

# IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

OF

*Literary Men and Statesmen.*

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, ESQ.

*THE FIRST VOLUME.*

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TO

**MAJOR-GENERAL STOPFORD,**

**ADJUTANT-GENERAL IN THE ARMY OF COLUMBIA.**

---

**SIR,**

**THERE** may be friends, I feel it, who have never seen each other. In the moment of losing, and perhaps for many years, one of my dearest relatives, I rejoice both in her marriage with you and in the time of it, which presents me the opportunity of adding to my congratulations the inscription of these dialogues.

There never was a period when public spirit was so feeble in England, or political

abilities so rare. Sordid selfishness and frivolous amusement, I will not say, are become the characteristics of our country, but, what is sufficiently calamitous and disgraceful, place it upon a dead level with others. Rising far above and passing far away from them, you have aided in establishing one of those great republics which sprang into existence at the voice of Bolivar, and enjoy for your exertions in the noblest cause the highest distinction any mortal can enjoy, his esteem and confidence.

You will find in these Conversations a great variety of subjects and of style. I have admitted a few little men, such as emperors and ministers of modern cut, to shew better the just proportions of the great; as a painter would place a beggar under a triumphal arch or a camel against a pyramid. The sentiments most often inculcated are those which in themselves

are best; which, even in times disastrous as our own, produced an Epaminondas, a Pelopidas, and a Phocion; and in these, when genius lies flat and fruitless as the sea-sand, a Washington, a Kosciusko, and a Bolivar.

That government beyond a question is the most excellent, which has always been most esteemed by the best and wisest men, and which has produced them in the greatest number.

Exult in your glorious undertaking, and be assured that the work, and the satisfaction at completing it, will be durable.

Yours faithfully,

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Florence, October, 1822.

## THE PREFACE.

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THE peculiarities of some celebrated authors, both in style and sentiment, have been imitated in these dialogues: but where they existed in times long past, to have retained their language would have been inelegant and injudicious. It was requisite to modify in a slight degree even that of so late a period as the reigns of Elizabeth and of James I; a period the most fertile of all in original and vigorous writers.

In the Conversation between Henry IV and Sir Arnold Savage, I have employed such a phraseology as the reader is in part accustomed to, whether from our earlier annalists or from our great dramatic poet.

This, by early habitude, appears more certainly the language of the Plantagenets, than their own would do, copied faithfully, and is attended with no difficulty or disgust.

The only characters known little to the public, of whom no sufficient account is found in the Conversations themselves, are those of the Author, of Sir Arnold Savage, and of Walter Noble.

Sir Arnold Savage was Speaker of the Commons in the second year, and again in the fifth, of Henry IV : and his manly and dignified speech, addressed to that king, is recorded by Hakewil, by Elsynge, and others.

Walter Noble represented the city of Lichfield. He lived familiarly with the principal men of the age, remonstrated with Cromwel on his usurpation of power, and retired from public life on the punishment of Charles.

The memorial of their virtues in these pages is a legacy I hold in trust under them for the benefit of our descendents.

The reader will not be surprised at finding in these dialogues a great diversity of opinions. He is requested to attribute none of them to the author of the work, as proceeding from his conviction or persuasion, but to consider that they have risen and fallen in different periods and emergencies; and he is invited to turn to the more eminent writers of antiquity, where such are introduced, and to compare their sentiments with those before him. If, after all, he should experience an evil or unpleasant impression, let him throw aside first these volumes, as the lightest; then Cicero, Demosthenes, and every one else whose political notions, so discordant from those now prevalent, are represented in them; and strengthen his mind, and correct both his style and judgement, by a careful

perusal of the speeches which have happily come down to us, from the more enlightened and prudent leaders of our parliament, Mr. Pitt, Lord Castlereagh, and their successors, whose rank and influence have ensured to them the promises of immortality.

What is excellent in one government may not be advisable in another; and what is advisable in that other may not appear so to those who direct its affairs. Hence the ideas of Washington and Franklin are represented as very much at variance with the ideas of those statesmen in France, Britain, Prussia, Russia, who declare themselves much wiser, much more dispassionate, much more disinterested. Hence also the opinions of the ruder Spaniards are extremely unfavorable to a House of Peers, and somewhat irreverent to that of England. Here however it must be protested, that nothing of this irre-



verence should be attributed to the writer ; whose business is to examine the most interesting and important questions, by the introduction of personages in some cases the most zealous and enthusiastic, in others the least prejudiced and preoccupied. This method presents occasionally somewhat like dramatic interest, and, where that is deficient or inadmissible, historical facts, biographical characteristics, critical disquisitions, philological observations, and philosophical truths or problems.

Above all things, the reader is exhorted to observe religiously our laws and customs, and to receive as curiosities, not as directions, the things, whatever they may be, which men educated in other countries and with other feelings, may, in the heat of discussion or in the unskilfulness of argument, oppose to them.

Wherever ground is dug for any purpose, there spring up plants of various

kinds, from that purpose altogether alien ; most of them are thrown away, a few collected : thus I, occupying my mind in enquiries and speculations which may amuse my decline of life, and shew to others the features of the times in which we live and have been living, at one moment write for business, at another for relaxation, turn over many books, lay open many facts, and gather many fancies which I must relinquish on the road. Should health and peace of mind remain to me, and the enjoyment of a country, where, if there is none to assist, at least there is none to molest me, I hope to leave behind me completed the great object of my studies, an orderly and solid work in history, and I cherish the persuasion that Posterity will not confound me with the Coxes and Foxes of the age.

# IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

IN

## THE FIRST VOLUME.

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# CONVERSATION I.

---

RICHARD I

AND THE

ABBOT OF BOXLEY.

RICHARD I  
AND THE  
ABBOT OF BOXLEY.

---

THE abbot of Boxley was on his road to Haguemau in search of Richard, when he perceived a tall pilgrim at a distance, and observed him waving his staff toward some soldiers who would have advanced before him. They drew back.

“ He may know something of Cœur de Lion,” said the abbot, and spurred his horse on. In an instant he threw himself at the pilgrim’s feet, who embraced him affectionately.

ABBOT.

O my king! my king! the champion of our faith at the mercy of a prince unworthy to hold his stirrup! the conqueror of Palestine led forth on foot! a captive, and to those he commanded and protected! Could Saladin see this...

## RICHARD.

The only prince in the universe, who would draw his sword for me against the ruffian of Austria. He alone is worthy to rescue me, who hath proved himself worthy to fight me.

I might have foreseen this result. What sentiment of glory, of magnanimity, of honour, of gratitude, of humanity, ever warmed an Austrian bosom?

Tell me, declare to me, abbot, speak out at once ... is this the worst of my misfortunes? Groans burst from me; they cleave my heart; my own English, I hear, have forsaken me: my brother John is preferred to me... I am lost indeed. What nation has ever witnessed such a succession of brave monarchs, for two hundred years together, as have reigned uninterruptedly in England? Example formed them, danger nurtured them, difficulty instructed them, peace and war, in an equal degree, were the supporters of their throne. If John succeed to me, which he never can by virtue, never shall by force, and I pray to God never may by fortune—what will remain to our country but the bitter recollection of her extinguished glory? I would not be regretted at so high a price. I would be better than the gone, presumptuous as is

the hope; but may the coming be better than I! Abbot, I have given away thrones, but never shall they be torn from me: rather than this, a king of England shall bend before an emperor of Germany\*; but shall bend as an oak before the pass-

\* Opinions have changed upon all things, and greatly upon titles and dignities. Who has not seen a consul appointed to reside in a fishing town? Who has not given a shilling to a marquis, a sixpence to a knight? A Roman senator was beneath the level of an English gentleman; yet not only a Roman senator, but a Roman citizen, held himself superior to foreign kings. Surely it might well be permitted our Richard to assume a rank far above any potentate of his age. If almanacks and German court-calendars are to decide on dignities, the emperors of Morocco, of Austria, and, since last August, of Mexico, should precede the kings of England and France: but learned men have thought otherwise. On this subject I shall transcribe a few sentences from Leonard Aretine.

“ Quid enim mea refert quemadmodum barbari loquantur, quos neque corrigere possum, si velim, neque magnopere velim si possim? De rege tamen et imperatore idem sentio quod tu, et jampridem ridens barbariem istam, hoc ipsum notavi atque redargui. Tres enim gradus majorum dignitatum apud Romanos, de quorum principe loquimur, fuere: rex, dictator, imperator. Ex his suprema omnium potestas rex est; post regem verò secundum tenuit dignitatis locum dictatura; post dictaturam imperium *tertio gradu* consequitur. Hujusce rei probatio est, quod Octaviano imperatori optime se gerenti Senatus Populusque Romanus dignitatem augere, pro imperatore dictatorem facere decrevit, quod ille non recepit, sed flexo genu recusavit, quasi majoris statûs majorisque invidiæ dignitatem existimans, Imperatoris nomen modicum ac populare, si ad Dictatoris fastigium comparetur. Majorem vero esse regiam potestatem quam dictaturam ex eo potest intelligi, quia



ing wind, only to rise up again in all his majesty and strength.

ABBOT.

God grant it! Abandoning a king like Richard, we abandon our fathers and children, our inheritance and name. Far from us be for ever such ignominy! May the day when we become the second people upon earth, Almighty God! be the day of our utter extirpation!

Julius Cæsar, Dictator cum esset, affectavit Regem fieri." Epist ix. lib. vi.

Many acute arguments follow. The dignity of a sovrain does not depend on the title he possesses; for that he may with equal arrogance and indiscretion assume; but on the valour, the power, the wealth, the civilization of those he governs. This is a view of the subject which Aretine has not taken, and which undoubtedly Richard took.

Rank, which pretends to fix the value of every one, is the most arbitrary of all things. A Roman knight, hardly the equal of our secondary gentlemen, would have disdained to be considered as no better or more respectable than a foren king. In our days, even an adventurer to whom a petty prince or his valet has given a pennyworth of ribbon, looks proudly and disdainfully on any one of us who has nothing more in his button-hole than the button.

There are few writers more sensible than Plutarch; and no remark of his appears to me more judicious than the following on Juba; at which however there is not a deputy commissary or under secretary who would not laugh heartily.

" His son, whose name also was Juba, was carried in triumph while yet a child: and truly most happy was his imprisonment; by which, barbarian as he was, he came to be numbered amongst the most learned writers."

RICHARD.

I cease not to be king, who rule over hearts like thine.

ABBOT.

Here are hardly, I reckon, more than three-score men; and, considering the character both of their prince and of their race, I cannot but believe that the scrip across my saddlebow contains a full receipt for the discharge of my sovran. Certain I am that little is left unto him of the prize that he made from the caravan of Egypt.

RICHARD.

The only prizes worthy of Richard were Saladin and Jerusalem. I divided the gold and silver among my soldiers. I have no hesitation in esteeming Saladin not only above all the kings and potentates now living, which of a truth is little, but above all who have ever reigned; such is his wisdom, his courage, his humanity, his courtesy, his fidelity; and I acknowledge, that if I had remained to conquer him, I would have restored to him all his dominions, excepting Palestine. And the crown of Palestine which of the crusaders should wear? which among them could have worn it one year? I would do nothing in vain; no, not even for glory. The Christian princes judged of me from their own worthlessness: Saladin judged of me

from himself. To them he sent pearls and precious stones, to me figs and dates; and I resolved from that moment to contend with him and to love him. Look now towards the Holy Alliance. Philip swore upon the Evangelists to abstain from all aggression in my absence. He invades Normandy and sanctions usurpation. Saladin was defeated and Jerusalem would have fallen; but God will forgive me if I preferred my throne to his sepulchre, my people to his persecutors, and if I chastise a disloyal rather than a loyal enemy.

ABBOT.

I wish my liege could have taken him prisoner, that he might have saved such a soul by infusing into it the true faith under baptism.

RICHARD.

Ay, that indeed were well: but Saladin lives in a country where prophet comes after prophet, and each treads out the last vestige from the sand. I am afraid it would not hold.

ABBOT.

Better as it is then.

RICHARD.

There are many in foren parts, who cannot be brought to comprehend, how a sprinkle of water should prepare a man's eternal happiness, or the curtailment of a cuticle his eternal misery.

## ABBOT.

Alas, my liege, society is froth above and dregs below, and we have much ado to keep the middle of it sweet and sound; much ado to communicate right reason and to preserve right feelings. In voyages you may see too much, and learn too little. The winds and the waves throw about you their mutability and their turbulence. We lose much when we lose sight of home; more than ever schoolboy wept for.

## RICHARD.

I discover, my good abbot, that you have watched and traced me from the beginning of my wanderings. I sailed along the realms of my family: on the right was England, on the left was France: little else could I discover than sterile eminences and extensive shoals. They fled behind me: so pass away generations; so shift, and sink, and die away affections. In the wide ocean I was little of a king: old men guided me, boys instructed me; these taught me the names of my towns and harbours, those showed me the extent of my dominions. One cloud that dissolved in one hour half covered them.

I debark on Sicily. I place my hand upon the throne of Tancred, and fix it. I sail again, and within a day or two behold, as the sun is setting,

the solitary majesty of Crete, mother of a religion, it is said, that lived two thousand years. Onward, and many bright specks bubble up along the blue *Ægean*; islands, every one of which, if the songs and stories of the pilots are true, is the monument of a greater man than I am. I leave them all afar off...and for whom? O abbot, to join creatures of less import than the sea-mews on their cliffs; men praying to be heard, and fearing to be understood, ambitious of another's power in the midst of penitence, avaricious of another's wealth under vows of poverty, and jealous of another's glory in the service of their God. Is this Christianity? and is Saladin to be damned if he despises it?

The king or emperor of Cyprus\* (I forget his title) threw into prison the crew of an English vessel wrecked on his coast; and, not contented with this inhumanity, forbade the princess of Navarre my spouse, and the queen of Sicily who attended her, to take refuge from the tempest in any of his ports. I conquered his island, with the loss, on my part, of a dinner, two men, and a bridle. He was brought before me. My emperor had an aversion to iron in every form. I adorned his imperial feet with a silver chain, and invited him to the festivi-

\* Isaac the usurper of Cyprus styled himself emperor.

ties of my nuptials with Berengere, followed by her coronation as queen of Cyprus. We placed his daughter under the protection of Jane\*, knowing her sweet temper and courtesy, and remembering that a lady of rank rises one step higher by misfortune. She has exchanged the cares of a crown for the gaiety of a court, and I hope that what she lost as princess she will gain as woman. I intend to place her suitably in marriage, and her dowry shall be what my treasury is at the time.

ABBOT.

We have only to consider now what lies before us. Could not my liege have treated with the duke of Austria?

RICHARD.

Yes, had he been more nearly my equal. I punished his neglect of discipline: it became in his power to indulge his revenge. Henry is mercenary in the same degree, but perhaps less perfidious, certainly less irritated and hostile. No potentate can forgive the superiority of England: none can forget that I treated him as a trooper and dependent: none can conceal from himself that the features of my contempt were too broad for any mask in all the rich wardrobe of dissimulation. Henry alone is capable of securing my

\* Queen of Sicily.

return. I remember the fate of Robert; and if I am not presently in London, I may be in Cardiff. He spoke wisely who said, *There is no confidence in princes*; and he will speak not unwisely, who shall say, *There is none for them*.

Those who have abandoned me shall ransom me: I myself will dictate the conditions, and they shall be such as no emperor of Germany can refuse.

Come on with me.

# CONVERSATION II.

---

THE LORD BROOKE

AND

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.



## THE LORD BROOKE.

AND

## SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

---

BROOKE.

I COME again unto the woods and unto the wilds of Penshurst, whither my heart and the friend of my heart have long invited me.

SIDNEY.

Welcome, welcome! And now, Greville, seat yourself under this oak; since, if you had hungered or thirsted from your journey, you would have renewed the alacrity of your old servants in the hall.

BROOKE.

In truth I did so; for no otherwise the good household would have it. The birds met me first, affrightened by the tossing up of caps, and I knew by these harbingers, who were coming. When my palfrey eyed them askance for their clamorousness, and shrank somewhat back, they quarreled with

him almost before they saluted me, and asked him many pert questions. •What a pleasant spot, Sidney, have you chosen here for meditation! a solitude is the audience-chamber of God... Few days, very few in our year, are like this: there is a fresh pleasure in every fresh posture of the limbs, in every turn the eye takes.

Youth, credulous of happiness; throw down  
 Upon this turf thy wallet, stored and swoln  
 With morrow-morns, bird-eggs, and bladders burst,  
 That tires thee with its wagging to and fro:  
 Thou too wouldst breathe more freely for it, Age,  
 Who lackest heart to laugh at life's deceit.

It sometimes requires a stout push, and sometimes a sudden resistance, in the wisest men, not to become for a moment the most foolish. What have I done! I have fairly challenged you, so much my master.

SIDNEY.

You have warmed me: I must cool a little and watch my opportunity. So now, Greville, return you to your invitations, and I will clear the ground for the company: Youth, Age, and whatever comes between, with all their kindred and dependencies. Verily we need few taunts or expostulations; for in the country we have few vices, and consequently few repinings. I take especial care that my young

labourers and farmers shall never be idle, and supply them with bows and arrows, with bowls and nine-pins, for their Sunday-evening, lest they should wench, drink, and quarrel. In church they are taught to love God; after church they are practised to love their neighbour; for business on work-days keeps them apart and scattered, and on market-days they are prone to a rivalry bordering on malice, as competitors for custom. Goodness does not more certainly make men happy, than happiness makes them good. We must distinguish between felicity and prosperity: for prosperity leads often to ambition, and ambition to disappointment: the course is then over; the wheel turns round but once; while the re-action of goodness and happiness is perpetual.

BROOKE.

You reason justly and you act rightly. Piety, warm, soft, and passive, as the æther round the throne of Grace, is made callous and inactive by kneeling too much: her vitality faints under rigorous and wearisome observances. A forced match between a man and his religion sours his temper and leaves a barren bed.

SIDNEY.

Desire of lucre, the worst and most general country vice, arises here from the necessity of

looking to small gains. It is the tartar that encrusts economy.

... Avarice

Grudges the gamesome river-fish its food,  
And shuts his heart against his own life's blood.

BROOKE.

O that any thing so monstrous should exist in this profusion and prodigality of blessings! The herbs are crisp and elastic with health; they are warm under my hand, as if their veins were filled with such a fluid as ours. What a hum of satisfaction in God's creatures! How is it, Sidney, the smallest do seem the happiest?

SIDNEY.

Compensation for their weaknesses and their fears; compensation for the shortness of their existence. Their spirits mount upon the sunbeam above the eagle: they have more enjoyment in their one summer than the elephant in his century.

BROOKE.

Are not also the little and lowly in our species the most happy?

SIDNEY.

I would not willingly try nor overcuriously examine it. We, Greville, are happy in these parks and forests: we were happy in my close winter-walk of box and laurustinus and mezereon.

In our earlier days did we not emboss our bosoms with the crocusses, and shake them almost unto shedding with our transports! Ah my friend, there is a greater difference, both in the stages of life and in the seasons of the year, than in the conditions of men: yet the healthy pass through the seasons, from the clement to the inclement, not only unreluctantly, but rejoicingly, knowing that the worst will soon finish and the best begin anew; and we are all desirous of pushing forward into every stage of life, excepting that alone which ought reasonably to allure us most, as opening to us the *Via Sacra*, along which we move in triumph to our eternal country. We may in some measure frame our minds for the reception of happiness, for more or for less; but we should well consider to what port we are steering in search of it, and that even in the richest we shall find but a circumscribed, and very exhaustible quantity. There is a sickliness in the firmest of us, which induces us to change our side, though reposing ever so softly; yet, wittingly or unwittingly, we turn again soon into our old position. God hath granted unto both of us hearts easily contented; hearts fitted for every station, because fitted for every duty. What appears the dullest may contribute most to our genius: what is most gloomy may soften the

seeds and relax the fibres of gaiety. Sometimes we are insensible to its kindlier influence, sometimes not. We enjoy the solemnity of the spreading oak above us: perhaps we owe to it in part the mood of our minds at this instant: perhaps an inanimate thing supplies me, while I am speaking, with all I possess of animation. Do you imagine that any contest of shepherds can afford them the same pleasure as I receive from the description of it; or that even in their loves, however innocent and faithful, they are so free from anxiety as I am while I celebrate them? The exertion of intellectual power, of fancy and imagination, keeps from us greatly more than their wretchedness, and affords us greatly more than their enjoyment. We are motes in the midst of generations: we have our sunbeams to circuit and climb. Look at the summits of all the trees around us, how they move, and the loftiest the most so: nothing is at rest within the compass of our view, except the grey moss on the park-pales. Let it eat away the dead oak, but let it not be compared with the living one.

Poets are nearly all prone to melancholy; yet the most plaintive ditty has imparted a fuller joy, and of longer duration, to its composer, than the conquest of Persia to the Macedonian. A bottle

of wine bringeth as much pleasure as the acquisition of a kingdom, and not unlike it in kind: the senses in both cases are confused and perverted.

BROOKE.

Merciful heaven! and for the fruition of an hour's drunkenness, from which they must awaken with heaviness, pain, and terror, men consume a whole crop of their kind at one harvest-home. Shame upon those light ones who carol at the feast of blood! and worse upon those graver ones who nail upon their escutcheon the name of great. God sometimes sends a famine, sometimes a pestilence, and sometimes a hero, for the chastisement of mankind; none of them surely for their admiration. Only some cause like unto that which is now scattering the mental fog of the Netherlands, and is preparing them for the fruits of freedom, can justify us in drawing the sword abroad...

SIDNEY.

And only the accomplishment of our purpose can authorise us again to sheathe it: for, the aggrandisement of our neighbours is nought of detriment to us; on the contrary, if we are honest and industrious, his wealth is ours. We have nothing to dread while our laws are equitable and our impositions light: but children fly from mothers that strip and scourge them. We are come

to an age when we ought to read and speak loudly what our discretion tells us is fit: we are not to be set in a corner for mockery and derision, with our hands hanging down motionless and our pockets turned inside-out. Let us congratulate our country on her freedom from debt, and on the economy and disinterestedness of her administrators; men altogether of eminent worth, afraid of nothing but of deviating from the broad and beaten path of illustrious ancestors, and propagating her glory in far-distant countries, not by the loquacity of mountebanks or the audacity of buffoons, nor by covering a tarnished sword-knot with a trim shoulder-knot, but by the mission of right learned, grave, and eloquent ambassadors. Triumphantly and disdainfully may you point to others.

## 1.

While the young blossom starts to light,  
 And heaven looks down serenely bright  
     On Nature's graceful form;  
 While hills and vales and woods are gay,  
 And village voices all breathe May,  
     Who dreads the future storm?

## 2.

When princes smile and senates bend,  
 What mortal e'er foresaw his end  
     Or fear'd the frown of God?  
 Yet has the tempest swept them off,  
 And the opprest, with bitter scoff,  
     Their silent marble trod.



## 3.

To swell their pride, to quench their ire,  
 Did venerable Laws expire  
 And sterner forms arise;  
 Faith in their presence veil'd her head,  
 Patience and Charity were dead,  
 And Hope.. beyond the skies.

But away, away with politics: let not this city-  
 stench infect our fresh-country-air.

## BROOKE.

To happiness then, and unhappiness, since we  
 can discourse upon it without emotion. Our un-  
 happiness appears to be more often sought by us,  
 and pursued more steddily than our happiness.  
 What courtier on the one side, what man of genius  
 on the other, has not complained of unworthi-  
 ness preferred to worth? Who prefers it? his  
 friend? no. his self? no surely. Why then  
 grieve at folly or injustice in those who have no  
 concern in him, and in whom he has no concern?  
 We are indignant at the sufferings of those who  
 bear bravely and undeservedly; but a single cry  
 from them breaks the charm that bound them to us.

