he would consider how patiently he himself suffers the obscurity of others, having no design of undertaking such an examination into the faculties of all unknown men, he would hardly expect this eager inquiry to be made after himself.

You attribute to me a perpetual pursuit of novelty: the changes you hear of are not caused by me, but by a mischievous politician, who has great influence in my dominions; and you will be surprised to learn that this pernicious statesman is my prime minister, but he is far too powerful to be dismissed. His name is Fashion: he is the author of innumerable projects and chimeras; and such is his authority that whatever he recommends is instantly received by my whole people. He was originally a tailor, and renowned for the beauty and reception of his inventions in that art; from which success he aspired to affairs of state, and was attended still by the same greatness. In government, in literature, in morals, he is now supreme; and, indeed, I believe there is nothing exempt from his corruptions except mathematics.

Though he is remarkable for inconstancy, and for perpetually revoking what he has just introduced, yet he always persuades my people that the present scheme or custom will last for ever, and every fancy that he

promulgates is embraced as a wise and durable invention. By some singular art he can make my subjects esteem or despise whatever he pleases. In all his plots he makes use of my name, and seems to enforce nothing by his own authority; indeed his skill consists in not passing for the author of his own inventions. So far am I from being able to dismiss him, that his aid is absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of all my undertakings. I depend upon him for my popularity; and whenever I design a new law, my first step is to obtain his concurrence. At my death you will find your dominions in the power of this person; and will soon have such experience of his art as to despair of discarding him from your service; for notwithstanding his great age I do not conceive it possible that I should survive him.

I disclaim the folly you impute to me of pretending to be the author of every useful thing that will descend to you; and I shall now say in a few words how far I think myself capable of really improving what was left me by my predecessor. The most honourable of my employments is to observe and encourage the studies of a few of my subjects, who with an ardent patience are searching into the laws of matter, and unfolding the universe by gradual discovery. From these labours you will obtain an enlargement, both of arts and contemplation.

The true method of discovery, from facts and not from imagination, had been pursued before I came to the throne, and it has been vigorously prosecuted under my reign and countenance. The results from it in art and knowledge will be far the most valuable gifts that you will receive from me.

Experiment, having wonderfully divulged the ways of nature, was applied to other studies—to the laws of the human understanding, and to political speculations; and wherever it has come there has been new light and certainty. I conclude that my chief glory must be from giving it encouragement and progress; and its discoveries in any kind of learning I shall transmit to you with full confidence of their utility.

It is true that from this sort of philosophy in politics I do not expect that general peace and wisdom through my dominions which some people foretell, though still I promote the study, and acknowledge the truths from it. But some of my subjects imagine, that by their researches of this kind all public factions, violences, and disasters, will speedily cease. They think they are effecting this tranquillity, by observing more accurately than before the rules according to which wealth is distributed and society conducted, and also by explaining those rules to all mankind. Through their instructions every man is to renounce his present emulation with those above him, and his hope of improving his own condition by disturbance. The people are no longer to strive through party spirit for things not really beneficial to them; politicians are not to make parties for themselves by inventing fallacious disputes for the people. In the room of these troubles, in which the world has hitherto been employed, all men are to occupy and delight themselves in viewing the peaceful operation of these newly discovered rules. Such is to be the prosperity from modern calculation; but I confess I have little confidence in the judgment of those who are convinced that the world is just going to be wise. I enter into no engagement, therefore, to leave you my dominions in any such tranquillity; and, instead of that, I can promise only one thing,—to make your government wiser; which is, that for your instruction my reign shall contribute its just share of follies to those already known, and preserved under the name of history. I am sure your efforts will not be wanting to increase the collection.

Through the progress of experiment, therefore, every age must now excel that which preceded it, in all such knowledge as experiment can discover. In that only I pretend to surpass my predecessor; but from my undoubted superiority in such knowledge some of my subjects would assert a pre-eminence in all other particulars. These persons seem to imagine, that because they live in an age of experiment every fancy that enters into their thoughts must infallibly be true, and they arrogate great

sagacity to themselves on account of discoveries made by others while they are alive. These are the statesmen who urgently desire that every thing should be destroyed, and made again on a different plan.

But having said thus much against the lovers of novelty, I must observe, that I equally disapprove of another sect, who see ruin in every alteration. You are to understand that, for some time past, my kingdom has been divided by a great dispute concerning the efficacy of change. One side maintain that there can be no peace, commerce, or fertility, under a government which is the same for six months together, and they recommend change to the people as something that they can feed upon; while their adversaries contend that the only virtue and benefit of a law consists in its never being altered, and they exclaim against the cruelty of those who would deprive the people of any inconvenience that their ancestors submitted to. These two parties are equally excluded from my favour.

But, perhaps, I have now said enough to vindicate myself from your accusations; if not, I must wait for justice till you succeed to my place, and then your experience will soon acquit me.

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# THE
# SLEEPER AND THE SPIRIT.
## A DIALOGUE.

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SLEEPER.

Merciful Heaven! what has happened to me? Surely I must be dead, for I am suddenly divided into two persons: here is my mind, which thinks, and there lies my body on that couch. I slipped out of it without knowing how; yet it cannot be dead, for it breathes, and looks like a sleeping man. But how happens it that I am in two parts, and that one half of me sleeps while the other half looks at it?

SPIRIT.

It is no more than has happened to you very often before.

SLEEPER.

Who is it that speaks? Ah! it is not a being of this world: then I am dead; may God forgive my offences.

SPIRIT.

You may defer your repentance to another opportunity, for you are not dead, but merely asleep.

SLEEPER.

Doubtless I listen to one whom I must believe; yet this sleep appears to me very singular. I lay down on that couch from weariness, and felt the approach and weakness of sleep, when suddenly I found myself two persons; and here I am talking and reasoning apart from the other portion of me, which is asleep. According to my past observation, this is not a common way of going to sleep.

SPIRIT.

You have never slept in any other way; but I will explain the mystery. The mind of man is from a divine origin, but subject to numberless infirmities by confinement within the body; and were it never released during life it would become altogether worthless. To prevent this, sleep has been contrived, which is not, as mortals suppose, a suspension of the mind, but a separation of it from the body, and by these continual escapes it is cleared from some of the evils which it contracts. During this freedom, which you call sleep, the mind converses with heavenly beings as you now do with me, and sees many things that recall it to its purity.

SLEEPER.

May I venture then to ask why I do not remember to have conversed with any heavenly being before? I have great success in sleeping, but have enjoyed no such interviews as you describe.

SPIRIT.

As soon as the mind has returned into its body, which you call waking, it forgets all these adventures, and, therefore, every time of sleeping it is surprised at its separation as something new. At night you may see the minds of men rising out of their bodies as they fall asleep. All their faults remain in the body; and the minds, being free from bad inclinations, lament to each other the several imperfections of the bodies to which they are joined, earnestly desiring death to set them at liberty. The minds of rival statesmen avow to each other the plots which they are preparing,

and deplore their contemptible employments. In these conversations they are apt suddenly to disappear, being summoned back into the body by waking; and when the night is over they all vanish. In the day there are a few wandering minds of those, who, like you, have been surprised by sleep through fatigue or idleness.

SLEEPER.

But whence proceed our dreams, if the sleeping body has no mind in it?

SPIRIT.

Dreams are the fancies of the mind at its first return to the body in waking, when it has lost its separate being, and is not yet quite settled in combination. These visions pass in a few seconds of time, though appearing of long duration. In reality you dream only at the time of waking.

SLEEPER.

Sleep must be the best part of human life; it is far better to be a pure spirit, and converse with heavenly beings, than to be busy in the miserable undertakings of men. Henceforth I shall obtain as much sleep as possible.

SPIRIT.

But you are to forget what now passes as soon as you are in your body again.

SLEEPER.

Ah! you told me so before. But now that I am free, I should wish to use my time to advantage, and gain some knowledge, however soon I may lose it again.

SPIRIT.

Your body seems effectually asleep, and not likely to want you very soon: if you please, you can accompany me in my present employment, which will give you some insight into the management of human life.

SLEEPER.

What is your employment, and what are you? For you have encouraged me to ask questions by answering them.

SPIRIT.

Not long ago I was a man like yourself. Out of those who die, a few of the most meritorious are selected to perform certain duties in the management of mankind. I having lived virtuously was appointed, at my death, to one of these offices; and my present employment is to prevent men from being too happy.

SLEEPER.

Is that the vocation of heavenly beings? Surely they can distribute nothing but good.

SPIRIT.

But there is evil in the world; whence does it come?

SLEEPER.

I know not; chiefly, I believe, from men themselves.

SPIRIT.

Thus it is that men reason. You suppose that no being higher than yourselves can have a disposition to hurt you. Animals might use the same argument: an ill used horse might say, "Man is a creature of divine race, and far superior to me; he cannot, therefore, inflict pain and mischief, and, doubtless, is not the author of the whipping and spurring

which I feel; this discipline must have another origin; perhaps I am in some way the cause of it myself." You say, "God is the cause of all things. There is much misery in the world, but God is not the cause of misery."

SLEEPER.

Will you instruct me better in the origin of evil, and the cause of its being inflicted on man.

SPIRIT.

When a misfortune befalls you, the best philosophy is to consider how it may be removed, and not whence it came. But I have told you, that my office here is to prevent men from being too happy. A certain number of blessings and misfortunes is allotted to mankind, and if constant care were not taken to enforce a just distribution, the lot of some mortals would be composed altogether of blessings, and others would provide themselves with nothing but miseries. Certain spirits are appointed to correct the unequal possessions of men, and transfer happiness from those who have too much to those who want it. This is now my occupation.

SLEEPER.

I am glad to hear that you give happiness to some while you take it away from others; that reconciles me to your office. But with all this care, how happens it that the advantages of life are so unequally dispensed? You do not appear to succeed very well in your endeavours to be just.

SPIRIT.

The inequality of happiness amongst men is not so great as you imagine. Superiority is very short, for we speedily correct it. But you shall see my operations. You observe that I carry a pair of scales, and two small boxes: in the scales I weigh the lot of every person within my province, placing his miseries in one scale, and his advantages in the other; then if they are

not evenly balanced, I take something from the heaviest scale, or add something to the lightest. When the man has his due share of good and bad fortune, the scales are exactly even.

SLEEPER.

By what contrivance can you weigh such things as blessings and calamities? When the advantage to be weighed is ten thousand acres of land, you must find it an unwieldy burden for so small a scale. I should imagine, too, there would be equal difficulty in weighing a cheerful temper, or any other quality of mind.

SPIRIT.

All the advantages and misfortunes of life have certain representatives, which are easily weighed. I have a number of them in these two boxes: one box contains the blessings which I have taken from those who had more than their weight of happiness; the other holds the evils from which I have eased the miserable. Open that box, which contains evil, and examine the troubles you find in it.

SLEEPER.

Will they not take the opportunity to seize upon me?

SPIRIT.

Fear not; they are quite harmless.

SLEEPER.

They are nothing in appearance but little weights, such as a druggist uses; but I see they are inscribed with the names of the calamities which they represent; one is poverty, another sickness. You have relieved the world from many inconveniences, but I hope you will keep them safe in this box, and not let them out again to plague mankind.

SPIRIT.

I keep them to bestow upon those whose misfortunes are too light. Sometimes I rectify the scales by taking away good, and sometimes by adding evil, as may best suit the particular case. But come, I am wasting time, follow me, and you shall see this weighing performed. We will walk through this wall into the next house.

SLEEPER.

How wonderful! We have indeed passed through the wall, and I felt not the least obstruction.

SPIRIT.

Walls are built against the body only, and cannot confine the mind. Here is a young woman who has just attained to widowhood. Look at her head, and you find your sight is so much altered that you can now see through her skull into the brain. You may observe in the brain two cells, one of which contains the weights that represent blessings, and the other those that stand for calamities. These things are invisible to anatomists. I can take her weights out of these cells without her perceiving it. I put them into their respective scales.

SLEEPER.

The scale of misery descends.

SPIRIT.

Yet there are only two weights in it, and the other scale is supplied with many blessings. The two misfortunes are the death of her husband and the tooth-ache. She must be relieved from one of these vexations.

SLEEPER.

Surely the death of her husband is past remedy: I conclude you cannot restore him to life.

SPIRIT.

No; but I can provide another. I have taken the dead husband out of the scale, and you observe it is very little raised; the tooth-ache preponderates against all these advantages. Now, I will put back the death, and take away the tooth-ache; the scale rises, and the two are now exactly adjusted. The tooth-ache was the heaviest calamity of the two, and almost prevented the husband's death from being felt; but now it is taken away, he is properly lamented. I will put this tooth-ache into my box: it seems a victorious one, and will serve to bring some very fortunate person to a reasonable state of uneasiness.

SLEEPER.

But the death of this lady's husband will every day become a less grievance, and the balance will soon be disturbed.

SPIRIT.

Yes; but I shall visit her again soon, and if I find her a very happy widow, may perhaps restore her tooth-ache. We will proceed to another house.

SLEEPER.

Here is a beautiful young woman, and her countenance is so happy that I think she must need a large supply of affliction.

SPIRIT.

The scales will soon decide that.

SLEEPER.

I was right; see how happy she is!

SPIRIT.

The chief weight, I think, is her beauty. I take that out of the scale, and see how it rises! and now her misfortunes are far too heavy, though no more than a few common troubles: her beauty is her happiness. I could easily deprive her of that, for in my box is a bad small-pox, but that is not my usual management. When I find one great predominant advantage, my delight is not to take that away, but to prevent the enjoyment of it by some importunate vexation. Now I think I cannot by any artifice more ingeniously divert this lady from the contemplation and joy of her beauty than by inserting in her the tooth-ache which I gained from the widow. I therefore restore her beauty to the scale, and commit to the other scale the pain out of the widow's jaw. The balance is exact; now it will be a doubt whether this girl is more happy by her beauty or miserable by her tooth-ache. That is just what human life is intended to be.

SLEEPER.

I have often thought there was a law against happiness, and admired the art with which men are prevented from being quite fortunate, but I never had the sagacity to discover the means by which this is effected. I cannot forbear thinking it would be more suitable to the greatness of the Deity that this distribution of good and evil should be by a command, and not by a pair of scales.

SPIRIT.

Providence is pleased to employ subordinate agents. Besides, it is only a weakness of the human mind that makes you admire most what is done without visible means. But I must proceed to another house. Here is a man whose weights I lately adjusted with great difficulty, and I do not doubt they require new regulation.

SLEEPER.

His cell of misfortunes is amply supplied, and his stock of blessings consists of one: you must open your box of good in his favour.

SPIRIT.

Let us first weigh his present condition. Here is a ruined fortune, loss of friends, infirm health, a faithless wife, with many other smaller calamities. I load the scale with them, and now we shall see what struggle the single blessing will make against them in the other scale. It outweighs them all.

SLEEPER.

It must be something of extraordinary value: is it philosophy, or religion?

SPIRIT.

No; this little weight is inscribed with the word "Vanity;" that is the possession which makes him a happy man in spite of so many evils. Whoever is sufficiently vain has no need of any other advantages.

SLEEPER.

But upon what grounds is he vain? He has neither fortune, friends, nor health, and I cannot discover that he has any beauty. Is he a man of genius, or what endowments has he to justify this pretence?

SPIRIT.

None at all: but you must have observed that men are not vain by force of reasoning; a man of true authentic vanity wants no argument to support it. And there is no happiness comparable to this: the peace of mind from vanity far excels that from benevolence, from a clear conscience, or any other such possession.

SLEEPER.

Do you mean to take part of this man's vanity away, since it is too heavy for his present disadvantages?

SPIRIT.

No; we are not permitted to alter the disposition of any person, but only to interfere with circumstances and events. I must leave this man a preponderance of good; for if I were to empty my box of evils they would not overcome his complacency.

SLEEPER.

Yet notwithstanding the happiness of this man, I do not envy him; his enjoyment is a mere fiction.

SPIRIT.

So is all the happiness of man. You never can assign any reason for your joy except that certain things affect you with certain emotions. Who is to decide what kind of happiness is pretended, and what real? If you resolve not to be imposed upon, and to accept of no happiness till you are satisfied it is not a fallacy, you will pass a melancholy life. Vanity is as valid a good as any other. But come, we must proceed. Here is a poor clergyman who has become the father of ten children on no better grounds than a small curacy.

SLEEPER.

And in addition to these troubles he is advanced in life. I hope if you have any preferment in your box you will bestow it upon him.

SPIRIT.

Let us first consult the scales whether he is sufficiently provided for already. Here are several calamities,—poverty, a wife with bad health, the neglect of former friends, with some others. But you see he has also a stock of blessings; I will put both into the scales: the blessings are much the heaviest.

SLEEPER.

What can they be? This curate must have great sagacity in the discovery of blessings, if he can detect any in his own condition.

SPIRIT.

These blessings are all of the same kind; they are all hopes.

SLEEPER.

Do hopes pass for real blessings?

SPIRIT.

Why not? You see by the scales that the happiness they impart is greater than the misery from all these calamities. We will try the hopes singly against the evils. I empty the scales, then I put into one the clergyman's poverty, his heaviest grievance, and in the other scale I place a hope of future wealth. You see the hope prevails over the affliction: he has more pleasure in hoping to be rich than grief in being poor. Then here is the bad health of his wife, and here a hope that she may speedily have new strength; the hope, again, is the heaviest. But besides these hopes of relief from particular calamities, here are many other fictions which he is accustomed to enjoy in his hours of leisure. Here is a hope that his third son, now a school-boy, and designed for the bar, may be a Judge at the age of forty-two; and this weight hopes that a certain nobleman may accidentally hear him preach, and may be charmed by his doctrine, language, and manner, so as to bestow upon him a rich living with an excellent house.

SLEEPER.

The old clergyman seems able to hope in contempt of probability.

SPIRIT.

That which cannot possibly happen may serve very well to hope for; a man has no invention who must be satisfied that an event may take place before he can hope for it. This clergyman, through his skill in hoping, has a store of blessings in his own imagination; and whatever misfortune occurs he can find an equivalent advantage. I have a painful disorder in my box which I think will be urgent enough to interrupt his visions. I will bestow it upon him: his contrivance will be to hope for a cure, but it will give him some real substantial pangs that cannot be so reasoned away. We will now pass on.

SLEEPER.

Here is a young man who looks happy.

SPIRIT.

Suspend your judgment till we have weighed his condition. He has both calamities and blessings: I have put both into the scales.

SLEEPER.

His happiness descends: I was right.

SPIRIT.

Nevertheless I shall leave him without correction; for I think his present joy will soon rectify itself by causing a speedy vexation. Here is the weight which now carries down his scale: it is a novel which he has lately published with general admiration. After a time he will send forth another book; but the truth is, that he has lavished on the first work all the thoughts that he had amassed during his life, and, therefore, his second production will repeat the same incidents and observations awkwardly disguised, by being expressed worse than before. This book he will publish with great confidence; but will soon discover that one work of an author is not admired for the merit of another, and his

happiness will be at an end. His present delight will be sufficiently corrected by his future mortification, without any assistance from my box. Let us go on.

SLEEPER.

Here is a man in a crisis of the gout; so I judge from the ornaments on his foot, and the efforts of his face. By the twisting of his person, and other contrivances, he seems hardly able to support the attack. Surely you will give him some mitigation.

SPIRIT.

If the scales determine so. Yes, you see his troubles descend without delay. I will take out his gout.

SLEEPER.

Still the scale is too low; then that is not his principal grievance, notwithstanding all these endeavours.

SPIRIT.

This is the chief weight—jealousy of his wife: I have relieved the scale from that and replaced the gout, and now you see the scales are brought to that balance and hesitation by which human life is represented. This man is married to a handsome woman, whose fidelity he has perpetually been doubting from no cause except his own sagacity. His fits of gout have been urgent, but his fits of suspicion have given him still more pain. I have put his jealousy into my box, and being free from that disease, he will be sufficiently cheerful under his gout. Now come into another house.

SLEEPER.

Here is a young man, and if he is not a fortunate person, the eye is not a judge of happiness; I never saw a countenance more overjoyed. And now a beautiful woman has entered the room with a face equally happy. They

seem to be married. I fear their enjoyment requires disturbance out of the box.

SPIRIT.

Yes; you see how the happy scale goes down with the husband's weights: I will now question the wife; her transgression is as great. I believe the suspicion, which I have just acquired from the gouty man will exactly rectify this excess. I bestow on the husband this endowment of jealousy, and now the scales are perfectly even; and there is this advantage, that the husband's jealousy will disturb the wife as much as himself, and so correct the weights of both at the same time. We may now leave them, and advance.

SLEEPER.

Here is a man of my acquaintance, who has been very unfortunate in the loss of wealth, and the death of his children, yet he has always been cheerful. I should like to know by what art?

SPIRIT.

We can soon discover that. I have put the troubles you mention, with some others, into the scale, and against them here is only one advantage, yet it outweighs them easily. It is inscribed, "A contented Temper." I never have so much difficulty in adjusting the balance as when this blessing occurs. No misfortune can prevail against it. If I deprive this man of every pretext for being cheerful, he will remain a happy person. He has one child left; I take away the weight representing it, and the child will soon die, but it has little effect on the scales: almost immediately after the death he will be as much delighted as ever, under pretence of resignation to the will of God, but in truth because he knows not how to grieve. But I will try again to obtain redress against him. In my box is that complaint which you call tic douleureux: I obtained it from an old man in whose possession it had been for thirty years; but at last, several additional calamities accruing to him, he was able to part

with this. It is a specimen of great vigour, and will have recourse to its victim so frequently as to disturb the most resolute cheerfulness. You see by the scales that it will contend with this man's happy temper, though not overcome it. We must leave him some advantage, for his disposition is incurable.

SLEEPER.

I have observed something that I must ask you to explain. I fancy I can see a thread ascending from the head of this man, and going I know not where; but it is so fine and delicate that I hardly can be sure of it.

SPIRIT.

You are right; most men have a thread of this kind annexed to their heads: we call them party threads; they are much used in the government of mankind. Follow me, and I will show you what becomes of the other ends of these threads, for we are now near the place where they are collected together. Here it is: you see a number of webs not unlike the webs of a spider. Each of these webs is a party, political or religious, for there is no difference between the two.

SLEEPER.

I cannot say I understand how these webs can have any thing to do with politics or religion.

SPIRIT.

You may observe that innumerable threads branch off from each web, and every one of those threads grows into a man's head, so that a multitude of men are thus united and tied together in what is called a party. Men are governed and controlled in a wonderful manner by these threads; for an influence passes along them from the web like a current of electricity. When a new party is wanted a web is woven, which immediately darts out its threads on every side; and when any thread approaches a man with whose understanding it has a certain affinity, it

grows into his brain and remains there, whence he becomes one of the party. Sometimes a web decays, and the threads from it vanish, upon which the party is at an end. No efforts of the ablest politicians can keep men united when their web is gone, and they are no longer tied together. Sometimes a part of the threads decay, while the web they issue from remains entire; and when a man has thus lost his thread, and is connected with none of the webs, he is commonly very uneasy. It often happens, also, that two threads from different webs attach themselves to the same man, which greatly distracts and perplexes him till one of them is broken.

SLEEPER.

I see certain English words hanging in these webs, and other words hovering in the air in a singular manner.

SPIRIT.

The words in the webs are all party words, and much used in controversy. You know that every party must have a cause to contend for, but this cause is commonly no more than a word: you must have observed that in all countries there are certain venerable names which men defend with great zeal. It is not long since in England the "Constitution" was the word by which all were safe and happy, and in the cause of this word every Englishman was bound to hazard both his fortune and his life. It was as valuable to the poor as the rich, and he who had nothing else had still the "Constitution."

SLEEPER.

But the "Constitution" was the name of a certain form of government: it was the government, and not the name, that men defended so eagerly.

How could that be, when the word was applied to many different kinds of government? For though all avowed that to the "Constitution" they owed their whole prosperity, they never could agree what the "Constitution" was. Some maintained it was that particular government then in being; others denied that there was then any "Constitution," and chose some time in history when they said it was in perfection; while others affirmed that the true "Constitution" neither existed then nor ever had existed, but that it was a certain state of things which had yet to take place. Still all these politicians concurred in extolling the "Constitution," though they differed so much as to what it was that they were praising. Now, since they used this word to signify very different things, much confusion in their reasoning would have been prevented had each of them selected a different word to distinguish the kind of government that he wished to promote, but each knew too well that the measures he was endeavouring to advance would have had no value in the country had they been called by any other sound than "Constitution."

The great power of these public words that prevail at different times is apparent in the efforts of politicians to obtain their aid; and indeed there is no art of government more important, or requiring more address. A statesman is ruined if he pretends to ridicule or despise a prevailing word that molests him: his true policy is to own its virtue and efficacy, and endeavour to win it over to his own side. When "Reform" is the irresistible sound, a prudent minister in every thing he does will say he is reforming. Two parties often dispute the possession of a popular word, each asserting a title to it, and deriding the claim of the other; and sometimes it is well known that the country will be governed by that side which remains proprietor of the word.

You may observe, that whenever a new party arises in a country its first precaution is to provide itself with a word; and when the word, which has been the head of an established party, is grown old and unserviceable, with the greatest care and anxiety they appoint it a successor. Many a word has covered the earth with troubles, and that without having any

force or merit, except the particular sound with which it fills the ear. In politics and religion every man chooses a word with which to associate himself; and many would be less dissatisfied at losing their property or their children than at relinquishing the word of which they are the adherents.

SLEEPER.

But it seems to me that these leading words have their authority only by representing certain opinions: I think a word has no influence, except by the good or evil that it signifies.

SPIRIT.