## SIDNEY.

The English character stands high above com-  
 plaining. I have heard the French soldier scream  
 at receiving a wound; I never heard ours: shall  
 the uneducated be worthy of setting an example

to the lettered? If we see, as we have seen, young persons of some promise, but in comparison to us as the colt is to the courser, raised to trust and eminence by any powerful advocate, is it not enough to feel ourselves the stronger men, without exposing our limbs to the passenger, and begging him in proof to handle our muscles? Only one subject of sorrow, none of complaint, in respect to court, is just and reasonable; namely, to be rejected or overlooked when our exertions or experience might benefit our country. Forbidden to unite our glory with hers, let us cherish it at home the more fondly for its disappointment, and give her reason to say afterwards, she could have wished the union.

---

The lord Brooke introduced here is less generally known than the illustrious personage with whom he converses, and upon whose friendship he had the virtue and good sense to found his chief distinction. On his monument in St. Mary's at Warwick, written by himself, we read that he was the servant of Queen Elizabeth, the counsellor of King James and the friend of Sir Philip Sidney. His style is rather stiff, but his sentiments are sound and manly, his reflections deep. The same family produced another eminent man, slain in the civil wars by a shot from Lichfield minster.

This conversation was longer. As the speakers were passionately fond of poetry, more was introduced: among the sections

cancelled was the following, in which perhaps the verses may, to some readers, not be unacceptable.

BROOKE.

To happiness then and unhappiness, since we can discourse upon it without emotion: but first I would rather hear a few more verses; for a small draught increases the thirst of the very thirsty.

SIDNEY.

To write as the ancients have written, without borrowing a thought or expression from them, is the most difficult and the most excellent thing we can achieve in poetry. I attempt no composition which I believe will occupy more than an hour or two, so that I can hardly claim any rank among the poets, but having once collected from curiosity all the *invocations to sleep*, ancient and modern, I fancied it possible to compose one differently; which, if you consider the simplicity of the subject and the number of those who have treated it, may appear no easy matter.

Sleep! who contractest the waste realms of night,  
 None like the wretched can extoll thy powers:  
 We think of thee when thou art far away,  
 We hold thee dearer than the light of day,  
 And most when Love forsakes us wish thee ours...  
 O hither bend thy flight!  
 Silent and welcome as the blessed shade  
 Alcestis, to the dark Thessalian hall,  
 When Hercules and Death and Hell obeyed  
 Her husband's desolate despondent call.  
 What fiend would persecute thee, gentle Sleep,  
 Or beckon thee away from man's distress?  
 Needless it were to warn thee of the stings  
 That pierce my pillow, now those waxen wings  
 Which bore me to the sun of happiness,  
 Have dropt into the deep.

BROOKE.

If I cannot compliment you, as I lately complimented a poet

on the same subject, by saying "*May all the gods and goddesses be as propitious to your invocation,*" let me at least congratulate you that all here is fiction.

SIDNEY.

How many, who have abandoned for public life the studies of philosophy and poetry, may be compared to brooks and rivers, which in the beginning of their course have assuaged our thirst, and have invited us to tranquillity by their bright resemblance of it, and which afterwards partake the nature of that vast body into which they run, its dreariness, its bitterness, its foam, its storms, its everlasting noise and commotion! I have known several such, and when I have innocently smiled at them, their countenances seemed to say, "*I wish I could despise you: but alas! I am a runaway slave, and from the best of mistresses to the worst of masters; I serve at a tavern where every hour is dinner-time, and pick a bone upon a silver dish.*" And what is acquired by the more fortunate amongst them? they may put on a robe and use a designation which I have no right to: my cook and footman may do the same: one has a white apron, the other has red hose; I should be quite as much laughed at if I assumed them. A sense of inferior ability is painful: that I feel most at home: I could not do nearly so well what my domestics do; what the others do I could do better. My blushes are not at the superiority I have given myself, but at the comparison I must go through to give it.

**CONVERSATION III.**

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**KING HENRY IV**

**AND**

**SIR ARNOLD SAVAGE.**

# KING HENRY IV

AND

## SIR ARNOLD SAVAGE.

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SAVAGE.

I OBEY the commands of my liege.

HENRY.

'Tis well: thou appearest more civil and courteous, Sir Arnold Savage, than this morning in another place, when thou declared'st unto me, as speaker of the Commons, that no subsidy should be granted me until every cause of public grievance was removed\*.

SAVAGE.

I am now in the house of the greatest man upon earth; I was then in the house of the greatest nation.

\* Such are the words reported by Hakewill de modo tenendi Parl.

HENRY.

Marry! thou speakest rightly upon both points; but the latter, I swear unto thee, pleaseth me most. And now, Savage, I do tell thee with like frankness, I had well-nigh sent a score of halberts among your worshipful knights and sleek wool-staplers, for I was sore chafed, and, if another had dealt with me in such wise, I should have strait-way followed mine inclination. Thou knowest I am grievously lett and hindered in my projected wars, by such obstinacy and undutifulness in my people. I raised them up from nothingness four years ago, and placed them in opposition to my barons, in trust that, by the blessing of God and his saints, I might be less hampered in my conquest of France. This is monstrous: Parliament speaks too plainly and steps too stoutly for a creature of four years growth.

SAVAGE.

God forbid that any king of England should achieve the conquest of all France. Patience, my liege and lord! Our Norman ancestors, the most warlike people upon whose banners the morning sun ever lighted, have wrested the sceptre from her swadling kings, and, pushing them back on their cushions and cupboards, have been contented with the seizure of their best and largest provinces.

The possession of more serfs would have tempted them to sit down in idleness, and no piece of unbroken turf would have been left, for the playground of their children in arms. William the Conqueror, the most puissant of knights and the wisest of statesmen, thought fit to set open a new career, lest the pride of his chevalry should be troublesome to him at home. He led them forth against the brave and good Harold, whose armies had bled profusely, in their wars against the Scot. Pity that such blood as the Saxon should ever have been spilt\*! but hence are the titled deeds to our lands and tenements, the perpetuity of our power and dominion.

HENRY.

To preserve them from jeopardy, I must have silver in store; I must have horses and armour, and wherewith to satisfy the cravings of the soldier, always sharp, and sharpest of all after fighting.

SAVAGE.

My liege must also have other things, which escaped his recollection.

HENRY.

Store of hides, and of the creatures that were within them; store of bacon, store of oats and

\* The Danes under Harold were not numerous, and there were few vestiges of the Britons out of Wales and Cornwall.



barley, of rye and good wheaten corn; hemp, shipping, masts, anchors; pinetree and its piche from the Norwegian, yewtree from Corse and Dalmat. Divers other commodities must be procured from the ruler of the Adriatic, from him who never was infant nor stripling, whom God took by the righthand, and taught to walk by himself the first hour. Moreover I must have instruments of mine own device, weighty, and exceeding costly; such as machinery for beating down walls. Nothing of these hath escaped my knowledge or memory, but the recital of some befits a butler or sutler or armourer, better than a king.

SAVAGE.

And yet methinks, sir, there are others which you might have mentioned and have not, the recital of which would befitt a king, rather than sutler, butler, or armourer: they are indeed the very best and most necessary things in the world to batter down your enemy's walls with.

HENRY.

What may they be? you must find them.

SAVAGE.

You have found them, and must keep them... they are the hearts of your subjects. Your horse will not gallop far without them, though you

empty into his manger all the garners of Surrey. Wars are requisite, to diminish the power of your Baronage, by keeping it long and widely separate from the main body of retainers, and under the ken of a stern and stedly prince, watching the movements of all, curbing their discourses, and inuring them to regular and sharp discipline. In general they are the worthless, exalted by the weak, and dangerous from wealth ill acquired and worse expended. The whole people is a good king's household, quiet and orderly when well treated, and ever in readiness to defend him against the malice of the disappointed, the perfidy of the ungrateful, and the usurpation of the familiar. Act in such guise, most glorious Henry, that the king may say *my* people, and the people say *our* king: I then will promise you more, passing all comparison and computation, than I refused you this morning; the enjoyment of a conquest, to which all France in estimation is as a broken flag-staff. A Norman by descent and an Englishman by feeling, the humiliation of France is requisite to my sense even of quiet enjoyment. Nevertheless I cannot delude my understanding, on which is impressed this truth, namely, that the condition of a people which hath made many conquests, doth ultimately become worse than that of the con-

quered. For, the conquered have no longer to endure the sufferings of weakness or the struggles of strength, and some advantages are usually holden forth to keep them peaceable and contented: but under a conquering prince the people are shadows, which lessen and lessen as he mounts in glory, until at last they become, if I may reasonably say so and unreprievedly, a thing of nothing, a shapeless form.

HENRY.

Faith! I could find it in my heart, sir Arnold, to clip thine eagle's claws and perch thee somewhere in the peerage.

SAVAGE.

Measureless is the distance between my liege and me; but I occupy the second rank among men now living, forasmuchas, under the guidance of Almighty God, the most discreet and courageous have appointed me, unworthy as I am, to be the great comprehensive symbol of the English people.

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Writers differ on the first Speakers of the House of Commons, for want rather of reflection than of inquiry. The Saxons had frequently such chiefs; not always. In the reign of William Rufus there was a great council of parliament at Rockingham, as may be seen in the history of Eadmerus: his words

are *totius regni adunatio*. He reports that a certain *knight* came forth and stood before the *people*, and spoke in the name and in the behalf of all. Peter de Montfort in the reign of Henry III spoke *vice totius communitatis*, and consented to the banishment of Ademar de Valence, bishop of Winchester. A sir John Bushey was the first presented by the Commons to the King in full parliament. Elsynge calls him "a special minion" to Richard II. It appears that he, like all his predecessors, was chosen for one particular speech, purpose, or sitting.

Sir Arnold Savage, according to Elaynge, "was the first who appears upon any record" to have been appointed to the dignity as now constituted.

The business on which my dialogus is founded, may be described by an extract from Rapin.

"Le roi, ayant représenté à ce parlement le besoin qu'il avoit d'un secours extraordinaire, les Communes allèrent en corps lui presenter une Adresse, dans laquelle elles lui remontreroient que, sans fouler son peuple, il pouvoit subvenir à ses besoins. Elles expoioient que le clergé possédoit la troisieme partie des biens du royaume, et que, ne rendant au roi aucun service personel, il étoit juste qu'il contribuât de ses richesses aux besoins pressans de l'Etat. L'archevêque de Canterbury..disoit que leur demande n'avoit pour fondement que l'irreligion et l'avarice."

The reformers, we see, were atheists in those days, as in ours: and to strip off what is superfluous is to expose the body politic to decay.

Henry IV was among the most politic of our princes. He and his successor may be compared with Philip and Alexander: but the two great Macedonian princes had not such difficulties to surmount as the two great English. Epaminondas alone, of all the Greeks, atchieved a victory so arduous as that of Agincourt. That of Poictiers was greater. To subdue the Athenians, or the Asiatics, and to subdue the French are widely different things. Henry V broke down their valour, and subverted the fundamental laws of their monarchy, as is proved by the sixth article in the treaty of Troyes.

"Après la mort du roi Charles, la couronne de France,

avec toutes ses dependances, appartiendra au roi d'Angleterre; et à ses heritiers." ... A female then might eventually inherit it.

The monkish historians, and, more than these, Shakespear have given a glorious character of Henry IV. The fact is, Henry permitted any irregularity at home, and suffered any affront from his rival kings, rather than hazard the permanency of his power. He rose by the people; he stood by the clergy. He suffered even the isle of Wight to be invaded by the French, without a declaration of war against them.

We should be slow in our censure of princes. Kingship is a profession which has produced both the most illustrious and the most contemptible of the human race. That sovran is worthy of no slight respect, who rises in moral dignity to the level of his subjects; so manifold and so great are the impediments.

**CONVERSATION IV.**

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**SOUTHEY**

**AND**

**PORSON.**

SOUTHEY

AND

PORSON.

---

PORSON.

I SUSPECT, Mr. Southey, that you are angry with me for the freedom with which I have spoken of your poetry and Mr. Wordsworth's.

SOUTHEY.

What could have induced you to imagine it, Mr. Professor? You have indeed bent your eyes upon me, since we have been together, with somewhat of fierceness and defiance; but I presumed that you fancied me to be a commentator; and I am not irritated at a mistake. You wrong me, in your belief that an opinion on my poetical works hath molested me; but you afford me more than compensation in supposing me acutely sensible of any injustice done to Wordsworth. If we must converse at all upon these topics, we will converse

on him. What man ever existed, who spent a more retired, a more inoffensive, a more virtuous life, or who adorned it with more noble studies?

PORSON.

I believe so; I have always heard it; and those who attack him with virulence or with levity are men of no morality and no reflection. I have demonstrated that one of them, he who wrote the *Pursuits of Literature*, could not construe a Greek sentence or scan a verse; and I have fallen on the very *Index* from which he drew out his forlorn hope on the parade. This is incomparably the most impudent fellow I have met with in the course of my reading, which has lain, you know, in a province where impudence is no rarity. He has little more merit in having stolen, than he would have had if he had never stolen at all. Those who have failed as painters turn picture-cleaners, those who have failed as writers turn reviewers. Orator Henley taught in the last century, that the readiest made shoes are boots cut down: there are those who abundantly teach us now, that the readiest made critics are cut down poets. Their assurance is however by no means diminished from their ill success. Even the little man who followed you in the *Critical Review*, poor Robin Fellowes, whose pretensions widen every



smile his imbecillity has excited, would, I am persuaded, if Homer were living, pat him in a fatherly way upon the cheek, and tell him that, by moderating his fire and contracting his prolixity, the public might ere long expect something from him worth reading.

I had visited a friend in *King's Road* when Robin entered.

"*Have you seen the Review?*" cried he to him... "*worse than ever! I am resolved to insert a paragraph in the papers, declaring that I had no concern in the last number.*"

"*Is it so very bad?*" said I quietly.

"*Infamous! detestable!*" exclaimed he.

"*Sit down then...nobody will believe you;*"<sup>a</sup> was my answer.

Since that morning he has discovered that I drink harder than usual, that my faculties are wearing fast away, that once indeed I had some Greek in my head, but...he then claps the forefinger to the side of his nose, turns his eye slowly upward, and looks compassionately and calmly.

#### SOUTHEY.

Come Mr. Porson, grant him his merits: no critic was ever better contrived to make any work a very periodical one, no writer more dexterous in giving a finishing touch.

PORSON.

The plagiarist has a greater latitude of choice than we; and if he brings home a parsnip or turnip-top, when he could as easily have pocketed a nectarine or a pine-apple, he must be a blockhead. I never heard the name of that pursuer of literature; and I have forgotten that other man's, who evinced his fitness to be the censor of the age, by a translation of the most naked and impure satires of all antiquity, those of Juvenal, which owe their preservation to the partiality of the friars; but indeed they are so impregnated and incrustated with bay-salt and alum that they would not burn. I shall entertain a very unfavourable opinion of him if he has translated them well: pray has he?

SOUTHEY.

Indeed I do not know. I read poets for their poetry, and to extract that nutriment of the intellect and of the heart which poetry should contain. I never listen to the swans of the sess-pool, and must declare that nothing is heavier to me than rottenness and corruption.

PORSON.

You are right, sir, perfectly right. A translator of Juvenal would open a public drain to look for a needle, and may miss it. My nose is not easily offended; but I must have something to fill

my belly: come, we will lay aside the scrip of the transpositor and the pouch of the pursuer, in reserve for the days of unleavened bread, and again, if you please, to the lakes and mountains. Now we are both in better humour, I must bring you to a confession that in your friend Wordsworth there is occasionally a little trash.

## SOUTHEY.

A haunch of venison would be trash to a Hindoo, a bottle of burgundy or tokay to the xerif of Mecca. We are guided in our choice, by precept, by habit, by taste, by constitution. Hitherto all our sentiments on poetry have been delivered down to us from authority; and if it can be demonstrated, as I think it may be, that the authority is inadequate, and that the dictates are often inapplicable and often misinterpreted, you will allow me to remove the cause out of court. Every man can see what is very bad in a poem, almost every one can see what is very good; but you, Mr. Porson, who have turned over all the volumes of all the commentators, will inform me whether I am right or wrong in asserting, that no critic hath yet appeared who has been able to fix or to discern the exact degrees of excellence above a certain point.

PORSON.

None.

SOUTHEY.

The reason is, because the eyes of no one have been upon a level with it. Supposing, for the sake of argument, the contest of Hesiod and Homer to have taken place: the judges, who decided in favour of the worse, who indeed has little merit, may have been elegant wise and conscientious men. Their decision was in favour of that poetry, to the species of which they had been the most accustomed. Corinna was preferred to Pindar no fewer than five times; and the best judges in Greece gave her the preference; yet whatever were her powers, and beyond all question they were extraordinary, we may assure ourselves that she stood many degrees below Pindar. Nothing is more absurd than the report, that the judges were prepossessed in her favour by her beauty. Plutarch tells us that she was much older than her competitor, who consulted her judgment in his earlier odes. Now, granting their first competition to have been when Pindar was twenty years old, and that all the others were in the years succeeding, her beauty must have been somewhat in the decline; for in Greece there are few women who retain the graces, none who

retain the bloom of youth, beyond the twenty third year. Her countenance, I doubt not, was expressive: but expression, although it gives beauty to men, makes women pay dearly for its stamp, and pay soon. Nature seems, in protection to their loveliness, to have ordered that they, who are our superiors in quickness and sensibility, should in general be little disposed to laborious thought, or to long excursions in the labyrinths of fancy. We may be convinced that the verdict of the judges was biassed by nothing else than their habitudes of thinking: we may be convinced too, that, living in an age when poetry was cultivated so highly, and selected from the most acute and the most dispassionate, they were subject to no greater errors of opinion than are the learned messmates of our English colleges.

## PORSON.

You are more liberal in your largesses to the fair Greeks, than a friend of mine was, who resided in Athens to acquire the language. He assured me that beauty there was in bud at thirteen, in full blossom at fifteen, losing a leaf or two every day at seventeen, trembling on the thorn at nineteen, and under the tree at twenty. He would have been but an indifferent courtier in the palace of a certain prince, whose exclamation was,

O could a girl of sixty breed,  
Then, marriage, thou wert bliss indeed !

I will not dissemble or deny, that to compositions of a new kind, like Wordsworth's, we come without scales and weights, and without the means of making an assay.

## SOUTHEY.

Mr. Porson, it does not appear to me, that anything more is necessary in the first instance, than to interrogate our hearts in what manner they have been affected. If the ear is satisfied; if at one moment a tumult is aroused in the breast, and tranquillized at another with a perfect consciousness of equal power exerted in both cases; if we rise up from the perusal of the work with a strong excitement to thought, to imagination, to sensibility; above all if we sat down with some propensities towards evil, and walk out with much stronger towards good, in the midst of a world, which we never had entered, and of which we never had dreamed before; can we so suddenly put on again the *old man* of criticism, as to deny that we have been conducted by a most beneficent and most potent genius? Nothing proves to me so manifestly in what a pestiferous condition are its lazarettos, as when I observe how little hath been objected against those who have substituted

words for things, and how much against those who have reinstated things for words.

Let Wordsworth prove to the world, that there may be animation without blood and broken bones, and tenderness remote from the stews. Some may doubt it; for even things the most evident are often but little perceived and strangely estimated. Swift ridiculed the music of Handel and the generalship of Marlborough, Pope the style of Middleton and the scholarship of Bentley, Gray the abilities of Shaftesbury and the eloquence of Rousseau. Shakespear hardly found those who would collect his tragedies; Milton was read from godliness; Virgil was antiquated and rustic, Cicero Asiatic. What a rabble has persecuted my friend, in these latter times the glory of our country. An elephant is born to be consumed by ants in the midst of his unapproachable solitudes. Wordsworth is the prey of Jeffrey. Why repine? and not rather amuse ourselves with allegories, and recollect that God in the creation left his noblest creature at the mercy of a serpent.

PORSON.

In my opinion your friend is verbose; not indeed without something for his words to rest upon, but

from a resolution to gratify and indulge his capacity. He pursues his thoughts too far; and considers more how he may shew them entirely, than how he may shew them advantageously. Good men may utter whatever comes uppermost, good poets may not. It is better, but it is also more difficult, to make a selection of thoughts, than to accumulate them. He who has a splendid sideboard, should likewise have an iron chest with a double lock upon it, and should hold in reserve a greater part than he displays.

Wordsworth goes out of his way to be attacked. He picks up a piece of dirt, throws it on the carpet in the midst of the company, and cries "*This is a better man than any of you.*" He does indeed mould the base material into what form he chooses; but why not rather invite us to contemplate it, than challenge us to condemn it? This surely is false taste.

#### SOUTHEY.

The principal and the most general accusation against Wordsworth is, that the vehicle of his thoughts is unequal to them. Now did ever the judges at the Olympic games say, "*We would have awarded to you the meed of victory, if your chariot had been equal to your horses: it is true*



*they have won; but the people is displeas'd at a car neither new nor richly gilt, and without a gryphen or sphynx engraven on the axle?"*

You admire simplicity in Euripides; you censure it in Wordsworth: believe me, sir, it arises in neither from penury of thought, which seldom has produced it, but from the strength of temperance, and at the suggestion of principle.

Take up a poem of Wordsworth's and read it; I would rather say, read them all; and, knowing that a mind like yours must grasp closely what comes within it, I will then appeal to you whether any poet of our country, since Shakspeare, has exerted a greater variety of powers with less strain and less ostentation. I would however, with his permission, lay before you for this purpose a poem which is yet unpublished and incomplete.

PORSON.

Pity, with his abilities, he does not imitate the ancients somewhat more.

SOUTHEY.

Whom did they imitate? If his genius is equal to theirs he has no need of a guide. He also will be an ancient; and the very counterparts of those, who now decry him, will extoll him a thousand years hence in malignity to the moderns. Whatever is good in poetry is common to all good poets;

however wide may be the diversity of manner, Nothing can be more dissimilar than the three Greek tragedians: but would you prefer the closest and best copier of Homer to the worst (whichever he be) amongst them? Let us avoid what is indifferent or doubtful, and embrace what is good, whether we see it in another or not; and if we have contracted any peculiarity while our muscles and bones were softer, let us hope finally to outgrow it. Our feelings and modes of thinking forbid and exclude a very frequent imitation of the old classics, not to mention our manners, which have a nearer connection than is generally known to exist with the higher poetry. When the occasion permitted it, Wordsworth has not declined to treat a subject as an ancient poet of equal vigour would have treated it. Let me repeat to you his *Laodamia*.

## PORSON.

After your animated recital of this most classic poem, I begin to think more highly of you both. It is pleasant to find two poets living as brothers, and particularly when the palm lies between them, without any third in sight. Those who have ascended to the summit of the mountain, sit quietly and familiarly side by side; it is only those who are climbing with gravel in their shoes, that

scramble, kick, and jostle. You have recited a most spirited thing indeed. I never had read it. Now to give you a proof that I have been attentive, I will remark two passages that offend me. In the first stanza,

With sacrifice before the rising morn  
 Performed, my slaughtered lord have I required;  
 And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,  
 Him of the infernal Gods have I desired.

The second line and the fourth terminate too much alike: *have I required* and *have I desired* are worse than prosaic. In another,

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel  
 In worlds whose course is equable and pure;  
 No fears to beat away, no strife to heal,  
 The past unsighed for, and the future sure;  
 Spake, as a witness, of a second birth  
 For all that is most perfect upon earth.

In a composition such as Sophocles might have exulted to own, and in a stanza the former part of which might have been heard with shouts of rapture in the regions he describes, how unseasonable is the allusion to *witness* and *second birth*, which things, however holy and venerable in themselves, come stinking and reeking to us from the conventicle. I desire to see Laodamia in the silent

and gloomy mansion of her beloved Protesilaus; not elbowed by the godly butchers in Tottenham-court-road, nor smelling devoutly of ratafia among the sugar-bakers at Blackfriars.

Mythologies should be kept distinct: the fireplace of one should never be subject to the smoke of another. The Gods of different countries, when they come together unexpectedly, are jealous Gods, and, as our old women say, *turn the house out of windows.*

A current of rich and bright thoughts runs throughout the poem. Pindar himself would not, on that subject, have braced one into more nerve and freshness, nor Euripides have inspired into it more tenderness and more passion. I am not insensible to that warmly chaste morality which is the soul of it, nor indifferent to the benefits that literature on many occasions has derived from Christianity. But poetry is a luxury to which, if she tolerates and permits it, she accepts no invitation: she beats down your gates and citadels, levels your high places, and eradicates your groves. For which reason I dwell more willingly with those authors, who cannot mix and confound the manners they represent. The hope that we may rescue at Herculaneum a great number of them hath, I firmly believe, kept me alive. Reasonably

may all the best be imagined to exist in a library of some thousands. It will be recorded to the eternal infamy of the kings and princes now reigning, or rather of those whose feet put into motion their rocking horses, that they never have made a common cause in behalf of learning, but on the contrary have made a common cause against it. The earth opened her entrails before them, conjured them to receive again, while it was possible, the glories of their species...and they turned their backs. They pretend that it is not their business or their duty to interfere in the internal affairs of other states. This is not an internal affair of any state whatever: it interests all; it belongs to all; and these scrupulous men have no scruple to interfere in giving their countenance and assistance, when a province is to be torn away or a people to be enslaved. The most contemptible of the Medicean family did more for the advancement of letters than all the potentates now in existence. If their delicacy is shocked or alarmed at the idea of making a proposal to send scientific and learned men thither, let them send a brace of pointers and the property is their own. Twenty men in seven years might retrieve all the losses we have experienced from the bigotry of popes and califs. I do not intend to assert, that every Her-

culanean manuscript might within that period be unfolded; but the three first sentences of the larger part might be; which is quite sufficient to inform the scholar, whether a further attempt on the scroll would repay his trouble. There are fewer than thirty Greek authors worth inquiring for; they exist beyond doubt, and beyond doubt they may with attention, patience, and skill be brought to light. With a smaller sum than is annually expended on the appointment of some silly and impertinent young envoy, we might recall into existence all, or nearly all, those men of immortal name, whose disappearance has been the regret of Genius for three hundred years. In my opinion a few thousand pounds laid out on such an undertaking would be laid out as creditably as on a Persian carpet or a Turkish tent; as creditably as on a collar of rubies and a ball-dress of Brussels-lace for our Lady in the manger, or as on gilding, for the adoration of princesses and their capuchins, the posteriors and anteriors of saint Januarius.

# CONVERSATION V.

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OLIVER CROMWEL

AND

WALTER NOBLE.

# OLIVER CROMWEL

AND

# WALTER NOBLE,

---

CROMWEL.

WHAT brings thee back from Staffordshire, friend Walter?

NOBLE.

I hope, general Cromwel, to persuade you that the death of Charles will be considered by all Europe as a most atrocious action.

CROMWEL.

Thou hast already persuaded me: what then?

NOBLE.

Surely then you will prevent it, for your authority is great. Even those who upon their consciences found him guilty, would remitt the penalty of blood, some from policy, some from mercy. I have conversed with Hutchinson, with Ludlow, your friend and mine, and with Walter Long: you



will oblige these worthy friends, and unite in your favour the suffrages of the wisest and best men existing. There are many others, with whom I am in no habits of intercourse, who are known to entertain the same sentiments, among the country gentlemen to whom our parliament owes the better part of its reputation.

CROMWEL.

You country gentlemen bring with you into the People's House a freshness and sweet savour, which our citizens lack mightily. I would fain merit your esteem, heedless of these pursy fellows from hulks and warehouses, with one ear lapped by the pen behind it, and the other an heirloom, as Charles would have had it, in Laud's star-chamber. Oh! they are proud and bloody men. My heart melts; but alas! my authority is null: I am the servant of the Commonwealth: I will not, dare not, betray it. If Charles Stuart had only threatened my death, in the letter we ripped out of the saddle, I would have reprov'd him manfully and turned him adrift: but others are concerned, lives more precious than mine, worn as it is with fastings, prayers, long services, and preyed upon by a pouncing disease. The Lord hath led him into the toils laid for the innocent. Foolish man! he never could eschew evil counsel.

NOBLE.

In comparison with you, he is but as a pinnacle to a butress. I acknowledge his weaknesses, and cannot wink upon his crimes. But what you visit as the heaviest of them, perhaps was not so, although the most disastrous to both parties, the bearing of arms against his people. He fought for what he considered as his hereditary property: we do the same: should we be hanged for losing a lawsuit?

CROMWEL.

Not unless it is the second... Thou talkest finely and foolishly, Wat, for a man of thy calm discernment. If a rogue holds a pistol to my breast, do I ask him what he is about? do I care whether his doublet be of dog-skin or of cat-skin? Fie upon such wicked sophisms! Marvellous, how the devil works upon good men's minds.

NOBLE.

Charles was always more to be dreaded by his friends than by his enemies, and now by neither.

CROMWEL.

God forbid that Englishman should be feared by Englishman! but to be daunted by the weakest, to bend before the worst... I tell thee, Walter Noble, that if Moses and the prophets commanded

me to this villainy, I would draw back and mount my horse.

NOBLE.

I could wish that our history, already too dark with blood, should contain, as far as we are concerned in it, some unpolluted pages.

CROMWEL.

'Twere better so, much better. Never shall I be called, I promise thee, an unnecessary shedder of blood. But remember, my good prudent friend, of what materials our sectaries are composed: what hostility against all eminence, what rancour against all glory. How the knaves dictate from their stools and benches, to men in armour, bruized and bleeding for them! with what fatherly scourges in their fists do they give counsel to those who protect them from the cart and halter. In the name of the Lord, I must piss upon these firebrands before I can make them tractable.

NOBLE.

I lament their blindness; but follies wear out the faster by being hard run upon. This fermenting sourness will presently turn vapid, and people will cast it out. I am not surprized that you are discontented and angry at what thwarts your better nature. But, come, Cromwel, over-

look them, despise them, and erect to yourself a glorious name by sparing a mortal enemy.

CROMWEL.

A glorious name, by God's blessing, I will erect, and all our fellow labourers shall rejoice at it: but I see better than they do the blow descending on them, and my arm better than theirs can ward it off. Noble, thy heart overflows with kindness for Charles Stuart: if he were at liberty tomorrow by thy intercession, he would sign thy death-warrant the day after for serving the Commonwealth. A generation of vipers! There is nothing upright or grateful in them: never was there a drop of true Scotch blood in their veins. Indeed we have a clue to their bedchamber still hanging on the door; and I suspect that an Italian fidler or French valet has more than once crossed the current.

NOBLE.

That may be: nor indeed is it credible that any royal or courtly family has gone on for three generations without a spur from some interloper. Look at France! some stout Parisian saint performed the last miracle there.

CROMWEL.

Now thou talkest gravely and sensibly: I could hear thee discourse thus for hours together.

NOBLE.

Hear me, Cromwel, with equal patience on matters more important. We all have our sufferings; why increase one another's wantonly? Be the blood Scotch or English, French or Italian, a drummer's or a buffoon's, it carries a soul upon its stream, and every soul has many places to touch at, and much business to perform, before it reaches its ultimate destination. Abolish the power of Charles; extinguish not his virtues: he may be a good father who was a bad king. Whatever is worthy to be loved for any thing is worthy of preservation. A wise and dispassionate legislator, if any such should ever arise among men, will not condemn to death him who has done, or is likely to do, more service than injury to society. Blocks and gibbets are the nearest objects to ours, and their business is never with hopes or with virtues.

CROMWEL.

Walter, Walter! we laugh at speculators.

NOBLE.

Many indeed are ready enough to laugh at speculators, because many profit, or expect to profit, by established and widening abuses. Speculations towards evil lose their name by adoption: specu-

lations towards good are for ever speculations, and he who hath proposed them is a chimerical and weak creature.

CROMWEL.

Proportions should exist in all things. Sovrans are paid higher than others for their office: they should therefor be punished more severely for abusing it, even if the consequences of this abuse were in nothing more grievous or extensive. We cannot clap them in the stocks conveniently, nor whip them at the market-place. Where there is a crown there must be an axe: I would keep it there only.

NOBLE.

Lop off the rotten, press out the poisonous, keep well the rest. Let it suffice to have given this memorable example of national power and justice.

CROMWEL.

Justice is perfect; an attribute of God; we must not trifle with it.

NOBLE.

Should we be less merciful to our fellow creatures than to our domestic animals? Before we deliver them to be killed, we weigh their services against their inconveniences. On the foundation of policy, when we have no better, let us erect the

triphies of humanity: let us consider that, educated in the same manner, and situated in the same position, we ourselves might have acted as reprovably. Abolish that for ever which must else for ever generate abuses; and attribute the faults of the man to the office, not the faults of the office to the man.

CROMWEL.

I abominate and detest kingship.

NOBLE.

I abominate and detest hangmanship; but in certain stages of society both are necessary. Let them go together, we want neither now.

CROMWEL.

Prythee, Wat, since thou readeest, as I see, the books of philosophers, didst thou ever hear of Digby's remedies by sympathy?

NOBLE.

Yes, formerly.

CROMWEL.

Well, now, I protest, I do believe there is something in them. To cure my headache, I must breathe a vein in the neck of Charles.

NOBLE.

Oliver, Oliver, others are wittiest over wine, thou over blood...cold-hearted, cruel man.

CROMWEL.

Why, dost thou verily think me so, Walter?  
Perhaps thou art right in the main: but he alone,  
who fashioned me in my mother's womb, and  
who sees things deeper than we do, knows that.



# CONVERSATION VI.

---

ÆSCHINES

AND

PHOCION.

ÆSCHINES

AND

PHOCION.

---

ÆSCHINES.

O PHOCION, again I kiss the hand that hath ever raised up the unfortunate.

PHOCION.

I know not, Æschines, to what your discourse would tend.

ÆSCHINES.

Yesterday, when the malice of Demosthenes would have turned against me the vengeance of the people, by pointing me out as him whom the priestess of Apollo had designated, in declaring that the Athenians were all unanimous, one excepted, did you not cry aloud, *I am that man; I approve nothing you do?* That I see you again, that I can express to you my gratitude, these are your gifts.

PHOCION.

And does Æschines then suppose that I should not have performed my duty, whether he were alive or dead? To have removed from the envy of an ungenerous rival, and from the resentment of an inconsiderate populace, the citizen who possesses my confidence, the orator who defends my country, and the soldier who has fought by my side, was among those actions which are always well repaid. The line is drawn across the account: let us close it.

ÆSCHINES.

I am not insensible, nor have ever been, to the afflicted; my compassion has been excited in the city and in the field; but when have I been moved, as I am now, to weeping? Your generosity is more pathetic than pity or than pain; and at your eloquence, stern as it is, O Phocion, my tears gush like those warm fountains which burst forth suddenly from some convulsion of the earth.

Immortal Gods! that Demades and Polyæctes and Demosthenes should prevail in the council over Phocion! that even their projects for a campaign should be adopted in preference to that general's who hath defeated Philip in every encounter, and should precipitate the war against the advice of a politician, by whose presages,

and his only, the Athenians have never been deceived!

PHOCION.

It is true, I am not popular.

ÆSCHINES.

Become so.

PHOCION.

It has been in my power to commit base actions; and I abstained: would my friend advise me to committ the basest of all? to court the favour of men I abominate and despise!

ÆSCHINES.

You court not even those who love and honour you. Thirty times and oftener have you been chosen to lead our armies, and never once were present at the assembly which elected you. Unparalleled glory! when have the Gods shown any thing similar among men! Not Aristides, nor Epaminondas, the most virtuous of mortals, not Miltiades nor Cimon, the most glorious in their exploits, not Codrus, so great as to redeem from contempt the name of king, enjoyed the favour of Heaven so uninterruptedly. No presents, no solicitations, no flatteries, no concessions; you never even asked a vote; however gravely, legitimately, customarily.

## PHOCION.

The highest price we can pay for anything is, to ask it: and to solicit a vote appears to me as base an action as to solicit a place in a will: it is not ours, and might have been another's.

Indifference to the welfare of our country is a crime; but if our country is reduced to such a condition that the bad are preferred to the good, the foolish to the wise, hardly any catastrophe is to be deprecated or opposed that may shake them from their places.

## ÆSCHINES.

In dangerous and trying times they fall naturally and necessarily, as flies drop from a curtain let down in winter. But if the people demands of me what better I would propose than my adversaries, such are the extremities to which their boisterousness and levity have reduced us, I can return no answer. We are in the condition of a wolf biting off his leg to escape from the trap that has caught it.

## PHOCION.

Calamities have assaulted mankind in such a variety of attacks, that nothing now can be devised against them. He who would strike out any thing novel in architecture, commits a folly in safety;

his house and he may stand ; but he who attempts it in politics, carries a torch, from which at the first narrow passage we may expect a conflagration. Experience is our only teacher both in war and peace. As we formerly did against the Lacedæmonians and their allies, we might by our naval superiority seize or blockade the maritime towns of Philip ; we might conciliate Sparta, who has outraged and defied him ; we might wait even for his death, impending from drunkenness, lust, ferocity, and inevitable in a short space of time, from the vengeance to which they expose him at home. It is a dangerous thing for a monarch to corrupt a nation yet uncivilized ; to corrupt a civilized one is the wisest thing he can do.

ÆSCHINES.

I see no reason why we should not send an executioner to release him from the prison-house of his crimes, with his family to attend him. Kings play at war unfairly with republics. They can only lose some earth and some creatures that they value as little ; while republics lose in every soldier a part of themselves. Therefore no wise republic ought to be satisfied, unless she bring to punishment the individual most obnoxious, and those about him who may be supposed to have made him so, his counsellors and his courtiers.

Retaliation is not a thing to be feared. The Locrians have admitted only two new laws in two hundred years; because he who proposes to establish or to change one, comes with a halter round his throat, and is strangled if his proposition is rejected. Let wars, which ought justly to be more perilous to the adviser, be but equally so: let those who engage in them perish if they lose, I mean the principals, and new wars will be as rare among others as new laws among the Locrians.

## PHOCION.

Both laws and wars are much addicted to the process of generation. Philip, I am afraid, has prepared the Athenians for his government. I wonder how in a free state, any man of common sense can be bribed. The corrupter would only spend his money on persons of some calculation and reflection: with how little of either must those be endowed, who do not see that they are paying a perpetuity for an annuity! Suppose that they, amidst suspicions both from him in whose favour they betray, and from those to whose detriment they have betrayed, can enjoy what they receive; yet what security have their children and dependents? Property is usually gained in hope no less of bequeathing than of enjoying it; but how certain is it that these will lose greatly more than was ac-

quired for them! If they lose their country and their laws, what have they? The bribes of monarchs will be discovered by the receiver to be like pieces of furniture given to a man who, on returning home, finds that his house, in which he intended to place them, has another master. I can conceive no bribery at all seductive to the most profligate, short of that which establishes the citizen bribed among the members of an hereditary aristocracy, which in the midst of a people is a kind of foren state, where the spoiler and traitor may take refuge. Now Philip is not so inhuman, as, in case he should be the conqueror, to inflict on us so humiliating a punishment. Our differences with him are but recent, and he marches from policy not from enmity. The Lacedemonians did indeed attempt it, in the imposition of the thirty tyrants; but so monstrous a state of degradation and of infamy roused us from our torpor, threw under us and beneath our view all other wretchedness, and we recovered, (I wish we could retain it as easily!) our independence.... What depresses you?

## ÆSCHINES.

Oh! could I embody the spirit I receive from you, and present it in all its purity to the Athenians, they would surely hear me with as much



attention, as that invoker and violator of the Gods, Demosthenes, to whom my blood would be the most acceptable libation at the feasts of Philip. Pertinacity and clamorousness, he imagines, are the tests of sincerity and truth; although we know that a weak orator raises his voice higher than a powerful one, as the lame raise their legs higher than the sound. Can any thing be so ridiculous as the pretensions of this man, who, because I employ no action, says *action is the first, the second, the third requisite of oratory*, while he himself is the most ungraceful of all our speakers, and, even in appealing to the Gods, begins by scratching his head?

PHOCION.

This is surely no inattention or indifference to the powers above. I smile at reflecting on the levity with which we contemporaries often judge of those great authors whom posterity will read with incessant admiration: such is Demosthenes. Differ as we may from him in politics, we must acknowledge that no language is more forcible, more clear; no combinations of words more novel, no sequency of sentences more diversified, more admirably pitched and concerted. Accustomed to consider as the best what is at once the most simple and emphatic, and knowing that whatever

satisfies the understanding, conciliates the ear, I think him little if at all inferior to Aristoteles in style, although in wisdom he is as a mote to a sun-beam; and much superior to Plato; excellent as was he; gorgeous indeed, but becomingly so, as wealthy monarchs are, and truly a magnificent piece of the Gods' work in their richest materials. Defective however and faulty must be the composition in prose, which you and I with all our study and attention cannot understand. In poetry it is not exactly so: the greater part of it must be intelligible to all: but in the very best there is often an undersong of sense, which none besides the poetical mind, or one deeply versed in its mysteries, can comprehend. Euripides and Pindar have been blamed by many, who perceived not that the arrow drawn against them fell on Homer.

Let us praise, my *Æschines*, whatever we can reasonably: nothing is less laborious or irksome, no office is less importunate or nearer a sinecure. Above all others let us praise those who contend with us for glory, since they have already borne their suffrages to our judgment by entering on the same career. Deem it a peculiar talent, and such as no three men in any age have possessed, to give each great citizen or great writer his just proportion of applause. A barbarian king or his eunuch

can distribute equally and fairly beans and lentils; but I perceive that Æschines himself finds a difficulty in awarding just commendations.

A few days ago an old woman, who wrote formerly a poem on Codrus, such as Codrus with all his self-devotion would hardly have read to save his country, met me in the street, and taxed me with injustice towards Demosthenes.

“ You do not know him, said she: he has heart, and somewhat of genius: true, he is singular and strange: but, I assure you, there is something in him, for I have seen some of his compositions that do him credit.”

“ Lady, replied I, Demosthenes is fortunate to be protected by the same cuirass as Codrus.”

Singular and strange must every man appear who is different from his neighbours; and he is the most different from them who is the most above them. If the clouds were inhabited by men, the men must be of other form and features than those on earth, and their gait would not be the same as upon grass or gravel. Diversity no less is contracted by the habitations, as it were, and haunts, and exercises of our minds. Singularity, when it is natural, requires no apology; when it is affected, is detestable: such is that of our young people in bad handwriting. On my expedition to

Byzantium, the city decreed that a cloak should be given me worth forty drachmæ: and when I was about to return I folded it up carefully, in readiness for any service in which I might be employed hereafter. A young officer, studious to imitate my neatness, packed up his in the same manner, not without the hope perhaps that I might remark it, and my servant, or his, on our return, mistook it. I sailed for Athens; he, with a detachment, for Heraclea; whence he wrote to me that he had sent my cloak, requesting his own by the first conveyance. The name was quite illegible, and the carrier, whoever he was, had pursued his way homewards: I directed it then, as the only safe way, if indeed there was any safe one, to *the officer who writes worst at Heraclea.*

Come, a few more words upon Demosthenes. Do not, my friend, inveigh against him, lest a part of your opposition be attributed to hatred. How many arguments is it worth to him, if you appear to act from another motive than principle! True, his eloquence is imperfect: what among men is not? In his repartees there is no playfulness, in his voice there is no flexibility, in his action there is neither dignity nor grace: but how often has he stricken you dumb with his irony! how often has he tossed you from one hand to the other with

his interrogatories! What harmony of periods, what choice of expressions, how popular his allusions, how plain his illustrations, his dialect how Attic! Is this no merit? is it none in an age of idle rhetoricians, who have forgotten how their fathers and mothers spoke to them? His sentences are stout and compact as the Macedonian phalanx, animated and ardent as the sacred band of Thebes. Praise him, my Æschines, if you wish to be victorious; if you acknowledge that you are vanquished, then revile him and complain. In composition I know not any superior to him; and in an assembly of the people he derives advantages from his defects themselves, from the violence of his action, and from the vulgarity of his mien. Permit him to possess these advantages over you: consider him as a wrestler, whose body is robust, but whose feet rest upon something slippery: use your dexterity, and reserve your blows. Regard him, if less excellent as a statesman, citizen, or soldier, rather as a genius or dæmon, who, whether beneficent or malignant, hath, from an elevation far above us, launched forth many new stars into the firmament of mind.

ÆSCHINES.

O, that we had been born in other days! The best men always fall upon the worst.

## PHOCION.

The Gods have not granted us, *Æschines*, the choice of being born when we would; that of dying when we would, they have. Thank them for it, as one among the most excellent of their gifts, and wait not for horn or herald: a whistle is here a signal. Whatever can happen to a wise and virtuous man from his worst enemy, whatever is most dreaded by the inconsiderate and irresolute, has happened to him frequently from himself, and not only without his inconvenience, but without his observation. We are prisoners as often as we bolt our doors, exiles as often as we walk to *Munychia*, and dead as often as we sleep. It would be a folly and a shame to argue that these things are voluntary, and that what our enemy imposes are not: they should be the more so if they befall us from necessity, unless necessity be less a reason with us than caprice. In fine, *Æschines*, I shall then call the times bad when they make me so. At present they are to be borne, as must also be the storm that follows them.

# CONVERSATION VII.

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QUEEN ELIZABETH

AND

CECIL.

# QUEEN ELIZABETH

AND

CECIL.

---

ELIZABETH.

I ADVISE thee again, churlish Cecil, how that our Edmund Spenser, whom thou calledst most uncourteously a whining whelp, hath good and solid reason for his complaint. God's blood! shall the lady that tieth my garter and shuffleth the smock over my head, or the lord that stedieth my chair's back while I eat, or the other that looketh to my buck-hounds lest they be mangy, be holden by me in higher esteem and estate, than he who hath placed me among the bravest of past times, and will as safely and surely set me down among the loveliest in the future.

CECIL.

Your Highness must remember he carouseth



fully for such deserts... a hundred pounds a year of unclipt monies, and a butt of canary wine\*.

ELIZABETH.

The monies are not enow to sustain a pair of grooms and a pair of palfreys, and more wine hath been drunken in my presence at a feast. The monies are given to such men, that they may not incline nor be obligated to any vile or lowly occupation; and the canary, that they may entertain such promising Wits as court their company and converse; and that in such manner there may be alway in our land a succession of these heirs of Fame. He hath written, not indeed with his wonted fancifulness, nor in learned and majestical language, but in homely and rustic wise, some verses which have moved me; and haply the more so, inasmuch as they demonstrate to me that his genius hath been dampened by his adversities. Read them.

CECIL.

How much is lost when neither heart nor eye  
 Rosewinged Desire or fabling Hope deceives;  
 When boyhood with quick throb hath ceased to spy  
 The dubious apple in the yellow leaves;

\* Calculating the prices of provisions and the increase of taxes, the poet-laureate in the time of Elizabeth had about four times as much as at present (1816); so that Cecil spoke reasonably, Elizabeth royally.

When, springing from the turf where youth reposed,  
 We find but deserts in the far-sought shore ;  
 When the huge book of Faery-land lies closed,  
 And those strong brazen clasps will yield no more.

## ELIZABETH.

The said Edmund hath also furnished unto the weaver at Arras, John Blaquieres, on my account, a description for some of his cunningest wenches to work at, supplied by mine own self indeed as far as the subject-matter goes, but set forth by him with figures and fancies, and daintily enough bedecked. I could have wished he had thereunto joined a fair comparison between Dian . . . no matter . . . he might perhaps have fared the better for it . . . but poets' wits, God help them! when did they ever sit close about them! Read the poesy, not over-rich, and concluding very awkwardly and meanly.