Then you are mistaken: a word may signify nothing, and yet be more powerful than the greatest monarch upon earth. Undoubtedly, there are men so inquisitive as to satisfy themselves whether a word means any thing before they will be zealous in its behalf, but the generality are capable of no such research; and I think it clear, that if none were eager party men except those who know why they are so, the heads of a party would find their followers reduced to a small number. During a century and a half, the two words Whig and Tory divided England into two sets of angry men. Now many a zealous Whig or Tory, had he been asked whether he could explain the difference between himself and his neighbour on the contrary side, would have thought it a very ridiculous question, well knowing how different a sound the two words make to the ear, and how different a figure they present to the eye, and therefore conceiving that the distinction between Whig and Tory must be obvious to every man who had an eye or an ear. Yet such a reasoner as this will frequently adhere to his own word with more resolution and anger than most of those who must know what is signified by a sound before they will risk their fortune in its defence.

Now, when you consider the strange authority that particular words obtain, you must have a curiosity to know what it is that makes a sound so powerful. For manifestly a party cannot select a word at pleasure, and

make it popular. Many attempts are made to that purpose in vain; some ambitious word is perpetually assuming importance, but fails to attract notice, and is forgotten. Words resemble men in this particular, that out of all the pretenders to renown very few succeed. And, certainly, in the words of most authority, it is impossible to discover any intrinsic excellence. The word Whig has neither music nor dignity, and yet numbers would have hazarded their lives and fortunes in defence of this sound, which is as harsh as any that could have been made out of the alphabet.

Of those words which have attained to great eminence, many before their advancement had served in the language as common words; some had never engaged themselves in politics, but been altogether without importance, when suddenly they have been promoted to be the leaders of a party. When a word obtains this mysterious influence it seems to prevail in the air, like a distemper, seizing men one after another, and involving them in the same anxiety. An industrious tradesman, who has laboured hard to keep his children alive, if he be suddenly possessed by a prevalent word, abandons his shop, and from that moment neglects his business for the sake of a word which he can neither roast nor boil.

These words cause different troubles of mind: the office of some is to provoke discontent; and when one of these takes possession of a man, while he is enjoying every comfort of life, he instantly imagines himself the most miserable of human beings. In this emergency, he has first to find out what is his distress,—a discovery, which he is commonly unable to make by his own genius; and he is, therefore, very grateful to any person who has invention enough to supply him with something to complain of. Other words excite hope, and a man believes that by often using and insisting upon them he shall soon arrive at unusual prosperity. By one powerful word of this species, a whole country is sometimes triumphant for several months together. There are words that cause alarm; and he who is seized by one of them is in perpetual terror lest it should bring upon him some mischief of which he cannot conceive the nature.

Now you here see how all this is effected. A number of words are always hovering about these webs, and when one of them touches a web, with which it has an affinity, it is retained there like a fly in a cob-web. As soon, then, as it is fixed in the web, it transmits its efficacy down all the threads, and so takes possession of all the men annexed to that web, with different violence, according to their several tempers.

SLEEPER.

I cannot forbear saying that I think the world would be much happier without these party webs, and these deceitful words.

SPIRIT.

You are wrong; this power in words is not pernicious: life without its illusions would be full of melancholy; and you cannot give them up without some new gifts to supply their place. Besides which, if the charm and deception of words were taken away, there would be nothing left in the minds of the generality of men by which they could be guided. Words cause faction and tumult, but they also effect order and government. The webs, too, are absolutely necessary; but I have not time to explain all the reasons why men must be divided into parties.

I will now show you something far more wonderful than what you have seen yet. But I see you are going to leave me; your body requires you. Farewell.

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# A DISPUTE BETWEEN THE MIND AND THE BODY.

*Translated from a Greek Manuscript lately discovered.*

BODY.

Since you and I first became associates, you have never ceased to revile me. I have, till now, borne your injurious language in silence, but at length venture to inquire what offence you can charge me with, for I have not hitherto been able to guess from your invectives what it is that you complain of.

MIND.

I complain of being united to a thing so base as you are, and so unsuitable to me.

BODY.

This is your usual language, and I wish to represent to you, that since we were born, and have grown up together, I am entitled to a kinder treatment, and I may add that the care, with which I have provided for your ease and enjoyment might claim some gratitude from you. I have made over to you my skull as a residence, which was prepared with great art for your reception, and fitted up with every thing that it was thought you could want.

MIND.

I admire the confidence with which you speak of having conferred an obligation on me by receiving me into your skull, instead of which you ought to be grateful to me for condescending to settle myself in such a paltry dwelling. But if you desire to know the cause of my displeasure, let me ask you, when our confederacy was first agreed upon, was it not a condition that you should be subject to my authority?

BODY.

I confess that such was the treaty.

MIND.

Then have I not reason to complain of a vassal so turbulent and seditious as I have always found you?

BODY.

I am astonished at the charge, for I cannot remember any revolt that I have been guilty of. The five senses have been appointed to transmit intelligence to you, and I believe that each of them has, with perfect regularity and despatch, given you the information that it is charged with. Besides this, all my limbs are subject to your command; every muscle waits to execute your will, and moves only when you order it. Such is the subordination that has been established, and I thought it had always been observed. But has there lately been any disaffection amongst my limbs? Has a leg or an arm refused to obey you, or have any of my fingers declared themselves independent?

MIND.

No; I do not accuse them of disobedience.

BODY.

Have any of the senses then been remiss in their duties? Perhaps the ear has failed to communicate to you a sound, of which it had received notice, or the nose may have neglected to impart a perfume that had come to it. If these senses have been guilty of suppressing any sounds or smells, which were due to you, I will enforce a greater vigilance, and take care that in future smelling and hearing shall be honestly executed.

MIND.

I do not say that either the ear or the nose has been refractory. In all such duties as these you maintain a great parade of obedience. My accusation against you is, that you are full of vices and sensual passions, which I highly disapprove of, and which you gratify in defiance of me. In vain I prohibit your luxury; my commands are broken as soon as they are pronounced; you commit follies in my presence without the least restraint; and when you have a pleasure in view, I seem not to have the least power to deter you from it. The truth is, that from head to foot you are in a state of insurrection, and yet presume to value yourself on your obedience, affirming in proof of it that you furnish a nose to smell for me whenever I desire.

I was born for virtue and contemplation, and if you had no share in mankind crime would be unknown. Your intemperate passions cover the world with vice, the punishment of which falls upon me. You commit sins, and I am involved in the consequences of them.

BODY.

You are very indulgent in excusing yourself, and very liberal in assigning to me all the wrong that is done; but it would not be difficult to prove that you concur with me in every transgression, and are very often the first instigator. Let us take as an example the vices of luxury, in which I seem to be the most active; I have no doubt you will deny that you are instrumental in my debaucheries.

MIND.

Certainly I do; you alone are guilty of every kind of intemperance, thus inflicting upon me innumerable disorders and miseries, which I have never deserved, and undermining all my vigour and enjoyment. For such is the unjust alliance which I have been forced into, that when you practise a vice the pains of it fall equally upon me. You drink to intoxication, and the next morning require me to sustain the head-ache. You by a long course of intemperance bring on the gout, and I must partake of it. You eat and drink alone, but we must ache in conjunction; and I, who do nothing towards the acquisition of gout, am involved in every pang that you have caused. My share, too, is much the most severe, since all the requisite patience is exacted from me, and whatever may be the pain, I am expected to supply fortitude. Have you the confidence to deny that you ought to bear your own gout?

BODY.

So far from owning myself only in fault, I maintain that the guilt of our luxury is to be imputed entirely to you.

MIND.

According to you, then, it is the immortal soul which dines sumptuously, while the body remains perfectly abstemious; the reasoning faculty drinks, and the mouth is not concerned in the debauch.

BODY.

This you represent with your usual want of candour; but I can easily prove that you only are to blame for every vicious banquet.

Hunger and thirst are my natural appetites, which would rest satisfied with the most simple food, were it not for the elaborate flavours, the sauces, and other sophistries, with which you mislead me. My uneducated hunger would never have attempted a discovery beyond plain meats, so that, without your fertility of invention, and your research into flavours, the gout would never have been found. Pray

answer me, was it the body that invented wine? To which of my limbs did it first occur that the grape might become a delicious liquor? Was it the foot, the hand, or the shoulder, that conceived the happy thought? Look at the drunkard in his disgrace, and remember that it was the reason, the immortal mind, which devised a liquor to debase him. Such is your justice to me: you invent a pernicious liquor, pour it down my throat, till I can no longer walk or stand, and then accuse me of debauchery. My natural moderation is proved by those animals which have no mind, or at least one of so little sagacity, that it can make no discoveries in vice. The horse has the same sensations as man: like you, it has to contend with a conspiracy of the five senses, but not having an immortal reason to invent new tastes, it remains satisfied with its original enjoyments. You say it is unjust that you should feel the pains from my festivities, by which you would make it appear that I associate you with me only in gout and head-ache, and refuse to admit you as an accomplice in the delight of eating and drinking, while the truth is, that you share with me all the pleasures of a banquet, and cannot deny that I impart to you the flavour of wine as frankly as I communicate a pang of gout. You are never excluded from my palate, nor is there a taste or sensation in it which is kept a secret from you. I am not therefore to be persuaded that you have less pleasure from our enjoyments than I have; but so unreasonable are you, that while you never fail to demand from me your full share of enjoyment, you wish me to keep all the pain for myself. If you had not your part of the delight, I think you would not so easily acquiesce in our pleasures; for when any pernicious food is to be devoured, or a few supernumerary goblets are to be drained, I always find you a willing associate.

MIND.

That I deny; I never fail to remonstrate against your vices.

BODY.

Yes; when there is no banquet ready, you pass the time in admiring temperance, and sometimes you tell me that we will certainly begin to practise it; but when the opportunity arrives,—when the table is before us, and we sit down to be temperate,—you forget all our plans, and suffer us to be undone without the least expostulation.

That you may not seem to authorise our irregularities, you pretend to be careless and forgetful, while in truth you heartily enjoy what we are doing. When I stretch out my hand to the goblet, you seem to be thinking of something else; when I help myself to a luxurious dish, though you know how perniciously it is composed, you wink at the ingredients, and give me no warning against it. Nor is this all, but you frequently labour even to corroborate my imprudence; and when, from a regard to health, we hesitate to partake of something that we both love, you can instantly find some casuistry to justify the dish, affirming that it has not all the malice imputed to it, or we have tried it before, and survived, or perhaps, this once it may do no harm, with many such evasions, which I never should have had genius to invent. But if you really disapprove of intemperance, why do not you positively forbid it?

MIND.

If I sometimes want the firmness to control you, I ought not to be reproached with it by you, who betray me into every frailty. All my base appetites I receive from you; the immortal soul has no love of wine or rich viands. It is by your means only that plausible dishes ever prevail against me. Without your persuasion, the most urgent meats would fail to move me; but you give them a specious flavour, and misrepresent them to me in such a variety of tastes that I am deceived.

You are always contriving to mislead me, and it is impossible that I should defend myself against a perpetual intrigue of the five senses. You incessantly instigate me to evil, and molest me with a thousand vile desires, which never permit me to enjoy that state of reason and

tranquillity which is natural to me. By your arts I am enfeebled and debased, so that even the blandishments of a goblet of wine overcome me, and then you upbraid me with my compliance.

BODY.

Nothing can be more unjust than to charge me with these evil suggestions. My voluptuousness takes place only while a meal lasts: you have enjoyment also in recollecting past pleasures, and looking forward to new. It is your own fancies that solicit you, and not my entreaties. I have no pleasure in a goblet of wine, except at the moment of commission; you expect it for hours before, revolve it in your thoughts, consider the flavour of it, and then when the peril arrives, you accuse me of your not being able to refuse the draught.

I have certainly given you the first hint of our pleasures, but you have improved upon my suggestions, and pursued them till they became luxury.

Real appetite is too dilatory for you, and you therefore practise a thousand artifices to be hungry. Often, too, when I have been quite disabled by excess, you make use of variety and persuasive dishes to give me new resolution for a debauch; and in all our other pleasures you endeavour to revive me in the same manner. My inclinations are slow to be provoked, and soon satisfied. You are indefatigably voluptuous. But you say that if I were out of the world crime would be unknown.

MIND.

Certainly: in my own nature I am pure and heavenly, but lose my best faculties by being entangled amongst your nerves, in which are seated all the passions that trouble mankind.

BODY.

I think I could enumerate a few passions which frequently disturb the world, and yet can hardly be imputed to me. Ambition is the cause of great calamities; perhaps, then, you can inform me in which of my limbs

a love of sovereignty is fixed, since I know not of any aspiring muscle which entertains such designs. It seems to me that my arms and legs, with all my other limbs, are entirely free from avarice, envy, revenge, and many such passions, which certainly prevail amongst men; and therefore, if I am incapable of them, it is to be presumed that they are endowments of the immortal mind. Is it I who plot and deceive? are all schemes of fraud contrived by my muscles?

MIND.

These may not at first appear to be bodily vices, but I doubt not they are all remotely derived from you. All unjust schemes and practices are undertaken to procure your ultimate gratification; and I am convinced, that were I disengaged from you, I should desire nothing but what is virtuous and noble. I wish our confederacy could be ended.

BODY.

You often express a wish for this independence, and yet, whenever age or sickness makes it likely that we may soon part, you are thrown into the greatest alarm, and become extremely desirous of remaining amongst these nerves which you now treat with so much contempt. How humbly do you then implore me to harbour you a little longer! How anxiously do you consult my countenance, and inquire what are my intentions; having recourse every hour to some medicine, prayer, or other plot, to retard the breaking of our alliance! If you sincerely desire a separation, why do not you rejoice when you appear likely to be released from me, who have subjected you to the hardship of enjoying so many pleasures. It is strange that you triumph so little in the expectation of immediately becoming a free spirit, and never again drinking wine or having the gout.

MIND.

My regret at parting from you is a weakness, to which I confess myself subject. Though I well know how unworthy you are of my kindness, yet from the years we have passed together I usually contract a tenderness

for you, which, though I am ashamed of it, gives me some pain at the prospect of separation.

BODY.

I believe, rather, you then discover how very helpless you are without my assistance; and I suspect you feel some distrust of your ability to live at all apart from me.

MIND.

What! do you presume to question my immortality? Have you the arrogance to suppose that my being is vested in you? That reason, imagination, memory, and all my great endowments, are derived from your muscles and arteries? Can you deny that you spring from the earth? And how then is it possible that we should partake of the same nature?

BODY.

I am far from wishing to disclaim my origin, but acknowledge myself derived from the earth; and in return, let me beg you to give me some information concerning your own lineage. Are you acquainted with your parentage? Is your native place heaven or earth? Can you in any intelligible language relate who and what you are?

However, to proceed no farther in these questions about your origin, which you seem in no haste to answer, let me ask how you would pass your time if disunited from me, and deprived of those amusements which I afford; for I believe that I supply or assist all the chief pleasures of mankind.

MIND.

I should pass my time in contemplation like the gods.

BODY.

I know not what may be the habits of the gods; but if men were excluded from all pleasure except contemplation I believe they would not think it so agreeable an employment as you imagine.

MIND.

And pray, except vice and debauchery, which of the pleasures of life are supplied by you?

BODY.

Remember I have never pretended that separate from you I am qualified for happiness; I affirm only that I contribute my full share of the pleasures that we enjoy together, and that if in this world you were deprived of my society you would be melancholy and forlorn. If, then, you ask me what advantages are furnished by me, I answer that one of the chief pleasures of life is the love between the two sexes.

MIND.

And do you pretend to be the author of that love? I think more nobly of the passion, and regard it as a feeling of the mind alone.

BODY.

Such has always been your doctrine; but I believe that I, though sprung from the earth, have quite as much power to inspire love as you, who are made of such great qualities as reason, imagination, memory, and I know not how many more. Lovers very commonly profess their fidelity to you, while in truth it is I on whom all their secret affections are fixed, for there are many whose notions of body and mind are so confused that they perpetually mistake one for the other. A young man declares himself enamoured of the mind of some beautiful woman, and yet when he is absent from her his thoughts are wholly occupied with her figure, and he passes his time in considering her countenance, her hair, her neck, while her reason, imagination, and memory do not once occur to him. When he

is in her presence he takes great delight in pressing her hand, without betraying the least wish to press her intellect. Indeed, there can be no doubt that in most instances in which the admiration is professed to you I secretly supplant you, and win to myself all the real tenderness. If two young persons were reduced to the mere soul, and deprived of eyes, lips, and all the other conveniences which are now so instrumental in loving, I do not understand how they could contrive to love each other at all.

MIND.

I shall not condescend to reason with you any longer.

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I must now explain the circumstances in which the preceding dispute between the mind and the body took place. It was an unusual controversy; for though the mind has often repeated these complaints against its colleague, the body has always endured them in silence. This account of the quarrel is translated from a Greek manuscript which has been lately discovered, and fell into my hands by an accident which I need not relate. This manuscript contained also the other tales in this volume, which are entitled translations from Greek. The author of them is unknown; but from his style he must certainly have lived in the later and more corrupt times of the Greek language. A great scholar is preparing these stories for publication by Latin notes and other encumbrances, without which they could not be valid Greek. In the mean time I give this translation.

The foregoing dialogue, according to this Greek author, was overheard by a philosopher named Aristus, who lived at Rhodes, where he had a great reputation and many disciples. He had one day been giving them a lecture on the inconvenience of having a body, on its vicious propensities, and interruptions of thought and study. He had lamented that it cannot be laid aside without loss of life, but exhorted his pupils to mortify, control, and govern it, and thus to be as nearly as possible

exempt from it. His lecture being ended, and his pupils dismissed to assume an authority over their bodies as they could, Aristus laid himself on a couch for rest in the heat of day, at the same time murmuring against the body, which exacted this indulgence, and very soon he fell into a strange kind of trance, in which he heard the foregoing dispute between the mind and the body as if within his own person. He listened till they were silent, and then rose out of his trance in great astonishment at this vision, which was quite different from a common dream.

He wondered that the mind had not argued with greater force, and thought that he could himself have pleaded its wrongs much better. Revolving the subject in his thoughts, he unconsciously said aloud, "Whatever the body may say in praise of itself, I should heartily rejoice in being free from all intercourse with it."

"Do you sincerely wish to relinquish your body?" said a voice close to him.

He looked round in surprise, but saw nobody: the voice seemed to come from the hearth, upon which were some little wooden images, his household gods, and while he gazed, one of these little figures opened its mouth and repeated the question. These deities of the hearth had hitherto been as silent as other gods of the same materials, and Aristus was overawed by the unexpected voice.

"Why," continued the image, "are you so much astonished? Is it wonderful that a god should be able to speak?"

"Certainly," answered the philosopher, "I did not expect a voice from an oaken god."

"But," replied the deity, "you have worshipped me with prayers and offerings, and must therefore have believed in my power."

"I have worshipped you," said Aristus, "in deference to the customs of my country; but to tell you the truth, I no more expected any blessing from you than from my walking stick, which is of the same wood as yourself."

"You philosophers," said the image, "are very apt to deprive the gods of their privileges: but you have deserved a benefit from me by rescuing me a few days ago from the fire, into which one of your children had thrown me, and as it is in my power to separate you from your body I will do so if such is your wish, still leaving you the faculties of seeing, hearing, and speaking, which you would find convenient; but I advise you to decide cautiously, for when once you have quitted your body you cannot enter it again."

Aristus still persisted in the wish to be disencumbered of his limbs, and vehemently entreated the image to execute what it promised, so possessed was he by his philosophy, though he was then in the prime of life, when the body imparts so many agreeable hints, which it afterwards loses the power of communicating. "Then," said the protector of the hearth, "if such is your resolution, go down to the sea-shore, and sprinkle a little of the salt water in your face, at the same time pronouncing a word which I will teach you: immediately your body will fade away, and leave you as free a soul as you desire to be." He then taught Aristus to pronounce the powerful word, and the philosopher eagerly expressed his gratitude for the privilege of not having a body. But he said there was one thing wanted to make his happiness complete. He had lived in great concord with his wife, but he feared that when they were become so dissimilar, she being confined within a body, and he reduced to reason and voice, they should not be so well fitted for the society of each other; he therefore entreated the household god, that his wife, Cleopatra, might be brought into the same condition as he was himself about to assume. "I will grant your request," answered the image, "if your wife concurs in it, but I shall not confiscate her person without her own consent. If she agrees to what you wish, let her sprinkle her face with sea water, and pronounce the word that I have taught you, and she will find the same consequences."

Aristus having again thanked the image, walked down to the sea in great expectation of what was to happen; and as soon as he had sprinkled his face, and pronounced the mysterious word, he saw his body begin to

escape. His arms, legs, and trunk wasted gradually away, and he could not avoid feeling some horror on looking down at himself thus diminished.

But this melancholy spectacle lasted only a few moments, for he soon withered away, and entirely vanished, so that he could not see the least remnant of himself. When he was quite gone, he no longer pitied the limbs, which had looked so rueful; and being very much elevated by the singularity of his condition, he set out towards home to inform his wife of the advantage he had obtained for himself and her. He was in great admiration of the new kind of being with which he found himself endowed. His body had left him so much remembrance of it, that he still imagined himself to be moving his limbs. At first, therefore, forgetting his want of substance, he set out to walk, as having legs, and fancied himself proceeding in the usual manner, till he looked down, and saw nothing to represent legs or feet. He had also a sensation of arms, together with the belief of a head, and of every other part of his late body. As he went along, he was continually looking for himself, and could hardly be convinced that the limbs, which he felt so plainly, were not there. However, he made the same progress on these imaginary legs as if he had been really walking.

The household god, in taking his body away, had left him those faculties of it, without which he could not have enjoyed any conversation or intercourse with mankind. The power of speech would have been forfeited with his tongue; but the god had contrived him a supposititious voice, exactly resembling the bodily one which he had lost; and thus when he seemed to himself to be opening his mouth, and moving his tongue, though his mouth and tongue were fallacies, yet he produced sounds as serviceable as those which his real tongue had formerly effected. The sense of hearing, too, being instrumental in conversation, and having been lost with his ears, he was by the same magic provided with a substitute for it. With these endowments, he went home in quest of his wife, designing the same spoliation of her.

He had often descanted to her on the demerits of the body, and told her how happily the soul might live apart from it. She having no love of dispute had always seemed to acquiesce in his philosophical opinions; he now therefore believed that he should have no difficulty in persuading her to follow his example, and discard this useless appendage.

When he arrived at home, he was, from habit, about to knock at the door; but endeavouring to raise what seemed to him a hand and arm, and seeing, to his surprise, that no hand or arm resulted from the supposed effort, he remembered his new condition, and was at a loss in what manner to procure entrance into his house. He called many times, but was not heard; and to his perplexity now first discovered that the immortal soul by itself cannot knock at a door. He thought that the god ought to have remedied this defect, and that as he had made him a false speech and hearing, by the same art he ought to have invented some fiction, by which he might have gained an entrance into his own house. It then occurred to him that the arm which he had just discarded was the very instrument that he was in need of, and a sudden apprehension crossed his mind that he had acted rashly. From this difficulty he was relieved by pressing against the door, and finding that he passed through it as if it had been air. Delighted and re-assured by this exploit, he tried himself against two or three other doors, which also offered no opposition, and he stood in his wife's apartment. She was quite ignorant of his presence: he passed before her face, and she took no notice of him; till having amused himself for a short time in watching her, he pronounced her name aloud. She started, and looked round the room without answering: he stood close to her, and again uttered her name, when in great astonishment she said, "Aristus, is that you?"

"Yes, certainly; do not you know my voice?"

"Where are you?"

"Here, in this room, close to you; my hand is on your shoulder. Though, indeed, I cannot properly call it my hand, because I no longer have one, but that sensation of a hand which I retain is now placed on your

shoulder."

"The sensation of a hand!" she exclaimed; "what can this mean? You must have been learning some juggling arts, by which you make your voice seem so near to me. But pray come into the room."

"My dearest wife, cannot you believe me? I am now in the room with you. My soul, my intellect, all the faculties of my mind are by your side at this moment; as for the body, arms, and legs, which you have been accustomed to call Aristus, I know not what is become of them."

Aristus, perceiving that this explanation of his circumstances was not quite intelligible to Cleopatra, at length relieved her astonishment by relating to her his conversation with the image, and the change which it had so kindly effected in him. His wife would have believed this wonderful tale to be merely a pleasantry of her husband's, had she not been convinced of its truth by his being invisible. She looked all round, and could see nothing; the voice was certainly close to her; and when she heard the air telling her this story she could not refuse to believe that something unusual had occurred.

She did not at first understand that her husband was to pass all his life in this condition, but imagined that he had merely gained a privilege of making himself invisible at pleasure; and in this belief she said to him, "The Image has certainly taught you an excellent trick; but as I have now had a proof of it, pray let me see you come to yourself again."

"What do you mean by coming to myself?"

"Why, making visible the body that you now contrive to hide?"

"Do you believe, then, that my body is here in concealment?"

"I do not understand how you can be here without it."

"Have I not already explained to you that my body is no longer a part of me? Though it is away I am present; that is to say, my judgment, my imagination, my memory, are here in person."

"Where are they? I cannot see them."

"No, they are not things to be looked at, but to be reasoned about."

"What! shall I never see you again, and shall I only reason about you in future?"

"You will never again see those paltry limbs in which I formerly went about; but me you will have with you still, that is, my reason, my ——"

"Oh, Aristus! what have you done?"

"Surely you do not regret what I have done. I have attained to that pure and exalted condition which is natural to me,—I have become a genuine mind, and shall pass the rest of my days in free contemplation. But this is not all, I have happy tidings for you; the household god, at my entreaty, has consented to extricate you also from your body. You have only to repair to the sea, and as soon as you have sprinkled a little salt water in your face, and repeated a word, which I will teach you, your body will release you, and you will see it crumble away. Let us immediately go to the sea, and practise this enchantment."