## CECIL.

Where forms the lotus, with its level leaves  
 And solid blossoms, many floating isles,  
 What heavenly radiance swift-descending cleaves  
 The darksome wave! unwonted beauty smiles

On its pure bosom, on each bright-eyed flower,  
 On every nymph, and twenty sate around . .  
 Lo! 'twas Diana . . from the sultry hour  
 Hither she fled, nor fear'd she sight nor sound.

Unhappy youth, whom thirst and quiver-reeds  
 Drew to these haunts, whom awe forbade to fly,  
 Three faithful dogs before him rais'd their heads,  
 And watched and wonder'd at that fixed eye.

Forth sprang his favorite . . with her arrow-hand  
 Too late the goddess hid what hand may hide,  
 Of every nymph and every reed complain'd,  
 And dashed upon the bank the waters wide.

On the prone head and sandal'd feet they flew . .  
 Lo! slender hoofs and branching horns appear!  
 The last marred voice not even the favorite knew,  
 But bayed and fastened on the upbraiding deer.

Far be, chaste goddess, far from me and mine  
 The stream that tempts thee in the summer noon!  
 Alas that vengeance dwells with charms divine . .

ELIZABETH.

Psha! give me the paper: I forewarned thee  
 how it ended . . pitifully, pitifully.

CECIL.

I cannot think otherwise than that the undertaker of the aforesaid poesy hath choused your highness; for I have seen painted, I know not where, the identically same Dian, with full as many nymphs, as he calls them, and more dogs. So small a matter as a page of poesy shall never stir my choler nor twitch my purse-string.

ELIZABETH.

I have read in Plinius and Mela of a runlet near Dodona, which kindled by approximation an unlighted torch and extinguished a lighted one. Now, Cecil, I desire no such a jetty to be celebrated as the decoration of my court: in simpler words, which your gravity may more easily under-

stand, I would not from the fountain of Honour give lustre to the dull and ignorant, deadening and leaving in "cold obstruction" the lamp of literature and genius. I ardently wish my reign to be remembered: if my actions were different from what they are, I should as ardently wish it to be forgotten. Those are the worst of suicides, who voluntarily and prepensely stab or suffocate their fame, when God has commanded them to stand up on high for an ensample. We call him parricide who destroys the author of his existence: tell me, what shall we call him who casts forth to the dogs and birds of prey, its most faithful propagator and most firm support? The parent gives us few days and sorrowful; the poet many and glorious: the one (supposing him discreet and kindly) best reproveth our faults; the other best remunerates our virtues.

A page of poesy is a little matter: be it so: but of a truth I do tell thee, Cecil, it shall master full many a bold heart that the Spaniard cannot trouble; it shall win to it full many a proud and flighty one, that even chivalry and manly comeliness cannot touch. I may shake titles and dignities by the dozen from my breakfast-board; but I may not save those upon whose heads I shake them from rottenness and oblivion. This year

they and their sovran dwell together, next year they and their beagle. Both have names, but names perishable. The keeper of my privy-seal is an earl: what then? the keeper of my poultry-yard is a Cæsar. In honest truth, a name given to a man is no better than a skin given to him: what is not natively his own, falls off and comes to nothing.

I desire in future to hear no contempt of penmen, unless a depraved use of the pen shall have so cramped them, as to incapacitate them for the sword and for the council-chamber. If Alexander was the great, what was Aristoteles who made him so? who taught him every art and science he knew, except three; those of drinking, of blaspheming, and of murdering his bosom-friends. Come along: I will bring thee back again nearer home. Thou mightest toss and tumble in thy bed many nights, and never eke out the substance of a stanza: but Edmund, if perchance I should call upon him for his counsel, would give me as wholesome and prudent as any of you. We should indemnify such men for the injustice we do unto them in not calling them about us, and for the mortification they must suffer at seeing their inferiors set before them. Edmund is grave and gentle: he complains of Fortune, not of Elizabeth, of courts, not

of Cecil. I am resolved, so help me God, he shall have no further cause for his repining. Go, convey unto him those twelve silver-spoons, with the apostols on them, gloriously gilded; and deliver into his hand these twelve large golden pieces, sufficing for the yearly maintenance of another horse and groom: besides which, set open before him with due reverence this bible, wherein he may read the mercies of God towards those who waited in patience for his blessing; and this pair of cremisin silken hosen, which thou knowest I have worne only thirteen months, taking heed that the heelpiece be put into good and sufficient restauration, at my sole charges, by the Italian woman at Charing-cross.

**CONVERSATION VIII.**

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**KING JAMES I**

**AND**

**ISAAC CASAUBON.**

# KING JAMES I

AND

ISAAC CASAUBON\*.

---

JAMES.

Good M. Casaubon, I am vexed and perturbed in spirit, to find that all my moderation and all

\* Casaubon, the four last years of his life, resided at the court of James I, and his opinion was consulted and his pen employed, when that religious king made proposals to the pope, for reconciling the Roman-catholic church with the catholic apostolic. He was a singularly virtuous and pious man, a liberal disputant, a sound critic, and of extensive no less than accurate scholarship. Among his friends he had the happiness of numbering a Thuanus, a Scaliger, a Douza, a Heinsius, a Taubmann, an Erpenius, a Gruter, a Beza, and a Grotius. Let no man hereafter hope ever to see, certainly none will ever live familiarly with, so many who have deserved so well of letters.

James was inglorious, for he was a Stuart; he was parsimonious, for he was a Scotchman; he was arrogant, for he was a theologian; and he was arbitrary, for he was educated in the doctrine of prerogative. No family in so many genera-



my zeal, which never has departed from it, should be opposed and thwarted by the Pontificials.

tions has exhibited so few virtues: yet it would be unjust to deny that he was the best of his race; that he was sincere and candid, that he was temperate and compassionate, that he was patient and beneficent, that he was learned and the favourer at least, if not the patron and remunerator, of learned men. Pompous as he was, he was less unbending than many constitutional kings have been; a practise which did not prevail in Europe until the minor potentates thought it becoming to imitate Louis XIV, and judiciously took that part of his character which was the most easy to copy. Unbendingness, in the moral as in the vegetable world, is an indication as frequently of unsoundness as of strength. Indeed wise men, whether kings or others, have been always free from it. Stiff necks are diseased ones. James conversed, on friendly and social terms, with many who never lied for him, never extorted for him, never extended his power, never pampered his pride, never pandered to his sensuality. He maintained the divine right of kings: we call the doctrine a monstrous one. Now those who *give* constitutions, must possess a divine right; whence else comes it? We have seen these given near home, and we have applauded the giver.

Dari bonum quod potuit auferri potest.

James called himself catholic, and insisted that the appellation could not be refused him, who acknowledged as articles of faith the three creeds, the four Ecumenical Councils, and every doctrine received as necessary to salvation in the four first centuries of the faith. If the title was worth having, it was clearly his.

As in these Dialogues I have not inserted a single sentence written by, or recorded of, the personages who are supposed to hold them, I have thought it needful to subjoin occasional notes and illustrations. On the eighth in particular I shall exceed my usual bounds, recommending at the same time an attentive perusal of Casaubon's letters on the subject.

## CASAUBON.

Your Majesty could entertain but feeble hopes of accommodation, where avarice and pride are the directors of every counsel. The advantage however, which I pointed out to your Majesty, is obtained, inasmuch as you have hung your proofs upon the highest peg in the chambers of the Vatican, and these manifest to the world below you both the sincerity of your heart and the solidity of your arguments.

## JAMES.

I could have wished that whatever leads to fellowship and concord were tolerated and encouraged. It is not the interest of kings to carry the forest-laws into churches. On this principle and persuasion I admitted many papists to offices about my person, not expecting that they would prepare for me such a blazing fire so early in the season: and after all, such is my spirit of peace and conciliation, though I would rather keep them out of my cellar and my kitchen, I should not however be loth to go with them, if their priests would allow me, to the communion-table. The Gospel says, *this is my body*: it does not say *how*. I am far from angry with the mass-maker for knowing more about it than I do, or than my master chose to tell my betters, his apostles and

disciples, or for insisting on transubstantiation, the very name of which was not in existence for some hundred years after he left the earth. Let every christian take the sacrament: let all neighbours take it together: let each apply to it his own idea of its import and its essence. At every commemoration-dinner, one would wish something which he does not see upon the table, another is desirous that the dish which stands before him were away; yet surely all may find that wherein their tastes agree; and nothing, of what is present or of what is absent, can alter their sentiments as to the harmony of the meeting or the object of the entertainment. Such feelings, let me ascend from the little to the great, from the ordinary to the solemn, will the christian's be at the sacrament of the eucharist. The memory of that day when it first was celebrated, makes me anxious to open my arms towards all, and to treat the enemies of my throne with the charity of the Gospel.

We gratify our humours in sovranity, in Christianity our affections; in this always our best, in that often our worst. You know not, M. Casaubon, how pleasant a thing it is to converse naturally, because you have always done so; but we kings feel it sensibly, those at least amongst us, to whom God hath vouchsafed a plain understanding.

It is like unto a removal from the curtained and closed chamber of sickness, where every footfall is suspended and measured, every voice constrained and lowered, into our native air again, amidst the songs and pipings of our shepherds and the wilder and more exuberant harmony of our woodlands. To you the whole intellectual world lies open: we must speak only in epigrams or in oracles. The book however which I hold in my hand, teaches me that the practise should be laid aside, and that we ought not to be ashamed of acknowledging a sort of relation, at home, with those whom in the house of God we call our brethren. If I fall rather short of this, I do not pretend to tell a man how he should sing, or how he should pronounce his language, or upon which side he should lie in bed, much less in what manner he should think on subjects which concern not me. I would exclude none from the benefit of law, none from the enjoyment of dignity: I would establish the catholic peers in that House, from which their friends Garnet and Catesby\* would, to serve their own purposes, have exploded them. What think you?

\* *Garnettus vester a Catesbeio consultus, essetne Mictim-sentes incoctesque perdere, si alteri sine alteris extingui non possent, semel ita respondit in privatis suis audibus: " Lieere,*

## CASAUBON.

I see not how your Majesty can receive as your counsellors, or indeed as any part of those who are to govern, judge, or administrate, men who profess that another has by right a greater power in this realm, not only than your Majesty, but than all the three estates conjointly. They are bound to assist in placing the instruction of your people out of your hands: they are bound to murder you if you resist the authority of the pope, or even if they are informed by him that such an action is of advantage to the Church: indeed any one may murder you, let him only be persuaded by two or three factious but learned men \* that it is conducive to the interests of his *Holiness*.

si tantum ex ea re boni proventurum esset, quantum aliquot insontium necem compensare potest."—So that murder may be committed even without advantage! The jesuit requires only a balance of good, and reckons the murder itself as merely an inoffensive means of obtaining it. "Iterum in campis suburbanis, quibus a palude nomen, in hanc sententiam . . . et posse et licere cum sontibus insontes *essufflari*, magnique adeo meriti rem fore, si id magno alicui bono catholicis caderet."

A few factious but learned men, deciding that such or such a thing is of great advantage to catholics, may, not only justly but with glory, blow up fifty or a hundred of their own *insontes* amongst two or three hundred heretics.

\* The question was proposed and decided in the affirmative. It was not an idle or a speculative one, but prepared the minds of the Roman-catholics, and led the way to the murder of two kings, Henry III and Henry IV of France.

JAMES.

I apprehend that my intentions must be deferred. O Lord! preserve my life for thy glory!

The name of the former was inserted for *illustration*. . An liceat regem legitimum, *puta Henricum III Regem Galliarum Christianissimum, postquam a paucis seditiosis sed doctis cœperit tyrannus appellari, occidere?* It is lamentable that the governments of Europe should have permitted such questions to be agitated by the clergy, to whom they least of all belong. It became them to imprison or punish capitally any pope who countenanced these universal rebels. Let those who inveigh so violently, against the *Illuminati*, the *Carbonari*, the *Radicals*, read the following language of the papal agents. The French regicide, Jaques Clement, a supremæ auctoritatis iudicibus de causâ suscepti parricidii interrogatus, quum more patrio in reorum cellulâ sederet, non per ambages aut ænigmata sed liquidò et disertè respondit, ideo se quod fecerat fecisse, quia rex protestantibus Germaniæ principibus opem ferre parans in causâ Cliviensi, Pontifici Maximo *rem faceret ingratis, ac proinde dignus esset qui periret*: deum enim se in terris Romanum Pontificem agnoscere, cujus voluntati qui sese *quovis pacto* opponeret eum se habere exitio devotum. Ipsissima feralis illius prodigii verba sunt, *Papa est deus et deus est Papa*. . Happy that people, whose Gods were leeks! religion could not teach them that perfidy and murder were virtues.

No treason of a priest against a king is criminal. Father Emanuel Sa, who has written *a guide to confessors*, says, Clerici rebellio in regem non est crimen læsæ majestatis, *quia non est principi subjectus*. . and again.. Tyrannice gubernans justum acquisitum dominium non potest spoliari sine *publico judicio*: latâ vero sententiâ *potest quisque fieri executor*... Christ says, "My kingdom is not of this world:" the pope says, "My kingdom is." Pius V excited to rebellion all the subjects of Elizabeth: Clement VIII (it is ludicrous to hear the titles of these ruffians) ordered all the Roman-catholics,

preserve it for the union of Christians! Casaubon, it is verily, though we enter thereby into bliss, an

“ quantum in ipsis esset, ut post Elizabethæ obitum rex *eligeretur*, omni sanguinis propinquitate spretâ.” For this purpose it was requisite that the consciences of men should be modified; and hence arose *mental reservation*, to which all the abominations of all other religions, all even of popery itself, are trifles. Christ says, “ Let your discourse be yea, yea; nay, nay:” the jesuit says, supported by the pope, “ the speech by equivocation being saved from a lie, the same speech may be without perjury confirmed by oath, or by any other way, though it were by receiving the sacrament, if just necessity so require.” Cannot a lie be circuitous? Whatever is said in order to make a man believe an untruth, is a lie; yet a jesuit has no hesitation to swear it upon the sacrament! and princes have no hesitation to let jesuits be the instructors of youth! Falsely, as my quotations prove, have they been called the supporters of thrones: they never support them, but when they can govern from them, by means of deluded or affrighted princes. The papacy is the guardian of governments as a bawd is the guardian of girls; for profit. Antonius Capellus, a Franciscan friar, says, “ Indignos esse reges qui ecclesiis suarum ditionum *ullo modo* praesint, quos Deus in Moyse sibi displicere apertè commonstravit.” Eudæmono-Johannes, a monk of Crete, a true jesuit, extols the son of the Emperor Henry IV for insulting the dead body of his father, who had been disobedient to the See of Rome. The opinions of these men are not private; they are sanctioned *facultate superiorum*, by the doctors of theology, and by the chancery of the papal court. The spirit of their church has always been and always will be the same, whenever it can exercise its authority; arrogant, intolerant, persecuting, unforgiving. Its poison has been sublimated, and its froth and fumes have been condensed, by the Jesuits, and may further be seen in Mariana and in Escobar, and in the demonstration of their fallacies by Arnaud and Pascal.

ugly thing to die. The malignity of popery may soften. I should be sorry to inflict new pains and penalties.

CASAUBON.

I would not inflict any: I would authorize no inabilities or privations for a difference in mere articles of faith: for instance, it would be tyranny and madness to declare a man incapable of beating the enemy because he believes in transubstantiation: but I would exclude from all power, all trust, all office, whoever should assert that any man has legitimate power of any kind within this realm, unless it repose in, or originate from, the king or parliament or both united. The Council of Trent has defined and settled all the questions at issue in the Roman-catholic creed, so that the popes can pretend to teach nothing new for the future: matters of discipline are likewise fixed. The appointment to ecclesiastical dignities of all degrees may safely be entrusted to the native hierarchy in each kingdom. Your Majesty has then a right to demand, from all your Roman-catholic subjects, that no papal bull, no order, brief, decree, or mandate of any kind hereafter be received in your dominions.

It is singular and anomalous in the political world, that subjects should claim any right of ap-



peal to foren princes; and it is absurd to argue that the appeal is made not to the prince but to the priest, when the person is invested with both characters, and acts in both. He may advise and enlighten; he may also command and *fulminate* ... a favourite designation of one among the supernatural powers which he arrogates to himself from the Divinity. By a less exertion, he might transfuse in a perennial stream his wisdom and his holiness into a succession of bishops: hence all appeals to Rome would be unnecessary. Power is always the more immoderate and the more jealous when it rises out of usurpation; but those who contend for liberty of any kind should in no instance be its abettors. If the popes had been conscientious or decently honest men, if they could have abstained from laughing in their sleeves when they called themselves the successors of Saint Peter, if they could have been contented with his mediocrity of fortune, his dignified and righteous exercise of authority, their influence upon sound consciences, far from being less, would have been greater and more permanent: and neither would rape and incest and the abominations of Lamp-sacus and Crete have been committed in their closets, under the images of the saints and under the lamp of the Virgin, nor would forbearance

from evil, and activity in good be postponed to frogs and flounders, to horse-hair, hemp, and ashes, or prayers to the dead for the dead.

The Cardinal Bellarmin, unable to confute the slightest of your remonstrances, came forward in his master's name, threw down the key of Peter and took up the sword, cutting short the question between you, and asserting that the king of England was also *in temporals the Pope's feudatory and subject*. After this, according to the constitution, your majesty may declare rebels, all adherents of the pope in any way whatever, all who hold direct or indirect communication with him, all who receive or give intelligence for the furtherance of his machinations and designs.

Among the various religions that have been established in the world, the papal is the only one which insists that a kingdom shall have two *chief* magistrates, that nevertheless one of these shall be *superior* to the other, and that he of right is so, who has never seen the country, never will see it, never had parentage or progeny or land or tenement in it; that a kingdom neither conquered nor hereditary, neither bequeathed nor surrendered by itself, must admit an alien arbitrator whenever it pleases him to raise a question, and that this alien arbitrator shall always give an irreversible verdict in

his own favour; lastly, that a kingdom, to the detriment of its defence, of its agriculture, of its commerce, of its population, of its independence, shall raise a body of men for the service of this intruder, unlimited in number, enormous in expenditure, which he alone shall discipline, he alone shall organize, he alone shall direct and controul. Mahomet left a family, and was far from deficient in impudence, but he wanted the assurance to claim for his own successors what the pretended ones of St. Peter claim for theirs: here however we have somewhat worse than common absurdity, or than common arrogance to contend with . . . A harlot was not contented with debauching your servants, with getting drunk at your expense, and with picking your pocket every time that you approached her: she became impatient for your purse, and invoked the blessed Virgin to witness that, unless she had it, you should never, as she hoped for salvation, leave the room alive. She now is angry that you have turned her off, complains of your violence and injustice, boasts of her affection and fidelity, pouts, pants, and swells, and swears that neither you nor yours shall enter her house again: Nicodemus asked our Saviour "*how can these things be?*" and his divine instructor heard and answered him with complacency: put the same question on any

subject of doubt to a theophagous pope from some mountain monastery or some suburban lane, and the fellow will illuminate you with a cartful of faggots.

JAMES.

Is it not wonderful that, odious and contemptible as the Italians are to all the other nations of Europe, when hardly the first amongst them, unless it be the son of some Venetian senator, can find access to the family of any gentleman in England, yet an ignorant, vicious, and ferocious priest, covered with filth and vermin, being hailed as another God by some dozens of the same cast, instantly treats kings as his inferiors and subjects, and is obeyed in a country like this, highminded, free, and enlightened? Is there anything more irrational or more humiliating in the worship of the Dalai-Lama? Far otherwise: he is innocent, gentle, and beneficent, no murderer, no applauder of murders\*, no plunderer, no extortioner, no

\* Medals were coined by order of Gregory XIII to commemorate the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's day: on one side is the pope, on the other is the massacre. He commanded it also to be painted in the Vatican, where the painting still exists. In popes no atrocity is marvellous or remarkable; but how painful is it to find a scholar like Muretus commending and applauding a massacre! The following words are part of an oration addressed by him to Gregory, in the name of Charles IX, on the celebration of this truly French festival.

vender of pardons, no dealer in dispensations, no forestaller and regrater of manna from heaven or of palms from paradise, no ringdropper of sacraments, no scourer of incests, no forger, no betrayer.

O noctem illam memorabilem, et in fastis eximie alicujus notæ adjectione signandam, quæ *paucorum seditiosorum* interitu regem a præsentis cædis periculo, regnum a perpetua civilium bellorum formidine, liberavit! Quâ quidem nocte stellas equidem ipsas luxisse solito nitidiùs arbitror, et flumen Sequanam majores undas volvisse, quo citiùs illa impurorum hominum cadavera evolveret et exoneraret in mare! O felicissimam mulierum Catharinam regis matrem! &c.

Such are the expressions of Muretus, as the most agreeable he could deliver, to the successor of him who proclaimed *on earth peace, good will towards men*. This language of Charity had been corrected by Infallibility, and altered to "*pax hominibus . . . bonæ voluntatis*:" terms on which a massacre is a commentary.

The only good performed by monarchs in two thousand years, are the abolition of the jesuits and of the inquisition, which must however be considered as merely the dismissal of old servants grown insolent. In the period of their continuance more mischief has been done to mankind by the catholic religion, not only than by all the other religions that have existed in the world, but than by all the other causes of evil put together. The jesuits taught youth, but only to a certain and very circumscribed extent, and their principal dogma was, the legitimacy of falsehood: hence knowledge and virtue have suffered more from the jesuits, than from the most profligate and ignorant of the other confraternities. The catholic religion is the cause, we are informed, why sculpture and painting were revived: it is more certainly the cause why they have made no progress, and why they have been employed on most ignoble objects; on scourgers and hangmen, on beggarly

O Casaubon, I blush to reflect that dissimulation is necessary to the maintenance of peace. A rotten rag covers worse rottenness: remove it, and half the world is tainted with infidelity. In England, in Holland, in any country where laws are equitable and morals pure, how often would these *Eminences* and *Holinesses* have clasped the whipping-post, and with how much more fervency than they clasp the cross! Bellarmin must have been convinced: he must have struggled against his conscience: heated with that conflict, he advances but the more outrageously against me.

CASAUBON.

Bellarmin throws all your arguments into the fire, and assumes a fiercer attitude, not from any resentment at being convinced, for that he was long before, but on the principle that, when we are tired of parrying, we thrust. Your Majesty has now a declared competitor for the throne. Parliament will provide, if the statute of queen

enthusiasts and base impostors. Look at the two masterpieces of the pencil; the Transfiguration of Raphael and the St. Jerome of Correggio: can anything be more incongruous, any thing more contrary to truth and history? I am persuaded that the little town of Sicyon produced a greater number of great artists in both arts than all the modern world. In landscape only, where superstition has no influence, are the moderns to be thought on a level with the ancients. Claude and Titian were probably not excelled.

Elizabeth is insufficient, the means necessary to maintain your possession. On the compliance of your Roman-catholic subjects with such conservatory statutes, nothing can be so unjust or so needless, as to exclude from the rights of citizenship, or from the dignities of state, a body of men who believe not differently from your Majesty, but more.

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Casaubon here finished his discourse, and James made no further observation. Such was his simplicity, he really had imagined that reason and truth, urged so forcibly by him, would alter the system and conciliate the goodwill of the papal court, and that it would resign a wide dominion for a weighty argument. He stroked his beard, licked softly the extremities of his whiskers, ejaculated, sighed, and sate down quietly. He was, notwithstanding, in a frame of mind capable of receiving with satisfaction whatever could derogate from the dignity of the Roman-catholic rites, when Archibald Pringle, one of his pages, entered the apartment.

“Archy,” said his Majesty, who was fond of such abbreviations, “I remember to have chidden

you for a wicked little story you told me last winter, touching a Japanese at Rouen. Come now, if you can divest it of all irreverence, I would fain hear it repeated. I think it a subject for the disquisition of my bishops, whether the pagan sinned or not, or whether, if he sinned, his faith was of such a nature as to atone for it."

Such were really, if not the first thoughts, those however which now arose in the king's mind . . . The page thus began his narration.

A young Japanese was brought over to Rouen on the day of Pentecoste. He had expressed in the voyage a deep regret at the death of the chaplain, who might have instructed him in the mysteries, and who, the only time he conversed with him, recommended to him zealously and with *unction*, as the French say, the worship of the living God. He was constant in his desire to be edified, and immediately on his debarcation was conducted to the cathedral. He observed the elevation of the Hoste with imperturbable devotion, and an utter indifference to the flattering whispers of the fairest among the faithful . . . such as, "O the sweet jonquil-coloured skin! O the pretty piercing black eyes! O the charming long twisted tail! and how finely those flowers and birds and butterflies are painted upon his trowsers!



and look at that leopard in the centre! it seems alive."

When the service was over, and the Archbishop was mounting his carriage-step, he ran after him, and bit him gently with eyes half-closed, by the calf of the leg. Vociferations were raised by the attendants, the soldiers, and the congregation, ill accordant with sanctity, and wronging the moral character and pious disposition of the Japanese. These however the good prelate quieted, by waving his hand and smiling with affability. The neophyte was asked what induced him to bite the archbishop by the leg. He answered, that he wished to pay the living God the same reverence and adoration, as the living God had paid the dead one.

"See now," cried James, "the result of proclaiming that the pope is God upon earth. It led this poor heathen, who amid such splendour and prostrations might well mistake an archbishop for a pope, to the verge of an abyss, dark, precipitous, and profound, as any that superstition hath opened in his own deplorable country."

# CONVERSATION IX.

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MARCHESE PALLAVICINI

AND

WALTER LANDOR.

# MARCHESE PALLAVICINI

AND

WALTER LANDOR.

---

AT Albaro near Genoa I rented the palace of Marchese Pallavicini. While he was presenting the compliments on my arrival, the wife of his bailiff brought me fish and fowl from the city, and poured upon the table a basketful of fine fruit.

LANDOR.

The walk has tired you, my good woman. The hill indeed is rather steep, but it is short, and you appear, like the generality of Genoese country-women, strongly built.

PALLAVICINI.

She has been frightened. When the Neapolitans and English landed here in the bay, she was in childbed.

LANDOR.

Poor woman! the alarm must have been great

indeed, before you knew that the general was an Englishman.

“ Ah, sir!” was all she replied.

Signor marchese, do inform me what she means.

PALLAVICINI.

Sir, it is better for all parties to forget the calamities of war, which always are the greatest in the most beautiful countries.

LANDOR.

Indulge me however in my request. Curiosity is pardonable in a stranger, and, led by humanity, is admissible to confidence.

PALLAVICINI.

You had begun, sir, to say something which interested me, in reply to my inquiry how you liked our scenery. I shall derive much more satisfaction from your remarks on our architecture and gardens, than you can derive from my recital of any inhumanity. It is fair and reasonable, and in the course of things, that we should first arrive at that which may afford us pleasure, and not flag towards it wearied and saddened, and incapable of its enjoyment.

LANDOR.

I am pleased, as I observed, by the palace before us, not having seen in Italy, until now, a house of any kind with a span of turf before it.

Like yours and your neighbour's, they generally encroach on some lane, following its windings and angles, lest a single inch of ground should be lost; and the roofs fight for the center of the road. If an Italian spends a livre, he must be seen to spend it: his stables, his laundry, his domestics, his peasants, must strike the eye together: his pigstie must have witnesses like his will. Every tree is accursed, as that of which the holy cross was fabricated, and must be swept away. You are surely the most hospitable people in the world: even that edifice which derives its existence and its name from privacy, stands exposed and wide-open to the stranger.

When I resided on the Lake of Como, I visited the palace of Marchese Odescalchi. Before it swelled in majesty that sovran of inland waters; behind it was a pond surrounded with brickwork, in which about twenty young goldfish jostled and gaped for room. The Larius had sapped the foundations of his palace, and the marchese had exerted all his genius to avenge himself: he composed this bitter parody. I inquired of his cousin Don Pepino, who conducted me, when the roof would be put on. He looked at me, doubting if he understood me, and answered in a gentle tone,

“It was finished last summer.” My error originated from observing red pantiles, kept in their places by heavy stones, loose, and laid upon them irregularly.

“What a beautiful swell, Don Pepino, is this upon the right,” exclaimed I. “The little hill seems sensible of pleasure as he dips his foot into the Larius.”

“There will be the offices.”

“What! and hide Grumello? Let me enjoy the sight while I can. He appears instinct with life. How he nods the network of vines upon his head beckoning and inviting us, while the figtrees and mulberries and chesnuts and walnuts, and those lofty and eternal cypresses, stand waiting and immoveable around. His playfellows beyond, all different in form and features, push forward; and, if there is not something in the motion of the air, or something in my eyesight, illusory, they are running a race along the borders... Stop a moment: how shall we climb over those two enormous pines? Ah, Don Pepino! old trees in their living state are the only things that money cannot command. Palaces and temples and aqueducts and amphitheatres rise up before it readily: but it must either wait, or pass away before venera-

ble trees. What a sweet odour is there! whence comes it? Sweeter it appears to me and stronger than of the pine itself." "I imagine, said he, from the linden-tree; yes certainly."

"Is that a linden? It is the largest, and, I should imagine, the oldest upon earth, if I could perceive that it had lost any of its branches."

"Pity, that it hides half the row of yon houses from the palace! It will be carried off with the two pines in the autumn."

PALLAVICINI.

I would gladly see that Lake, which detained you three whole years amongst a people so rude and barbarous.

LANDOR.

Barbarous is that city, think you, which contains two families of friends? It was in Como I received the brave descendants of the Jovii, and my bosom feels at this moment that there I pressed to it the calm philosophical Sironi. I must love that city too for other recollections. Thither came to visit me the learned and modest Bekker, and it was there I shed my last tear when I said farewell to Southey.

PALLAVICINI.

Our cities are in much better taste than our villas.

## LANDOR.

They are superb, and appear the more so after the wretched towns of France. In that country almost every thing animated is noisy, and almost every thing inanimate is mis-shapen. All seems reversed: the women have hoarse voices; the men squeal. The children, and the very dogs and frogs, are more clamourous than ours; the cocks are shriller. On the staircases, as here, the more decent do that which the less decent do at the corner of the streets. In Italy we cannot walk ten paces without observing the union of magnificence and filth, of gorgeous finery and squalid meanness. The churches are fairly divided between piety and prostitution, leaving the entrance and a few broken chairs to beggary and vermin. There always is something of misapplied paint and importunate gilding. A couple of pepper-boxes are mounted on St. Peter's; a dozen of mass-boxes range the Colosseo; the Pantheon is the tomb of a fiddler.

Enter the gardens, and approach the vases: do you perceive the rarity, the beauty, the fragrance of the flowers? In one is a bush of box, in another a knot of tansey: Neptune stands in a parterre of cabbages, and from the shell of a Triton sprout three turnips... to be sold.



We English in our gardens, the most beautiful in the universe, are not exempt from absurdities\*.

\* In the shadiness of the English garden, it is the love of retirement that triumphs over taste, and over a full sense and experience of its inconveniences.

## SEPTIMIUS.

Probum piumque ego ex ephebo noveram  
 Septimium ; at illud in viri virtutibus  
 Primum juvabat, quod casam, quod hortulum  
 Describeret parentum amore ludicro,  
 Locoque fratrum buxæas imagines  
 Complecteretur, toto aperto pectore.  
 Invisere istas cogitabam sæpius,  
 Sciens eundem hunc esse, mitis indolis,  
 Vitæque agresti non agrestem deditum.  
 Odium quod in me est, et fuit semper, domûs  
 Aliens ob hoc repello, et evinco brevi . . .  
 Anquiro ubi sedes Septimî . . . " vides," ait  
 Herbas salubres colligens vicina anus.  
*Dico paternas, quasque Septimius colit,*  
*Cerasus caminum contegit, laurus forem.*  
 " Verum . . . ecce easdem !"

Non moror diutiùs

Quin tortuosam carpo et insequor viam ;  
 En ipse ! jussa fortè villico dabat  
 Quo tortuosa tortuosior foret  
 Via illa, quærerentque fallentem domum  
 Fenestrâ apertâ quærere auditi hospites.  
 Benignitate pristinâ concurritur . . .  
*At buxus, O mi Septimî ! quonam loco,*  
*Arcus, sagittæ ?*

" Jure ridenda optimo"

Respondit . . .

*Atqui non meâ sententiâ*

*Ridendus ulli est ullus innocentia*

Inhabiting a moist and chilly climate, we draw our woods almost into our dining-rooms: you, in-

*Custosve, testisve; hæc videre pervelim,  
Istasque fructu annisque convexas nuces,  
Sub queis repertus semimortuus lepus  
Cruore primis jam rigente naribus,  
Causa ambigendi seriis parentibus  
An edere fas nefasne, tam incertâ nece.  
Illuc eamus protinus.*

Prensat manum,

Suspirat . . . "eruantur!"

*Ut fit?*

"Atqui ita est!"

*Bellam fatebor reddidisti villulam.  
Munit recurvum certius ferrum gradus  
Quam ros marinus, nec fides huic absuit,  
Annos ducentos usque servanti locum;  
Sed quæso, amice Septimî, magis placet  
Priore? nec quid inter hæc desideras?*

"Immo omnia! et me poenitet facti mei

Et poenitebit: hostis haud tantum malum

Inferret: hunc ornare gestibam situm;

Ipsum sepulchrum primi amoris obrui."

The neighbourhood of Genoa produces a great quantity of lemons, and many families are supported by renting, at about thirty crowns, an acre or less of lemon ground. I mentioned the fact at Pisa, with some doubt and hesitation, and there I learned from Don Luigi Serviti and Signor Georgio Salvioni, both gentlemen of Massa di Carrara, the following most extraordinary fertility of a lemon tree. A wager was laid in the year 1812 by Signor Antonio Georgieri of Massa with Marchese Calani of Spezia, that, at Croscello, half a mile from the former place, there was one which would mature that year fourteen thousand lemons. It exceeded the quantity. In Spain I was informed that a large tree in favorable seasons

habiting a sultry one, condemn your innocent children to the ordeal of a red-hot gravel.

I have now, signor marchese, performed the conditions you imposed on me, to the extent of my observation; hastily, I confess it, and preoccupied by the interest you excited.

PALLAVICINI.

Across the road, exactly four paces from your antechamber, were the quarters of your general: exactly forty-eight from his window, out of which he was looking, did this peasant woman lie groaning with labour, when several soldiers entered her bedroom, and carried off the articles most necessary in her condition. Her husband ran under the window of the general, which faced the wife's, entreating his compassion. He was driven away.

LANDOR.

Was nothing done?

PALLAVICINI.

A few threats were added.

might ripen three thousand; in Sicily the same, or nearly so. The fruit however of the tree at Croscello is small, of little juice, and bad quality. I presume it to be a wilding. This and the celebrated vine at Hampton-Court are the two most extraordinary fruit-bearing trees on record; they have quintupled the most prolific of their species in Europe.

LANDOR.

Impossible, impossible!

PALLAVICINI.

Since, sir, we are in the regions of impossibility, do look again, I entreat you, at the palace just before us: and I am greatly mistaken if I cannot fix your attention upon something of higher import than a span of turf.

LANDOR.

It is among the most magnificent and, what is better, the most elegant, that I have hitherto seen in Italy; for I have not yet visited the Venetian territory, and know merely from engravings the admirable architecture of Palladio. Whose is it?

PALLAVICINI.

It belongs to the family of Cambiagi, to which our republic, while it pleased God to preserve it, owed many signal benefits, as doges and as senators. In the latter capacity a private man from amongst them constructed at his own expense the most commodious of our roads, and indeed the first deserving the name that had ever been formed in Liguria, whether by the moderns or ancients.

LANDOR.

How grand is that flight of steps upon which the children are playing! These are my vases, marchese, these are my images, this is ornamental

gardening, these are decorations for architecture. Take care, blessed creatures, a fall from such a highth! . . .

PALLAVICINI.

Over those steps, amidst the screams and embraces of those children, with her arms tied behind her, imploring help, pity, mercy, was dragged by the hair the marchesa Cambiagi.

LANDOR.

For what offence?

PALLAVICINI.

Because her husband had mastered all his prejudices, and resigned all his privileges.

LANDOR.

Signor marchese, the English general, whatever may be the public opinion of his talents, his principles, and his conduct, could never have known and permitted it.

PALLAVICINI.

Perhaps not. I can only declare that his windows were filled with military men, in uniforms make them, and that he was amongst them. This I saw. Your Houses of Parliament, M. Landor, for their own honour, for the honour of the service and of the nation, should have animadverted on such an outrage: he should answer for it: he should suffer for it.

## LANDOR.

These two fingers have more power, marchese, than those two houses. A pen! he shall live for it. What, with their animadversions, can they do like this?

# CONVERSATION X.

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GENERAL KLEBER

AND SOME

FRENCH OFFICERS.

# GENERAL KLEBER

AND SOME

## FRENCH OFFICERS.

---

AN English officer was sitting with his back against the base of the great Pyramid. He sometimes looked towards those of elder date and ruder materials before him, sometimes was absorbed in thought, and sometimes was observed to write in a pocket-book with great rapidity.

“If he were not writing,” said a French naturalist to a young ensign, “I should imagine him to have lost his eyesight by the ophthalmia. He does not see us: level your rifle: we cannot find a greater curiosity.”

The Arts prevailed: the officer slid with extended arms from his restingplace: the blood, running from his breast, was audible as a swarm of insects in the sand. No other sound was



heard. Powder had exploded; life had passed away; not a vestige remained of either.

“Let us examine his papers,” said the naturalist.

“Pardon me, sir,” answered the ensign; “my first enquiry on such occasions is *what’s o’clock?* and afterwards I pursue my mineralogical researches.”

At these words he drew forth the dead man’s watch, and stuck it into his sash, while with the other hand he snatched out a purse, containing some zecchins: every part of the dress was examined, and not quite fruitlessly.

“See! a locket with a miniature of a young woman!” Such it was . . . a modest and lovely countenance.

“Ha! ha!” said the ensign; “a few touches, a very few touches, I can give them, and Adèle will take this for me. Two inches higher, and the ball had split it . . . what a thoughtless man he was! There is gold in it too: it weighs heavy. Pest! an old woman at the back! grey as a cat.”

It was the officer’s mother, in her old age, as he had left her. There was something of sweet piety, not unsaddened by presage, in the countenance. He severed it with his knife, and threw

it into the bosom of her son. Two foren letters and two pages in pencil were the contents of the pocket-book. Two locks of hair had fallen out: one rested on his eyelashes, for the air was motionless, the other was drawn to the earth by his blood.

The papers were taken to General Kleber by the naturalist and his associate, with a correct recital of the whole occurrente, excepting the appendages of watch, zecchins, and locket.

“Young man,” said Kleber, gravely, “is this a subject of merriment to you? Who knows whether you or I may not be deprived of life as suddenly and unexpectedly? He was not your enemy: perhaps he was writing to a mother or sister. God help them! these suffer most from war. The heart of the far-distant is the scene of its most cruel devastations. Leave the papers: you may go: call the interpreter.”

He entered.

“Read this letter.”

*My adored Henry . . .*

“Give it me,” cried the general; he blew a strong fire from his pipe and consumed it.

“Read the other.”

*My kind-hearted and beloved son . . .*

“Stop: read the last line only.”

The interpreter answered, "It contains merely the name and address."

"I asked no questions: read them, and write them down legibly."

He took the paper, tore off the margin, and placed the line in his snuffbox.

"Give me that paper in pencil, with a mark of sealingwax on it."

He snatched it, shrunk, and shook some tobacco on it. It was no sealingwax. It was a drop of blood; one from the heart; one only; dry, but seeming fresh.

"Read."

*Yes, my dear mother, the greatest name that exists among mortals is that of Sydney. He who now bears it in the front of battle, could not succour me: I had advanced too far: I am, however, no prisoner. Take courage, my too fond mother: I am amongst the Arabs, who detest the French: they liberated me. They report, I know not upon what authority, that Bonaparte has deserted his army, and escaped from Egypt.*

"Stop instantly," cried Kleber, rising. "Gentlemen," added he to his staffofficers, "my duty obliges me to hear this unbecoming language on your late commander in chief: retire you a few moments . . . Continue."

*He hates every enemy according to his courage and his virtues: he abominates what he cannot debase, at home or abroad\*.*

\* Whoever is about to describe the character of some remarkable man, considers first how much invention and acuteness he can display, and secondly how best he can bring into order and congruity, or what the painters call *keeping*, his observations and reflections. For which reason, it rarely has happened that we carry in our mind from these writers a resemblance that is not illusory or overcharged. In all great men there are discordances, as there are inequalities in all great substances. It is only from a collection of facts, generally too minute to be conveyed in the paniers from which public curiosity is fed, that we are enabled to judge fairly and fully.

There is little perfect truth in the most sagacious of historians, and little pure love of it in the best of men. We are as unwilling to exchange our thoughts for another's as our children, whatever more they may possess of strength or beauty; and the way to conciliate our suffrages is not by dictating and teaching, but by laying before us evidences and testimonies, by collecting what may corroborate them from circumstances, and by raising us to the dignity of judges. The ancients drew characters; we discourse on them.. a much easier matter.. every thing now is compendious and economical: we make soups from bones, and histories from metaphysics.

Bonaparte seems to me the most extraordinary of mortals; because I am persuaded that so much power was never acquired by another with so small an exertion of genius, and so little of any thing that captivates the affections; or maintained so long unbroken in a succession of such enormous faults, such scandalous disgraces, such disastrous failures and defeats. I investigate him with the same dispassionate attention, as Lape de would the spine of a serpent from Surinam or Cuvier the jaws of a mammoth from the Ontario.

“ Oh!” whispered Kleber to himself, “ he knows the man so well!”

All persons who are elevated to high rank, however modest and virtuous, assume more or less of a fictitious character, but congenial and agnate, if I may say it, with the former. Bonaparte would be whatever he had last read or heard of . . . Brutus or Borgia, Frederick or Charlemagne. All appeared best that were most striking no matter for what; and not only a book whenever it fell in his way, or a story when he had patience to listen to it, but even a new suit of cloaths, changed him suddenly. If his hair had been clipped in the morning, he was at noon a Marius, at night a Sylla: no sooner had he put on a court-dress, than he took a lesson of dancing; for Louis XIV danced; no sooner the uniform of a marshal, than he tried to sing; for Villars sang.

Whoever is an imitator, by nature, choice, or necessity, has nothing stable: the flexibility which affords this aptitude, is incompatible with strength.

Bonaparte's knowledge of chorography, to which many attribute a certain part of his successes, was extremely limited. In a conversation with Count Giovio at Como\*, a few days after the Austrians had first abandoned Milan, he inquired whether the Larius ran into the lagunes of Mantua. The memory of this excellent man is still fresh in the memory of his fellow citizens and friends: no one ever doubted his veracity. So long ago as the year 1796, in which his relation was published, he stated that Bonaparte, in his first campaign, had permitted or ordered his sick and wounded, past service, not to be carried to the hospitals or entrusted to the care of the religious and beneficent, but to be left on the field, or killed, or thrown into the rivers. He informs us that many, on somewhat recovering from their lamentable state, went mad from thirst and hunger, and that among those who were cast into the water, the hands of many, as they clung in agony to the barks, were broken.

\* Published by Ostinelli, Como, 1796.

*The first then are Nelson and Sir Sydney Smith. Their friends could expect no mercy at*

Fortunate! not he who can restrain his indignation or his tears at this recital; but he who, turning his eyes upon a Sidney, as he waves away the water from his own parched lips to the wounded soldier near him, can say, *This was my countryman, that my enemy.*

Much hath been repeated of the studious and retired habits of his youth. I had inquired into these matters, long before I read the little narrative I have quoted; the inquiry would otherwise have been superfluous; for no very studious man was ever very cruel; no two things in nature have less affinity than violence and reflection. M. St. Leger, lieutenant-colonel of the regiment in which he was ensign, told me that he never, at that period, had heard of his progress in any branch of the mathematics; that he was chiefly remarkable for the dirtiness of his hands and linen, his vulgar pronunciation and phrases, his aversion to the society of the officers, and his propensity towards the least respectable of the privates. This also would have been corrected by study. If Pompey had read like Cesar, he might not indeed have possessed the clemency and amenity of that most accomplished man, nor have been in any respect worthy to be called his rival, but he would certainly have been less contracted and self-sufficient, less unsteady and impatient, less vindictive and ferocious.

I remember no general, worthy of the name, reviling the character of those military men who performed their duty against him: for Cesar in his *Anti-Cato* did not attack the captain, but the senator and the patriot. Bonaparte left unuttered no term of ungovernable rage and vulgar contumely, when Sir Sydney Smith precluded him from the conquest of Europe by his defence of Acre.

Spannuchi, governor of Leghorn, refused to open the gates to him, then at peace with the Granduke. Intending a surprize, he had made a forced march, and expecting no re-

*his hands. If the report be any thing better than an Arabian tale, I will surrender myself to*

sistence he had brought no cannon with him. He summoned the governor to surrender the town and citadel, who refused both the one and the other until he had orders from Florence. They arrived the next day, and the brave Spannochì was exiled to Sienna, but not before the allie of the Granduke had cursed him, called him by that appellation so familiar to the lower French, seized his epaulette, spit upon him, and kicked his shin. History for her own sake must soften some characters and equivocate on some facts. She treads confidently and firmly upon blood, she follows her clue unhesitatingly through all the labyrinths of mystery and of crime, she is embarrassed only by vulgarity and baseness. We feel a deep interest whenever great masses of mankind are moved, and seldom think or are altogether ignorant what trifling things are the movers.

Bonaparte was invidious of the dead almost to the same degree as of the living: one time he asserted that Marlborough owed his successes to Eugene, another that Eugene owed his to Marlborough; and any officer would have been ruined who had suggested, that Marlborough was not present at the battle of Belgrade. In a conversation at Varese, just before his visit to Como, he appears to have mistaken Gustavus Adolphus for Charles XII. On hearing that the army of Gustavus had penetrated into Italy by the lake of Como, of which a terrific account is given in the Latin letters of Sigismund Boldoni, he denied the fact, and added . . . "*That madman never thought about Italy: he had other affairs, other interests; he was sans tactique, sans calcul.*" And yet Napoleon in his youth was an historian. He shewed his manuscript to Paoli: it was such as might have been expected from an admirer of Ossian. Paoli, not long before his death, mentioned the fact at Clifton, and said he believed the young man had never pardoned the freedom of his advice, in recommending that the

*his successor as prisoner of war, and perhaps may be soon exchanged. How will this little leaf reach you? God knows how and when!*

work should be delayed a little, until the impetuosity of his genius had subsided. I should have imagined that the sentences were short, as from the tripod; the General said that, on the contrary, they were excessively verbose, strangely metaphorical, without any regard to punctuation, or rather to that upon which punctuation is founded; that, when you had come, as you believed, to the end of your march, you were to start again; and often, on setting out, you were suddenly stopt and countermanded.

His discipline hath been extolled, and examples are cited of soldiers, in every campaign, shot for petty thefts. To avoid all examination into the wealth of his dukes and princes, such as Cambaceres, Fouchè, Talleyrand, Torlonia, and several of his marshals and *grand dignitaries*, the General Mouton, when he dined at the Escorial, which he did every day, with the king and queen of Spain, took away the plate after dinner, until none was left. This fact, reported to me in the country where it occurred, has been since confirmed to me at Florence, by my friend cavaliere Galiano, who sate regularly at the same table and was chamberlain to the king.