"Indeed if I thought water would have such an effect I would never wash my face again."

"You do not seriously mean to be so perverse as to neglect this opportunity of quitting your body."

"Really I do not understand what is the advantage of being without a body."

"Have I not often explained to you that the mind by being disengaged from the limbs is able to think with all its natural vigour?"

"My limbs do not prevent me from thinking: I have now as many thoughts as I desire, and do not wish to lose so much as a finger."

"I am grieved that you are unable to value the blessing offered you. Consider the glorious life we shall enjoy, when together with our bodies we shall have laid aside our infirmities. We shall undoubtedly soon

become the two wisest persons upon earth, we shall attain to contemplations hitherto beyond the reach of mortal reason, and shall every day make fresh discoveries in nature."

"One of us is sufficient for all this: you can make discoveries while I stay in my body, and then you can tell me what you have found."

"And do you imagine that you, a composition of dust, will be able to comprehend the conceptions of a pure spirit?"

"I must be content, then, with as many of them as are suitable to my capacity."

Aristus was greatly mortified by this obstinacy of his wife; and being determined to enforce his advice, he turned towards her, as he imagined, with a look not to be disputed, but suddenly remembered that he had no longer a face to be stern with, and that this invisible anger could have but little efficacy. Finding, therefore, that his wife began already to have less veneration for him, now that he was out of sight, he became more than ever desirous of obtaining the resignation of her body, and continued to remonstrate against her perverseness. She persisted, however, in refusing the release that he offered, and also reproached him with his folly, lamenting her loss very bitterly, and declaring that nothing could reconcile her to the change of his character.

Aristus endeavoured to prove to her that his efficacy was not at all diminished, the mind constituting a rational creature, and the body being an insignificant addition. While he was thus labouring to vindicate himself, a friend of his, named Polemo, entered the room, and inquired whether Aristus was at home.

"Oh, Polemo!" exclaimed Cleopatra, weeping vehemently, "you are come to receive sad intelligence of your friend: you will never see him again."

Polemo, supposing him to be dead, expressed the greatest sorrow, and asked what disease or accident had caused this unexpected calamity.

"Aristus can best relate his misfortune to you himself," answered Cleopatra; "for I scarcely understand what has happened to him."

"Is my friend then still alive?" inquired Polemo eagerly.

"He is; but you can never again look upon him."

"What can you mean? I conjure you to explain what has occurred."

"Oh, Polemo! one of our household gods has taken away Aristus's body from him. But ask him to tell you what has happened, for he is now in the room."

"Now in the room! and without his body! Really, if it were not for your tears, I should suppose you were jesting. Perhaps there may be some pleasant raillery in all this, but I confess I am too dull to understand it."

"Why do not you speak," said Cleopatra, addressing herself to the air, "and explain this mystery?"

Aristus having thus long suffered his friend's perplexity to continue, at length declared himself by saying,—

"It is true that I am now in the room and apart from my body, but I know you will not regard my separation as a calamity."

Polemo was in great astonishment when these words spoke themselves close to him. He knew the voice to be his friend's, and looking round endeavoured to find him, till Aristus related to him the whole adventure, and the circumstances in which he now found himself, saying to him at the conclusion of his story,—

"You have come fortunately, my friend, to assist me in persuading my wife to her duty. I have prevailed on the god to grant that by sprinkling her face, and by the magical word, she shall be let loose as I was, but (would you believe it?) she determines to remain shut up in her body, and in spite of the fidelity and love which I have a right to expect from her, she positively refuses to resemble me."

"Indeed, my friend," answered Polemo, "I think you very unreasonable in expecting that she should submit to such a change. She is certainly obliged as a wife to be faithful and kind, but it does not seem to me that as a wife she is obliged to be air whenever you may think fit to desire it."

"But is she not acting contrary to her own happiness in refusing such an opportunity?"

"Why, perhaps she has not, like you, felt the hardship of a body, but having passed many years in hers very comfortably, has no reason for desiring to break out of it. Not only do I commend her prudence, but I believe that you even, philosopher as you are, will soon repent of having allowed yourself to be thus despoiled; and I earnestly advise you to repair instantly to this household god which takes away men's bodies, and entreat that it will again let you into the human frame, which you have so unadvisedly abandoned; that is, if it has not quite decayed since your desertion of it, but can still be repaired so as to be habitable."

"That, I rejoice to say, is impossible," answered Aristus: "my body is gone —quite annulled—I saw it abolished. But even if there were still a frame fit for my reception, do you imagine, that after having once escaped from that carcass I shall ever suffer myself to be inveigled into it again?"

"And pray what advantages have you gained by being shut out?"

"I have gained the power of passing my life in uninterrupted thought, the proper employment of the human mind."

"But why could not you think in your body? I do not understand why your limbs should interfere with your studies. When I wish to think I never find that my arm interrupts me, or that my leg breaks in upon my meditations."

"Nor did his body interrupt him," exclaimed Cleopatra: "I have seen him sit in it and think for hours together without any one of his limbs molesting him."

"Indeed," replied Polemo, "I think he had as much time for contemplation as a man moderately thoughtful could wish."

"But," said Aristus, "what an addition is now made to my life! for I shall not lose a moment of time in any of those duties which the body exacts. I am no longer required to eat, drink, or sleep."

"You have to rejoice, then, in being quite exempt from pleasure," said Polemo.

"Entirely so."

"I hope you may find this immunity as delightful as you expect," said his friend; "but I cannot help fearing that you will soon begin to look back with regret on those bodily employments by which you tell me you have been so much persecuted; some of them seem to me very pleasant."

"You would not suppose me likely to feel much regret if you knew what satisfaction and alacrity I now find from being at large, and with what compassion I regard you, when I see you encumbered by all those useless limbs."

"I can carry them without any inconvenience, and in my turn I lament that you should go about nothing but voice, and talk out of the air in that ridiculous manner."

"You will envy my condition when you hear of my discoveries in philosophy, and the wisdom and renown which I shall attain. From the elevation of thought, which I feel already, I have no doubt that my progress in study will be very rapid, and that I shall soon have things to impart to you much too sublime to have been discovered within a body."

After some further conversation Polemo took his leave, having promised to return soon, that he might learn the discoveries which Aristus should have made.

Cleopatra, being now left alone with the voice, which she was henceforth to regard as Aristus, remained silent, and plainly showed by her dejected countenance that she did not consider this sound as equivalent to a husband; while Aristus, in suggesting arguments to console her, felt himself very insignificant, and was conscious that he greatly wanted personal advantages. The remainder of the day having passed in melancholy conversation, and the hour of rest being arrived, he said, "We must now part, for the immortal soul does not lie in bed: your body insists upon sleep, but I, being intellect, am no longer liable to any such

infirmity. While you and your body are asleep, I shall be engaged in meditation, and you see, therefore, how many valuable hours I have rescued."

Cleopatra retired alone, not a little indignant that this meditation should have supplanted her in her husband's affections, while he left the house and glided forth to pass the night in contemplation, as he said. The moon was bright, and the night calm and beautiful. He sat down on the sea-shore, and betook himself to the consideration of several philosophical subjects, being very desirous of arriving at some happy thought, which might justify him to his friend. He had been persuaded that as soon as he was reduced to pure intellect he should be put in possession of extraordinary powers, and that whenever he applied himself to thinking, some great revelation would be made to him. He now, therefore, sat waiting for these new thoughts; but though he revolved one subject after another, on which he desired to gain information, to his great disappointment his meditations did not seem to him more profound than when he had been detained in a body.

After some hours, he was weary of these studies, by which he was surprised, having always imagined that the soul was not liable to fatigue, and having always laid to the charge of his body all the weariness that he had felt. Finding, however, that he was not the indefatigable intellect which he had expected to be, he returned home without having acquired any information except that it was a fine night. On arriving at home, he entered his wife's chamber, and sat down by her bed. She was asleep, and appeared very beautiful to him, and he could not refrain from stooping to kiss her, forgetting how incapable of such an enterprise he was become. On reaching her face he endeavoured to press what he considered his lips against hers, and finding that no intercourse ensued, was reminded of the deception. Being distressed that all endearments were unattainable, he continued to gaze upon her, acknowledging to himself that she was a beautiful woman, and beginning to doubt whether he had done right. But he suddenly checked himself with the consideration that he was now a pure soul, and as such, could not possibly be affected by female beauty.

Aristus had several young children, and the next morning Cleopatra endeavoured to explain to them the change that had taken place in their father. This, however, she was unable to make them comprehend: they were never to see him again, they were told, yet he was still with them, and by what means he had been put out of sight was a mystery beyond their understanding. That figure which they had been used to consider as their father having vanished, they wondered how any remainder of him could be left, and were much perplexed by hearing that he had been divided into two. In vain their mother tried to explain to them that the body might be gone, and the mind remain at home; this was a distinction that they could not reach.

Aristus remained silent while his wife thus endeavoured to explain him to the children; but finding himself too abstruse for their understanding, in order to make his condition more intelligible, he spoke to them. They were at first terrified by this mysterious voice, and could hardly be prevented from running away; but hearing it solemnly assure them that it was their father, and had no design of hurting them, they took courage, and were then greatly amused to find how their father had hid himself,—they laughed violently whenever he spoke, and seemed to be delighted with the novelty. It was not long before Aristus found that the order and obedience of the family were likely to be much disturbed by his concealment. His wife being of a gentle temper had left to him all the duty of command, and never claimed much authority to herself; but now his influence was much lessened by his new singularity, and the household was soon in great want of control. He endeavoured to admonish and instruct his children as before, but the same obedience did not ensue. They had been accustomed to follow without hesitation the advice which came from a peremptory countenance; but now the advice which came out of the air made very little impression upon them. His positive commands were broken, and the lessons he enjoined were not learned. Their mother attempted to persuade them of the duty they owed to the voice which was going about the house, and which she affirmed was still their father; but her expostulations could procure no obedience

to the venerable sound, and it was disobeyed every hour. In this revolt, Aristus having nothing but a voice to govern with made trial of all its tones, but still without success. Sometimes he remonstrated gravely, and at other times was provoked into very loud invectives. When the voice grew choleric the children were amused; they practised tricks to incense it, and laughed immoderately whenever the air began to exclaim. On one occasion, Aristus being exasperated beyond forbearance against his eldest boy, and forgetting how incapable of revenge he was become, attempted to inflict on him a severe blow; but the offender sitting quite insensible of the admonition which had been aimed at him, Aristus was obliged to confess that the mind, notwithstanding all its great endowments, cannot chastise a child without the aid of an arm.

Aristus had not lived long in this unusual condition before he began to look back with regret upon the domestic happiness which he had enjoyed in his body. He had relinquished all his pleasures, and had not found those improvements in wisdom which he had expected. At first he had been pleased by the novelty of his condition, the miracle of being invisible, and the privilege of passing through a wall as if it were air, but when he was accustomed to these ways he no longer found any amusement in them, and pierced a wall without the least satisfaction. When all mankind retired to sleep he sighed for that sweet rest and forgetfulness, in exchange for which he had to pass his nights in a dreary wandering.

He would now have most gladly subjected himself again to eating, sleeping, and all such ignominious practices, in his exemption from which he had at first so much exulted. When he saw any poor squalid wretch, he thought of the happiness he enjoyed by being settled in a body, and he could not look at an arm or leg, however withered and crooked, without envying the proprietor of it.

He had frequent visits from his friend Polemo, who always inquired what discoveries he had been making, and entreated him not to do so great an injury to mankind as to keep them secret. To which Aristus answered that he had indeed discovered many wonderful things, but since they

were all far too sublime to be comprehended by any person covered up in a body, it would be useless to endeavour to explain them to Polemo; but if by any means he could clear his mind from the limbs which obscured it he would freely impart to him all his new acquirements. He had also to contend against the visits and inquiries of all his friends; for the news being soon spread that the mind of Aristus was loose from his body, all were seized with a curiosity to know how a mind could live in such circumstances. For several days, therefore, his house was crowded with visiters, all desirous of hearing the mind speak.

They entreated Aristus to speak first in one place, then in another, and to move about and talk in every corner of the room, that they might be convinced he was not a deception.

Aristus continued to verify himself in this manner till his patience was quite exhausted by the incredulity of his friends; some of whom he could hardly persuade to believe in him by all the proofs that he could furnish. He was perplexed, too, by their innumerable questions: they wanted to be informed whether he had been cold when he was first stripped, what were his sensations, by what contrivance he moved himself about, and what invention had enabled him to talk without a tongue. Many other such inquiries were made, which Aristus answered as favourably to his own condition as he could.

He was chiefly incensed that all his friends regarded this event as a great misfortune to him. In vain he endeavoured to undeceive them, and to explain the happiness he was enjoying—they persisted in pitying him; and he saw that they thought he had committed a great folly in abandoning his comfortable body.

At length being quite overcome by his numberless vexations he resolved to implore the household god that it would revoke what it had done for him, and admit him again into his old frame if it were still fit for his reception. Repairing, therefore, to the image, he entreated very earnestly that his body might be restored to him. But to this request the little

figure remained as insensible as any other piece of wood. He therefore repeated the prayer, and uttered a mournful narrative of his sufferings, which, however, failed to extort any answer from the god.

This hope being disappointed, Aristus became every day more miserable, till as he was walking on a cliff near the sea, and considering his several vexations, he suddenly determined to destroy himself by leaping from the cliff, as the only remedy of his afflictions. First, therefore, turning round he surveyed his native country as for the last time, after which he confronted the precipice, and having completed all his preparations, sprung desperately into the air. He felt himself falling, and expected every moment to be dashed to pieces, till finding that he had suddenly stopped, and looking round to discover the cause, he perceived that he was impeded by the earth, at which he had arrived, and on which he was now safely standing. He looked up, the rock was above him, and finding that he had attained the bottom of it without any success, he discovered what in the distraction of his thoughts had never occurred to him, that in order to be killed from a precipice a body is necessary. He began to consider, too, that he was equally unable to practise against himself any of the other arts of dying. A dagger would in his case prove as futile as a precipice; he was also disqualified for being hanged or drowned; there was no drug of sufficient skill to benefit him, and thus in dismay he remembered his perfect security. Not having, therefore, received the comfort that he had hoped by his fall from the rock, he had no expedient left but to return home. Day after day passed without any diminution of his misery, the ridicule of his friends and the discontent of his wife continuing.

He was grieved to remark an increasing coldness in her manner whenever he conversed with her, in consequence of which he was more frequently absent from home. That she loved him less now than when he had a body appeared to him a very culpable inconstancy; and while he was considering what could be the reason of it, he was told that Cleon had been seen to enter his house many times lately. This Cleon had been his rival for the affections of Cleopatra when he was first endeavouring to

obtain her as his wife, and at one period of the conflict had seemed to have a chance of being preferred. Aristus, therefore, was greatly troubled by hearing of his visits, and was conscious that Cleon having the advantage of a body they should no longer contend upon equal terms. He resolved, therefore, in order to discover the real purpose, and danger of this rival's visits, that he would watch the house, and be present at the next interview unperceived, for which undertaking he was effectually concealed. The being so admirably qualified to observe the conduct of his wife was the first advantage that he had been able to discover in the absence of a body. But before he had an opportunity of putting this design in execution he gained by other means the information that he wanted. One day on entering his wife's apartment he found her in company with her sister, and hearing his own name mentioned, he remained in ambush to listen to their conversation; from which he learned that Cleon had been endeavouring to convince Cleopatra that by her husband's disappearing she had been separated from him as lawfully as if he had died in the usual way, and, therefore, since she was at liberty to contract a new marriage, he had urged her to accept of himself, who had suffered no such abolition, but was actually a human being. It appeared that Cleopatra had scrupled to consider her husband deceased; and at the moment when he entered the room the sister was urging her to comply with the entreaties of Cleon, and endeavouring to satisfy her that Aristus was virtually dead. "My dearest Cleopatra," said the sister, "let me persuade you not to refuse the comfort of this marriage; you are certainly authorised to be a widow."

"Not while Aristus is alive."

"Alive! if he is so let him show himself, and claim you as his wife."

"He cannot show himself, as you know."

"He is not dead then, but merely obliterated to such a degree that we cannot see him. But can he do any thing like other human beings."

"Yes, he can think."

"An excellent husband!"

"The noblest part of him remains, his reason, his memory, his imagination."

"But when you married, you were not contracted to a reason, a memory, or an imagination, but to a human being in possession of two arms, two legs, and altogether a competence of body; this person is gone. I am surprised that Aristus, after being expunged as he has been, should still pretend to be a married man. His absconding in this strange manner is certainly equivalent to death; for as to the voice which is left to personate him, it is ridiculous to profess fidelity to a sound. How can a noise be entitled to a wife and children? It seems to me you might with as much advantage be married to the creaking of a door."

"I greatly lament the change."

"It is impossible you can have any affection for him as he now is, and I am sure you have never been happy since he first dwindled away."

"I have indeed suffered much vexation. Aristus tells me I should be better satisfied if I were like him; and he is constantly urging me to surrender my body."

"I would not give up my little finger to please him. I am sure you cannot be persuaded to any thing so extravagant."

"I certainly shall not; I am very easy in my body, and shall remain there."

"But I wish to convince you that Aristus is intrinsically dead."

"I can hardly think it: this concealment of him is something very different from the dying in his bed, and my closing his eyes, and weeping, and having a funeral."

"He has not, indeed, passed through all the formal dying, which would have been satisfactory; but, nevertheless, every rational person must think that he is so far dead as to empower you to be a widow. Therefore pray resolve at once to disclaim any farther connection with this reason, or intellect, or whatever else your sound may choose to style itself. I am sure Cleon will be a good husband; and he has wealth, a kind disposition, and a body."

"Still I cannot help preserving a reverence for Aristus."

"You may still revere your late husband and lament his death; that does not prevent your marrying again: but to revere a sound as being Aristus is ridiculous. You might as well, if he had died in the usual way, consider yourself married to his ashes."

"But if I were to become the wife of Cleon, I could not bear the reproaches of Aristus. He would pursue me every where, and inveigh against my infidelity. And I should have no means of shutting him out, for he walks through a wall without feeling it. He would certainly haunt me like a ghost!"

"He will probably be troublesome at first; but if you act with spirit he will soon find the folly of his clamours, and I think you may easily bear a little invisible scolding. I am sure you must despise him for lurking about you in this dishonourable manner. I could not bear a husband that came walking to me through a wall. Cleon will pass through a door in the natural way."

Aristus had stood by during this conversation, and heard with great resentment the arguments for his being dead: he was about to speak, when he was prevented by this censure on the meanness of his concealment; and he began to consider, that if he affirmed himself to be there, his petulant sister-in-law would probably have the confidence to persist in his death, and might defy him to appear and prove himself to be real, his inability to do which would confirm her reasoning. He therefore remained hid to hear the sequel of the conversation, in which his wife became more inclined to believe that he was in justice dead, and at last she promised her sister that she would consider the matter, and endeavour to satisfy her scruples. The sister then departed, saying, "When this voice of yours comes home, pray tell him openly that you look upon him as an imposture, and do not listen to any casuistry by which he would pretend to be a human being, but tell him you will believe it when you see him."

Aristus, in greater distress than ever, resolved, as a last hope, to try once more the indulgence of the household god, and entreat him to restore the body, being convinced that by appearing in it he should instantly revive all Cleopatra's affection, and suppress any thoughts which she might have admitted in favour of Cleon.

He therefore repaired again to the hearth; where, with the most pitiful entreaties, he conjured the image to hear his prayers. To his great joy it opened its mouth, and asked what was his request. With great humility he acknowledged his error, described the misery of his present banishment, and prayed for permission to live again in his body. On hearing this the god animadverted on his folly in having ever wished to leave it, representing to him the impiety of discontent, with the duty of acquiescing in the nature assigned to man, and living in perfect resignation to the gods.

Aristus listened very humbly to these admonitions, and assured the image that he was now fully sensible of his fault, and eager to resume his body that he might acquiesce in it, and show his resignation for the rest of his life.

The image then taught him certain magical words, by pronouncing which he was to regain his body. The restoration was not to take place at once, but one part of the body to be recalled after another, each word having authority over a particular limb.

Aristus having made himself master of these words earnestly expressed his gratitude to the image, and returned home without making trial whether any of his limbs were within call, designing to astonish his wife by coming to light in her presence. Having entered her apartment, where she was alone, he thus addressed her:—

"As I find, Cleopatra, that you cannot reconcile yourself to my present condition, I am willing, if possible, to sacrifice for your sake all the happiness that I enjoy in it, and again to undergo my body. I have therefore been entreating the household god to contrive this for me. His

answer was so ambiguous that I know not whether he intends to comply with my prayer or not, but from some hints that he gave I think it not improbable that you may see me gradually coming back."

Cleopatra seemed to give little belief to this; but Aristus, speaking that word which had command over the beard, it instantly began to grow, and by degrees fell down in full beauty, and there being yet no chin for it to be associated with, Cleopatra was astonished by the unusual spectacle of an independent beard supporting itself in the air. Her eyes sparkled with hope at the sight; but Aristus, to amuse himself with her suspense, delayed for some time to resume any other part of himself. He was delighted to see, by the eagerness of his wife for his return, that when finished he should have nothing to fear from Cleon.

In great anxiety she watched his beard, expecting a chin to ensue from it, and at last exclaimed in alarm, "My dearest Aristus, how slowly you grow! I hope the god means to bring you back entire: surely he will not limit you to a beard."

"It is impossible to say," answered Aristus, "whether he will think proper to suppress any of my limbs or not, but you must endeavour to be content with as much of me as he may choose to give you."

He then spoke another of the supernatural words, and a chin was annexed to the beard: this soon spread into a face, which gradually advanced to an entire head. Cleopatra was in raptures at seeing once more the countenance of her husband. She kissed the lips again and again, till quite assured that they were real. The coming so strangely out of the air made it seem as if the whole appearance were an artifice; but by examination she was convinced that what she saw was not only a true head, but the very same which Aristus had worn. He continued these additions to himself, repeating from time to time one of the magical words, each of which produced its corresponding part. Every new appearance delighted Cleopatra, and with the greatest emotion she watched him coming back limb by limb, till at length he stood before her quite completed.

# ALCIBIADES.

*Translated from a Greek Manuscript lately discovered.*

ALCIBIADES.

Fly! Praxinoe, fly! I hear the voice of Socrates, and it frightens me as much as the voice of Cerberus. Pick up your girdle and run. Leander, here! remove the wine and fruit. Now my apartment looks more austere than before. Here he comes. I wish he were at the pillars of Hercules. Ah! Socrates, welcome.

SOCRATES.

Alcibiades, we expected you at the house of Agatho. You had promised to be present at our conversation, and perhaps you might have benefited by it as much as by lying on that couch.

ALCIBIADES.

I should have come, Socrates; but I was seized by a sudden sickness, which made me quite unfit for philosophy.

SOCRATES.

I am grieved to hear it; but the colour in your cheeks makes me hope for a speedy recovery.

ALCIBIADES.

I begin to think, indeed, that the disorder has left me.

SOCRATES.

I am sure it has, for I met it at the door. But was that beautiful creature a disease? I imagined, as it glided by me, that it must be Hebe herself who had been visiting you. I never before saw so blooming an illness.

ALCIBIADES.

Ah! Socrates, I never succeed in deceiving you. I think I have heard you boast that you have brought philosophy down from the stars to live amongst men.

SOCRATES.

Is she not likely to do more good to men than to the stars?

ALCIBIADES.

Why, I was going to advise that you should release her and let her fly up again, for she would be much less troublesome amongst the stars than at Athens. The truth is, I cannot enjoy my pleasures while she is observing them, but she might observe the Pleiades as long as she pleased without giving me the least disturbance. But now, since I have lost your conversation to-day, I would willingly hear you explain a difficulty that I can propose. Perhaps one cause of my zeal for instruction at this moment is a wish to divert the reproof that I see coming.

SOCRATES.

I think you have justly interpreted your love of knowledge. However, let me hear the difficulty. But stay, here are more friends; Cleocrates and Hiero.

ALCIBIADES.

Welcome, my friends! but you shall not interrupt our conversation. Therefore, without taking farther notice of you, I proceed to ask Socrates why it is that I, being one man, discover within myself so many different characters? I find a philosopher who would always be engaged in study, a reveller that would make life but one debauch, and a politician who loves to be busy with the state, a prudent man who foresees every danger, and a rash fool who never avoids one, all collected together and called Alcibiades. Nor do these different persons prevail in turn, but all together; I wish to be wise and foolish at the same instant, and frequently cannot decide which I desire the most. So a few hours ago I wished to be both with you at the house of Agatho, and here with a Rhodian girl. So violent was the contest that I expected to be torn into two parts by it, and that one half of me would go to hear you talk, while the other remained here with the Rhodian.

SOCRATES.

I should have been content with a smaller share of you than half; if you had only sent your head by a servant, the fair Rhodian might have kept the remainder, and I imagine you would not have been the less fit to entertain her from wanting merely a head.

ALCIBIADES.

Not at all; but my whole head would not have consented to go, one part of it only being inclined to philosophy. I am the same divided person that Cerberus must be if he has a disposition to each head. Now pray let me hear the explanation of this.

SOCRATES.

I transfer the duty to Cleocrates, who three days ago was about to tell me something that he brought out of Egypt on this very subject. You know that a man cannot be wise without having been in Egypt.

CLEOCRATES.

You shall hear my tale; but Hiero too can tell one to account for these contending inclinations, and he having been not only in Egypt, but in every other country, is entitled to be far wiser than I am. Let him, therefore, speak first.