Whatever in different men may have been the difference of punishment for the same offence, where society was interested; however it may have been permitted by special privilege that he who had renounced the deity might renounce the laws, that he who had abjured the bishop might supersede the citizen, all offences were equally unpardonable which were committed against Napoleon. Another proof of a weak intellect: not that forgiveness is any proof of a strong one. Offences that can be pardoned should never be taken: Bonaparte took them indiscriminately and voraciously, as his food. There is no trouble or address in finding them, and in shewing them there is no wisdom or content.

His ideas of a ruling star present a still more signal indi-



“ Is there nothing else to examine ? ”

“ One more leaf. ”

“ Read it. ”

cation of a vacillating and ill-composed mind. He knew nothing of judicial astrology, which hath certain laws assigned to it, and fancied he could unite it with atheism, as easily as the iron crown with the lilies; not considering that ruling stars themselves must have a ruler, and must obey, far more certainly than they can indicate, his designs and will. Afterwards he laid by the star, and took up the crucifix to play with; on which some sweeter recollections and more delightful hopes might have reposed, if ever he could have brought himself to the persuasion, that either a man or a god would suffer pain, or disseminate good, gratuitously. In the same manner and degree as he was inconsistent in principle he was irresolute in action. He lost his presence of mind when he advanced to dissolve the representatives of the people; he lost it at the battle of Marengo; and when the allies were marching into Paris, he appeared to be deprived, not of his judgement only and his senses, but of locomotion. In one thing he was singular, and altogether different from every other man; when he had accomplished his design, he was as fond of appearing dishonest as he was satisfied with having been so: he was the only pickpocket in the world that ever laid before the people the instruments of his trade, and shewed ostentatiously how he had used them. Indeed he had few secrets to keep. He invaded the territory of nations, to whom any possible change might reasonably appear a gainful speculation. Neither force nor fraud, nor bribery itself, however largely and judiciously administered, subverted the continental states: it was effected by the credulity of their hopes and the incapacity of their rulers. His attack was against the cabinet; those within cried for quarter, gave a province or two for a ransom, kept their places resolutely, (who would abandon them in times so *critical*?) complimented their master, rang their church-

*Written in England on the battle of Aboukir.*

Land of all marvels in all ages past,  
Egypt, I hail thee from a far-off shore;  
I hail thee, doom'd to rise again at last,  
And flourish, as in early youth, once more.

---

bells, fired their jubilee-cannon, if one was left, for, after so fierce a contest with an enemy so powerful, they had surrendered only . . . their country. Austria and Prussia fell; they had kings and king's servants within: Spain and Portugal, unsuspecting, unprepared, undisciplined, unarmed, resisted successfully; their kings and king's servants stood without. Where there are interests, real or apparent, distinct from those of the community, *that*, whatever it be, wherein they lie, should be shoveled down and carried off; for there is the ground upon which the enemy will mount his first masked battery. Everywhere kings and oligarchies soon seconded Bonaparte; nations spurned and expelled him. Of his fidelity or infidelity towards his allies, I have nothing here to remark, other than that, from whatever motive, he did greatly and incomparably more service, to several who had fought against him, and, after discomfiture and subjugation, had become his friends, than some governments, who boast loudly of their good faith and generosity, to the most faithful and persevering of their confederates. I have truly no leisure for discoursing, and could excite no interest if I did, on princes first degraded into crimp-sergeants, then caparisoned like cooks and ostlers for billets and relays, then running the gauntlet, and drummed from their dominions; on princes in short who felt, and whose conduct has made others feel, that even this was clemency. The description of tyrants is at least a stirring thing: it is like walking over red-hot ploughshares, and the vulgar are not the first in pressing on to an exhibition so strange and antiquated. Bonaparte had perhaps the fewest virtues and the faintest semblances of them, of any man that has risen by his own efforts to supreme power: and yet the

How long hast thou lain desolate ! how long  
The voice of gladness in thy halls hath ceast !  
Mute, e'en as Memnon's lyre, the poet's song,  
And half-suppress the chaunt of cloister'd priest.

---

services he rendered to society, incommensurate as they were with the prodigious means he possessed, were great, manifold, and extensive. Never had been such good laws so well administered over so considerable a portion of Europe: never was right obtained with so moderate a cost, never was injury so speedily redressed. Two of the bravest and most orderly nations of the continent received the benefit of excellent kings at his hands. Bernadotte and Louis Bonaparte, the most upright men of their order, gave no signs, either by violence or rapacity, by insolence or falsehood, that they had been nurtured in the feverish bosom of the French Republic. By his insatiate love of change, by his impatience to *see* any thing, or to *be* any thing, long together, his mild, intelligent, and virtuous brother, was forced to abdicate a throne, which he mounted amidst the curses of the people and descended amidst their tears. That he might not be an oppressor he ceased to be a king; and his short unquiet reign is mentioned with gratitude, by the most republican and least sensitive members of the great European family.

Instead of scoring maps and shifting kings, Napoleon could have effected more than Henry IV designed. The road was paved for him with well-broken materials and well rolled over. There was hardly a statesman in Europe of capacity enough to direct a workhouse, or write a fair copy of a washerwoman's bill. Energy was extinct upon the continent: in England it was displayed by the crazy fanatics, who wandered from field to marketplace, from marketplace to field, roaring to the people that they were damned; a truth which indeed they might have discovered by themselves, if they had only put their hands into their pockets. While, as Kleber says in the Dialogue, *throughout the whole territory of France, throughout the range of all her new dominions, not a single man of abilities was neg-*

Even he, loquacious as a vernal bird,  
 Love, in thy plains and in thy groves is dumb,  
 Nor on thy thousand Nilefed streams is heard  
 The reed that whispers happier days to come.

---

*lected*, in England son succeeded to father in the oligarchy, and expeditions were formed just weighty and durable enough to give fortunes to those who had squandered them. Of our generals, the most distinguished then employed was a body that rose from bed after midday; of which when orders were requested, the first answer was, *his lordship is at breakfast*; the second, *his lordship is at lunch*; the third, *his lordship is at dinner*. He and a part of his army returned home. The armament had been directed, first against an island, where fevers are as periodical as rains under the tropics, and ultimately against a fortified city: neither the climate of the one nor the strength of the other was known by the wisest of the ministers, although there is hardly a ginshop in St. Giles, where some smugler or smugler's boy might not have been found, who could have given the information. The want of it seemed so shameful, that one of the ministry, in that hurry and confusion of intellect which involve all his words and actions, said in parliament "*that he knew it; but that he wished to let his colleague have his own way*" .. forgetting that the deference cost the nation an army, and heedless that it cost her a disgrace. His colleague was angry, some say ashamed, and was determined to show that, if he was unfit to direct a council, he was not unable to direct a pistol; a far higher qualification in his country. The choice of the commander was more easily defended; no member of the cabinet blushed at that.

I have dwelt the longer on these characters, from the same principle as the sight, after rocks, ruins, and precipices, reposes upon a flat surface though fen or quagmire. On Bonaparte I have thrown together my materials as I caught them from him, not wishing to represent a whole, where no whole existed: he was courtier and postilion, sage and assassin, quicker than the pen could trace the words. He never was observed

O'er cities shadowing some dread name divine  
 Palace and fane return the hyena's cry,  
 And hoofless camels in long single line  
 Stalk slow, with foreheads level to the sky.

---

in a moment of highly bad or highly good humour, without expressing it by some boisterous sally of ill-breeding. Even those who had seen him daily, and knew him well, stood in astonishment sometimes at the discrepancy between his language and his office, at the disparity between the action of his hands and his embroidered mantle. Be it remembered, that, if I have represented him as a thing not luminous in itself, I have forborne to represent him as one in which all light is absorbed, or upon which none can fall. He did both greater evil and greater good than all the other potentates of his time united: the larger part of the evil he did, they perpetuate, and nearly all the good they abolish. Priestcraft and oligarchy, the two worst of curses, are restored throughout Europe, and royalets are only plucked forth from under his coop, to be engaged and hoodwinked by their old decoy-men. After taking up, from one side and the other of this strange phenomenon, the brighter parts and the darker, in as just proportions as I could,

*Treis imbris torti radios, treis nubis aquosæ,*

I would divert the public mind from dissatisfaction at the present, by shewing in brief retrospect the last example of his selfishness. In the retreat from Moscow he provided only for his own security: the famished and the wounded were without protection. Those, to the amount of forty thousand, who supplied the army with occasional food by distant and desperate excursions, were uninformed of its retreat: they perished to a man, and caused to perish by their disappearance a far greater number of their former comrades. Forty miles of road were excavated in the snow. The army seemed a phantasmagoria: no sound of horses feet was heard, no wheel of waggon or artillery, no voice of man. Regiment followed regiment in long and broken lines, between two files of sol-

No errant outcast of a lawless isle,  
Mocker of heaven and earth, with vows and prayers,  
Comes thy confiding offspring to beguile,  
And rivet to his wrist the chain he wears.

---

diers the whole way. Some stood erect, some reclined a little, some had laid their arms beside them, some clasped them; all were dead. Several of these had slept in that position, but the greater part had been placed so, to leave the more room, and not a few, from every troop and detachment, took their voluntary station amongst them. The barbarians, who at other seasons rush into battle with loud cries, rarely did so. Skins covered not their bodies only but their faces, and, such was the intensity of cold, they reluctantly gave vent, from amidst the spoils they had taken, to this first and most natural expression of their vengeance. Their spears, although often of soft wood, as the beech, the birch, the pine, remained unbroken, while the sword and sabre of the adversary cracked like ice. Feeble from inanition, inert from weariness, and somnolent from the iciness that enthralled them, they sank into forgetfulness with the Cossacks in pursuit and coming down upon them, and even while they could yet discern, for they looked more frequently to that quarter, the more fortunate of their comrades marching home. The gay and lively Frenchman, to whom war had been sport and pastime, was now reduced to such apathy, that, in the midst of some kind speech which a friend was to communicate to those he loved the most tenderly, he paused from rigid drowsiness, and bade the messenger adieu. Some, it is reported (and what is unnatural is, in such extremity, not incredible) closed their eyes and threw down their muskets, while they could use them still, not from hope nor from fear, but part from indignation at their general, whose retreats had always been followed by the total ruin of his army; and part, remembering with what brave nations they had once fought gloriously, from the impossibility of defeating or resisting so barbarous and obscure an enemy.

Britain speaks now . . . her thunder thou hast heard . . .  
Conqueror in every land, in every sea ;  
Valour and Truth proclaim the Almighty word,  
And all thou ever hast been, thou shalt be.

“Defender and passionate lover of thy country,” cried Kleber, “thou art less unfortunate than thy auguries. Enthusiastic Englishman, to which of thy conquests have ever been imparted the benefits of thy laws? Thy governors have not even communicated their language to their vassals. Nelson and Sydney are illustrious names: the vilest have often been preferred to them, and severely have they been punished for the importunity of their valour. We Frenchmen have undergone much: but throughout the whole territory of France, throughout the range of all her new dominions, not a single man of abilities has been neglected. Remember this, ye who triumph in our excesses. Ye who dread our example, speak plainly; is not this among the examples ye are the least inclined to follow? . . . Call my staff, and a file of soldiers.

“Gentlemen, he who lies under the pyramid,

Napoleon moved on, surrounded by what guards were left to him, thinking more of Paris than of Moscow, more of the conscripts he could enroll than of the veterans he had left behind him.

seems to have possessed a vacant mind and full heart, qualities unfit for a spy. Indeed he was not one. He was the friend and companion of that Sydney Smith who did all the mischief at Toulon, when Hood and Elliot fled from the city, and who lately, you must well remember, broke some of our pipes before Acre... a ceremony which gave us to understand, without the formalities of diplomacy, that the Grand-Signor declined the honour of our company to take our coffee with him at Constantinople."

Then turning to the file of soldiers,

"A body lies under the Great Pyramid: go, bury it six feet deep. If there is any man among you capable of writing a good epitaph, and such as the brave owe to the brave, he shall have my authority to carve it with his knife upon the Great Pyramid, and his name may be brought back to me."

"Allow me the honour," said a lieutenant; "I fly to obey."

"Perhaps," replied the commander in chief, "it may not be amiss to know the character, the adventures, or at least the name"....

"No matter, no matter, my general."

"Take them, however," said Kleber, holding a copy, "and all try your wits."



“General,” said Menou, smiling, “you never gave a command more certain to be executed... What a blockhead was that king, whoever he was, who built so enormous a monument for a wandering Englishman!”

---

The name of Bonaparte (what no writer has remarked) seems to be derived from *Bon-reparte*, now called *San Genasio di buon riposo*, a village under Samminiato, in which town the family resided afterwards. The name of *Bon-reparte* is preserved by Benedict of Peterborough in his *Life of Henry II of England*, wherein are described the halts of Philippe Auguste...*per Castellum Florentinum, et per Saint Denys de Bon-reparte, &c.*

Although I did my utmost in pursuing this tyrant to death, recommending and insisting on nothing less, yet I acknowledge that I am sorry he is dead. Seeing what I see, I would preserve him as the countryman preserves the larger ant, to consume the smaller, more numerous and more active in mischief.

Europe wants a fierce housedog to keep in check those impudent little thieves, who molest and plunder her in all directions, shouting and laughing at her slowness and imbecility.

# CONVERSATION XI.

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BONAPARTE

AND THE

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

# BONAPARTE

AND THE

## PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

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PRESIDENT.

SIRE, while the car of Victory is awhile suspended in its course, and mothers are embracing those pledges of affection, which a frightful Revolution hath spared to their maternity, happy France is devising, under the auspices of her immortal hero, new pangs and afflictions for the tyrants of the ocean. The radiant star that shone upon your Majesty's nativity, throws a lustre that eclipses the polar. It embellishes our soil, and renders it fruitful in all those resources of industry, which will for ever keep it independent of distant and less happy climates. The beet-root, indigenious plant, satisfied all the wishes of a nation at once the most elegant and luxurious. *Frenchmen, I am contented with you,* said her tutelary Genius:

yes, your Majesty said it. Suddenly a thousand voices cry, *Let us make fresh sacrifices : we have wished ; it is not enough ; we will do more.*

Ardent to fulfill their duties, and waiting but to be instructed how, the brave youth, and those whose grey hairs are so honorable, implore that paternal wisdom which never will cease to watch over them, that they may receive those august commands which will accomplish their destinies.

The enemy no longer pollutes our soil : France recovers her attitude. Your Majesty wishes no new provinces : greater triumphs, wider dominion, to the successor of Charlemagne and of Trajan ! That mighty mind, to bless a beloved and grateful people, shall make the animal kingdom confederate with the vegetable. Such are his conquests : the only ones that remain for him to atchieve.

From the calm of their retreats the sages of France step forth ! and behold the decree which your Majesty had already uttered at the bottom of their hearts.

#### DECREE.

To put our implacable enemies to confusion, to drive proud Albion to despair, to abolish the feudal system, to wither for ever the iron arm of despotism, and to produce, or rather to place

within the reach of all your Majesty's subjects, those luxuries which a long war, excited by the cupidity of the monopolizing islanders, seemed to have interdicted to our policy, and which our discretion taught us manfully to resign, it is proposed that every regiment in the French service be subjected to a mild and beneficent diabetes. Our chemists and physicians, ever labouring for the public good, have discovered that this disposition of the body, which if improperly managed might become a disease, is attended with the most useful results, and produces a large quantity of the saccharine matter.

The process was pointed out by Nature herself, who also did more, in the person of your Majesty, and of several of the Grand Dignitaries of the Empire, when the barbarians of the North flew from their capital, which they reduced to ashes, and threw themselves in consternation on the Vistula, the Oder, and the Elbe, to the very shores of the Cimbrian Chersonese.

I therefore have the honour of submitting to your Majesty, that the sugar, the produce of this simple operation, be made subsidiary to that of the beet-root in the proportion of one-third; and that this lively and long-desired sugar, so salutary to man from its prior relationship with his constituent

principles, and so eager for its reunion, be the only sugar used in the French empire and among the good and faithful allies of your Majesty: and further, that after the expiration of fourteen years, every Power in amity with France may fabricate it within its own territory.

His Majesty the Emperor of the French, King of Italy, Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, and Mediator of Switzerland, was graciously pleased to make the following reply.

Sir, president of my senate, I am content with you. My ministers of war and of the interior shall be charged to carry your proposition into effect.

# **CONVERSATION XII.**

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**BISHOP BURNET**

**AND**

**HUMPHREY HARDCASTLE.**

## BISHOP BURNET

AND

## HUMPHREY HARDCASTLE.

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HARDCASTLE.

I AM curious, my lord Bishop, to know somewhat about the flight and escape of my namesake and great uncle Sir Humphrey Hardcastle, who was a free-spoken man, witty, choleric, and hospitable, and who cannot have been altogether an alien from the researches of your lordship into the history of the two late reigns.

BURNET.

Why, Mr. Hardcastle, I do well remember the story of that knight, albeit his manners and morals were such as did entertain me little in his favour. For he hunted and drank and fornicated, and (some do averr) swore, which however, mark me, I do not deliver from my own knowledge, nor from any written and grave document. I the more wonder at him, as he had lived among the



Roundheads, as they were contemptuously called, and the minister of his parish was Ezechiel Stedman, a puritan of no ill repute. Howbeit he was ensnared by his worldlymindedness, and fell into evil courses. The Lord, who permitted him a long while to wallow in this mire, caught him by the heel, so to say, as he was coming out, and threw him into great peril in another way. For although he had mended his life, and had espoused your great aunt Margaret Pouncey, whose mother was a Touchet, two staid women, yet did he truly in a boozing-bout, such as some country-gentlemen I could mention do hold after dinner, say of the Duke,

*James, a murrain on him, is a papist.*

Now among the others of his servants was one Will Taunton, a sallow shining-faced knave, sweaty with impudence. I do remember to have seen the said Taunton in the pillory, for some prominent part he had enacted under the doctor Titus Oates; and a countrywench, as I suppose her to have been from her apparel and speech, said unto me, plucking my sleeve, *Look, parson, Will's forehead is like a rank mushroom in a rainy morning; and yet, I warrant you, they shew it forsooth as the cleanest and honestest part about him.*

To continue: Will went straitway, and communicated the words of his master to Nicolas Shottery, the Duke's valet. Nick gave unto him a shilling, having first spatten thereon, as he, according to his superstition, said, for luck. The Duke ordered to be counted out unto him eight shillings more, together with a rosary, the which, as he was afraid of wearing it (for he had not lost all grace), he sold at Richmond for two groats. He was missed in the family, and his roguery was scented. On which, nothing was foolisher, improperer, or unreasonabler, than the desperate push and strain Charles made, put upon it by his brother James, to catch your uncle Hum Hardcastle. Hum had his eye upon him, slipped the noose, and was over into the Low-Countries.

Abraham Cowley, one of your Pindarique Lyrists, a great stickler for the measures of the first Charles, was posted after him. But he played the said Abraham a scurvy trick, seizing him by his fine flowing curls, on which he prided himself mightily, like another Absalom; cuffing him, and, some do say, kicking him in such dishonest wise as I care not to mention, to his, the said Abraham's, great incommodity and confusion. It is agreed on all hands that he handled him very roughly, sending him back to his master with a

flea in his ear, who gave him but cold comfort, and told him it would be an ill compliment to ask him to be seated.

“Phil White,” added he, “may serve you, Cowley. You need not look back, man, nor spread your fingers like a figleaf on the place. Phil does not carry a bottle of peppered brine in his pocket: he is a clever, apposite, upright little prig: I have often had him under my eye close enough, and I promise he may safely be trusted on the blind side of you.”

Then, after these aggravating and childish words, turning to the Duke, as Abraham was leaving the presence, he is reported to have said, I hope untruly . . .

“But, damn it, brother! the jest would have been highthened if we could have hanged the knave.” Meaning not indeed his messenger, but the abovesaid Hum Hardcastle. And on James shaking his head, sighing, and muttering his doubt of the King’s sincerity, and his vexation at so bitter a disappointment,

“Oddsfish! Jim,” said his Majesty, “the motion was Hum’s own: I gave him no jog, upon my credit. His own choler did it, a rogue! and he would not have waited to be invested with the *order*, if I had pressed him ever so civilly. I will

oblige you another time in any thing, but we can hang only those we can get at."

It would appear that there was a sore and rankling grudge between them, of long standing, and that there had been divers flings and flouts backwards and forwards, on this side the water, on the score of their mistress Poesy, whose favours to them both, if a man may judge from the upshot, left no such a mighty matter for heartburnings and ill blood.

This reception had such a stress and stir upon the bile and spirits of doctor Spratt's friend (for such he was, even while writing about his mistresses), that he wooed his Pegasus another way, and rid gentlier. It fairly untuned him for Chloes and fantastical things of all sorts, set him upon anotherguess scent, gave him ever afterwards a soberer and staidier demeanour, and turned his mind to contentment.

## HARDCASTLE.

The pleasure I have taken in the narration of your Lordship is for the greater part independent of what concerns my family. I never knew that my uncle was a poet, and could hardly have imagined that he approached near enough to Mr. Cowley for jealousy or competition.

## BURNET.

Indeed they who discoursed on such matters were of the same opinion, excepting some few, who see nothing before them and every thing behind. These declared that Hum would overtop Abraham, if he could only drink rather less, think rather more, and feel rather rightlier: that he had great spunk and spirit, and that not a fan was left upon a lap when any one sang his airs. Poets, like ministers of state, have their parties, and it is difficult to get at truth, upon questions not capable of demonstration nor founded on matter of fact. To take any trouble about them is an unwise thing: it is like mounting a wall covered with broken glass: you cut your fingers before you reach the top, and you only discover at last that it is, within a span or two, of equal highth on both sides. Who would have imagined that the youth who was carried to his long home the other day, I mean my Lord Rochester's reputed child, Mr. George Nelly, was for several seasons a great poet? Yet I remember the time when he was so famous an one, that he ran after Mr. Milton up Snow-hill, as the old gentleman was leaning on his daughter's arm from the Poultry, and, treading down the heel of his shoe, called him a rogue and a liar, while another poet sprang out from a

grocer's shop, clapping his hands, and crying "*Bravely done! by Belzebub! the young cock spurs the blind buzzard gallantly!*" On some neighbour representing to Mr. George the respectable character of Mr. Milton, and the probability that at some future time he might be considered as among our geniuses, and such as would reflect a certain portion of credit on his ward, and asking him withal why he appeared to him a rogue and liar, he replied: "I have proofs known to few: I possess a sort of drama by him, entitled *Comus*, which was composed for the entertainment of Lord Pembroke, who held an appointment under the king, and this very John has since changed sides, and written in defence of the Commonwealth."

Mr. George began with satirizing his father's friends, and confounding the better part of them with all the hirelings and nuisances of the age, with all the scavengers of lust and all the link-boys of literature; with Newgate solicitors, the patrons of adulterers and forgers, who, in the long vacation, turn a penny by puffing a ballad, and are promised a shilling in silver, for their own benefit, on crying down a religious tract. He soon became reconciled to the latter, and they raised him upon their shoulders above the heads of the wittiest and the wisest. This served a

whole winter. Afterwards, whenever he wrote a bad poem, he supported his sinking fame by some signal act of profligacy, an elegy by a seduction, an heroic by an adultery, a tragedy by a divorce. On the remark of a learned man, that irregularity is no indication of genius, he began to lose ground rapidly, when on a sudden he cried out at the Haymarket, *there is no God*. It was then surmised more generally and more gravely that there was something in him, and he stood upon his legs almost to the last. *Say what you will*, once whispered a friend of mine, *there are things in him strong as poison, and original as sin*. Doubts however were entertained by some, on more mature reflection, whether he earned all his reputation by this witticism: for soon afterwards he declared at the Cockpit, that he had purchased a large assortment of cutlasses and pistols, and that, as he was practising the use of them from morning to night, it would be imprudent in persons who were without them, either to laugh or to boggle at the Dutch vocabulary with which he had enriched our language. In fact, he had invented new rhymes in profusion, by such words as *trackschuyt*, *Wageninghen*, *Skiermonikoog*, *Bergen-op-Zoom*, and whatever is appertaining to the marketplaces of fish, flesh, fowl, flowers, and

legumes, not to omitt the dockyards and barracks and ginshops, with various kinds of essences and drugs.

Now, Mr. Hardcastle, I would not censure this: the idea is novel, and does no harm: but why should a man push his neck into a halter to sustain a catch or glee?

Having had some concern in bringing his reputed father to a sense of penitence for his offences, I waited on the youth likewise, in a former illness, not without hope of leading him ultimately to a better way of thinking. I had hesitated too long: I found him far advanced in his convalescence. My arguments are not worth repeating. He replied thus.

“ I change my mistresses as Tom Southern his shirt, from economy. I cannot afford to keep few; and I am determined not to be forgotten till I am vastly richer. But I assure you, doctor Burnet, for your comfort, that if you imagine I am led astray by lasciviousness, as you call it, and lust, you are quite as much mistaken as if you called a book of arithmetic a bawdy book. I calculate on every kiss I give, modest or immodest, on lip or paper. I ask myself one question only; what will it bring me?” On my marveling and raising up my hands, “ You churchmen,” he



added, with a laugh, "are too hot in all your quarters for the calm and steady contemplation of this high mystery."

He spake thus loosely, Mr. Hardcastle, and I confess, I was disconcerted and took my leave of him. If I gave him any offence at all, it could only be when he said, *I should be sorry to die before I have written my life*, and I replied, *Rather say before you have mended it*.

"But, doctor," continued he, "the work I propose may bring me a hundred pounds." Whereunto I rejoined, "That which I, young gentleman, suggest in preference will be worth much more to you."

At last he is removed from among the living: let us hope the best; to wit, that the mercies which have begun with man's forgetfulness will be crowned with God's forgiveness.

HARDCASTLE.

I perceive, my lord bishop, that writers of perishable fame may leave behind them something worth collecting. Represented to us by historians like your lordship, we survey a light character as a film in agate, and a noxious one as a toad in marble.

BURNET.

How near together, Mr. Hardcastle, are things

which appear to us the most remote and opposite!  
how near is life to death, and vanity to glory!  
How deceived are we, if our expressions are any  
proofs of it, in what we might deem the very  
matters most subject to our senses! the haze above  
our heads we call the heavens, and the thinnest of  
the air the firmament.

**CONVERSATION XIII.**

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**PETER LEOPOLD**

**AND THE**

**PRESIDENT DU PATY.**

PETER LEOPOLD  
AND THE  
PRESIDENT DU PATY.

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AMONG the few Frenchmen who, within the last fifty years, have reflected much honour of any kind on their country, a distinguished rank is holden by the President Du Paty. His letters on Italy contain the most acute observations, and his interview with Leopold forms no inconsiderable portion of their interest. Pleased with the justness of his remarks and the pointedness of his expressions, and perhaps hoping to derive some advantage to the new Code from his deep study and long practise of jurisprudence, Leopold invited him to return the next day.

At the hour appointed, the Granduke was leaning with his elbow on the chimneypiece, that he might neither rise at the entrance of the President nor receive him in the manner of a sovrain.

The commencement of all conversation is trifling, even among the greatest men: this expression, whenever I use it, means men of the greatest genius and worth. The usual courtesies, then, having been exchanged, Leopold thus addressed his illustrious visitant.

LEOPOLD.

I know, M. Du Paty, that your compliments, rich and abundant as they are, cannot stifle nor supersede your sincerity; and that if I seriously ask your opinion on the defects of my Code, you will answer me just as seriously.

The President bowed, and, observing that Leopold had paused, replied.

PRESIDENT.

Sir, I cannot bear in mind all the articles of your Code; and unless I could do so, my observations, if not erroneous, must be imperfect. On these subjects we may not talk vaguely and fancifully as on subjects of literature. Where man is to decide on man, where the happiness or wretchedness of one hangs on the lips of another, where a breath may extinguish a family or blight a generation, every thing should be tried particle by particle... To have abolished capital punishments is a proof, in certain circumstances, no less of wisdom than of humanity: but I would suggest to your con-

sideration, whether you have provided sufficiently for the protection of property and of honour. Your prisons are empty; but are you sure that the number of criminals is less? Or are you of opinion that it is better to see them at large than in custody?

LEOPOLD.

Here are few assassinations, and no highway robberies.

PRESIDENT.

I will explain the reason. In other countries the prostitutes are a distinct class: in Tuscany not. Where there are no jealousies there will be few assassinations. Supposing a case of tyranny, the Tuscans will wriggle under it rather than writhe; and if even they should writhe, yet they will never stand erect. They will committ no assassinations from the other motive to them, that is, for the purpose of robbing: and robbery on the highway they will not committ, having such facilities for committing safer and more compendious. Every man may plunder the vineyard of another at small hazard of prosecution; nor is there a single one in all Tuscany that is not plundered repeatedly every autumn, unless the owner pass his nights in it during the maturity of the grapes. If he prosecutes, he suffers a heavier punishment

than the prosecuted: he loses several days of labour, and receives no indemnity; nor indeed is there any security against a similar injury the succeeding year. Many robberies require impossible proofs. There are others the crime of which is extenuated by what ought to be an aggravation, because they are also breaches of trust. I know that your Highness has enacted clement laws in order to humanize the people, and that violence might never be added to rapine. But laws should be formed according to the character of the nation that is to receive them. The Italians were always more addicted to robbery and revenge than any other European people; crimes equally proceeding from idleness and effeminacy.

LEOPOLD.

On what authority do you found your assertion, M. Du Paty, that the Italians were always so addicted to theft?

PRESIDENT.

I will not urge as a proof of it the increasing severity of the ancient laws, which would only demonstrate their imperfection: but I will insist on the documents of the Latin writers *de re rustica*, who give particular directions on the breed of house-dogs for the safeguard of the farms, however far removed be the subject from cattle and cultivation.

Nothing similar has entered into the scheme of any modern author on agriculture. Added to which, there is hardly a Latin writer, whether in prose or poetry, whatever be his subject, who does not say something about thieves; so familiar was the idea. The word itself extended, in more than one direction, beyond the character it first designated: Plautus calls a soldier *latro*, Horace calls a servant *fur*. The Romans, who far excelled us in the greater part of their institutions, were much inferior in what by way of excellence we call the *police*. Hence, in early times, an opening to theft, among a people less influenced than any other by continence and honour. In many whole provinces of England, France, and Holland, and throughout all the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, the countryman may sleep in perfect security with his doors wide open: in Italy, not a single village, not a single house from Como to Reggio. The windows of every dwelling, in Florence, even of your own palace, are barricadoed by grates of iron; in other words, every dwelling, your own among the rest, holds forth in the censor's face a libel against the government. The fault is partly in the laws, and partly in the magistrature; for there is no nation so easily coerced by fear, as this. I recommend not cruelty. Those laws are cruel which are illusory, dilatory, or costly, to



such as appeal to their protection; not those which award a stated and known severity of punishment for proven offences. The latter are no more so than a precipice or a penknife: I may leap down the one, I may cut my throat with the other; I may do neither. I pay taxes for the security of my person, my property, and my character: every farthing I pay beyond for law, if I can demonstrate the equity of my cause, is an injustice. Sistus Quintus is the only sovran who appears to have acted uniformly according to the national character. Happy would it have been for his country, had he united to omniscience another attribute of the Godhead, immortality.

LEOPOLD.

In that case, M. Du Paty, I should not have had the pleasure of your conversation here. I see however that cruel laws do not necessarily make a people cruel. The Romans (I would rather call them the inhabitants of Rome) were less so under Sistus Quintus than before or since; and your neighbours the English are, and have always been, the most humane of men, under penal laws the most iniquitous and atrocious.

PRESIDENT.

The laws of England have been the subject of eulogy to many learned and sagacious men. I have read them repeatedly and pondered them

attentively. I find them often dilatory, often uncertain, often contradictory, often cruel, often ruinous. Whenever they find a man down they keep him so, and the more pertinaciously the more earnestly he appeals to them. Like tilers, in mending one hole, they always make another. There is no country in which they move with such velocity where life is at stake, or, where property is to be defended, so slowly. I have hardly the courage to state these facts, and want it totally to hazard a reflection on them. Can we wonder that, upon a Bench under so rotten an effigy of Justice, sate a Scrogges, a Jefferies, a Finch, a Page!

Some of the English laws are most strange, and equally strange are the expressions. I may be punished *for bringing a man into contempt*: as if any one could be brought into it without stirring a step on his own legs towards it. Aristides may have been laughed at, Phocion may have been reviled; but the judge who should have said that either had been brought into contempt, would have been covered with it himself by every citizen of Athens. The English are somewhat less quick in the apprehension of absurdity. This expression is not merely an absurdity, but a most pernicious one. The doctrine was inculcated by M. Murray,

a Scotchman by birth, but an English judge, and the opinion of judges in that country, when once acted upon, passes into law. The national character, if I am not greatly mistaken, will within half a century feel the sad effect of this decision. Nothing in the world is such a safeguard of liberty and of virtue, as the maxim '*Ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne qui dveri non audeat,*' or such a loss and misfortune as its abolition. I would punish most severely every thing false against character, and permitt every thing true, as being the fairest chastisement of faults and follies, the mildest and surest and most expeditious. On the contrary, an English judge would punish in a fellow-citizen what he applauds in a Roman historian.

It may indeed be doubted whether the laws of England have not been gradually deteriorating for above seven hundred years; that is, whether they have not been accumulating more anomalies, more uncertainties, more delays, more costs, more contradictions, more cruelties.

LEOPOLD.

In England a peasant is slaughtered for the slaughter of another's sheep against his consent: a servant for stealing his master's spoon or wig: a little vagabond, starving at christmas, snatches a rag from a hedge, and is recommended to the

hangman for correction...Are these laws better than mine?

PRESIDENT.

No, sir; they are worse in themselves; yet your Highness would do well to make the exchange, throwing back to the English, the boy, rag, spoon, and wig. They would suit your people better, and might fairly be laid aside when it had outgrown them: but I suspect they would be serviceable many years. Punish all crimes and you will punish few, remitt a single one and you create a thousand. I must here observe to you that the privilege of pardon in a prince, is the most flagrant of usurpations. It belongs for the greater part to the person injured; but not entirely: the magistrate, who takes cognizance of the particulars, should also give his assent in the name of the community, but not in consequence of any private petition or any subsequent representation. I perceive with pleasure in your Code that fines occur but seldom.

LEOPOLD.

Pray, M. Du Paty, give me your reasons. If they are the same as mine they strengthen them; if they are different, they are more.

PRESIDENT.

Fines and halters, the minions of English jurists,

are the most summary and the least summary of chastisements, and by far the worst. A great fine does no harm whatever to a man of great fortune: it is a bribe to the laws, and ought as much to be prohibited as a bribe to the judge. It ruins, not the poorer man, but the poorer man's children: it deprives him of what he perhaps may do without, but what they cannot, without an injury to society. If his education was defective, which the offence goes a great way towards proving, theirs must be more defective still, because the means of educating them are taken away or lessened. In some countries heavier fines are imposed for injuries or affronts committed against the superiors of the offender, slighter for those against the inferiors: this, if indeed they are ever equitable in such cases, ought to be reversed: for the inferior is the weaker in calumny and injustice, as in other things. We cannot strike so hard from below as from above. The rich and powerful man does not lose even so much as a salute by it, while the artisan or tradesman loses in one instance a customer, in another ten or twenty, in another his livelihood.

LEOPOLD.

In reply to the former of your remarks, I know not what else to say than that all punishments must in some degree touch the innocent; and that

the family of every criminal is a loser in estimation, and consequently in property and prosperity, by his punishment, however just.

PRESIDENT.

The first duty of a legislator is to proportion penalties; the second is to isolate them as much as possible, and to embank the waters of bitterness. I would therefore, both for the sake of compensation to the unoffending and to guard against offences, place the children of criminals in schools or workhouses, appointed for that purpose, and forbid them to keep the paternal name, which, for more than one reason, should be the first thing forfeited. A workhouse should contain a school, not of writing or reading, but of industry. If you wish to make the bulk of men wiser, do not put books into their hands, which they will either throw away from indifference, or must drop from necessity, but give them employment suitable to their abilities, and let them be occupied in what will repay them the most certainly and the best. Their thoughts will thus be directed to one main point, and you will produce good artisans and good citizens: this is the wisdom for every day in the week; and what is higher than this will never be impeded by it, and will often rise out of it.

## LEOPOLD.

I will consider your advice: I say it as legislator, not as prince: for in our language, you know, when we promise to consider we purpose to neglect. Here I may venture to say, that suitable to my character, my laws are wary and circumspect.

## PRESIDENT.

I am afraid that, in the practise of jurisprudence, circumspection more than rarely means dilatoriness. Delay of justice is injustice. When offences are defined and punishments are apportioned, no circumspection is necessary. According to the practise in Tuscany, if I complain of a robbery, a young commissary of police examines me, and writes my deposition, without reading it over to me that I may acknowledge or challenge its correctness. After several weeks another young commissary examines me again; at the same interval a third; and if my relation varies a tittle from what is found written by either, no chance remains of recovering the loss or of punishing the offender. These young men are paid no better than postillions, and it seldom happens that one of the three is not corrupted by the offender. Travellers cannot delay their journey: their valets know it:

hence hardly one in twenty but finds himself robbed in this city. Witnesses are required where witnesses cannot be expected: for which reason treachery is the constant companion of violence, and all manliness of character is excluded. It is remarkable, that in a single week two cases have occurred in point. A young man in the theatre applauded an actress: one sitting near him called him a blockhead for his admiration. He replied. The severer critic, to prove his superior judgement, made a different use of his hands, applying them to the face and frill of the applauder, who stood motionless as the prompter himself, and on the following day applied to the police. It being proved that he returned no blow, the Aristarchus was condemned to a month's imprisonment. A few days before or afterwards (I forget which) a young forener, a painter by profession, who had refused a favour to another, was waylaid by him in the street at dusk, and a blow was aimed at his head from behind with a club, which, if he had not at the moment heard the feet of his assassin, must have killed him, as it required from its massiveness the use of both hands, and the assassin was a remarkably strong man. The forener turned and avoided it, immediately aiming a blow at his adversary. The facts were proved: and this blow,



necessary for self-preservation, was alleged as the reason why the crime was punished by one day's confinement. Yet this offender, it cannot be doubted, had premeditated an assassination, and had carried it as far into effect as he could. For this attempt he was almost unpunished; and if he had succeeded in it he would not have been punished at all; for the witnesses were brought together only by the contest. Had there been no contest there would have been no witnesses: it being the *etiquette* here in Tuscany not to interfere in another man's affairs without strong solicitation. Now the dead can neither ask favours, nor, what is equally necessary, requite them. Cowardice then is a merit, courage a bar to justice. What can be expected from a people, the least confident of all in personal strength and honour, and according to some the most insincere and fraudulent, when such dispositions are countenanced by such institutions?

LEOPOLD.

I need not remark, M. Du Paty, that institutions are with difficulty laid aside.

PRESIDENT.

Yet your Highness has abolished a very ancient one, that of monachism, I forbear to say totally, but surely almost so, and that without detriment

or danger. Now the forest is thinned, we discover its boundaries and can make our way through.

LEOPOLD.

The business is done then to your satisfaction.

PRESIDENT.

Not altogether so. In my journey from Pisa to Florence, I inquired what was allotted to each ejected monk, and was informed that it amounted to somewhat less than what each galley-slave could earn in prison; facilities and materials of which earning are supplied to him by government, but are supplied in no measure to the ejected monk.

LEOPOLD.

The fellows are idlers\* and rogues: none of

\* There is less agreement on the character of reformers than of others, and Peter Leopold was a reformer. It is reasonable to suppose that he should have defended his conduct in some such manner as is represented in this dialogue. His enemies accuse him of avarice; and support their opinion by insisting on the inadequate education and slender maintenance of his natural children. Irony may say of Leopold, what Flattery said of Cosmo III, that he was *pater pauperum*. The hospitals however were abundantly supplied and carefully attended. After his decease, the lands belonging to them have been granted on perpetual leases, their income much diminished, and their superintendence much neglected. At Pisa the poorest and most afflicted are so reluctant to enter the hospital, that the number of patients is reduced to *half* of what it was in the time of Leopold, and the quantity of accommodations and of comforts to less. At Florence the public

them understand and few of them believe what they teach. I am not more imperious and arbi-

is *permitted* to send subsidies of food twice in the week, and instances have occurred of patients who have suffered severely by the sudden effect of a nutritious meal.

The less contemptible of princes love money for the sake of power, the more contemptible love power for the sake of money. Avarice is condemned in them from a sentiment of avarice. Other faults injurious in a greater degree to the public morality are overlooked or forgiven. The principal one of Peter Leopold was his employment of spies and informers. Curiosity and lust were the motives; not cruelty nor suspicion. He and Lord Cowper divided all the beauty of Tuscany in such a manner as that neither should be jealous. In every family throughout Florence, high or low, one of the domestics or one of the children communicated to the agents of the Granduke a detail of its most minute affairs. No harm perhaps was perceived by them in these communications which never led to punishment and seldom to inconvenience; but in fact they did greater mischief to the national character than the best institutions could remedy or compensate. Hence venality, bad-faith, suspicion, cowardice; hence the prostration of private and the extinction of social virtue. Chetani, a thief-taker, a man equally of scandalous life and of coarse manners, walked into all the societies of Florence unmolested: age lost its dignity, youth its vivacity in his presence: all bowed before the grand informer. This creature has formed the manners of two generations and perhaps the national character for centuries to come. Leopold was in such security by his means, that on his departure from Tuscany, he left behind him not a soldier in Florence. He saw growing up a generation of Pygmies; and he saw them surrounded by cranes, with clipt wings and broken beaks.

As we frequently see in the progeny of spotted animals, that some are all-white, others all-black, so appears it in the family of Leopold, that one has inherited all the brighter parts,

trary with the monks, than the monks have been with princes. I have removed their cells, they have removed our palaces. The church of Saint Isidore in Seville was opposite the royal palace.

the others all the darker of his character. In removing my hand from the portraiture, I wish I could dismiss the most excellent prince of his age, with merely a charge of unwise curiosity, of unworthy suspicion, or of too vague an indulgence in sensuality. I wish he had always observed in himself the justice he enforced in others. The Counts del Benino for services rendered to Florence inherited certain valuable privileges: Leopold annulled them. Del Benino petitioned that he might appeal to the courts of justice. Leopold frankly and willingly assented. The judges fancied they should flatter him by displaying in their decision a luminous proof of his equity, and gave a sentence in favour of the plaintiff. Leopold disregarded it, and refused Del Benino any satisfaction for his loss.

I shall not be accused of flattery in recording some wise remarks and good actions of the reigning Granduke; for I am the only Englishman at Florence, I believe, who never goes to court, leaving it to my hatter, who is a very honest man, and to my breechesmaker, who never failed to fit me.

When the minister of Austria, and another, laid before him a list of freemasons, *carbonari*, and various subjects for imprisonment or exile, he replied that he knew his people better than strangers could do, and would answer for their conduct.

When some bigot told him that the Florentines ate meat on Fridays, he answered, "I am happy they have it to eat."

When a Pisan professor, a Signor Rossini, who had written sonnets and such other things as the Italians write on every novelty, deaths, marriages, births, arrivals, departures, ribbons, crosses, popes, pandars, catchpoles, academicians, &c. &c. &c. every thing in short from which money or meat may be extracted, and had complimented all the invaders and oc-

Sanchia, the king's daughter, was praying at a window which faced the shrine of the saint, when he appeared to the family, and commanded that the situation of the palace should be changed, as it was dangerous to have a woman so near his ashes\*. The body is dangerous from a shew of enthusiasm, of all pests upon earth the most contagious. Those who believe nothing make others believe most; as the best actors on our theatres are those who retain the most perfect command over their feelings, voice, and countenance. Our spiritual Mamelukery is as ambitious of power and riches as if it had children to inherit them, and the money that falls into their hands lies dead, the land indifferently cultivated. I shall fumigate my old hives, one after another, not minding the buz from within.

I shall next abolish the greater part of the festivals, for every saint in the calendar has made ten thousand beggars and ten thousand thieves, not counting monks. Frequently, when I have been vehement against abuses, but silent on my

cupants of his country by turns, not without gross invectives against Ferdinand, congratulated him on his happy and glorious return, he ordered a timepiece to be given him, as the present most proper to a timeserver.

\* Luca Tudensis Hist. Mirac. Sti Isidori, c. xxxv. Bol-landus,

intentions, the clergy has told me that abuses form no part of their religion: they now tremble at what they call innovation, not knowing or dissembling that, in a pure religion, there can be no other innovations than abuses. They talk to me about the religion of our forefathers, conveyed to us in all its purity from the earliest ages. I am afraid, M. Du Paty, the pear was thumbed at the stalk when it was just ripe, and it rotted almost the next day.

## PRESIDENT.

The priesthood in all religions sings the same anthem. First, the abuses are stoutly defended; but when the ground is no longer tenable, then these abuses form no part of the holy faith. If however they are always found in its company, you may as well say that the cat's skin is not the cat: the creature will make horrible cries if you attempt to strip it off, and perhaps will die of the operation.

You have done much towards the destruction of a system, where fraud has been incessantly building upon fraud for fifteen hundred years. The most dexterous attack ever made against the worship of the Virgin, the principal worship among catholics, which opens so many sidechapels to pilfering and imposture, is that of Cervantes.

LEOPOLD.

I do not remember in what part.

PRESIDENT.

Throughout Don Quixote. Dulcinea was the peerless, the immaculate, and death was denounced against all, who hesitated to admitt the assertion of her perfections. Surely your Highness never could have imagined, that Cervantes was such a Knight-errant as to attack Knight-errantry, a folly that had ceased more than a century, if indeed it was any folly at all; and the idea that he ridiculed the poems and romances founded on it, is not less improbable, for they contained all the literature of the nation, excepting the garniture of chapterhouses, theology, and pervaded, as with a thread of gold, the beautiful histories of this illustrious people. He delighted the idlers of romance by the jokes he scattered amongst them on the false taste of his predecessors and of his rivals; and he delighted his own heart by this solitary archery; well knowing what amusement those who came another day, would find in picking up his arrows and discovering the bull's-eye hits. Charles V was the knight of La Mancha, devoting his labours and vigils, his wars and treaties, to the chimerical idea of making all minds, like watches, turn their indexes, by a simultaneous

movement, to one point. Sancho Panza was the symbol of the people, possessing sound sense in all other matters, but ready to follow the most extravagant visionary in this, and combining implicit belief in it with the grossest sensuality. For, religion, when it is hot enough to produce enthusiasm, burns up and kills every seed entrusted to its bosom.

## LEOPOLD.

Your exposition of the subject is quite novel to me, and your observation on it just. I care nothing about the worship of mapletrees and marble, or the inscriptions under them, or the coronets above: but I am resolved if not to forbid at least to discountenance the canonization of more saints in Tuscany. Many noble families have been ruined by counting a saint amongst them; almost as many as have been enriched by counting a pope. The process costs fifty thousand crowns. When it happens that a poorer man or woman is made the object of adoration, then indeed it is attended with somewhat lighter expense, because the confraternity that solicits it never does so, unless it has some powerful patron at Rome, nor unless the speculation is sure enough to be lucrative.