ALCIBIADES.

Begin, Hiero; and I charge you to omit all apology, preface, and modesty.

HIERO.

Rejecting then all such impediments, I begin by telling you that amongst every people which I have visited in my travels, I have found a great curiosity to know the origin and first condition of mankind, and to learn the changes which have made men what they now are. Accordingly in every country some person has undertaken to gratify this desire, and disclose the first beginning of man, and his progress to the present condition; so that there is not a race to be found, however savage and destitute of literature, which has not some legend of the early circumstances of the world. Fortunately none are so inquisitive as to ask how these things became known to the historian who first divulged them; men think they have nothing to do with the story, but to believe it.

The general opinion seems to be, that since it is absolutely necessary for the peace of our minds that some origin of things should be current amongst us, it would be very unwise to undermine the one we have now, because it might not be easy to find another. The best course is to let things begin as they have been used to do.

Thus the world has as many origins as it has races of men; all are believed with the same resolution, and good men are ready to defend their own beginning of things at the hazard of their lives. Though these histories of unknown times are very different from each other, yet in one particular they all agree, which is in supposing that man is now, by his own vice and folly, in a very inferior condition to that which he once enjoyed.

I shall now give you my narrative of the early state of mankind, being assured that I have as ample information on the subject as any previous author; and I claim the advantage allowed to all historians of this kind, which is, that I shall not be suspected of fiction merely because I relate events of which there is neither remembrance nor history.

The first generation of men was much more powerful and happy than the present. The human race was not divided into two sexes, as now; but the two sexes were united in every single person. Each human being was composed of male and female, so joined together as to make one person. Each, therefore, was supplied with four arms, four legs, two faces, and two bodies. The two were separate in every part except the head, which was the point that united them: the heads grew together without any partition of skull between them, so that the two brains were joined, and thus the two bodies were governed by one will and understanding. The male was always on the right side, and the female on the left. Every man, therefore, was naturally married, and without any choice of his own.

This combination of the two sexes prevented a great part of the miseries by which life is now infested; for it is manifest that the world is unhappy chiefly by the quarrels, jealousies, and contending wishes of man and woman. Hence most of the great wars which have depopulated the earth. If Helen had been fastened to Menelaus by the head, it is plain that she could not have eloped from him, and involved Greece and Asia in misfortune; nor is it probable that Clytemnestra would have divided the head of Agamemnon with an axe if her own head must have shared the blow.

Amongst this double race there was nothing to interrupt domestic peace. It is evident there could be no such passion as jealousy, for when a man's wife was part of himself he could not suspect her of infidelity. There being only one mind in the double body, the male half never was enamoured of the female half of another person, nor did the female side love any but the male to which she was annexed. A man, therefore, was then as unlikely to charge his female side with disobedience as he would be now to accuse his own arm or leg of a mutiny. It is well known too that

the present conjugal love, however vehement at first, is very apt to fall out of the heart after a certain time, which accident could not occur in the double condition, the love of one half for the other being a kind of self-love; so that any one who considers the fidelity with which he adheres to himself in our present circumstances, will know with how much greater constancy the man and woman then lived together than they do now. That forgiveness with which a man now regards his own faults and that patience with which he waits for his own reformation were then practised between the two sexes, to the great peace and concord of every family. All sensations felt by one side were imparted equally to the other, so that the husband could not pursue his pleasures apart from his wife. Besides this, when people were born married, as I describe, they avoided all doubt and perplexity of choice; there were no fears and anxieties in love, no vain pursuits, nor affections without return. The male part was no more doubtful of the female's kindness than a man is now apprehensive of losing his own esteem.

But it pleased the gods that this happy condition should cease. The reason of their displeasure I cannot assign with any certainty. It has been thought that these double men having much greater strength and dexterity than the present race, had made Jupiter apprehend that they might at some time revolt from heaven, and become dangerous enemies. And it is observable that in all countries, however religions may vary, there is some obscure tradition of the gods having once imagined their supremacy to be in danger, which I think argues a remarkable cowardice in the divine nature; for when we consider the distance from earth to heaven, we can hardly meditate an attack from this quarter with any reasonable hope of victory. But I am rather inclined to think that in this case Jupiter was not moved by the power of men, but by their happiness. An excess of good is contrary to our nature, and certainly the gods have always shown a very provident care in supplying us with sufficient misfortunes. But whatever reasons may have decided the King of the Gods, it is certain that he resolved to divide man from woman, and make them live as two separate beings. Having therefore counted the number

of mortals on the earth, he took the same number of thunderbolts in his hand, and hurled them with such certainty as to cleave every human being into two parts. I think that a god capable of such dexterity needed not to have feared the human race, though every man had had a hundred arms instead of four. All mankind, therefore, having fallen asunder at the same instant, each half was seized with consternation; but yet was so stupified by the blow that it knew not what had happened, and began to wander about by itself in an ignorant terror. After some time, however, these halves became sensible of their condition; and each perceiving that in its amazement it had wandered away from its partner, was seized with a violent desire to be reunited. The earth was covered with these imperfect creatures, running about in search of their associates. When two halves which had been one were so fortunate as to meet they threw their arms round each other, and with passionate embraces declared that they never would be separated. But most of those who did not speedily find their true partners, in horror at being alone, betook themselves to some other half. The male and female sides being equally terrified and forlorn in their sudden solitude, these wrong associations were readily and eagerly formed. When two halves happened to meet, each despairing of its former colleague, they joined themselves together after a short negotiation, with mutual caresses and vows of inseparable union. But it was soon found that a pair could not be thus joined at pleasure with any success. When the two halves which before the thunderbolt had formed one person were restored to each other, they lived together in great harmony and happiness, endeavouring by a perfect unanimity to forget that they were no longer one; but those who had been casually united soon found cause of disagreement, and passed their lives in hatred and dispute. And when one of this unfortunate confederacy happened to meet with its true partner, involved also in a foreign compact, the desire of reunion was incontrollable; and each deserting its provisional associate, returned with delight to the former alliance.

It is easy to discover a secret memory of these events in human nature as it now is, what I have related being the true origin of love and marriage. Each man and each woman of these times is singly but half a creature, and is naturally sensible of its imperfection. In childhood we do not suspect our mutilation; but as soon as the feelings are mature, every person becomes eager to discover the other half of himself, and be reunited to it. Unfortunately, the whole human race has been so dispersed and confused together, that very few have the good fortune to find their authentic halves; but both sexes being conscious of the division they have suffered, are so impatient of solitude, that the generality of persons after a very short search are content to choose partners with which they have no affinity. Hence, a great part of the two sexes are erroneously joined, which explains the number of unhappy marriages; for the law is still in force, that two halves, not belonging to each other, cannot be prosperously united, but to be happy together they must be descendants of the same double person. When any two are once made known to each other as being halves of the same person, nothing can prevent their immediate union, and any former confederacy is instantly abandoned. Thus, when a married woman, to the great astonishment of her friends, deserts her husband and her children for a stranger, the truth is that she has found her corresponding half. Thus, also, we may understand why it is that a man has so often a violent passion for some particular woman, whose charms are so far from being obvious that he is the only person who has sagacity enough to discover them. She is the half which it is the business of his life to find.

When Jupiter made this division of men, he threatened that if they gave him any farther displeasure he would make another partition, and divide every human being, already so imperfect, into two. After some time, I know not upon what provocation, he determined to execute this threat, and with the same skill as before effected a still more lamentable division, the whole human race falling asunder at the same instant. Every man found himself, he knew not why, suddenly standing on one foot. The two halves of a man gazed at each other in amazement; and

each asked the other its opinion of what had happened, and of what was to follow. Each body was divided into two even shares; the nose being split exactly in the middle, and the same justice observed from head to foot. At the moment of division a new skin had grown over the parts newly exposed, so as to prevent the loss of a single drop of blood. One of these half men, therefore, putting his hand to that side of his face which had undergone the change, felt a plain flat surface. The voice, though from half a tongue, was as distinct but not so strong as before. A man had no difficulty in supporting himself, or in hopping along on his single foot; for though in the present condition of man it is a severe labour for one foot to discharge the duty of both, and convey the whole body, yet half the burden being taken away the remaining foot could make some progress without any violent exertion. Some practice, however, was required to move with sufficient speed and security; and the right side, by its superior vigour, was the first to attain a proficiency in hopping. As soon as the first consternation was over, men, supposing that their new condition was to continue, endeavoured to reconcile themselves to the being half what they had been, and to supply the loss of limbs by the exercise of what remained. Many disputes and confusions were caused by this event. A man being about to be married to a beautiful girl before the division took place, and one side of him in its first attempt to hop down stairs having broken its neck, the other side found itself provided with two wives by the separation of the intended bride; and as the two halves of her were equally beautiful and loved him with equal fidelity, he knew not which to choose. There was another case not less difficult to decide. A man had been betrothed to a woman of great beauty, but her left cheek was unfortunately disfigured by a scar. The two sides, therefore, being now of different value, the right side of the man claimed the perfect half, maintaining that each ought to take the part corresponding with himself; but this opinion was disputed by the left side of the man, who positively refused to accept of the blemished half.

In many cases great injustice was done by this division to one half of the human being. The brain being separated in the middle, the qualities of the mind were divided. In some instances they had been equally distributed through the head, so that each side contained a just share; but in other cases they had been differently arranged, and one half possessed all the valuable endowments. In some heads the virtues had been all on one side, and the vices collected on the other; so that one half was a man of perfect character, while the other abandoned itself to every sort of depravity. It appeared that some men, who had been distinguished by wit in conversation, had been witty only on one side of the head, and that side remained as agreeable as before, while the other became extremely dull. In a public assembly, soon after this occurrence, the right side of an orator began to speak, and proceeded for some time with great volubility, but suddenly stopped in the middle of a sentence, and appeared at the end of its oratory, upon which the left side finished the sentence, and then continued the harangue to its conclusion. It seemed, therefore, that this oration had occupied the whole head, in which it lay ready for use, and had been cut into two equal parts, the left side of the orator being ignorant of the beginning and the right side of the end.

Jupiter soon discovered that by this second separation he had too much disabled the human race, for men sunk into such misery and dejection that all the duties and enterprises of life would have been speedily forgotten had they remained so decrepit. He therefore ordered Apollo to unite men again, and make them such as they now are, and as they were before the last division. This was done, but not so skilfully as to prevent all bad consequences from the separation. The injury done to us is still apparent; for although on the outside we bear not the least mark of this cruel operation, yet in the minds and characters of men it is easy to find evidence of their having been cleft into two. The truth is, that Apollo thought only of preventing any external injury, and was not careful enough in adjusting the several parts of the brain to each other. In most cases, therefore, the fibres were not accurately united, and in

consequence the generality of men may be said to have two minds; one set of passions and opinions on the right side and another on the left. Sometimes one side gains the direction of the man and sometimes the other, and hence arise the contradictory qualities and variations of character in the same person. A man, whose habitual prudence we have long known, surprises us by a sudden rashness; in this case one side of his head only has been stored with prudence, and that has commonly been the governing side, but upon this one occasion the other half has prevailed over it. In the first ages, when man and woman composed one creature, two bodies were governed by a single mind; but now, to our misfortune, one body is subject to the control of two minds, each of which having its own separate passions, and endeavouring to gratify them, there is a perpetual contest between them for the government of the body. Any man who considers what passes within himself, will perceive that he thinks and acts more like two men than one. He finds in himself infirmities which he despises; this is the contempt which one side of him entertains for the other side. He is conscious of two dispositions,—the one wise, moderate, and circumspect, the other intemperate and rash; and he cannot determine which of these is himself, for all the passions seem equally his own. Thus I explain the difficulty proposed by Alcibiades, and I am now ready to hear Cleocrates.

CLEOCRATES.

I learned many things from an Egyptian priest, and amongst other strange doctrines he told me that I had passed many lives upon the earth before that which I enjoy now. Perceiving that I regarded this as a fable intended for amusement rather than belief, he told me that he would soon convince me of the truth of what he taught by restoring to my memory a part of the past. He then mixed together many ingredients, of which I knew not the nature, and making a draught of them desired me to swallow it. I complied, and soon fell into a deep sleep, from which, when I awoke, I found myself wonderfully altered, for I clearly remembered a former life, the chief adventures of which were as distinct to me as the occurrences of my present existence; and besides this I

remembered my death, and the treatment which I met with in another world. I shall not relate to you any events of my former life, but confine myself to an account of what I observed as a dead person, because it is that which explains the subject of our present conversation.

As soon as I was dead, then, I found myself in a throng of spectres, approaching the place of judgment, which is conducted in a very different manner from what is usually imagined. When I arrived at the fearful spot, I found that the actions of all those to be tried had been collected together, the deeds of each man forming a separate heap. The judge held in his hands a large sieve, which he presented to the first spectre who came to trial. He then took up a part of this man's actions, and placing them in the sieve commanded him to shake them; the sieve having a peculiar sagacity, by which it lets the meritorious actions pass through, and retains the bad. This spectre had been a pirate, and the sieve was filled with cruelty, rapine, and murder. He shook vigorously, but only one of his actions dropped through; it was the release of a prisoner without ransom, probably at the beginning of his career, and from want of experience. When he had shaken the crimes ineffectually for some time, the judge commanded him to empty the sieve by inverting it, and then placed in it another handful of his life. This he agitated with great resolution, but the sieve refused to part with a single crime. He succeeded no better with the remainder of his exploits; and when all had been shaken sufficiently to try their worth, they were thrown into a heap, from which the judge deducted one crime as an equivalent for the single good action which had passed the sieve, and then ordered the criminal to lie down and roll himself in his sins. As he rolled every crime adhered to him, and he rose from the ground covered with his own enormities. A fury then approached, and touched him with a lighted torch, by which every crime was instantly converted into a flame. He uttered a loud yell; and another fury, armed with a whip, drove him from the place of judgment, blazing violently as he went along. All the spectres had to undergo the same judgment in turn; the actions of each were submitted to the sieve, and for every deed which by passing through could prove

itself a laudable act one of the bad actions was removed; the remaining errors were fixed to the guilty spectre as I have described, and set on fire, when each of them burned with violence and pain according to its enormity.

Whether it was Minos who presided at this ceremony I could not learn; but it seemed to me that the office required no great sagacity or justice, for the sieve was really the judge, and I greatly admired the equity with which it detained or dismissed the actions submitted to it. I heard it said that this sieve was Minos himself, who had been transformed into that instrument at his death for the duty I am relating.

I saw the trial of a well known orator, who took the sieve with great confidence as a benefactor to his country. His harangues were placed in it, and a few of them passed through, as having enjoined what was useful; but the chief part, notwithstanding their eloquence, could obtain no passage, and some of them, as soon as they were kindled, seemed to give him great torment. I also saw three celebrated poets receive judgment. They were Anacreon, Archilochus, and Sappho. Their poems lay in the heap amongst the other actions of their lives, and were subjected to the consideration of the sieve. Those strains which had caused virtue immediately fell through, and the lays that had encouraged vice were detained to become firebrands. Many were the dissolute odes which Anacreon shook without success, though he tried every part of the sieve, as if he had imagined that some of its holes would be more indulgent than others. His debaucheries, too, were obstructed in the same manner as his poetry; and as he had lived to a great age, and continued his poetry and his enjoyments to the last, he made a large conflagration. Sappho having lived and and written as voluptuously as Anacreon, was as unsuccessful in her agitation of the sieve. Archilochus, also, had many licentious poems to burn him; and many others were stopped in the sieve on account of their malevolent and unjust satire.

I shall not enumerate all the trials that I saw before I came to judgment myself. I was fully satisfied of the justice of all that I had seen, and was therefore in great terror, for I believed many of my actions to be quite

disqualified for passing so rigorous a sieve. And so they proved; for though I shook them with great vigour, a considerable heap remained after the deduction of faults equal in number to the good actions. With great reluctance and horror of mind I rolled myself in them as I was commanded, and rose covered with my crimes, which burst into a blaze as soon as the torch was applied. The pain was dreadful, and I wonder that by any means I could have been made to forget it. The conducting fury drove me away to a large plain, where all the criminals were collected. There was here no light except from the flame of our own crimes, and we all wandered about in restless agony. Some rolled upon the ground in hope of extinguishing their fires, but not a crime could be smothered till it had been burned out in the manner ordained. The whole place was filled with screams and lamentations.

After some years of these dreary pains our fires evidently began to abate. At the end of twenty years three of my errors had gone out, and others were burning faintly. When fifty years had passed the flames had disappeared from all of us.

As soon as we were extinguished, several furies appeared with whips, and drove us to a distant part of hell, where we had to make choice of bodies in which to pass another life in the world. But first we underwent a singular examination. The plain where we had been burning was surrounded by a wall, and in leaving it we all passed through a gate, at which sat a minister of the place, whose name I know not. He seized every spectre that passed, and closely examined him; some he dismissed, but upon others he performed a strange operation. For when he had found one that required this remedy, he fixed his nails into the head, and tore him downwards into two parts, as a man may tear a piece of cloth. Every spectre so divided uttered a loud scream as if the separation were very painful. It was remarkable, that each part was still an entire spectre, and appeared as large as when the two were united. The operator then examined the two halves, and sometimes tore them again, each still retaining its size. Thus, in some instances, he made six or seven spectres out of one. The reason of this I afterwards discovered, and must explain

to you. When this ceremony is ended, the spectres are turned into an enclosed place, where they find a crowd of bodies, being those which they had inhabited upon earth. Each has liberty to enter either his own body or any other that he can seize, a great strife, therefore, takes place; and in the contest for bodies it frequently happens that two or more souls obtain a lodgement in the same. These souls are compressed together, and pass through life as one person. This, therefore, is the cause why so many contradictory thoughts and inclinations are often found in the same man, for the two or more souls can never be united so as to make a single mind, but each preserves its own nature; and thus they are always contending together, sometimes one gaining the ascendant and sometimes another. When a man dies they go out of him as one spectre, having been pressed into each other by the body, so that they cannot separate themselves by their own efforts. They are then punished together, since their crimes have been committed in concert; but as they leave the place of punishment they are torn asunder as I have related. The executioner who divides them knows by examination whether each spectre consists of one soul or more, and never suffers a double one to pass. I was scrutinised with the rest, and being found single escaped the laceration of which I was much in dread.

I observed that when a soul had been divided, each single part was very different in appearance and character from the compound soul before separation. Thus Sappho, after being examined, was torn into two parts, when one half of her appeared a soul of elevated and solemn genius, the other half had in a previous existence been a woman of lascivious and disorderly life, who having obtained entrance into the body chosen by the woman of genius had filled her disposition and her poetry with vice. As soon as they were separate, the sublime Sappho began with great indignation to reproach her late associate with the disgraceful pleasures in which she had involved her. The other was not at all disconcerted, but received the censure with a laugh.

I heard many other souls, after separation, inveighing against their confederates, and declaring what great things they could have done had they been single. Some of the souls thus reproved denied their guilt, and affirmed that they had first been misled by the accuser, so that there were many disputes amongst the cloven spectres. We were now turned into the place where the bodies we had last lived in awaited us, and amongst these we had each to choose a habitation for another life. The bodies here presented a very singular spectacle, having no minds to animate them, but standing upright without motion, and without thought or life in the countenance. Some strange adventures now ensued amongst the souls, in haste to take possession of the bodies that pleased them. A soul enters the body by opening the mouth and crawling in, being able by a little effort and struggling to compress itself so as to be admitted. On every side, therefore, bodies were seen in the act of swallowing their souls; and it frequently happened, that when a soul had only his legs projecting from the mouth another seized him by the feet, and dragged him back again, having a desire for the same body.

I immediately saw the frame which I had last inhabited, but had no wish to return into it, for it had neither strength nor beauty. Why I had chosen it before I know not, for the draught of the Egyptian had not restored things so remote to my memory. I resolved, therefore, to provide myself with a better figure, and wandered about in search of a body to my taste.

I found that when a spectre had taken possession of a body, he was not immediately united with it so as to form one being, nor could he command it, as we living men rule our bodies; he was at first a separate creature from the body, though not at liberty to leave it when once settled within. The uniting of mind and body takes place afterwards.

Many souls were extremely desirous of being the only occupiers of a body, which gave rise to innumerable contests; for when a spectre of this solitary temper had established himself in a body that he liked, he vigorously defended it against all assailants. In many places a soul was seen on the outside of a body eagerly endeavouring to force open the mouth, which another soul within was striving to keep shut. Sometimes

the possessor remonstrated loudly against the invasion, and insisted on his right to live alone. Other souls formed willing confederacies, and chose a body by agreement, in which they might live together. Sometimes he who was conscious of a deficiency in any particular quality associated himself with one who had it in an eminent degree. I saw five or six merry spectres, who purposely formed themselves into a composition of the most incongruous characters, and seemed to be much diverted with the expectation of being a very singular man. I remarked, that the souls which had been united in a former existence always took care not to become confederates again. Any spectre might enter either a male or female body, and several therefore took the opportunity of changing their sex. But in this case the former disposition still continues, which explains the effeminate nature of some men, and the masculine temper of certain women. In some instances a man and a woman settled themselves in the same body, and it is easy to discover the mixed characters which result from such a composition.

I saw a male and a female spectre, who in their last existence had been husband and wife, and still retained their love for each other. Thinking it probable that if they took different bodies they should be separated for ever, they agreed to become associates in the same. They hesitated at first whether to be a man or a woman, but decided in favour of the male sex; and having found an empty body they crawled into it, but a mischievous spectre, observing this union, crept in after them, not being discovered until he was quite established and immovable. When the husband perceived how his privacy was interrupted, he loudly reproached the intruder, who laughed heartily at finding himself so troublesome.

I shall now, Socrates, relate what I saw take place in the composition of you. I observed a thoughtful spectre wandering about, and appearing in no haste to enter a body. Another soul, which was that of a poet, proposed to him that they should become associates, saying, that the reasoning power of one and the poetical fancy of the other could not fail by combination to produce a splendid genius. The other spectre declined

this offer, saying, that he was conscious of a superior intellect, which in his last existence had been rendered quite useless by a bad confederate, and he was therefore determined to be alone. He added, that he cared not what kind of body he should live in, provided he was the sole master of it. This was overheard by another spectre, who in his former life had been a public buffoon, and supported himself by wandering through Greece, telling fables to the crowd, and exhibiting the accomplishments of a monkey. He had been renowned for his satirical humour, and his success in putting some of his hearers out of countenance. This buffoon hearing the words of the philosophical spectre, said to him, "If you wish to have no companion, I advise you to enter the body now before you, for you cannot possibly have any competitors for such a dwelling." The body he recommended was that, Socrates, which you now walk about in; and as I have often heard you ridicule the shape of it, I need not fear to offend you by telling how it came to be your covering. The solemn spectre having considered this body, said, "I really think your advice is good, for I certainly shall not be disturbed by invaders as long as there is another body to be found; besides which, a philosopher has many advantages in being ugly." After a little consideration he opened the mouth, and crawled in, when the buffoon, not able to refuse the opportunity of a jest, crept after him, and had irrevocably entered the body before the philosopher perceived his unwelcome colleague. He then inveighed bitterly against the intruder, and lamented that a second time his intellect would be useless from the levity associated with it. The buffoon contradicted this, and affirmed that his vivacity would much assist the philosopher in his design of instructing the world. Thus, Socrates, were you compounded; and since to the buffoon we owe the satire and irony by which we grow wiser, I think we may rejoice that the philosophical half of you was so cheated.

After this I saw a very beautiful male form disputed by a crowd of spectres. The body was that of Alcibiades, and when I tell him how many opposite characters were finally lodged in it, he will cease to wonder at the variety of inclinations, which he finds within himself. It had first

been taken possession of by the spectre of a philosopher, who thought that so noble a figure would give eloquence to his doctrines; and when I first saw it, this philosopher within was guarding the mouth against a multitude of assailants, all eager to inhabit the most beautiful of bodies. I heard him arguing against the justice of the attack, in a smothered voice from within the body, and endeavouring to prove his own sole title. But in spite of his reasoning, the mouth was forced open, and a whole crowd rushed in. The first to enter was the spectre of a debauched reveller, who was followed by an orator, a musician, a pirate, a soldier, a poet, and two courtesans, besides some other spectres, of whose genius and vocation I was ignorant. More wished to enter; but those within, thinking they had a sufficient diversity of character for one man, combined together to close the mouth against all future assailants. Since, therefore, Alcibiades, you find that in your person so many people must agree to act together, you cannot wonder that there is a frequent conflict, and that the philosopher has some difficulty in ruling his associates.

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# TRUTH RELEASED.

*Translated from a Greek manuscript lately discovered.*

A LETTER FROM THRASICLES OF MILETUS TO RHODIUS OF ATHENS.

You must remember, Rhodius, that when I last visited you at Athens we fell into a dispute about the danger of truth, which was occasioned by my advising you to erase certain passages from the book you intend to publish, as being adverse to the general opinion, and against your own peace. You would by no means allow this confiscation; but defended the passages in question with all the fidelity of an author. Hence ensued a controversy between us, whether truth could ever be mischievous, in which, by your arguments against my notions, you fully convinced me that I was right, and I believe I had the same success with you. I have since been engaged in some adventures, which have pursued and decided our dispute in a remarkable manner, and I shall therefore write you a brief account of what has happened. You will probably mistake my narrative for a fiction; but whenever you visit Miletus you may satisfy yourself, from the inhabitants, that the singular events which I shall relate have really happened.

I was one day wandering alone in a wood, and had insensibly penetrated into the thickest, and most remote part of it, when I suddenly perceived myself at the very brink and danger of an opening in the earth, which I

found was a well, and looking cautiously down, I saw a glimmering from the surface of water. I was leaving the place when I heard a human voice, weak by the depth, but earnestly calling for aid, the person who spoke having caught sight of me as I leaned over. I called down the well to ask what unfortunate being was below, and by what accident, though I have since thought that this inquiry into the particular method of descent was not the measure that I ought first to have used for the prisoner's release. The voice answered, that the person below was the goddess Truth, who for some centuries had been hidden and useless in that well, and entreated me to assist in her escape. It would commonly be a natural and just caution to disbelieve any person casually met, who should undertake to be Truth, but there was something more than human in this voice, which instantly convinced me: I forgot my fears of this goddess, and eagerly desired her freedom, which by ropes from a neighbouring cottage I soon contrived.

I now saw before me the real person of Truth; and if I had before doubted her divinity, the first sight of her would have persuaded me. It is impossible to describe the beauty and contemplation of her countenance. I had seen her picture by Apelles, which is so beautiful, that I had always thought it must exactly resemble her; but I now found it altogether erroneous, which, perhaps, may be from his having painted without seeing her: for while she has been buried in her well both painters and philosophers have been describing her with as much confidence as if they had been in daily intercourse with her. She thanked me for her release; and I ventured to ask why she had chosen so singular a residence, which, I conceived, would afford her no advantage for instructing mankind. She condescended to give me a short history of herself, saying that she was the daughter of Thought, the oldest of the gods, by a mother of earthly race, whose name was Experience. She had a half sister named Falsehood, from the same father, but of an unknown mother. This sister was so like her in appearance, that they were perpetually mistaken for each other; but their disposition and character were very different, she herself being thoughtful, cautious, and sincere, her sister, volatile,

talkative, and deceitful. She had been sent to take possession of this earth, which she was to govern; but her sister had immediately followed her into her new dominions, under pretence of a friendly visit, and here, by her busy nature and plausible arts, she had soon usurped the whole authority. It being found, therefore, that Truth was incapable of command by her own merit, two instruments of government had been sent her from Heaven. These were a torch and a mirror, which she held in her hands when she rose out of the well. It was thought that she would be able to establish her power by these gifts, which were endued with wonderful virtue and discovery. But before she had begun to employ her new arms, having caught sight of her treacherous sister in that wood, she had so eagerly pursued her for reproach and triumph, that she had not seen the well, but fallen into it, and heard the laughter of her sister as she disappeared. I told her it had been affirmed by the philosopher Democritus that she lived in a well but I had supposed this to be a mere fable and allegory. To this she answered, that Democritus, like myself, had discovered her by accident: she had called to him, informed him who she was, and implored freedom, upon which he had endeavoured to negotiate with her, and bargain, that if released she should confirm his particular philosophy, and explode all other doctrines. She asked what were the tenets that he expected her to enforce; in answer to which he had begun to scream forth the heads of his creed. She interrupted him in this erudition, which with a great exertion of voice he was conveying down the well: she assured him that these were chiefly deceptions of her sister, and promised, at being set free, to teach him better things. It appeared, however, that he did not desire her to instruct him, but to ratify the doctrines that he had published; and finding her resolved not to become his accomplice, he had left her, first declaring that he should carefully surround the well with thorns, against the discovery of others. Since that time, a few other philosophers had come by accident to the mouth of her well, but all had refused her freedom, some like Democritus wanting to make conditions in favour of their own fancies, and others telling her that they were frightened by the very sound of her voice, that, if let loose, she would be the most pernicious being, and that the bottom

of a well was the only post in which she could do no mischief. Since, however, she was at last free, she declared that she should immediately begin to put in force the arms that had been sent her, and hoped soon to gain by them her just authority. I entreated, that as a reward for my assistance she would make my native city the place of her first revelation. To this she consented, and we approached Miletus. Before we entered the town, the goddess said that her torch must be lit, since it was to be a principal instrument in undeceiving mankind. She breathed upon it, when instantly it broke into a flame, and it is impossible to describe the beauty and rapture from its light. The sudden brightness betrayed the rival sister, Falsehood, who happened then to be very near us, and invisible by her art; but she had no concealment against the torch, and now stood manifest before her offended sister. As they were now together, I could easily distinguish the superiority of Truth; but they were so much alike, that I thought had I seen only one I could not have pronounced with any certainty which of them it was. Truth walked angrily up to her sister; and a conversation ensued, which I will relate as nearly as I can remember the words.

TRUTH.

I wonder at the insolence with which you confront me.

FALSEHOOD.

Will you tell me what behaviour I ought to assume in your presence?

TRUTH.

My surprise is, that you should have the courage to meet one whom you have so basely injured.

FALSEHOOD.

What wrong can you accuse me of?

TRUTH.

That you are found amongst mankind is a sufficient proof of my wrongs. This world was bestowed upon me, and I originally occupied it, but you have supplanted me, called yourself by my name, and governed in my place.

FALSEHOOD.

Now it appears to me that your inability to keep your place amongst men is a proof that you have no such title to the world as you pretend. The wise men of every age have been engaged in seeking you, but in vain. You persist in remaining out of sight, and complain that you are not known and honoured. It is true that for some time past your situation, the bottom of a well, has not been very favourable for teaching the world; but before you made that singular choice of a home you were as much neglected and as little known as now.

TRUTH.

I am unknown, because you offer yourself to those who seek me, and call yourself by my name.

FALSEHOOD.

Am I to blame for proving the more attractive of the two? But you seem to affirm that you alone are entitled to live, and that I ought not to be in the universe.

TRUTH.

The universe would be much more prosperous without you.

FALSEHOOD.

I contend, on the contrary, that from me proceeds almost every thing that is valuable or useful to mankind.

TRUTH.

Indeed! I wish you would name some of the blessings which you bestow upon the world.

FALSEHOOD.

I will do so: my inventions are so numerous that I cannot want topics. First, then, you will grant that religion is a blessing.

TRUTH.

And are you the founder of religion?

FALSEHOOD.

Why, since out of the many religions that have ever been in the world you can certainly claim only one, all the rest must be ascribed to me. Make your choice, therefore, I will give up to you without dispute whichever you select; but the others are mine, and all the piety and virtue which they have caused must redound to my honour.

TRUTH.

A very moderate claim.

FALSEHOOD.

You must acknowledge it, unless you affirm that no virtue has ever been practised except under your one religion.

TRUTH.

I wonder you should think fit to boast of the variety of false religions with which you have deceived the world. This is the complaint I made against you at first, that you have supplanted me in the possession of a world which is by nature mine.

FALSEHOOD.

And I maintain that my having supplanted you proves that this world was not designed for you; besides which, I am confirming my title to possession by showing that I have invented almost every thing that is esteemed valuable amongst men.

TRUTH.

Well, let me hear what other benefits the world owes you. It seems you have invented religion.

FALSEHOOD.

All the religions but one; I give you one.

TRUTH.

You are very generous to me.

FALSEHOOD.

That is more than some philosophers allow you. Let us next consider which of us benefits most the intercourse of private life. I affirm, that without me there could be no such virtue as friendship amongst men.

TRUTH.

I thought it had been allowed by all that friendship is founded upon truth.

FALSEHOOD.

Such is the common opinion, but altogether erroneous; for if any two friends were to act with perfect sincerity, and mutually divulge every thought that passes through their minds concerning each other, do you think that they could remain friends? Let any man consider the secret discoveries which he has made of his friend's infirmities, how he has censured certain qualities of his mind, and ridiculed those failings which

could not endure to be mentioned or hinted at, and then let him judge whether a candid disclosure of all his thoughts would tend to confirm the friendship. He who would retain the kindness of any man must suppress more than half his observations on that man's character.

But without my arts there would be not only no friendship amongst men, but no amicable intercourse or society; for if all were disclosed that had ever been said or thought by each man against others with whom he is acquainted, the general indignation would be such that not one person would be found ready to converse with another. I may add, that if all courtesy were discontinued the world would not be much improved,—and what is courtesy but falsehood? If you were to prevail as you wish, men would tell each other of their faults with the greatest zeal and sincerity, and no two persons could meet without giving pain to each other. When people now assemble for conversation, the art is to expose the faults of absent friends, which is always pleasing, and those who can impart this knowledge most skilfully obtain the greatest praise; but if every man were as eager to apprise another of his own faults, as he now is to tell him of his friend's, the information would be very differently received. I think it easy to prove, that more than half the kindness of human life subsists by dissimulation, and must therefore be ascribed to me.

TRUTH.

Pray go on: what other good have you done? Having construed benevolence into deception, you can have no difficulty in proving every other virtue to be your own contrivance.

FALSEHOOD.

Next I affirm, that if I did not inspire and entertain the mind of man with innumerable fancies and visions the melancholy of life would be intolerable. What would man be without hope? and where he borrows one hope from you he receives a hundred from me. What would become of all the unhappy if they listened only to you for comfort?

TRUTH.

But if men are indebted to you for hope, to you also they owe disappointment.

FALSEHOOD.

No; for those who are truly under my government are always supplied with a new hope before the old one is lost. Pray why is it that none wish to live again that part of their lives which is gone, and yet all set a high value upon the remainder? Because they see you in the past and me in the future. Then what a perpetual recreation do I furnish by those visions of the future, in which many persons pass a great part of their lives, not really hoping that such things may happen, for they are usually impossible, but enjoying them in speculation, and as if actually taking place.

TRUTH.

I acknowledge that claim; and allow you to be the author of those idle fantastical dreams which divert men from true business and study.

FALSEHOOD.

My next assertion is, that I contrive all the complacency and satisfaction which a man has from his own character. Had I invented no other art for the welfare of mankind, the grand discovery of self-deception would entitle me to the gratitude of the whole human race. For if each man were to discern with severity every oblique motive in his own heart, every mean preference of himself to others, every artifice for undeserved praise, who is there that could endure himself? I taught men the skill to hide their infirmities from themselves, the only remedy against conscience. By this invention great numbers pass with themselves for excellent men, who after a lesson from you would regard themselves with hatred and contempt. Men commemorate with gratitude those whom they believe to have first taught agriculture, mechanics, and other arts of convenience or plenty, but my praise for this invention has been

forgotten, though even the discovery of bread from the earth has not conferred on man half of that ease and contentment which I have given by teaching him not to know himself. I conclude you do not dispute my title to this invention.

TRUTH.

Certainly not; I allow you all the honour of this noble science, in which men have received your lessons with great alacrity.

FALSEHOOD.

Let it not be supposed that because men now misunderstand their own characters with great facility it must be a thing of no art or study. The ease with which it is done proves how well my instruction has been imparted. Many books have been written to teach the deceiving of mankind, and many statesmen have practised with renown the rules they assign, but no artifice of these books or statesmen can equal the skill of men, even the most ignorant, in cheating themselves. It is impossible, without admiration, to observe a man diligently keeping his failings out of his own sight, and enjoying them under fictitious names, inventing motives for his own use, and faithfully believing whatever he chooses to tell himself, providing for his own advantage, and still persuaded that he is labouring for others. With what genius have I contrived that all these stratagems shall be conducted within one head where there is no partition, so that it might have been supposed all the thoughts must be known to each other! By this art I am the great author of all serenity of mind, for the chief part of mankind can neither bear to practise virtue nor to live without it; but by this excellent contrivance they are enabled to believe themselves good without the inconvenience of really being so.

TRUTH.

An excellent device for improving mankind! I had supposed that before a man reforms his faults he ought to know them.

FALSEHOOD.

Your remark shows how much I excel you in the management of men. You can think of no expedient to free men from the evil of their vices except the leaving them off, which if you knew this world you would know to be a visionary undertaking. I attempt nothing impossible, but teach men to avoid the reproach of their faults by not knowing that they have any. This art supplies most men with peace of mind; but some, it is true, are troubled with a curiosity about what they are doing, and in all their culpable actions take care to inform themselves what the employment really is, so that they seldom can do wrong without knowing it. The consequence of which is, that they pass their lives in great uneasiness and ineffectual endeavours to relinquish their bad habits. But I have found a remedy even for these people; for after every commission of a fault I teach them to be convinced that they shall never be guilty of it again, by which confidence they are restored to their tranquillity.

TRUTH.

You have stated very justly the share you have in men's opinion of themselves.

FALSEHOOD.

To proceed, then, with my benefits: amongst the valuable entertainments of life, literature and philosophy are most eminent. Let us consider what part of them must be assigned to me. First, I think you will hardly contest my right to poetry; or, if you please, you shall correct the works of Homer, and expunge from them all the incidents that you disallow. Your genius for poetry will be proved by what remains, if, indeed, any thing is left; and it will be seen whether you have increased the glory of Greece by inspiring its poets. But I shall presume myself beyond dispute the author of poetry and other fiction; and amongst the arts of fiction I think oratory may be ranked.

TRUTH.

I confess you are a more successful orator than I am.

FALSEHOOD.

I go on to philosophy, moral and physical, in which many things are instituted as certainties, but I must observe that I can be as positive as you. When there are two contending certainties, I must be entitled to one of them, very frequently to both; and since there is not any opinion to be found in philosophy without an adverse opinion equally resolute, I must at least own half of that which is taught. But perhaps the most equitable division will be that which I proposed in the case of religion: you shall choose any one philosophical sect of which you like to have been the author, and I will resign to you all that has been written and said in defence of it, taking all the remaining controversy for my share. Or, if you hesitate to undertake any entire sect with all the belief that it exacts, I permit you from all the schools to select what opinions you please, and be the author of them, while I keep what you reject. I believe all that you have dictated would be comprised in a very small volume, and leave me a splendid library of philosophical writings.

TRUTH.

I grant you have been more copious than myself in works of this kind. But go on, let me next hear of your exploits in mathematics.

FALSEHOOD.

No; you have named the only kind of learning in which I have not excelled.

TRUTH.

Is there, indeed, any thing in which I surpass you?

FALSEHOOD.

Since, then, mathematics are the only kind of human learning which you can ascribe to yourself alone, what would the world be without my inventions? Very few men have a capacity for pure mathematics: to the generality of those who study them they are no more than a help to contemplations in which I have a share.

But now, since I have reduced you to a mere mathematician, and proved myself the author of all that is chiefly esteemed by the world, I think that, instead of acknowledging my own usurpations, I have a right to complain of yours.

TRUTH.

But, since you hardly allow me any possession upon the earth, what have I usurped?

FALSEHOOD.

The honour and applause which justly belongs to me. I am the great benefactor of mankind, yet am universally hated and despised.

TRUTH.

As you deserve to be.

FALSEHOOD.

You are revered and extolled though you have done nothing for the improvement of human life. Men entreat you to show yourself to them and you refuse; still, without having seen you, they are convinced of your vast perfections and benefits. The only real cause which they have for gratitude towards you is, that you are deaf to their prayers; for were you to live amongst them, as they desire, all human happiness would be at an end.

TRUTH.

Pray how should I interfere with human happiness?

FALSEHOOD.

I believed I had said enough to explain the advantages of your absence, since at your appearance all my useful inventions must vanish. But consider, if there were no error in the world there would be no diversity of opinion; and although every philosopher thinks that the world cannot prosper till all men think as he does, the truth is, that a greater injury could not be inflicted upon man than the banishment of all variety in belief. It is doubt and conjecture that keep the minds of men in activity: if all were certainty, there would be no conversation, for nothing could be imparted: there would be no literature or philosophy of any kind; for nothing would remain to be done by argument, eloquence, explanation, or research. If men were incapable of being deceived they would not need to be informed. Hope and surprise would be no more; and the minds of all would be possessed by a perpetual calm and dejection. The search after Truth is caused by Falsehood; and I acknowledge that the pursuit of you is useful, though the finding you would be a great misfortune. I repeat, therefore, your only benefit to man is the having taught him nothing. The bottom of a well is the most useful situation of which you are capable. Being known by name, and fancied something excellent, you may provoke a visionary hope and pursuit of you which busies and employs men much to their advantage. You ought, therefore, to be satisfied with being heard of, since your name is here the only part of you that can be of use; but if you have an ambition to be better known, I advise you to wander amongst the stars, and seek for a race of beings fit to receive you in person. Whatever dreams some philosophers may entertain of establishing you here at a future time, as long as the faculties of men remain what they now are you will be honoured and praised, but the world will really be governed by me.

TRUTH.

You are mistaken; your reign is at an end: by these new weapons I shall soon defeat all your arts. You cannot look at this torch without knowing its power against you.

FALSEHOOD.

I know not what new authority may have been given you; but if in these weapons, as you call them, there is really a power to undeceive the world, I think I have proved to you the folly and calamity of using them. I warn you of the universal despair that you are going to cause. Remember that a man once undeceived cannot be restored to error. The mischief you are preparing is irreparable, and I therefore give you my opinion, that the best use you can make of your liberty is to leap back into your well, as the only effort by which you can benefit mankind.

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Thus speaking, Falsehood walked away: her sister had heard her with a scornful look, and allowed her to argue without much contradiction. We now entered the town, where I conducted the goddess to my house, and going immediately to the prætor, who was then at Miletus, informed him that Truth was arrived there to free the people of Miletus from all their errors, and I asked his permission and concurrence, which he readily granted, and wrote to the emperor an account of the extraordinary event. I then returned to the goddess, and by her instruction made preparations in my house for her discoveries. I published that those who liked it might come and be undeceived with regard to various fallacies. The goddess kept herself concealed, and I was empowered to command the torch and mirror.

The first day was assigned to the satisfying of suspicious husbands. It had been made known that an invention was ready, by which all married men who doubted the fidelity of their wives might discover either their

guilt or innocence. The first who offered himself to this hazard was a rich citizen of Miletus. He came to me accompanied by a friend, who earnestly endeavoured to dissuade him from the experiment.

"What advantage," said he, "do you hope from the trial? If your wife's frailty be detected, you will have gained a certain evil, which is now only possible, and if her innocence appear, you are in the same condition as now."

"No," answered the husband; "I shall then be easy, and I am now perpetually disquieted."

"And why all this anxiety?" inquired his friend: "what cause have you for suspicion?"

"My chief cause," said he, "is that my wife loves me more than she can give a reason for; I am sure there is nothing in me to justify all the kindness she professes."

"So," replied the other, "her love is hypocrisy, and her neglect would be the love of another. With such a temper you can never be satisfied."

"Yes," said the husband, "I am going to be satisfied now."

"But only for the past," rejoined his friend; "you must still be in trouble for the future."

Thus this faithful adviser continued to argue against the enterprise; but in spite of his reasons the husband persisted in demanding the inquiry. I desired him to go home and return to me attended by his wife, to which he said that he would bring her on some pretence, and not explain the true design. I then made preparations for the trial, which was thus conducted. At the torch of Truth I lit a small taper of peculiar materials, and placed it in a room, from which I excluded the light of day. Such was the sagacity of this light from the torch of Truth, that when a married woman, secretly corrupt, entered the room, it was to be extinguished, but to burn on at the presence of a wife without blemish. I shut out the daylight to make the sudden darkness and conviction more solemn.

The inquisitive husband soon appeared with his wife, who believed she had come to see some splendid show. I took the husband aside, and told him the nature of the trial. He then entered the room, and desired his wife to follow him, fixing his eyes on the taper. She was no sooner in the room than all was dark. I then let in the light upon the detected wife, while her husband assailed her with reproaches. She was much surprised to hear him so violently upbraid her with the taper's going out, which she declared was not by her contrivance, and was besides, she thought, no great calamity. When the magic was explained to her, she protested against the injustice of her reputation being forfeited because a taper had gone out; perhaps it had mistaken her for another woman; she would maintain her honour against any torch or taper in the world; and then she appealed to her husband, whether he would believe a candle rather than his wife.

But the detection was to be completed by discovery of her accomplice, for which another proceeding was necessary. I lit the taper again, and giving it to the wife, desired her to pass with it in her hand before the mirror of Truth, when instead of her own image the assistant in her guilt was to appear in the mirror with the taper in his hand. She complied, though unwillingly, while the husband looked eagerly into the mirror for his enemy; and as his wife passed he saw a perfect resemblance of that friend who had endeavoured to deter him from this inquiry by so urgent a remonstrance. His wife was so overcome and guilty at the sight that she no longer accused the taper of detraction, but fell on her knees for pardon. Her husband wept; and as the negotiation seemed likely to be prolonged, I told him, since he was now cleared from suspicion, it would be convenient that he should give audience to his wife at home, in order that other husbands might come and enjoy the same satisfaction.

Another wife was soon brought to trial: she was possessed of great beauty, and instantly extinguished the taper. At the second trial for detection of her partner, as she passed like the preceding lady in front of the mirror, with the taper in her hand, three young men appeared holding the taper in concert. The husband was much distressed by the

number: one, I believe, he could have forgiven, but the plurality seemed greatly to discompose him. He desired his wife to remain before the mirror, till he had recognised all their faces, which filled him with surprise; for he had regarded all these culprits as excellent young men, having estimated their merit by the deference with which they had treated himself.

The next lady came to the information of the taper with evident reluctance; but when she had entered the room, the light continued steady, upon which her husband, who had shared her apprehension, embraced her with great joy; but in the midst of their triumph the fatal light went out. The husband, in consternation, inquired why the taper had retracted its first acquittal, to which I answered that it distinguished the time of transgression: its going out was instantaneous, when the fault was recent, and there was a delay in proportion to the length of innocence that had intervened before the experiment. He comforted himself that the delay had now been considerable: his wife protested that the interval had not been less than ten years, and she thought the taper might have said nothing about such an obsolete adventure. In this her husband agreed: he called it a censorious candle; and dispensing with the intelligence of the mirror, led his wife out of the house.

In the trial of some ladies, the taper faded gradually, grew more and more dim, and required several minutes from its first decay, to be quite extinguished. By this it denoted a reluctant and tenacious sacrifice of virtue; in going out suddenly it signified a speedy resolution. A lady came to trial with great alacrity, and seeming quite convinced of her own innocence, but as soon as she was within the knowledge of the taper its light began to waste away. The husband was in despair, while the wife protested vehemently against the extinction, which she called a vile slander; but the taper, after being gradually almost reduced to darkness, suddenly recovered itself into a blaze.

"What!" exclaimed the husband, "has the taper been convinced by my wife's declaration, and recalled its verdict!"

"No," I answered, "it had no intention of going out; but from its approach to darkness, you are to conclude that your wife's virtue has been brought to the same extremity, the taper having been almost extinguished, she must have been almost frail. In every instance the taper follows accurately the example of the lady." The wife was so overcome by the unforeseen exposure of the fault, which she had not quite committed, that by shame and silence she confessed herself to have been nearly faithless. She was conducted to the mirror, into which the husband looking anxiously for the tempter, that he might provide against a return of the danger, saw one of his dearest friends, according to the plan of human affairs. In the case of another wife, the taper gave the same verdict of an approach to error, and when she was brought before the mirror it presented a singular spectacle. The form of a certain young man appeared in it for an instant and vanished, and it was followed by twenty others in succession, only a glimpse being given of each. Being desired to interpret this, I informed the husband, that the fault of his wife had been only thought of, and no choice had been made of an associate; but in her imagination all these young men had been competitors for the office.

It often happened that when a lady was presented to the taper it would decay and revive many times, and some appeared to have been constantly preparing for frailty, yet still without attainment. When the fading of the taper was gradual, its restoration was always by a sudden effort. In several cases, after growing dim, and blazing forth again many times, it went out at last, showing that much endeavour and resolution had been wasted. In the decays of light the flame was more or less reduced in proportion as the danger had been urgent. Sometimes when the alteration was not very palpable there was a dispute about it, the wife urging the husband not to see any diminution of the light.

The fame of these discoveries being spread through the city, every married man was seized with a desire of being set at rest, and those wives who refused the experiment fell under a reproach little less than conviction. For many days the taper continued its information, to the great disturbance of numberless families.

I next undertook to try the fidelity of friends, and fixed a day for exposing pretended kindness. The first who came to this examination were two men celebrated for inviolable friendship to each other. The one owed his life to the courage of the other at sea, and had since, at the risk of his own ruin, preserved the fortune of his friend, in danger of bankruptcy. They had been friends so long and so securely as to want no confirmation, but had been provoked to this trial by the sneers of a satirist, who had written an ingenious treatise to prove that friendship has no real being, and in truth is nothing more than a few letters of the alphabet joined together. This doctrine he enforced also in conversation, and attacking these two supposed friends, he had entreated them to undergo the trial which I had announced, and so confirm the discoveries of his book; upon which they had undertaken, by complying with his desire, to show the fallacy of his tenets. He accompanied them to the experiment for triumph and derision.

I told these inquirers that I could subject their friendship to two kinds of scrutiny, one of which taught a man the secret wishes of his friend concerning him, and the other betrayed what he had said of him when absent. The malicious author advised them to choose this last trial, and strengthen their friendship by their mutual praises out of hearing. To procure this intercourse, I drew back a small sliding door in the wall, and showed the mouth of a funnel. I then desired one of these friends to listen, informing him that from this funnel would issue all that the other had said of him in conversation during the previous month. All were silent and attentive, and very soon a voice was heard in the funnel, which the chief listener recognised as his friend's. The voice first said something moderately in praise of his disposition, and then proceeded to his faults, which it confessed with great sincerity, explaining certain bad propensities, which he had fancied unknown to all the world except himself, and to himself even he had acknowledged them only in moments of uncommon frankness. His countenance betrayed his resentment at his friend's knowledge of these things, but he appeared to be still more mortified when the voice, with much wit, ridiculed his

peculiarities of manner and gesture. It seemed that he never could talk earnestly without the cooperation of all his limbs, and embroiling his arms, legs, and body in the discourse. These unnecessary efforts were now represented by his friend so as much to amuse the hearers, whose laughter was preserved in the funnel, and heard at suitable times. While he listened, his guilty friend stood confounded to hear his past remarks coming out of the wall, and had not confidence to disown them. The author was the first who made any observation on the revived detraction. He offered to comfort and appease the injured man. "I fear," he said, "you are discomposed by what you hear; but you should remember that your friend did not mean to vex you, for when he said all this he did not expect it to be kept in a funnel, and let out in your hearing: had he had the least suspicion of such a contrivance, undoubtedly he would have been more circumspect. Pray consider, also, that he has great sagacity, and excels in discerning the characters of men, and that all persons love to exercise any faculty which they have in perfection. Your friend could not avoid observing these particulars; for you cannot expect that a man who has sagacity shall not use it."

"I think," said the injured friend, "if it was necessary for the exercise of what you call his sagacity that he should observe these things he might have kept them secret."

"But then," said the other, "he has a great deal of wit, and to debar him from your failings, which he knows so accurately, and can, therefore, excel with, would be to require too great a sacrifice from his friendship."

The victim would not allow that an urgent want of being witty was a sufficient reason for making a friend ridiculous, but left the house abruptly, and his friend was too much abashed to pursue him with any defence. A reconciliation was afterwards attempted, but in vain.

When a report had been spread of the funnel, and its success in separating two such friends, great numbers soon came to consult it. They did not come in pairs like the two friends just mentioned, but each visiter was led in singly, and being placed at the funnel with no witness, except

myself, heard out of it every thing that had been said concerning him in his absence during the month before. The praise from this funnel was so much exceeded by the censure, that to listen was in most cases a very painful duty, yet every sufferer seemed under a charm to remain till the end of the discipline, and would not lose a single sneer. My employment was to watch the countenance, and observe what pain was given by the several kinds of animadversion.

Some accusations, which I thought the most severe, were heard with perfect calmness, while many trifling charges, not at all injurious to the character, caused great rage and uneasiness.

One man, who without disturbance had heard a violent and arbitrary temper imputed to him, was unable to command himself at the ridicule of some peculiar and established gesture with which he saluted his friends. Another being accused of inordinate vices showed no concern; but it being added, that he had a tiresome way of telling a story in conversation, he was overwhelmed with shame.

Most listeners seemed more ready to pardon the being supposed to want a kind disposition, than being thought defective in understanding. But the charge of any bodily imperfection was chiefly resented both by men and women; and many, who were armed against satire on all their endowments of mind, could not sustain with any firmness a jest on the shape of their features, or the management of their limbs. I observed that the most painful and masterly strokes of censure were always by an intimate friend. In which cases not only was the sufferer incensed against his friend for divulging his infirmities, but he regarded even a knowledge of them as a vile breach of fidelity, which made me consider how unreasonable we are in imposing this blindness on our associates; for we expect the greatest ignorance of our faults in those who have the best opportunities of knowing them.

Few friendships could stand against the information of this funnel. All the listeners went from it enraged or dejected; some sought new companions, and others had recourse to solitude as the only security

against deceitful friendship. I have mentioned besides the funnel a trial of friendship, by which any person might discover the secret wishes of another concerning him. A rich old man desired to make this inquiry into the inclinations of his grandson, whom he had made his heir. The youth had just sent him a present of some quails, together with an anxious wish that he might have life and health for many years.

"Now," said the old man, "let me know whether he would have sent me this wish had he thought that I should live the longer by virtue of it?"

For this scrutiny I placed the old man in front of the mirror, and told him that on pronouncing his grandson's name he would see in it any fate that the youth really wished him. He spoke the name, and I asked him what he saw.

"I see," he answered, "my own figure lying on a bed, and seemingly I am at the point of death,—my grandson kneels at the bed-side with a countenance full of grief. He is very dutiful, indeed, to wish me dead that he may show his sorrow. I seem to be giving him my last advice, and with what submission he receives it! But now I have sunk back, and I believe am effectually dead; the young man thinks so too, for he jumps up and goes to my chest, he unlocks it, and surveys my treasure with delight. I have an excellent grandson! He has sent me a present of quails! but I will take care that the latter part of his vision shall never be fulfilled; he shall not be the invader of that chest. I must provide another heir."

"But," said I, "if some young man is to inherit your property only on condition of not wishing you dead, you may perhaps hardly find one who will be able to perform his part of the contract. Besides, if this young man attacks your life with no weapon more hurtful than a wish, you may live in defiance of him. It is some merit that he has not contrived your death, instead of being content with wishing it. Many an heir has hastened possession by his own industry."

"So," answered he, "you think I ought to give this youth my property as a reward for not having poisoned me."

"It is probable," I said, "if you were more generous to him now, he would wait for your death with a grateful patience."

"What!" he replied, "it is advisable that with half my wealth I should bribe him not to wish for my death! that would be employing my money to great advantage!"

"Well," I said, "if you are determined to have an heir who will prefer your enjoyment of this money to his own, you should lose no time in seeking for him; so singular a man will not be easy to find."

This old man having appointed several heirs in succession, and discarded them after trial of their wishes in the mirror, at last died without a will, and his grandson came into possession.

The mirror was next consulted by a merchant who had just taken leave of his wife to go to sea. At parting she had prayed earnestly for his safety, and he came to try the sincerity of these prayers. As soon as he had pronounced the name of his wife he saw the mirror filled with a violent storm at sea, and his ship tossed about by it, his own figure standing on the deck. The lady's wish proceeded, and very soon the ship sunk without a hope of preservation to any on board. He then saw his own dead body driven on shore amongst other ruins; his wife was on the beach, accompanied by a young man whom he knew: she pointed to the body smiling, then stooped, and drawing from its finger a ring, which had been her own present, placed it on the finger of her living companion, who succeeded to it with great joy.

Many other husbands pronounced the name of their wives before the mirror, and saw themselves in the agonies of death, and many wives by the name of their husbands incurred the same doom. A man who had consulted the funnel, and heard much detraction against himself, was however greatly pleased with one of his friends, whose voice had said many things in his praise without the least censure. That his friendship might be quite certain, he resorted to the other trial also, pronounced his name before the mirror, and immediately saw himself standing on the sea-shore, and watching three ships which contained his whole wealth,

for he, too, was a merchant. These ships were in danger by a storm, and very soon he saw them perish. His representative in the mirror stood fixed in distress and ruin, when his friend, the author of the storm, approached him with consolation, led him to his house, and there presented to him a deed which put him in possession of an easy maintenance. The merchant saw this with great astonishment. "What!" he exclaimed; "my friend wishes me ruined that he may restore my fortune! He is very generous; but I think had he let my ships come safe into port without being at the pains of raising this tempest, and drowning so many innocent men, he would have acted more beneficently and more to my advantage." He seemed hardly able to determine whether he should be grateful or angry on account of this singular kind of generosity, but on the whole I thought he resented the loss of his ships. The mirror afterwards showed many instances of the same thing, so as to make it appear that a man often wishes the distress of his friend for the sake of being his comforter.

Indeed, the mirror declared a strange opposition between the actions of a friend and his secret wishes; for many who had lived in the constant practice of kindness and benefits towards a companion, yet appeared to have pleased themselves at their leisure with involving him in imaginary troubles. The injury was not to be inflicted by them, but by fortune, and they were to have no share in it except by a secret satisfaction. Great was the resentment of many at seeing the distresses wished them by friends to whom they had given no kind of provocation. And what aggravated the cruelty was, that these malicious friends proposed no advantage to themselves from the desired calamities. I endeavoured to explain to some of these injured and incensed people, that they were not to suppose, because a friend wished them to be unfortunate, he would make them so if it were in his power; all he had done was to consider, in a kind of dream, that if such distresses should occur to those he loved he could find a singular pleasure in them. But none would allow this distinction; and by all a misfortune wished was resented as much as one inflicted. In

several of these trials it appeared, that a man had at the same time wished a disaster from fortune to his friend, and an opportunity to himself of doing him good.

This trial of friendship was made by several persons to whom some gift of fortune had suddenly accrued, and they seldom failed to see themselves deprived of it in the mirror by the wishes of those who had been full of joy and congratulation at their success. I learned from these trials, that whatever prize or advantage a man obtains, every other man thinks it taken from himself.

I announced another discovery to be made by the mirror; which was, the showing every man his own character. The importance of this knowledge is owned by all, and by all the study is neglected, perhaps from its difficulty, since it is as hard to know our own faults as not to know the faults of our friend. I proposed this trial, thinking it the most useful of all, and persuaded that Truth could not make a nobler communication to man than his own mind. The first who came for intelligence about himself was a philosopher, renowned for his virtues, and for the number and probity of his disciples. He said the study of his life had been to know himself, and he believed that nothing remained for him to discover, but he had come to have his judgment confirmed. I desired him to stand before the mirror, in which he would immediately see his whole character. "But," said he, "how am I to distinguish the qualities of my mind by the eye? I can reason about them, but I know not any one of them by sight. How can a virtue have shape or colour?" I told him, that by looking in the mirror, he would discover more of his character than by disputing the possibility of seeing it. I informed him that he would see two reflections of his face; the one on his right hand, expressing the character which he attributed to himself, and that on the left representing his real disposition.

I looked over his shoulder while he made the trial. It is impossible to describe the peculiar clearness with which the qualities of mind were declared in these two faces. On the right hand, I saw the face of the philosopher, beautiful with the practice of every virtue; this was his

character according to his own judgment. On the left were the same features, but corrupted into a countenance wholly different, so as to signify a foolish love of applause, voluptuousness awkwardly concealed, avarice, treachery, haughtiness; and all covered by a hypocritical pomp and solemnity. The teacher of wisdom stood in dismay at this discovery; he was no longer at a loss to conceive how qualities of mind could be subject to the eye. After gazing some time in horror, he turned suddenly away, and sought refuge at home. His pupils assembled at the usual hour for a lecture, but he had not the boldness to confront them, imagining that he now carried about with him the face that he had seen in the mirror. He dismissed them, renounced the trade of wisdom, and lived melancholy and alone.

Many others came for a view of their characters; and it appeared, that men are willing to know themselves when they can do so with no farther toil than the looking into a mirror, though they will not undertake the study requisite for acquiring that knowledge in the ordinary way. The sight struck them all with misery and aversion, and not one who had visited the mirror for this inquiry was to be seen in public for a long time after.

I now made it known that all authors who chose to bring their works to the torch might have them cleared from error. I was soon visited for this purpose by the philosopher Eucritus, who had lately finished a treatise on which he had been employed for several years. This he now brought to be corrected by the torch. I had nothing more to do than to open his book, and let the light of the torch fall upon it, after which I restored it to him, saying, that all its fallacies had been expunged. He opened it with great eagerness to see how many of his opinions were disallowed, and found the whole book a blank, every word of his treatise having disappeared. I advised him to bring me his other works, which perhaps might be capable of the same improvement. He was unable to speak a word on seeing the fate of his doctrines, but retired in dismay. To my surprise he brought no more of his writings for amendment; and this

judgment being made known, all the authors of Miletus used the same precaution against being in error, and declined the trial, so that the torch had no farther employment in correcting books.

I now published that I could free men from vain wandering hopes, leaving them only such as were to be fulfilled, which must give them wonderful prudence and success in their undertakings. The first who came for this relief was a young man, who told me he was not conscious of any extravagant dreams, but as he knew how much the management of a man's hopes contributes to his prosperity, he had come to be quite sure that his expectations were all perfectly moderate. I produced the torch, and desired him to look steadily upon it, which when he had done for a short time, I told him that if he had any visionary hopes he would see them leaving him. Accordingly many projects, which he had secretly enjoyed at his leisure, appeared one after another, seeming to come out of his brain. The first was the figure of a crown that he was to have won by a series of great exploits, for which opportunities were to have occurred at favourable times. This crown had the appearance of a shadow; it issued from his head, and floating away into the air, was soon turned into a smoke and vanished. He was much startled by the loss of his crown, and surprised that this design was not to be accomplished. After the crown went shadows of the great actions by which he had intended to obtain it. Several battles came out of his brain, and soared through the air; the fighting in them was very vehement, and the figure of this young man appeared conspicuous in the danger. The battles, like the crown, soon vanished. Next came forth some pictures of him declaiming to the people, for his crown was to have been won by oratory as well as war. When all his achievements had left him he stood in despair; he was no more to be an orator, a general, or a king, though before this time the transition from one exploit to another had been so easy that a crown seemed inevitable. He left me abruptly, and lived a few days in the utmost dejection, for a hope thus banished can never return; and finding it impossible to recover his crown, he very soon put himself to death as the only cure. Great numbers of people came to this trial,

though it may appear strange that they should desire to be made melancholy; but as this proceeding was to clear them from all fallacious hopes, it seemed to give a foresight of the future, which is always sought very eagerly; many, therefore, came to procure despair.

Amongst these were five young men of obscure rank, each of whom had privately aspired to the empire of the world, and hoped to sit on the throne of Constantinople. When they had looked at the torch their heads were disburdened of a great crowd of guards and attendants. I remonstrated with one of these men on the extravagance of his designs, when he declared that he could not understand the folly of his hopes, for Diocletian was not from a higher origin than himself. These five competitors for the empire had concealed their ambition, and passed a quiet, harmless life, not at all distinguished from their fellow citizens, having yet to begin the great exploits which were to gain the empire.

Many other young men of boundless hopes came to this trial. When the torch was applied, each of them saw his own figure issuing from the brain, engaged in whatever mighty action he had secretly designed, and very soon vanishing in smoke. Several were reciting to a crowd of people, who seemed full of admiration; these were to have been celebrated poets, and certainly an ample supply of them was prepared for Miletus.

There were also orators, soldiers, and statesmen. In short, from these heads came every great intention which is apt to be entertained by young men who have nothing to do. Every one of them gazed after his hope with a countenance full of misery. It was impossible to regain a hope once dismissed by the torch, and those who had undergone this clearing of the mind were overcome by despair; some put themselves to death, and others lived disconsolate and incapable of any effort.

During these achievements of Truth many complaints had been made to the prætor by perverse men, who doubted the utility of what was done; and at last he resolved to make a strict examination of the city, and satisfy himself whether its improvement was as great as he had expected. When he had completed his observations, he sent for me and described

to me the consequences of what I had been doing. The peace of numberless families, he said, had been quite destroyed by the discoveries of the torch concerning married women; almost all who had been firm friends were quite alienated by the information of the funnel; and besides these disturbances, the city was full of miserable wretches who had lost their principal hopes, and had no longer energy for any enterprise, or even for their common business. He had resolved, therefore, to stop the progress of Truth, lest the city should be quite ruined, and for this he thought the most effectual device was to throw back the goddess into the same well which had so long kept her harmless and quiet.

This design was immediately executed; the goddess was seized, and I being commanded to lead the way to the residence where I had found her, in spite of her remonstrances she was thrown in, together with her torch and mirror. The mouth of the well was then covered and carefully hid, and every person engaged in the transaction was bound by oath not to disclose the spot.

I have written you an account of these adventures, my friend Rhodius, that you may consider whether your late discoveries, if let loose, are likely to confer as much benefit on the world, and as much honour on yourself, as you have imagined. The obvious conclusion from my narrative is, that when we have drawn Truth out of her well, the only use we can safely make of her is to throw her back again.

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# THE TWO EVIL SPIRITS.

**DIALOGUE I.**

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BELPHEGOR.

Ah! my old friend Recab! where have you been during all these ages? I have not seen you since the Fall.

RECAB.

I have been working in the mines since the Fall. When our chief resolved to build Pandemonium, he sent me amongst others to search for silver, and from that time to this I have been digging in the lowest pit of this dismal place, for metal has always been wanted. At last I am released, and now I have much to see and to learn, for I know but little of recent events, the mines not abounding with intelligence. From some new workmen I have had an imperfect account of the creation of men; but I wish to see these new creatures, for I understand that the dissolute amongst them are sent here.

BELPHEGOR.

You call them new, forgetting how long you have been buried in the mines. You may find them here in sufficient numbers; and if you wish rather to see them living, you may, perhaps, obtain leave to accompany me to their world, where I am going very soon.

RECAB.

I shall be glad of the opportunity. And what are you doing now? I have observed you walking about, and examining the ground with great attention.

BELPHEGOR.

My business lately has been to keep the pavement of hell in repair.

RECAB.

Then you can tell me what this pavement is. I have never seen any thing like it before. There is nothing of the sort in the mines.

BELPHEGOR.

I find you are come very ignorant out of the mines. I thought all the world had known that hell is paved with good intentions.

RECAB.

Are good intentions so abundant here?

BELPHEGOR.

Oh! yes; they are the intentions of those, who come here after death.

RECAB.

I thought that the profligate only had been sent down to us.

BELPHEGOR.

True, but they are usually the best provided with good intentions.

RECAB.

That seems strange.

BELPHEGOR.

You will understand it better when you have seen living men.

RECAB.

But pray, how do you obtain these good intentions? For since you preside over the pavement, I suppose it is your duty to collect them.

BELPHEGOR.

Every man, who is sent here after death, brings down with him all the thoughts and actions of his life in a bag. At the gates of hell the bag is opened, and if any good deeds are found in it they are let go, and immediately fly up to heaven, where they are kept for the use of future men. His bad actions he carries on with him to the place where he receives his sentence; and his good intentions, that have never been accomplished, as being neither vice nor virtue, are thrown into a heap, and afterwards used in mending the pavement.

RECAB.

Are these intentions then very durable? Or what is the particular excellence of such a pavement? It seems to me a singular choice of materials.

BELPHEGOR.

The advantage of this pavement is, that it torments the condemned spectres; they are always wandering about; and when one of them finds his own good intentions, he remembers his opportunities of virtue, and is reproached with the folly of not having executed such resolutions.

RECAB.

It is ingeniously contrived: but how does a man discover his own intentions in this great space?

BELPHEGOR.

Do not you see inscriptions upon them? Each intention bears the name of the person by whom it was entertained. Look round, and you will observe here and there a man studying the ground with great attention. The miserable wretches will stand for hours and days poring over their own virtuous resolutions, and lamenting the weakness with which they broke them. For notwithstanding the misery of such reflections, there is an enchantment in this remorse, which fixes them to the spot.

RECAB.

I see some creatures intent upon the pavement; are they men?

BELPHEGOR.

They are the spectres of men.

RECAB.

I see that the pavement has other inscriptions besides the names of those to whom the intentions belonged.

BELPHEGOR.

Upon each is written the particular virtue, in favour of which the intention was formed. As you walk about you will see that the ground is covered with intentions of temperance, chastity, and every other virtue in the world. You may also observe that every separate piece of pavement is marked with lines, which serve to record the time during which the resolution lasted. Each is divided into seconds, minutes, and hours.

RECAB.

Then if time is represented by these lines, some of the good intentions appear to have lived but a very short time. Here is one that has lasted a minute.

BELPHEGOR.

A minute is a moderate continuance for so perishable a thing as a good intention. You may find great numbers of them cut off at a much earlier period.

RECAB.

Here I find an intention repeated a greater number of times than I shall take the trouble of counting. It is an intention of being moderate in wine and diet. This person seems to have become a temperate man at least a thousand times.

BELPHEGOR.

I remember the man: he died of an apoplexy from luxury. You see that each of his intentions has lasted just four hours, so that he has been temperate from the end of one meal to the beginning of the next. Each of his meals was concluded with a determination never to commit another debauch; and his last resolution was the only one that he kept, for he died before the opportunity of breaking it arrived.

RECAB.

Do men usually design to do a thing so often without doing it?

BELPHEGOR.

Many are very resolute between their infirmities, and perfectly virtuous all their lives, except at the moment of being frail.

RECAB.

But I should think this habitual austerity must impair the enjoyments of a voluptuous man. Even the attempt to be virtuous must disturb him, though not so much as the really being so.

BELPHEGOR.

Why no; a man living in a course of pleasures, which he knows to be ruinous, is frequently molested by remorse, to quiet which he determines upon abstinence ever after; and this he does, not that he may be abstemious in future, but that he may be easy at the present moment. Thus men form intentions of virtue that they may enjoy their vices in peace.

RECAB.

That artifice accounts for what you told me, that the dissolute are usually best provided with good intentions. Here is another design, which has paved a large district by its frequency. I see it is a determination against idleness.

BELPHEGOR.

Idleness has caused more pavement to be made than any other fault.

RECAB.

What does this inscription mean, "Never to see my friend's wife again?"

BELPHEGOR.

It is the resolution of a man, who found himself becoming too benevolent towards the wife of his friend. As soon as he made the discovery he determined to see her no more, but this noble intention proved a mere paving-stone. You see that he was three times resolved upon this self-denial, for here are three similar resolutions. I remember the case perfectly, for I was then on the earth, and was employed as tempter upon this very man. Here is the first of his determinations against seeing this beautiful woman again. You see that he resolved with great vigour, for the vow has been in force till the fifth day. During that time my business was to clear his mind from prejudicial thoughts, such as the danger of discovery, the ruin and unhappiness of the lady, the injury and indignation of his friend. These reflections were at first very

troublesome, and returned as fast as I drove them out. I therefore changed my plan, and suffered them to take full possession of him without resistance, so that he was soon in perfect security, and thought himself so well fortified that absence was unnecessary. He therefore released himself from the irksome determination, and saw the lady again. After a week passed in her society, being seized with a sudden terror he made this second resolution, which, as you see, continued for two days. He then began to fear that this violent forbearance would prove intolerable, and concluded that his best policy would be to see the lady sometimes, though seldom, and thus reclaim himself from her by degrees. Still he had vigour left for a third banishment, and this time you may see that he remained firm for six hours, after which he judiciously acquiesced in what he could not prevent.

RECAB.

But I do not quite understand all this. You speak of a man endeavouring to leave his friend's house, and not succeeding. If he wished to go, what prevented him? Had he not the use of his limbs?

BELPHEGOR.

Yes, but he could not persuade them to carry him away.

RECAB.

That I cannot comprehend; if I wish to fly, my wings never refuse to flap, and if I would walk I am not obliged to use any oratory with my feet. You tell me that a man sometimes sits still against his own consent, and cannot prevail upon his own limbs to convey him where he would go.

BELPHEGOR.

Yes, there is this singularity in human nature, that a man holds a very precarious power over himself, and is often inexorable to his own reasoning. There are a few peremptory men, who keep themselves in absolute subjection; but the generality maintain an uncertain dominion,

and many have very little authority with themselves; so that most men are all their lives doing one thing and trying to do another. Some have recourse to every sort of artifice and enticement in procuring from themselves what they wish to be done, and it is remarkable that a man is very easily deceived by a plot of his own devising. There is nothing that mortifies him more than to be deceived by another man, but he submits to be cheated by himself without a murmur. He is sharp-sighted and suspicious against all others, but towards himself is wonderfully credulous, notwithstanding the experience that he has had of his own arts. But you will understand this better when you have seen living men.

RECAB.

I hope so, for I now find it very abstruse. Here, I see, is a most resolute paving stone, for the intention it declares is, "To abandon all my vices next year."

BELPHEGOR.

There are just thirty of these stones. The man began to resolve at forty years of age, and entered into an annual agreement with himself till seventy, when he died.

RECAB.

What are those heaps that I see near the gates?

BELPHEGOR.

They are heaps of virtuous intentions, ready to be used upon any part of the pavement that wants repair. I have found several places, where the inscriptions are worn out, and must order those spots to be mended. As soon as the stones become illegible they are always removed, being then incapable of causing remorse.

RECAB.

Why are they opening the gates?

BELPHEGOR.

To receive some men, who have lately died, and been sent here from the earth. You may observe that each of them carries a bag. We will go and see what addition they have brought to our materials for paving. I remember these men, having known them in my last visit to the earth. The first was a miser; his bag is quite full, but I think there are more vices than good intentions in it. Empty his bag. Why, it has not yielded one paving stone; the unprofitable wretch has never even intended to do good. Let us see what his faults are. He has seen his relations distressed without relief, has cheated his friends, been cruel to his children, with a great deal more; and all this without so much virtue as amounts to a paving stone. Shut up his bag again. The next was a convivial spendthrift; what a shower of virtuous projects is coming out of his bag! He has as many good intentions as vicious actions, and will pave a considerable district. He would have been an excellent man if he could. The third was a selfish tyrannical wretch; his bag will afford us nothing; yes, there is one piece of pavement, which is more than I expected from him. What can it be? "An intention of forgiving a distressed cottager his rent." This, I suppose, was his only approach to virtue, and he would not break the uniformity of his life by accomplishing the design. I must leave you now, for I have other business; but I shall soon be ready for my journey to the world where these creatures are alive, and I will ask for permission to take you as my companion. If you become a skilful tempter, you will have frequent employment amongst men, and will find their world far more agreeable than this. I therefore advise you to study the art with diligence, and I will teach you all I know in it. Before I am ready to set out you cannot employ your time better than in conversing with the spectres here, from whom you may learn something of the world they came from.

RECAB.

I will follow your advice, and pray do not fail to obtain me permission to attend you.

# THE TWO EVIL SPIRITS.

**DIALOGUE II.**

---

BELPHEGOR.

Well, Recab, are you ready to set out?

RECAB.

Have you obtained permission for me?

BELPHEGOR.

Yes; I represented you as an ingenious spirit, and likely by practice to become an accomplished tempter. You must endeavour to justify my praises, or I shall be disgraced.

RECAB.

I will certainly apply myself industriously to the employment, for fear I should be sent back into the mines. I have been conversing with the dead, as you advised me, but have not obtained from them any clear insight into the nature of man. I have learned that human life is miserable, and that no man can leave without bitter regret the world in which he has been so wretched. I have also discovered that men are the authors of their own unhappiness; that they are miserable, not by necessity but choice. The first desire of man is to be happy; the power of

being happy is given to him, and he prefers the being miserable. The mines may, perhaps, have impaired my faculties, but these things appear to me to be very difficult studies.

BELPHEGOR.

Men are full of contradictions, certainly, but still they may be understood. Come, let us set out; I have an order for the gate to be opened to us.

RECAB.

What have you in that bag?

BELPHEGOR.

A new disease, as a present for mankind. You will see me distribute it. I seldom go to the earth without some largess. But come, the gate is opened; we must stand upon the very brink, and then spring out into the abyss.

RECAB.

How dark it is! How shall we find our way?

BELPHEGOR.

I know the road very well; you have only to keep close behind me. Now spring;—well done! flap your wings boldly, and shoot straight upwards.

RECAB.

But which is upwards? I can find neither upwards nor downwards in this black abyss; it is all alike.

BELPHEGOR.

Keep close to me.

RECAB.

But how am I to see you?

BELPHEGOR.

You must follow me by the sound of my wings.

RECAB.

Belphegor! Belphegor!

BELPHEGOR.

What is the matter with you?

RECAB.

I had lost you; pray do not go so fast. I never before flew with so much labour and difficulty.

BELPHEGOR.

We are still within the attraction of hell, which drags us back. We shall soon be beyond its influence, and then you will fly without fatigue. Well, do not you fly with more ease now?

RECAB.

Yes; but I am tired of being in the dark.

BELPHEGOR.

You must learn perseverance if you would be a tempter. But do not you see a glimmering of light before us?

RECAB.

I believe I do now.

BELPHEGOR.

And now look, there is a star.

RECAB.

What is a star? There are no stars in our mines, and therefore I know not what they are.

BELPHEGOR.

You will see what they are when we arrive amongst them. We are directing our course to the star that you see.

RECAB.

I see hundreds of stars now.

BELPHEGOR.

Yes; and that which you saw first is something more than a star.

RECAB.

What a beautiful globe of light it is become.

BELPHEGOR.

Several worlds revolve round it at different distances, and to one of them we are going.

RECAB.

Take care, Belphegor; do you see what is coming? A great world is rushing towards us.

BELPHEGOR.

Do not fear; it will do us no harm. That is the planet the most distant from this sun. It is accompanied by six smaller globes, which glide very prettily round the large one.

RECAB.

Very prettily, perhaps, but I should like to be out of their way.

BELPHEGOR.

Fly straight on, and trust to my guidance.

RECAB.

Here comes another strange world, with a hoop round it, and seven little globes.

BELPHEGOR.

That is the second planet from the extremity; and now at a distance you see a third, with four attendants. But there is our globe; we shall soon reach it.

RECAB.

There are two together.

BELPHEGOR.

Yes; it is the larger that we are to visit.

RECAB.

It grows to a great size as we come near; but surely we shall be dashed against it.

BELPHEGOR.

Fly on without fear. There, you find we have reached the ground without any injury. You may sit down to rest yourself for a few minutes.

RECAB.

What a cool delightful world!

BELPHEGOR.

We must fly on a little farther yet. This is India; and England is the country we are to visit.

RECAB.

Are your proceedings limited to a particular spot?

BELPHEGOR.

It is best that every tempter should confine himself to one country, that he may know the particular character of the people, and so tempt them to advantage. I have chosen to light in India first, having a little business to transact here.

RECAB.

Are you opening your bag to let out the blessing that you told me of?

BELPHEGOR.

Yes; you see this little blue ball: it is a new disease of my own invention, which will become very famous, and acquire the name of Cholera Morbus. This little ball will surprise men in the midst of their sins, and send them down to us in thousands. I have chosen this country to let my disease loose in, because the climate here is most favourable to its first prosperity. I have placed it on the ground, and you see that, having felt the open air, it is beginning to turn into a blue vapour. The whole ball has now disappeared, and the vapour crawls slowly along before the wind. Let us follow our assassin, and see its first success: it is going straight towards that village. There is a strong healthy man;—see! he is the first victim; the vapour has coiled itself round him like a serpent.

RECAB.

He has fallen down.

BELPHEGOR.

And you may perceive what pain he suffers.

RECAB.

Two more have fallen.

BELPHEGOR.

And the blue cloud continues to spread. My medicine was well mixed; that vapour needs no farther orders; we may therefore continue our flight. This disease will give rise to innumerable conjectures among men, and many ingenious opinions will be formed concerning its origin. I think human science cannot discover that it was let out of my bag.

RECAB.

Have you bestowed many such presents upon the world?

BELPHEGOR.

Yes; long ago, I brought here a vigorous disease, which obtained the name of "the plague." After having put millions to death, it is still as lively as at first. But diseases are not the only blessings distributed from this bag; sometimes it lets loose a delusion. Not long after the creation of this world I mixed a delusion with uncommon skill, and brought it from below in my bag. It is called "religious zeal," and has been more fatal than the plague. As soon as I perceived its success, I combined its most important ingredients with a few more drugs, and so formed another excellent delusion, called "party spirit." There is hardly a country on the earth which has not been visited with both. But come, if your wings have had rest enough we will mount again.

RECAB.

I am ready.

BELPHEGOR.

We will rise only to a moderate height, that you may see the earth and its inhabitants. You will be pleased with the sight, now that you are no longer afraid of the world's rolling against you.

RECAB.

How beautiful it is! I perceive that men have the same figure here as when they come down to us, only they now look more healthy and cheerful. But pray what quarter of the globe are we now flying over? for I have learned from the dead that the earth is divided into four parts.

BELPHEGOR.

This is Asia below us.

RECAB.

Then there are two great cities here, which I have a curiosity to see, Nineveh and Babylon; for I heard Sardanapalus and Nebuchadnezzar conversing about them, and each contending for the superior splendour of his own city.

BELPHEGOR.

You are not much conversant with Eastern history. You are come up some thousands of years too late to see the places you mention; not a trace of them remains. But do you see that man sitting in the desert and drawing, with his servants asleep, and his camels resting by him. That is an English traveller; and he is now taking a sketch of Babylon.

RECAB.

But how can he draw a town that is not there? He must be a great artist. I can see nothing but desert where he is looking.

BELPHEGOR.

He sits at least 200 miles from the place where that city really stood; but having found a few stones, he is drawing them as Babylon, and is determined that no man shall dissuade him from having really seen that famous city. When he returns home, he will make a great book containing this picture, and many others equally authentic; and his countrymen will delight themselves with looking at the true Babylon. He might as well confirm the validity of his work by a portrait of Belshazzar. However, those stones will represent Babylon as well as if they were true fragments of the great wall. Look there! far away where I point; there is a famous city.

RECAB.

But can I see it? or is it in the same condition as Babylon?

BELPHEGOR.

It is really to be seen; that is Constantinople.

RECAB.

What! the city of the murderer, Constantine, whom we have below?

BELPHEGOR.

Yes; the emperor attended by so many bishops, who are always wondering why they are not in heaven.

RECAB.

Is this the sea that quivers in the sun below us? I have heard that this world is divided into sea and land.

BELPHEGOR.

Yes; to the left you may see a river flowing into it with several mouths: there is Egypt, the country of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies, with some of whom, perhaps, you may be acquainted. On the sea you may perceive several ships full of men. Most of those now under us are from England. The people of that country are perpetually wandering round the globe. You may see two Englishmen in the middle of Africa—those two white men surrounded by blacks. They are English travellers, who, having every comfort at home, choose to roam through the deserts of Africa, in the greatest misery.

RECAB.

I have heard much below of the wretchedness of human life; but, as if there were a want of suffering, men seem to follow pain with the greatest industry, and then think themselves cruelly treated because they are allowed to find it; they choose to wander through the deserts and then complain that they are not comfortable and at home.

BELPHEGOR.

A great part of mankind take the same pains to be miserable that these travellers do.

RECAB.

But are they also looking for Babylon in the sand?

BELPHEGOR.

No; though a desert of Africa would be as good a Babylon as a desert of Asia. These travellers have a different purpose. There is an African river of which the English know the source, but they have not discovered where it runs into the sea; and I should tell you, that the whole people of England are in great trouble when they know the beginning of a river, and not the end. These two resolute men, therefore, are exposing themselves to the greatest dangers and hardships, that both ends of the

stream may be known; and if they can pursue it to the place where it runs into the sea, and actually detect it in the fact, they will return to tell their countrymen, who will be overjoyed by the intelligence. But now we must turn our course to the right, for I have deviated from the true direction to give you a survey of the earth. Europe is now beneath us.

RECAB.

I see a great crowd of men running about, and a thick smoke rising from them.

BELPHEGOR.

That is a battle, in which crowds of men meet together to kill others and be killed themselves. Probably many thousands will go down to us from this encounter.

RECAB.

And how can they be compelled to destroy each other so plentifully?

BELPHEGOR.

There is no compulsion: all these men might have remained at home, and preserved their lives.

RECAB.

Why have we taken this long flight to destroy the happiness of mankind? they seem so determined to be miserable, that I think our arts are not wanted.

BELPHEGOR.

When you know men better, you will find occasions to exercise your ingenuity upon them. There are many, indeed, who eagerly ruin themselves without our assistance; others wait for a hint from us; but there are some so obdurate, that all our skill is required to circumvent

them. But we have reached England, and the great city now beneath us is London. We will soar round a little that you may have a view of it. The streets are full of our victims.

RECAB.

For what purpose do those crowds of people continually hasten backwards and forwards?

BELPHEGOR.

Each of them has a separate design in view; many are transacting their own business and ours at the same time. Money is the chief pursuit of all those in the part of the town now under us.

RECAB.

I have heard of money in my conversations with the dead; pray show it to me, for I know not what it is.

BELPHEGOR.

In many places you may see one man giving to another a small shining thing; that is money.

RECAB.

Can that be the famous thing that I have heard of? I have been told that money is one of the most powerful beings in the universe, and as artful as Satan himself; that its eloquence is irresistible; that it is always in confederacy with us, and the most powerful ally we have; that it commits innumerable crimes, and subverts both the integrity of men and the modesty of women.

BELPHEGOR.

You have heard no more praises than it deserves. That shining metal can do all that you say, and a great deal more; you will soon be acquainted with its artifices. But we will now fly to another part of the town, and

descend to find some person upon whom you may practise your first lesson in temptation.

RECAB.

Surely those who see us will know that we are evil spirits, and will guard themselves against our designs. How shall we persuade them that we are not what we appear?

BELPHEGOR.

What! do you suppose that we are to show ourselves, black and sooty as we are, to the mortal whom we would tempt, and assure him, that although appearances are against us, we are not real devils, but men like himself; and that, although we may seemingly have horns and wings, we are, in truth, shaped like other mortals? This, I think, would not be very plausible; but you do not know that no human being can either see us or hear us speak.

RECAB.

How, then, can we have any communication with men?

BELPHEGOR.

That I will soon show you. Let us alight in this street; and now, in this house, there is a lady who will serve to teach you the rudiments of temptation.

RECAB.

How do you know her present circumstances? They may be changed since your last visit to the earth.

BELPHEGOR.

It is not from my last visit that I know her. By experience we acquire the means of discerning the present circumstances and undertakings of any mortal whom we approach. I will teach you the art when you are

qualified for it. By constant exercise and hardship since the fall, we have discovered in ourselves many faculties that we were ignorant of before.

RECAB.

I do not find that by my labours in the mines I have discovered any new faculties in myself.

BELPHEGOR.

I suppose not. This is the house, and we may pass through the wall into it; for the walls here are not so intractable as that which surrounds our dominions below. See! there sits the lady, quite idle, and with a pensive countenance. Many mortals when they are alone are always in bad society; solitude has probably prepared this lady to receive us. But a spirit has no influence over the outside of a human being; all our artifices are practised within; therefore walk into this woman, and try what you can do.

RECAB.

How is it possible that a human being should contain a devil? We are considerably larger than men, even without our horns and wings.

BELPHEGOR.

I have not yet told you, that the spirits sent to tempt mankind are endued with the power of varying their size; you have received this faculty without knowing it. Do as you see me do.

RECAB.

I see you beginning to contract yourself, and shrink all over. You are a mere dwarf already, and still continuing to decrease; you have now dwindled to the size of an insect, yet I can distinguish the same shape and face as before. I must tell you that your diminutive person looks very ridiculous.

BELPHEGOR.

Now follow my example, and contract yourself as I have done.

RECAB.

It is useless to bid me be little, unless you teach me how to effect this abridgement.

BELPHEGOR.

It is done by a particular effort of contraction. Only endeavour to be small, and you will find yourself becoming less.

RECAB.

I will try, then.

BELPHEGOR.

Where are you going? You have shot up to the height of a hundred feet through the roof of the house. You gave yourself a twist just contrary to what was required. I do not think, indeed, that this woman will contain you, now that you are let out to that size. But how long do you mean to stand projecting through the roof?

RECAB.

I wish you would bring me down again, for I do not like my situation at all.

BELPHEGOR.

Make another effort. Well done; you have descended to your ordinary stature at once. Try again: that is right—you are a foot shorter. You have acquired the true art of contraction. Now you are dwindling very prosperously, and at last are as diminutive and ridiculous as myself.

After a little practice, you will draw yourself in and shoot yourself out at pleasure. But we have not yet completed our reduction; contract yourself till I desire you to stop. There; you are now small enough.

RECAB.

I am glad of it, for I was in some fear lest I should vanish altogether.

BELPHEGOR.

I have now reduced myself to an equality with you, and we will walk into the lady together.

RECAB.

How strangely her appearance is altered! She is as large as I was when I started up through the roof, and is covered with great holes.

BELPHEGOR.

The alteration is only in your sight; by the diminution of your organs objects appear to you greatly magnified. The holes that you talk of are only the pores in the lady's skin, and the change of our bulk has qualified us to creep through them; so that you are no longer startled by being desired to walk into the lady. Though she appeared quite solid before we changed our size, we shall find her porous all through. We must fly up, enter at the forehead, and penetrate to the brain: follow me. Creep in at that pore, and now fold your wings, and walk close behind me: the road is very intricate.

RECAB.

Intricate, indeed! without you I should certainly have lost myself, and wandered about this woman's head for ever. You seem to know every turn.

BELPHEGOR.

When you have travelled through as many human brains as I have, you will walk with equal certainty.

RECAB.

Stop, Belphegor!

BELPHEGOR.

What is the matter?

RECAB.

Something holds me by the horns, and I cannot move.

BELPHEGOR.

You have entangled your horns in a nerve; do not struggle, and I will release you. There, now, take care to conduct your horns better.

RECAB.

What noise is it that I hear?

BELPHEGOR.

The beating of the heart, by which human life is supported. Day after day, and year after year that organ acts with the same fidelity. We have now reached the place where our temptations are performed. You see this mirror; it reflects every thought that passes through the woman's mind, whatever she imagines or considers is instantly represented in it. In the brain of every human being there is a similar mirror. This picture of the mind can never be discovered by men of science, though they are very ingenious in their researches, since it is far too small to be found by their best glasses. It is composed of an infinite multitude of nerves, interwoven together so as to make a polished surface. If you look behind

this mirror, you will see branches of nerves proceeding from the back, the great number of delicate filaments over the mirror being united behind in a few branches.

Now, I must acquaint you with the history of this lady. She had contracted a violent passion for a young man, who had an equal love for her, but on account of his poverty they could not be married. In despair, therefore, she has been induced to accept of another man, and they are soon to be united.

She is now, therefore, endeavouring not to love her former favourite, and instead of him to dote on the person who is to be her husband. This morning she has positively forbidden herself to think once of the dangerous man during the day. We shall see how she will succeed in keeping him out of the mirror. Now, let us watch it.

RECAB.

I see the figure of a man in it now; has her resolution failed already?

BELPHEGOR.

No; that is the future husband: she is considering his figure, manner, and conversation; endeavouring to reconcile herself to him, and interpreting him as favourably as she can. She does not succeed very well in her praises; that is a most ill-shaped figure, and in reality he is not ugly. She is very unjust in laying such a nose to his charge. Then she equally misrepresents his manner: see how awkwardly that shadow conducts his limbs. These are all mere aspersions.

RECAB.

These thoughts proceed without any suggestion from us: if the duty of a tempter is only to look into this mirror, I can perform it as skilfully as you.

BELPHEGOR.

Something more is required, which I will now explain to you. This feather which I pull from my wing is the instrument of temptation. The surface of the mirror is endued with a most acute sensibility, so that a dexterous touch of this feather will cause such an emotion over it, that all the delightful and forbidden recollections of the mind are not to be resisted. There are some feathers in the wing of a devil which have a remarkable softness and allurement, exactly suited to the perceptions of the mirror: I can teach you to select the tempting quills. By this feather I can revive guilty thoughts, which had for years been suppressed, and when persons have established an absolute command over themselves, I subvert their authority at a single touch. Now see how I will alter the scene in this mirror; observe how the surface trembles as I draw the feather gently across it.

RECAB.

The figure of the intended husband has vanished at the first touch.

BELPHEGOR.

I try a second touch;—what a sigh there was! Now what do you see?

RECAB.

The mirror is occupied by another man much handsomer than the first.

BELPHEGOR.

That is the real lover, who has been so positively interdicted; but he owes a great part of his beauty to the lady, and is far handsomer in this mirror than elsewhere. Let us see what he will do, and what treatment he will receive. He stands with his eyes fixed in despair, and makes no progress; I must assist him. For you are to understand by his melancholy looks, that the lady is thinking of his sorrow at her marriage, and supposing it impossible that his wishes should be gratified. There is a very delicate

touch of the feather, and in consequence you see that a shady walk has sprung up in the mirror. A shady walk has been instrumental in many an intrigue. If you watch you will see that these trees have a secret to keep.

RECAB.

The figure of the lady herself has appeared in the walk.

BELPHEGOR.

And her admirer advances from the farther end to meet her. They are walking together very peaceably. Let us see how long this indiscretion will continue. Not long, with a violent effort the whole scene has vanished.

RECAB.

What is to come next?

BELPHEGOR.

The lady herself appears with a child in her arms; she is now endeavouring to banish all unlawful thoughts by thinking of the children that she is to have. I will take that child from her by one touch of my feather.

RECAB.

No; the child remains in defiance of your feather.

BELPHEGOR.

I know what has weakened my feather; I will soon reinforce it. You may remark that one of the nerves proceeding from the back of the mirror trembles violently; we call that the nerve of conscience; and whilst its vibration continues no vicious picture can appear in the mirror, for the filaments from that nerve are spread over all the surface and agitate the whole together. Sometimes that nerve is troublesome, but I think in this case I can easily pacify it. I have only to pull another feather from my

wing, and press it lightly against the trembling nerve, which you see instantly quiets it, and now that the conscience no longer interferes, I again touch the child with my tempting feather; immediately it fades away, and in its place comes a letter, which the lady is reading with great eagerness. I think we have made some advances towards the completing of this affair.

RECAB.

Perhaps so: but our plot has proceeded so abruptly, that I know not what we are doing. I do not understand why this letter is so preferable to the child.

BELPHEGOR.

Then I must interpret. This lady now imagines herself the wife of the man whom she has been condemned to marry, and consenting to receive letters from her first favourite. That is the dream which my feather has suggested. Having therefore given her these excellent thoughts to be married with, we will leave her. Now that the sensibility of her mirror is provoked, she will never be able to keep these pictures out of it. After she has been married we will return into her, and try to accomplish in reality what we have succeeded in making her imagine. The best plan of conducting such a scheme is that two spirits should act in concert, and one of them instigate the man, while the other prompts the female. You therefore shall be my colleague: before this lady is ready for us you will have acquired some dexterity. We will now find our way out again: follow me, and guide your horns carefully through the nerves.

Being now in the open air we must resume our natural size, for we should fly very slowly with these diminutive wings. Let me see you enlarge yourself: well done; you have succeeded at the first trial. We will now go in search of some person upon whom you may try your feather. For your first attempt I must find you one, who will be tractable, and easily dissuaded from virtue. In this house is a man who will afford just the easy practice that you want. He is a rich old miser, whose want of

generosity has brought his son into great distress, and in a moment of compassion he has been induced to promise him relief. The persuading him to retract this frailty will be an exploit just suited to a beginner. Come into the house. There sits the old man: we must make ourselves little again; that will do; you are become very expert in changing your bulk. Keep close behind me, as we go through his head. Now what do you see in the mirror?

RECAB.

I see a woman weeping bitterly, and three children with her.

BELPHEGOR.

That is the son's wife, who has made the old man intend to be bountiful. Draw this feather from your wing: one gentle touch of it will recall the mirror to its natural passion, a love of money. Admirably done! A heap of money has instantly taken the place of the daughter-in-law and her children. You have revoked the intended munificence.

RECAB.

I have converted the old man's charity into a paving stone.

BELPHEGOR.

Yes; and I think there is no danger of his relapsing into kindness; we will therefore leave him, and find one who will require a little more art. Now recover your true size.

RECAB.

This temptation seems to be performed without any great skill.

BELPHEGOR.

You must not expect to find every mortal as easy to reason with as this old man. Many mirrors must be solicited by a delicate and artful touch, which cannot be acquired without study. The effect of the feather is to

bring into the mind whatever thoughts are the most alluring, and therefore the touch must be regulated by the disposition. Some mirrors are best provoked by a quick abrupt touch, others by a slow protracted one; some must be urged by a hard blow, and others persuaded by a hint that is only just felt. This knowledge is acquired by a study of human nature.

RECAB.

It appears that we can do no more than recall the corrupt thoughts which have been in the mind before; it is not in our power to suggest any thing new.

BELPHEGOR.

Yes it is; but I thought it best to explain our art by degrees. The feather merely drawn over the surface of the mirror does nothing more than revive the vicious thoughts which have been there before. This is the most simple and the easiest way of tempting. To inspire a new wish you must draw upon the mirror with the point of your quill a picture of the object that you would cause to be desired. Thus if you wish to involve a man in an unlawful passion for a particular woman, you delineate her upon his mirror, the nerves of which continue to vibrate through all the lines that have been traced by your quill, thus making him meditate on the woman's figure; and no man can avoid a vehement desire for any object which is thus depicted on his mirror by the quill of a devil. Before you can practise this way of tempting you must learn to draw, and make yourself capable of executing a perfect resemblance. But follow me, and I will soon find some person upon whom I can show you a specimen of this art.

# THE
# JUDGMENT OF MAHOMET.

To the bottom of my grave I heard the disturbing trumpet, and then the voice of the Prophet commanding that the bodies of the dead should rise, the souls be restored to them, and that all mankind should appear in the Valley of Judgment. I started out of death, and stood on the surface of the earth. Very great was the misery of being disquieted, and I should have been willing to forfeit my hopes of paradise for permission to lie still. I found myself standing in the burying ground where I had been laid at my death, and saw the graves opening all round me, and flinging out their dead, old and young.

Every one at rising found by the side of his grave two sacks belonging to him, in one of which were contained the good actions of his life, and in the other the faults. These two sacks were to be carried by the owner to the Valley of Judgment: they were closely sealed up, and he had not the power of opening them till he should come to his trial, when the virtues were to be weighed against the crimes in the scales of the Prophet, and as either prevailed over the other he was to be consigned to happiness or misery. At the first sight of my own two sacks I was struck with consternation to behold a very large one inscribed "Vices," and evidently quite full, while that entitled "Virtues" was dangerously small. In my own eyes I had always been a good man, and now on hastily endeavouring to remember my faults I could scarcely believe that I had committed so large a bag of them. On the other hand, when I surveyed my little sack of

merits, it was equally inconceivable to me that all the good I had done could be packed up in so small a compass, and I called to mind several laudable actions, each of which appeared to me of itself large enough to fill it. So bulky were my faults that it seemed impossible for me to reach the Valley of Judgment under such a burden, and I doubted whether I had strength enough to lift them from the ground. However, I grasped the sack, and made a great effort, which I found was not required; for notwithstanding the size of my load it proved to be extremely light, and I threw it over my shoulder with perfect ease. I rejoiced to discover that my errors were great in appearance only, and snatching up my virtues in my left hand I set out on my journey.

Having gone some distance I saw a crowd of people who had stopped to rest themselves, and placed their sacks on the ground; and although I was not weary, I joined them for the sake of their society. I first addressed myself to a man who stood by a very large bag of crimes, from which he had just relieved his shoulder, and I could not forbear expressing to him my surprise that he should have been able to carry it. He assured me that large as his burden was, it contained only such frailties as sat very lightly upon him. I took hold of his bag to try its real guilt, but with my utmost efforts was unable to stir it from the ground. He laughed at my feebleness, and taking it in one hand whirled it round his head without the least difficulty, astonishing me by such an exhibition of strength. He then requested permission to try the weight of my faults, which I told him he would hardly feel, but to my surprise he was as unable to raise them as I had been to lift his. I could not imagine why we should differ so much concerning the weight of each other's sack, till I observed the same mutual experiment made by several among the crowd with the same result; every person finding the sack of vices owned by another intolerably heavy, while his own, however large, had an alacrity in being carried that prevented his being the least incommoded by it. All round me I saw men toiling in vain to lift their neighbours' burdens, which, when raised by the owner, sprang upon his shoulders without an effort; and it was remarkable that however small a bag of sins

might be, any person who made trial of it, except the proprietor, was sure to find it grievously heavy, and to rejoice that he was free from such a burden.

No one in all the company being exempt from this propensity to connive at the weight of his own sack and magnify that of his neighbours, it seemed impossible to form a true judgment of any before we should see them in the scales of the Prophet, which were not likely to be biassed in the same manner. In the mean time, when I saw the most bulky loads passing themselves on the owners for mere trifles, I began to fear that my own might have equally misrepresented itself to me, since every other person in palliating his bag seemed as confident of its real innocence as myself. I took it up again and again, threw it upon my back, and whirled it round, unable quite to satisfy myself whether it were intrinsically a light bag or not; but it was lifted with such ease, and lay on my shoulder so plausibly, that I at length came to the conclusion that every other man present had certainly suffered his bag to deceive him, and that I alone had rightly interpreted mine.

An old woman, loaded with a very large sack of faults, complained to me that her merits had been forgotten. She told me that she had found by the side of her grave this great bag, in which every failing of her life must have been accumulated, but her sack of good actions had not been sent to her. I asked her whether she was quite sure that she had performed any such actions, to which she answered with some indignation that they were innumerable, and that her prayers alone would have made a considerable burden. I afterwards heard her repeating to all who approached the injustice that had been done her by the suppression of her bag.

Though all those who were at first assembled in this place bore their own sacks without trouble, yet this was not universally the case; and we were afterwards joined by many who seemed miserably fatigued, and eagerly threw down their loads for the sake of a short respite. They seemed to be variously affected towards what they carried, according to the cowardice

or valour of their consciences, more than the real weight of the burden. Some shrunk with horror, and appeared to be under dreadful persecution from bags of no great bulk.

After I had left this crowd, and was pursuing my journey, I saw a man who had placed his bag of sins on the ground, and stood gazing at it, and holding a knife in his hand. I asked him with what design he stood looking at his vices so steadily, and what assistance the knife was likely to afford him in carrying them. He told me that he was loaded with the most serious charges against himself, and should certainly be condemned on the testimony of his bag, unless he could find some expedient for suppressing a part of its evidence. The seal, he said, could not be broken without detection, and he had therefore intended to open a few stitches, that he might release some of his worst sins, and afterwards heal the wound as dexterously as he could; but, on examination, he had found the sack to be made without a seam, for fear, as he supposed, lest any little fault should have trickled through some flaw in the stitches; and he could not forbear murmuring against the severity with which his vices had been enclosed in so inexorable a bag. In this difficulty, the only plan that remained for setting his errors free was to cut a hole with the knife which he held in his hand. I advised him to abstain from all such violence, asking with what confidence he could present a bag with a hole in it at the judgment, and whether he thought it probable that the Prophet would connive at the aperture. To this he answered, that he should repair his bag, and not be so incautious as to present it with a declared hole. He intended to break in at the bottom, and when he came to judgment, should place it close to the Prophet, quite upright, and standing on its conscious end; the Prophet, it might be expected, would break the seal and take out the sins, without being so censorious as to turn it up, and call the lower end in question. I endeavoured to dissuade the unfortunate man from this desperate attempt; but he persisted, that having the choice of two dangers, he

resorted to this deception as the least of them; for he should certainly be condemned on the information of his bag, unless he could find some means of imposing silence upon it.

He therefore turned up the bottom of his sack, being resolved upon violence, and, after a little hesitation, made a great effort to plunge his knife in; but to his astonishment the knife, though a sharp one, failed to inflict any wound. He repeated the stroke, and still the bag remained unhurt, being quite impenetrable, and not capable of letting go a single vice that had been entrusted to it. He attempted an inroad in several different parts, but being every where repulsed, threw away the knife, and resuming his inviolable bag proceeded under it in a miserable state of mind.

I found that my approach to the Valley of Judgment had an extraordinary effect upon my bag of vices, making it become gradually heavier; and when I came within sight of the place, my burden seemed to grow more oppressive at every step. In this misfortune I was not singular; a man, whom I overtook, complained of the same aggravation in his sack, which at setting out he had carried with ease, and could now hardly support, though he protested he had done nothing on the road that could entitle it to weigh more. The same thing occurred to others; and I remarked that those sacks, which at first were most cheerfully carried, on a nearer approach to the valley began to harass their bearers the most grievously.

At length I arrived at the fearful spot. The place of Judgment was in a large valley surrounded by hills, the sides of which were covered with mankind, divine power having contrived that the human race should on this occasion be enclosed within a space which would otherwise have contained but a very small part of it. This pale multitude was a dreadful sight. Every one in the crowd was endued with the power of seeing and hearing all that passed at the place of Judgment, as distinctly as if he had stood close to it, so that the crimes and virtues of each who came to trial were made known to the whole world.

In the middle of the valley stood the Prophet, with some attendants, and before him was a pair of scales, in which he was weighing the crimes and merits of men, and pronouncing sentence according to the weight. It was the law of this judgment, that any man who had wronged another should, in retribution, resign to him so much of his own merit as was equivalent to the wrong, the quantity being adjusted by weight; and if he who had committed the injury happened to have no merit, or not enough for atonement, he had to receive from the injured person a portion of his sins, and be judged for them as if he had committed them himself. When a sinner was condemned, the earth opened under his feet, and showed a dreadful passage, into which he fell; the earth closed again, and he was seen no more. Whenever this place opened a sound of distant torment came from it, which was seen to strike terror into the whole multitude. The person consigned to paradise ascended a glorious road, which rose up a hill that concealed its top in clouds. The faces of the whole crowd were turned up to every one who climbed this road, which in the middle of a hill turned round a rock and disappeared. From behind the rock a wonderful light fell upon the road, which, as the new saint entered it, brightened his countenance, and made him another being. As each approached the spot, all mankind gazed from below to see the light receiving him, and then turned back their eyes with horror to the place of Judgment. I observed that as any one who was thus rising arrived at the rock, and looked onward, his eyes were filled with wonder and happiness at what he saw.

The Prophet had a list of mankind, from which he called them before him in turn; and every one, as he heard his name pronounced, issued from the crowd and appeared at the scales. The weighing was conducted by Mahomet and the person tried; the prophet placing the vices in one scale, and the criminal consigning his own virtues to the other. To entitle a person to paradise, it was required that the virtues should exceed the vices in weight by a certain number of pounds.

I saw a man who had passed his life in vice and pleasure approach the scales, and with a trembling hand break the seal of a large bag of sins, at looking into which he shuddered with horror, and seemed hardly able to put in his hand. Being, however, compelled to an exposure, he drew forth his debaucheries, one after another, to a melancholy number, and placed them in rows before the Prophet. This bag having made its confession, he turned to that containing his merits, which was in appearance tolerably stored; and as he produced them he seemed to be encouraged by the sight, and to hope that they might prevail over his pleasures. These merits, being also laid out in order, made at first sight a very advantageous show; but I soon observed that they consisted entirely of resolutions to be virtuous, without one positive act of virtue amongst them. On comparing the two heaps, I saw that the resolutions of the one were formed against the very vices of the other, drunkenness being opposed by a determination of sobriety, and every other vice encountered by an intention of its adverse excellence. These resolutions had a very specious appearance, and to the eye seemed of more than sufficient weight to prevail against the errors with which they were to contend; besides which, they were far more numerous, there being set against every act of intemperance at least twenty or thirty designs in favour of moderation.

The Prophet, taking up an act of drunkenness, placed it in the accusing scale, which was immediately weighed down by it. The culprit seemed not to be dismayed, but selecting from his heap a very firm intention of sobriety, with some confidence placed it in the scale which had to defend him; but against this excuse the opposite scale remained immovable. He added another similar determination, which proved equally fruitless; and continuing to repeat the same kind of vindication, had at length piled up all his laudable designs without making the slightest impression on the peremptory scale, which was kept down by a single error.

"Didst thou imagine," said Mahomet with a frown, "that these resolutions would have a power in my scales, which they had not in thy own heart?" The earth opened, and another was called into the place of

the criminal.

The person who now came to be tried appeared in a hopeless condition, being provided with a large sack of vices, and no bag of merits. I remembered to have travelled in his company a part of my journey to the Valley of Judgment, when he had informed me that notwithstanding his want of a virtuous bag he had considerable hopes of entering paradise. I asked him on what grounds his claim could be founded; and he answered, that though he must confess he had passed his whole life in vice, still his errors had not proceeded from a dissolute mind, but from the strength of temptation: his heart, he said, had never been corrupted, he had hated vice in the midst of his debaucheries; and from his earliest youth to the day of his death had admired and loved virtue though he had never been quite able to practise it: but being inspired with this passion for what is laudable, he had always considered himself a good man, and could not believe that he should now be condemned for sins which he had committed contrary to his own wish. I thought it useless to flatter his hopes, and told him that I feared an admiration of virtue would hardly atone for an actual vice; for if this kind of inclination were really of the value that he believed, he would certainly have been furnished with a bag full of an admiration of what is laudable. This had not seemed to discourage him, and he now advanced boldly to trial with his single bag, which he emptied of its contents. The Prophet heaped up his vices on the dreadful scale, which sunk without hesitation, and pointing to the other which was mournfully elevated, he asked the criminal whether he had any thing by which to lower it.

"Oh, divine Prophet!" he answered, "I stand before the Almighty justice without the aid of a bag, yet let not my merits be the less effectual because they come not out of a sack. Though I lived in vice I never loved it, but in the midst of my sins I ardently desired to be virtuous." To this the Prophet replied, "Thou shalt have a just retribution; thy wish for virtue shall be rewarded by a wish for heaven; though thou wilt now live in hell thou wilt never love it, but in the midst of thy torments shalt ardently desire to be in paradise."

I saw a man advance to trial with great courage: he first placed his sack of vices on the ground, and then proceeded with some ostentation to break the seal of that which contained his good actions. He drew forth a few insignificant merits, and then, to his dismay, finding the bag empty, complained to the Prophet that his best actions had not been packed up. During his whole life he said he had practised charity with the utmost zeal, and hoped to have found his sack full of the distresses which he had relieved. The Prophet assured him that whatever acts of charity he had performed were certainly there. He turned the mouth of his bag downwards and shook it, but without shaking forth any charity, and he then declared there must certainly be a hole in the bag, by which his charity had escaped; but on examining it, he was not able to find the least blemish. With a look of misery he turned to his sack of faults, and when it was opened, at the top appeared a heap of the very actions that he had been looking for. He recognised his virtues with great joy, declared they had been placed by mistake in the wrong sack, and complained that the preparation of his burdens had been intrusted to some angel who could not distinguish vice from virtue. He was proceeding to grasp the good deeds in order to restore them to the other heap, when the Prophet stopped him, saying that perhaps these actions, which he had construed into charities, were not really such, but he had weights which would instantly prove their real nature. He then tried one of them in the scales, and declared that by the weight it was proved to be, not "charity," but "ostentation," and had therefore, as a vice, been allotted to the right sack. The remainder of these ostentatious acts being placed in the scale, without the addition of any more of the faults which were there, out-weighed the whole stock of merits, and thus was this charitable man condemned by the very actions to which he had trusted for his justification.

I next saw at the scales the female who on the journey had complained to me that she was not provided with a load of merits, although her prayers alone would have filled a very large bag. It now appeared that she had misconstrued her prayers, as the man last tried had misconceived his

charity; for her sack of faults, on being opened, was found to be choked with these very prayers which were to have carried her into paradise. Mahomet placed them in the infallible scale, and by the weight pronounced them to be "hypocrisy."

I was thrown into great alarm by observing how human beings are liable to be imposed upon by their own actions, and began to fear that many of my deeds, which had always passed with me as virtues, might receive a very different name from these uncharitable scales. I looked back upon several acts of charity, the validity of which I had never before called in question, but I was now in doubt which of my bags might contain them.

I saw many such instances: men came to judgment with great complacency, relying on some action which had been very amiable in their own eyes, when this very piece of goodness was detected in the guilty sack. The father of a family was astonished to see among his faults the chastisement of his children, which he had always regarded as paternal affection, but when it was placed in the scales its weight was declared to be that of "anger."

By far the greater number of actions which had been thus misunderstood by their owners were proved to be composed of "vanity." Those which in appearance were acts of patriotism, friendship, religion, or generosity, were found to be made of these same materials, though by the proprietor of them himself they had never been suspected to be counterfeit.

There was one man whose virtuous actions greatly preponderated in the scale, and it seemed as if his happiness was secure, when there issued from the crowd of mankind a number of his contemporaries, who claimed reparation for the injuries they had suffered from him. It seemed that this man, though possessed of very good intentions, had been remarkably choleric, and in his fits of anger had done some violence to each of these persons, who were now clamorous for compensation. It was chiefly his intimate friends, and his servants, who had demands against him: the wrong suffered by each was referred to the scales, and an equivalent given from the merits of the angry man. One by one his

virtues were paid away; and so ungovernable had his temper been, that of the stock of virtues which had been about to carry him triumphantly to heaven not one remained.

The merits of one person whom I saw tried were considerable; but as he had had an unfortunate love of pleasure, his debaucheries proved a little too heavy, and he wanted two pounds of virtue to entitle him to paradise. In this difficulty, he remembered that a neighbour of his had, in a bargain, defrauded him of some acres of land, an injury which had given him so much vexation, that in atonement for it he had no doubt of receiving more than the two pounds of merit which were wanting to make up his qualification for heaven. He asserted his claim, therefore, and his dishonest neighbour being called, the injury was placed in the scales, and found to weigh three pounds. Accordingly, the injured man was authorised to select from the sack of the other any good action, not exceeding three pounds, that he might prefer. The man who had committed the fraud had during his whole life been occupied in the improvement of his fortune, and as he had rigorously abstained from all luxury, his sack was now filled with resistance to pleasure, that being the only virtue it contained; but since it was the very merit in which the plaintiff was most defective, he was delighted to see it in such abundance, and with great joy asserted his claim to three pounds' weight of resistance. First, he chose from the heap an act of self-denial, which looked extremely austere, notwithstanding which it proved almost destitute of weight, and when placed in the scale caused not the least depression of it. He added another effort of abstinence, which failed in the same manner; and he continued to heap up one after another, till the whole cargo of resistance collected together was found to weigh only two ounces. This caused a general surprise, and many suspicions were whispered concerning the veracity of the sacred balance. It began to be believed that Mahomet secretly prompted his own scale, making it magnify the faults of men, and connive at their virtues; and I heard one person complaining, that after he had practised temperance with great difficulty during his whole life, he was now to lose all the merit of it by

the detraction of these scales. He said he had restrained every unruly desire, and now it appeared that all his mortifications were to weigh two ounces. The Prophet perceiving these murmurs, and graciously deigning to vindicate the probity of his scales, weighed one of the pieces of resistance with those weights which discovered the real quality of every thing, and declared it almost entirely composed of "want of inclination."

The two ounces of resistance being made over to the injured person, there still remained two pounds fourteen ounces of injury not paid for; and the wealth of the other being exhausted, he had nothing to give, and was therefore compelled, in order to a composition of the fraud, to accept of its weight in vice. The plaintiff therefore having liberty to choose from his errors any one that he might most wish to discard, selected an act of drunkenness, which he assigned to the old man, with whose grave and prudent demeanour it seemed very inconsistent. He was greatly embarrassed to find himself thus surprised into a debauch, and represented to the Prophet how unjust it was that he should be intoxicated by the wine which another man had drank; but his remonstrances were not listened to, and he was deputed to suffer for the intemperance, while the person guilty of it was allowed to pass into heaven, having made up the weight for eternal happiness.

A young man, whose virtues were found to preponderate in the scale, and who appeared just ready to rise, was stopped by the shrill voice of a woman in the crowd, which sounded as if some fearful demand was going to be made upon his virtues. A woman appeared, and advancing to the scales, alleged that this young man had treacherously deprived her of her virtue,—a loss which she had never ceased to deplore. The accused could not deny the charge, and looked mournfully at the scale containing his merits, expecting it to be grievously lightened by this claim. The woman's virtue was then placed in the scale, where, to the astonishment of all, it was found to weigh only one grain, such having been its real value in the mind of the possessor. The young man being desired to pay to her one grain of virtue could find no merit in his store, which was light enough; and the Prophet, therefore, breaking from his filial piety a

fragment weighing a grain, presented it to the injured woman, who, having trusted entirely for future happiness to the price she expected in exchange for her virtue, was struck with despair at receiving so small a chip.

After observing a number of judgments I concluded that the guilt of every action was decided according to the injury which mankind had sustained by it. Thus the pleasures of a man, by which he had not impaired the happiness of others, were not to be found in his sack of faults: but those enjoyments, which, by example or participation, had involved others in misfortune, were declared by the scale to be crimes; and if even without being imparted to others they had corrupted the mind of the criminal, or occupied his time so as to prevent the good actions he would otherwise have performed, they were weighed against him.

At the bottom of each sack containing vices were found the opportunities of virtue, which the criminal had neglected, and which were weighed against him as actual crimes. Thus there were some, who, by the advantage of their situation in life, had done but little harm, and yet their merits were greatly outweighed by these omissions of goodness. Some produced sacks very well stored with merit, who nevertheless were overwhelmed by the multitude of neglected opportunities. Others who found but few good actions in their sack, yet were favourably judged by the scale, because there were no opportunities against them.

The Prophet perceiving it was generally suspected that the angels who had prepared the sacks of vice and virtue had performed their tasks ignorantly, and omitted many acts of goodness, declared, that every person who was dissatisfied with the stock of merits assigned him, might require any absent action of his life to be produced and weighed.

A Saracen approached the scales with great confidence, relying upon the number of men whom he had put to death for not believing in Mahomet; but, to his dismay, these exploits were all found in the criminal bag, and the earth swallowed him while he remonstrated against the ingratitude

of the Prophet, who condemned him after such services. A Christian also, who had converted men to his own faith by torture, imprisonment, and other arts of persuasion, found all these religious efforts in the wrong bag. By some other judgments it was soon declared upon what grounds religious merit was to be decided: those who had caused the morality of their religion to be received had merit by it; but there was no credit to those who had only propagated their faith from party zeal; and if they had done it violently the oppressions were as heavy in the scale as other injuries.

I observed the trial of a zealot who had been burned for heresy. He had maintained every article of his creed against the flames, and been turned into ashes without recanting a single tenet. Having now observed that good men of all religions were rewarded, he opened his bag of virtue with confidence, and was astonished that his burning could not be found in it. However, supposing it to have been omitted by mistake, he summoned it into the sack through the permission given by the Prophet, and taking it forth, held it ready to atone for any failing that could depress the adverse scale. A man stepped forth, and claimed compensation of him for an injury. The zealot once endeavoured to convert this man, who was of a different faith from himself, and incensed by his not believing with the despatch which he thought reasonable, he had seized him by the hair, and dashed his head against a wall with so much energy, as to make him fall senseless to the ground, upon which the teacher had left him thus effectually silenced. This outrage was placed in the scale, and weighed it down with some force. The zealot, with a triumphant look, placed his martyrdom in the other scale, but without stirring it. He lost all patience when he discovered the invalidity of his burning, and asked what inducement men would now have to become martyrs. The Prophet condescended to answer, that he forgot the world was now at an end; and if it were not, perhaps it would be quite as prosperous without martyrs. He then tried this martyrdom by his infallible weights, and found it interpreted into "party rage."

I remarked the trial of an author celebrated for some works on moral philosophy. A man whom he had defrauded of a legacy came forward to demand a portion of the philosopher's virtue. The fraud was committed to the scale, and hastily drew it down, when the author took from his bag a treatise on justice, which had been much applauded. I believe this book was not in his bag at first, but summoned there by the permission which the Prophet had given, that all who believed any of their virtues omitted might require them to appear. The author, therefore, tearing out a leaf from his treatise, placed it in the scale as an ample equivalent for the legacy. He was surprised that this just and eloquent leaf had no weight against the fraud, upon which he added another torn from a part of the treatise which evinced the most integrity; but this reinforcement was equally useless. He then resigned the whole dissertation to the scale, but it did not move its adversary from the ground, though loaded only with an oversight about a will, while the treatise contained a strict equity in every transaction of life, and amongst other acts of probity a faithful execution of wills. The author again had recourse to his bag, and produced another work, in which he had equally observed the severest rules of duty; but this in conjunction with the essay on justice had no force against the violated will. He continued with the same result to heap one book upon another, for he had been a man of very voluminous morals, and neglected no kind of virtue in his writings. At length he had come to the end of his productions without any atonement, and the great heap of books hung in the air, outweighed by one little error. He proceeded to expostulate against the indignity to his works; and presenting one of the volumes to Mahomet, entreated him to read only a single page, that he might be convinced what injustice was done, when one trifling error was not allowed to be expiated by his continued probity in writing. The Prophet only pointed to the scale resting on the ground, upon which the author said that unless the scale had read his works he could not accept of it as a competent judge of their integrity. The Prophet, without any answer, opened his bag of vices, of which there was an ample collection, and added them to the scale. The author very mournfully searched his bag of merits, which were few and trivial, for he

had been so lavish of virtue in his writings as to have none left for practice. However, he made another appeal on behalf of his works; asked how he could be a malefactor with so many chapters of virtue, and represented the injustice of condemning one who had been a good man in every sentence he had written. He then took up one of his books, and was beginning to read aloud at a passage of very vigorous probity, when the earth opened and he descended reading.

A man approached the scales with a criminal bag of a hopeless size, and a diminutive sack of merits; yet by his confident look he seemed to imagine the little bag qualified to contend with the large one. When the great bag came to its confession it was found exempt from hardly any kind of depravity, and the scale sunk irrevocably under its contents. The criminal, however, opened his small bag without dismay; and having stocked the scale with two or three trifling merits, he drew from the bottom of the bag a death-bed repentance, and placed it in the scale with a look of success, but to his amazement the accumulated vices on the other side were unmoved. He appealed to the Prophet against the decision of the scales, declaring that his repentance had been authentic, and without premeditation, not like the formal remorse of so many, who while they commit a crime design to evade punishment by a fiction at last. He protested that for two days before he died his vices had harassed him with sufficient terror; and his clergyman had exhorted him not to afflict himself any longer, for he had repented quite enough to be forgiven. He said he had done all that a dying man could do, and he did not believe that a more deserving death would be presented at judgment. The Prophet deigned to answer that amendment was the only repentance.

"But," said the man, "I had no time for that."

"You lived fifty-six years," replied Mahomet.

"Yes," said the culprit: "but my repentance did not begin till my last illness."

"And why not?" inquired the Prophet; but before the condemned wretch could answer he was swallowed up.

This last sentence appeared to strike a miserable terror into the crowd; for there were great numbers who had thought that by repenting at last they had amply provided for the judgment, and they now saw their whole stock of merit taken from them. I heard a man near me reproaching his priest for having deceived him about the efficacy of a death-bed sorrow. He said he had never committed a sin of any importance without resolving to cancel it by remorse at last: at his death he had not had time to bestow a separate repentance upon each fault, but he had included his whole life in one comprehensive remorse, and lamented all his errors at once. Accordingly his priest had assured him that with allowance for the hurry of his case he had made a very handsome repentance, and might die securely. He now bitterly upbraided his teacher for not having obtained better information; since he had always understood from him that it was the privilege of a dying man to retract any part of his life that he disapproved of, and that he had only to be sorry for a bad action in order not to have committed it. It seemed that this minister of religion had obtained preferment from the man who now complained, and therefore at that man's death had forgiven all his sins out of gratitude. He now gave little attention to the reproaches of one whom he seemed to think disabled as a patron.

A man who had been a celebrated hermit was next tried. His bag of merits contained little besides the relief of two or three distressed travellers. This scarcity seemed to astonish him; however, it might be imagined that his hermitage would be found equally exempt from faults. But his solitude had secured no such immunity; for the Prophet took from his other sack a number of faults, which instantly dragged the scale to the earth, outweighing the sheltered travellers. The hermit declared that his bag must have acknowledged the faults of some other man by mistake, for he had done nothing in his cell that could possibly weigh so much. By examination, however, he found that these weights were neglected opportunities, good actions which he might have performed,

and had omitted. Still he protested against the validity of these accusations, and declared his hermitage had furnished no such occasions of doing good as were here imputed to him.

"Here," said he, "I am accused of not having aided my brother, who was a bankrupt: I never heard of his ruin, besides which I possessed nothing except a walking staff, which would not have retrieved his affairs had I bestowed it upon him. If I had known of his approaching misfortune, I would have prayed against it. I wish you would call as witnesses some of the angels, who, I suppose, watched over me: they will tell you that I never went farther from my cell than to the neighbouring wood, and that I cannot with any appearance of justice be accused of my brother's being a bankrupt; yet his bankruptcy seems to weigh very heavily against me, as if in my meditations I had undermined his fortune. The bag also imputes to me the neglect of many other good actions, for which I was equally disqualified. It seems as if I ought to have relieved every want and affliction in the world, and all from my hermitage."

"And why were you in a hermitage?" said the Prophet.

"I was there to pray, to fast, to meditate," answered he, "and now I find a bad reward of my exertions."

"Therefore," said the Prophet, "your bag of faults contains the good actions, for which you would have had opportunity had you lived with other men, and practised their duties. However, if you think that your prayers, fasts, and meditations have so much merit, you may put them in the scale, and try their efficacy against these deserted opportunities."

The hermit availed himself of this privilege, and first loaded his scale with a meditation of six hours, which effecting no descent, he seconded it with a prayer of equal patience, and then proceeded to heap up one handful of severities after another, till he had used his whole supply of rigour without the least tendency downwards. He was beginning another remonstrance, when he disappeared.

I stood a long and wearisome time watching these judgments; at last my own name was called, and I approached the Prophet with a miserable reluctance. My faults being placed in the scale descended with such violence that I quite despaired of changing the verdict. I drew forth my little supply of merits, and tried their force in vain: the earth opened under me, I fell, and lay on my back in the midst of flames. With a great effort I started up, and found myself in bed with my curtains on fire, and Sale's Koran by my side, the Preliminary Discourse of which I had been reading by candlelight, and falling asleep had derived from it the dream which I have related.

THE END.

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Transcriber's note

Obvious typographical errors corrected, unusual but consistent or unique spelling left, including unusual hyphenation of words.

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