## PRESIDENT.

It appears to me, sir, that even in a religion resting on peculation and fattening on vice, with violence on the right hand and falsehood on the left, giving every thing to the slothful and taking every thing from the industrious, no evil is worse than the necessity of periodical confession to priests: an evil which, I am afraid, all your power cannot remove nor all your wisdom remedy. It does more than impoverish noble families: it divests them of their respectability. What young woman who has once overcome her sense of shame, so as to expose before a stranger of another sex the first secrets of the heart, and the disclosing germs of the passions, can retain any delicacy of character? Modesty, by lifting up her veil, is changed in all her features; and when she turns her first step aside, is gone for ever.

Compare the women of Saxony and England with those of Italy and, I say it very reluctantly, of France. What a difference! In Florence indeed you rarely see an Englishwoman of character: they are chiefly those who are little respected at home; arrogant, presumptuous, suspicious, credulous, and speaking one of another more maliciously than untruly. But English-

women in their character as in their cloaths contract a great deal of dirt by travelling. Of this there are many causes: such as the filthiness of our continental inns, so shocking to decency, and to nothing of which kind are they accustomed in their own country; the immodest language they hear from all classes, and nearly from all individuals, a thing utterly unknown amongst them at home; the conversations on topics to which not even the most vulgar wretch in England ever alludes in presence of a female; and above all, their intercourse with others of their countrywomen who, from a long residence abroad, have been deeply initiated in foren manners. These lead the fashion: these teach them to talk aloud in their chapels, where they have any, and to feed greedily on the blushes of the more innocent, who at first enter decorously and piously, but who soon do the same towards others, that they may not be thought awkward and ill-bred.

Your Highness is perhaps acquainted with what occurred this morning. The young woman I understand was among the beauties of a little fishing-town in the west of England: an ensign fell in love with her, and married her. She soon observed that it was unfashionable in Italy to live without her *cavaliere servente*: she engaged one:

he went away: she took another. In these matters the number two multiplies rapidly: they followed not singly nor by intervals, but one upon another, like eels down a floodgate after a shower. Having found access to the house of the Minister, she was visited by many, however they declaimed against her, until at last a gallant for some private injury has whipt her twice in the streets this very day. It is hoped she will have interest enough to stop enquiry, and will have received no other harm than a few such circuitous lines as designate the latitudes on a globe, and the name, partly derived from her native place, and partly from her recent misfortune, of *La Nereide Frustata* . . . the whipt Nereid. Nicknames and whippings, when they are once laid on, no one has discovered how to take off.

## LEOPOLD.

What the English ladies may be in their interior I do not pretend to know: but when I compare their manners and address with those of my Florentines, or indeed with those of any other nation, it is far beyond my prerogative to grant them the precedency. Ours are accused of levity at church: they go thither, it is objected, to make love. Be it so. I never saw a Florentine girl or woman, who did not come out in better humour

than she entered, nor an English who did not come out in worse. The heart may surely be as impure from gall as from love; and if we must err on either side, let it rather be towards the kind affections than towards the unkind. The Florentine opens her heart, gives it, and resumes it, as easily as her fan: the Englishwoman abroad keeps hers locked up, as a store-room for the reputations she has torne, or intends to tear, in pieces. She may be indeed a good mother; but if she takes alarm or umbrage at every foot that approaches her, I would rather have such a good mother in cub or kennel, than in my closet, or at my table.

## PRESIDENT.

The Englishwoman is domestic: she of highest rank superintends the village-school, hears the children their lesson, examines their cleanliness, observes their dress, enquires into their health, remarks their conduct, presages their propensities, is amused at their games and is interested in their adventures. She visits the sick, she converses with the aged, she comforts the afflicted, and she carries her sons and daughters with her, to acquire the practise of their duties. Those in England are all diffidence; these in Italy all defiance. Awkward beyond all other women upon earth,

they happily are the most so when they are copying what is bad.

If we desire to know with certainty what religion is best, let us examine in what country are the best fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, wives: we shall there also find the best citizens, and of course the best christians.

LEOPOLD.

Popery, with all her abuses, hath had her converts, and even from among the reformed, and men neither vicious nor ignorant: explain me this.

PRESIDENT.

Reasons and reason are different things. In all religions there have been believers who reflected with equal intensity. Those you mention, serious and melancholy triflers, attach much importance to things of little. After attempting to penetrate and pass the crowd of fathers (as they are called) and saints and martyrs, and knowing that before them lies a vast extent of perplexity and confusion, they stop, exhausted and spiritless, cast back a look of anguish over the ground they have plodded through, hesitate, close their eyes, and sink upon the bosom of infallibility. As if the Almighty had ever invested with his attributes a senseless and vicious priest, studious of nothing

but the usurpation of power and the aggrandisement of family, a creature stained, as the greater part hath been, with murder and incest and other enormities, at which Nature is confounded and Piety in consternation.

## LEOPOLD.

The best among them permitt for money what they and all their statutes condemn. Prohibitions are merely a preparation for indulgences: sins are wealth, masses save souls, virtues are insufficient. Would not you relieve your father from the agonies of hell, when a petticoat tied by you round a priest's mistress can accomplish it? do you hesitate? would not you, unnatural wretch! desire that your children should perform the same service for you? I have under my windows here in Florence, no fewer than three uncles married to their nieces by express permission from the *Holiness of our Lord* ... the title always given to him in our gazettes. A little more wealth, with hardly any more impudence, and we (unless I check it) may see brother and sister, father and child, united by the sacrament of matrimony.

## PRESIDENT.

Let me return to my monks, who, whatever may be the abuses of their institutions, have nothing to do with such abominations.

## LEOPOLD.

While they are monks, no: but scatter the dragon's teeth upon a warmer mould, and up springs a body of the same troopers.

Those of Rome were desirous, not many years ago, of beatifying one of your countrymen. *Such a rarity*, said Benedetto Sant-Anna, one of its promoters, *was the brilliant device of father Nepomuceno, and should have gloriously greased our platters.* Benedetto Sant-Anna Torbellini is the natural son of a prince whom I esteem. Neglecting his studies, he was placed in a monastery at Rome, where he was remarkable for his musical powers and his influence on the minds of his fair auditors. An intrigue with the adopted niece of a Cardinal, was his ruin. *It is not enough, Benedetto*, said his Eminence, *that you treat me with this ingratitude; me, who from your earliest youth have treated you with paternal kindness. We have known each other's foibles: but such an affront in my own library, under my own eyes, is unpardonable.*

In vain he protested that, guilty as he was, this aggravation of his guilt was unintentional; that for the universe he would not have wounded the feelings of his early friend and benefactor, who certainly had been towards him a great deal more

than ever father was; that his Eminence at no other time could have been irritated by any levity in him; that he thought the library a sanctuary unentered by human foot; and that he and Costanza had almost blinded themselves, by dusting the cushion where . . . *Begone from my sight, villain; leave Rome instantly*, cried the cardinal. He obeyed, bringing me a letter; on which, knowing his state of probation, I did not hesitate to place him at the head of my young fifiers, and he will shortly be leader of my band. His account of the sanctification is this.

A poor devil had been observed every day, for twenty years, saying his prayers and beating his breast upon a bridge at Rome. It sounded like a drum from inanition voluntary or involuntary. During the performance of these religious duties a boy, who had gone over upon the butress on such an occasion as is usual here in Italy on those places, fell from it, and was taken up by a barge a little way off. We have receipts for doing every thing, miracles not excepted. On the death of the Frenchman, who was attended in his last moments by father Nepomuceno, it was resolved to make a saint of him, as having saved by his intercession the boy who tumbled from the butress. Depositions were made upon oath that he was seen pray-



ing at the time, and that he neither called out for assistance nor exerted any other human aid. Such unequivocal proofs of piety and faith interested all the holy city in his behalf. His cloaths, after being well shaken on the bridge and sprinkled with holy water, were removed to the convent. Benedetto Sant-Anna had the charge of giving them the odour of sanctity, by sprinkling them daily with the powder of a Tonquin bean, a substance then unknown at the capital of the christian world. They were kissed inside and outside, and some of the more pious in this operation licked them furtively.

You must have observed at Rome, M. President, a vast number of lame beggars. No single war, in ancient or modern times, could have lamed so many as now become lame every year. Nearly all are cheats. A consultation was holden by the elder monks; and it was resolved to collect these rogues and vagabonds, and to restore the use of their limbs in the church of the monastery. Two younger members of the confraternity were commissioned to joke with some and to pay a paolo to others. At the morning appointed for the solemnity, the cloisters were filled with these creatures upon crutches, and the church, arrayed in silks of yellow and red, was admirably well

attended. Every one was in full dress: the ladies with naked bosoms, the gentlemen with swords. Suddenly the cloister-door flew open, and a tremendous sound was heard from the pavement to the roof. Tatters rustled round, crutches and knees and bosoms covered with parchment made a noise greater than that of an attack with bayonets. Waves of mendicants, one bending over another, poured in. It was an edifying sight.

An old beggar, really lame, and not in the secret, heard by chance of the ceremony, and hopped in after the rest. Many prayers were offered up to the beggar-saint: the censer was waved frequently before his picture; motions of the hands in various figures were made over the supplicants, and all received signal benefit. Some walked like boys, others walked indeed, but felt pain. Again crosses were made, again breasts were beaten, groans and thanksgivings were mingled, till at last pain and stiffness were unfelt by all; old sinews were knitted anew, lost bones recovered, and even the maimed and mangled left their late supports in the nave of the church as incumbrances, and perhaps as offerings, and walked firm and erect to finish their thanks in the refectory. One only remained. Father Nepomuceno who led the rear, approached him marveling, and said

majestically and somewhat angrily, *Arise*. The beggar, strengthened in faith, made an effort.

*Do not you find yourself better?* said father Nepomuceno.

*Rather better*, replied the mendicant.

*Rise then instantly.*

He raised himself vehemently, and his crutches and knees and knuckles rattled all in unison upon the floor.

*Thou man of little faith! away!* exclaimed father Nepomuceno. He led him into his cell, and cried furiously, *What means this?*

*God knows*, replied the poor good patient creature; *it is God's will.*

*Have you prayed?* asked the father hastily.

*Thrice aday regularly, since I could speak.*

*In church? and always to the Virgin?*

*Yes*, replied the penitentiary.

*Have you confessed?*

*Yes.*

*Have you scourged yourself for your manifold sins?*

*Alas! how can I scourge myself!* cried the beggar with tears in his eyes, from so painful an inability . . . *I can only beat myself when I lie down: and besides, I can committ no offence to any one, which God forbid I should ever wish to do.*

*No offence to any one! is that no offence? How! no offence do you think it to talk thus presumptuously? We are all sinners: unless we did works of charity and penitence, what, in the name of heaven, would become of us! Vile wretch! I must open your eyes; you have secret crimes unexpiated: you have brought dishonour upon him who would have been your patron, and whose manifold mercies you have just witnessed towards the more deserving.*

Upon this he took down a scourge, and bade the beggar kiss it. The contrite man complied. The father unconsciously drew it through his left hand, and found that it was one adapted to his own shoulders. He threw it down indignantly, and seized an old cord from across the back of a chair, with which, and without any farther ceremonials, he scourged the lame beggar heartily, exhorted him to faith, humility, and penitence, and dismissed him weeping and praising God that his eyes were opened\*.

\* Saints are again the *rage*, but saints of *bon ton*. It will hardly be credited that the following is an extract from a Gazette. Firenze, giovedì 19 Dicembre 1822. La religione de' *Servi di Maria* (her servants are very familiar with her) che ha avuto origine in questa capitale, ci ha dato in quest' anno il contento di vedere due de' suoi figli, nostri Toscani, sollevati all' onore degli altari, cioè il B. Ubaldo Adimari,

## PRESIDENT.

I am not the advocate of this order; but it contains, I know, many virtuous individuals; many have resigned all pretensions to patrimony in favour of brothers and sisters, relying on a secure possession of their hoods and cells. I may not be greatly benefitted by their processions or their prayers, but surely as much by these as by the cutlass and pistol of the highwayman.

## LEOPOLD.

I trust however, M. Du Paty, that the laws and establishments are better in Tuscany than in the other states of Italy.

nobile Fiorentino di cui ne furono già fatte le festi nella basilica della SS. Annunziata di questa città, ne' tre giorni della scorsa pasqua, cioè 7. 8. e 9 Aprile, e nella chiesa di monte Senario il di 16 nello scorso maggio, in cui ricorreva la solennità de Ascenzion del Signore, e il B. Bonaventura Bonaccorsi, nobile Pistoiese, del quale oltre le solennissime feste celebrate in Orvieto, *dove passò alla gloria e si conserva il di lui sacro corpo*, ne' giorni 11. 12. e 13 dello scorso ottobre, il di 14 del corrente, giorno della sua *preziosa morte*, ne fù con decente sacra pompa solennizzata la memoria nella predetta basilica della SS. Annunziata. *Rendiamo pertanto grazie all'Altissimo, per averci concesso in questi due Beati Comprensori due potenti avvocati al suo divin trono!* According then to the papists, God is ready enough to receive thanks and perfumery, from whoever offers, without the introduction of squire or chamberlain, but is somewhat slow to grant pardon without such powerful advocates as Signor Bonaventura Bonaccorsi or Signor Ubaldo Adimari, in their saintly embroidered shoes and pink satin robes of glory.

## PRESIDENT.

I observed nearly the same inequality at Como. A house of industry was established there: virtuous mothers have been led frequently out of it, heavy with child, and died from inanition in the streets, their allowance of food being only one scanty meal in the twenty-four hours, while prostitutes, thieves, assassins, poisoners have enjoyed purer air and more comfortable accommodation in prison, and have been supplied twice in the day with more wholesome food, and each time more abundantly. In both instances a discouragement is holden forth to honesty, a premium to crime. Sovrans know more correctly the state of other countries than of their own. We may be too near great objects to discern them justly, and the greatest of all objects to a prince is the internal state of his people.

## LEOPOLD.

Your observation is just. The persons we employ have more interest in deceiving us than others have. I can trust one, Gianni\*. I send none

\* At my last arrival on the continent, it retained among its ruins two great men, Kosciusko, and Gianni: the one I had seen in England, the other I visited in Genoa. He was in his ninetieth year; an age to which no other minister of king or prince or republic has attained. But the evil passions never preyed on the heart of Gianni: he enjoyed good health from good spirits, and those from their only genuine source, a

abroad; so that I am rather less liable to deception than my neighbours are. As the gentlemen

clear conscience. Accustomed, as I had been, to see chattering mountebanks leap one after another upon the same stage, play the same tricks they had exploded, first amid the applauses and afterwards amid the execration of the people, I was refreshed and comforted by the calmness and simplicity of this venerable old man. Occasionally he displayed a propensity to satire, not the broadfaced buffoonery, and washy loquacity of his nation, but the apposite and delicate wit which once sparkled in the better societies of Athens and of Paris. He has left behind him a history of his own times, which never will be published in ours. If any leading state of Europe had been governed by such a minister, how harmless would have been the French revolution *out of France*, how transitory *in*. Patient, provident, moderate, imperturbable, he knew on all occasions what kind and what intensity of resistance should be opposed to violence and tumult. I will adduce two instances. Ricci bishop of Pistoja and Prato, had excited the indignation of his diocesans, by an attempt, as is related in the Dialogue, to introduce the prayers in Italian, and to abolish some idle festivals and processions. The populace of Prato, headed by a Confraternity, broke forth into acts of rebellion; the bishop's palace was assaulted, his life threatened. The church-bells summoned all true believers to the banner: the broken bones of saints were exposed, and invited others to be broken. Leopold, on hearing it, shocked in his system of policy, forgot at the moment the mildness of his character, and ordered all the military at hand to march against the insurgents. Gianni was sent for: he entered the very instant this command was issued. *What disturbs your Highness?* said he mildly.

“ You ought to have been informed, Gianni, answered the Gran-duke, that the populace of Prato has resisted my authority and insulted Ricci. My troops march in a body against these wretches.” *I have already dispatched a stronger force against*

of Tuscany seldom travel further than to Sienna or to Pisa, the expense of a coffeehousekeeper, under the title of plenipotentiary, is saved me everywhere.

*them than your Highness has done, which by your permission must remain in the city.*

“On free-quarters until the madmen are quiet. But how could you collect a stronger force so instantaneously?”

*Instead of two regiments I dispatched two crosses; instead of cannon and ammunition-waggons, a nail-box, a hammer, and a clean napkin. If reinforcements are wanted, we can find a dice-box at Riccardi's, and a sponge at Rospigliosi's, on good security. At this hour however, I am persuaded that the Confraternity is walking in procession and extolling to the skies not your humanity but your devotion. It was so.*

The *maximum* or *assize* had been abolished by Gianni: lands and provisions rose in value: the people was discontented, broke into his house, drank his wine, cut his beds in pieces, and carried off the rest of his furniture. Leopold, who had succeeded to the Empire of Germany and was residing at Vienna, decreed that the utmost severity should be exercised against all who had borne any part in this sedition. It was difficult to separate the more guilty from the less; particularly as every man, convicted of delinquency, might hope to extenuate his offence by accusing his enemy of one more flagrant. Gianni, who could neither disobey nor deferr the mandate of the Emperor, engaged Commendatore Pazzi to invite some hundreds of the people to a banquet in the court-yard of his palace.

Now while the other families of those Florentines, who in ages past had served this bustling little city, were neglected for their obscurity, shunned for their profligacy, or despised for their avarice and baseness, that of Riccardi was still in esteem for its splendid hospitality, that of Pazzi for its patronage of the people. The invitation was unsuspected; they met,



PRESIDENT.

Your Highness is as desirous of abolishing idle offices as others are of creating them\*.

LEOPOLD.

I am not afraid of losing my place from a want of party friends, and have no very poor relations to support. Among the residents in Florence, I speak in confidence M. President, I remember none of even ordinary talents, or, according to what I could judge or could learn from report, of

they feasted, they drank profusely; every man brought forward his merits; what each had done, and what each was ready to do, was openly declared and carefully recorded. On the following morning, before day-break, forty were on the road to the galleys. The people is never in such danger, as from its idol.

\* There is in Italy a little state governed by a woman, who constantly sends after the *opera* to the innkeepers of her city, and demands a portion of what has been spent amongst them within the day by strangers. If many carriages have stopped at their doors, in passing through the place, the same visit is made, the same tax imposed. She has forbidden the extraction of pictures, offering to purchase them at the value: she has taken several to herself, and has never paid for them. Is it not as proper for the Saints of the Holy Alliance to exercise the duties of high police in such instances, as against the public, where great nations, and such as were never subject to them, rise unanimously and demand the reform of government? England maintains a minister at the court of this woman, whose revenues are little more than his appointments, and whose political influence is weaker than that of any one who keeps a secondrate ginshop in St. Giles. What reed or rush, in its rottenest plight, but serves for the spawn of our aristocracy to stick on!

the slightest political or literary reputation. Not long ago a young person was sent hither in that capacity, who had more dogs than books, and more mistresses than ideas. He rode hard, drank hard, and fiddled hard, and admitted to his society, as such people usually do, the vilest and most abandoned of both sexes. At Milan, his course was arrested by a deficiency of means: he had already drawn on his bankers here for sums beyond such even as the prodigality of his government had enabled him to deposit in their hands. With this heavy debt upon him, he drew on them again from Milan, at one single time, for four thousand crowns: the draft was dishonoured, with a protestation that their concerns were inadequate to such frequent and vast demands. He replied with a vehemence of language such as most tribunals would have severely punished in a private character, and such as, if presented in complaint to me, would have obliged me to insist on his recall. When he thus retired to rest himself for about a year, after the labours of his office, he left behind him a pack of hounds, a groom, a *chargé d'affaires*, a *chasseur*, and several other domestics. The amusement of these delegated powers was cat-hunting in the spacious gardens belonging to the Legation. Every day the diversion was pursued, until

the neighbourhood was so infested with rats, that serious remonstrances, light as the subject may appear, were presented to me, by gardeners, grocers, oilmen, booksellers and stationers, and other trades, and I condemned to extermination by poison the more innocent of the offenders.

As it often happens that those who are very wealthy, are far from forward in displaying what they possess, so happens it that, in countries which abound in talents and genius, the governors are careless how little of them is exhibited in their appointments to foren courts. I should be happy to see, as ministers at mine, M. President, men like you, with whom I could converse familiarly and frankly on matters of high importance: and in my opinion no greater compliment could be paid me, by the princes my friends and allies. To delegate as their representatives young persons of no knowledge, no conduct, no respectability, proves to me a neglect of their duty and an indifference to their honour, and no less evidently shews the opinion they entertain of me to be unworthy and injurious. Trifling men, in such situations, may suit indeed small courts, but not where the sovran enjoys any considerable share of credit, for the rectitude of his views and the arduousness of his undertakings. This reflection

leads me back again to an enquiry into the last of your positions, that my code provides but faintly and ineffectually for the protection of character.

The states of Italy are the parts of shame in the body politic of Europe. I would not hold out an ægis to protect a snail: the gardener does not shelter his plants while they are underground. I declare to you, M. Du Paty, that whenever and wherever I find a character to protect, I will protect it.

PRESIDENT.

I am averse to the perpetual maintenance of great armies; but without somewhat of a military spirit there can be little spirit for anything, as we see in China and India. That the Florentines should have conquered the Pisans, quite astonishes me when I look upon them; at present they could not conquer a hencoop guarded by a cur.

LEOPOLD.

The Italians, when they were bravest, were like tame rabbits; very pugnacious amongst themselves, but crouching, screaming, and submitting to be torne piecemeal by the smallest creatures of another race. In the consulate of Marcus Valerius (brother of Publicola) and Postumius, the Sabines were conquered: thirteen thousand prisoners were taken in two battles, in the second no Roman was slain.

I want no armies: if ever I should want them, I can procure a much better commodity at the same price: the rations of a Bohemian and of a Tuscan are the same: I would not exchange a good farmer for a bad soldier. I want honest men, and no other glory than that of making them.

PRESIDENT.

In Tuscany there are persons of integrity; few indeed, and therefore the more estimable. One honest Italian is worth one hundred thousand honest Englishmen, for such I imagine to be the proportion. Wherever there is a substitute for morality, where ceremonies stand in the place of duties, where the confession of a fault before a priest is more meritorious than never to have committed it, where virtues and duties are vicarious, where crimes can be expiated after death for money, where by breaking a wafer you open the gates of heaven, probity and honour, if they exist at all, exist in the temperament of the individual. Hence a general indifference to virtue in others; hence the best men in Italy do not avoid the worst; hence the diverging rays of opinion can be brought to no focus; nothing can be consumed by it, nothing warmed.

The language proves the character of the

people. Of all pursuits and occupations, for I am unwilling to call it knowledge, the most trifling is denominated *virtù*.

The Romans, detained from war and activity by a calm, termed it *malacia*: the Italians, whom it keeps out of danger, call it *bonaccia*\*.

Love of their country is so feeble, that whatever is excellent they call *pelegrino*.

So corrupt are they, that softness with them must partake of disease and impurity: it is  *morbidezza*.

Such is their idea of contemplation, and of the subjects on which it should be fixed, that if a dinner is given to a person of rank, the gazettes announce that it was presented *alla Contemplazione della sua Eccellenza*.

A lamb's fry is *cosa stupenda*.

Strength, which frightens, and finery, which attracts them, are *honesty*: hence *valentuomo* and

\* On malacia and bonaccia let me remark that although the latter supplanted the former as *Beneventum* did *Maleventum*, yet *malacia* descends not in a direct line from *malus* (a thing evidently unknown to those who substituted in its place *bonaccia*;) but from *μαλακός*. *Malus* itself has the same origin. Effeminacy and wickedness were correlative terms both in Greek and Latin, as were courage and virtue. With us softness and folly, virtue and purity. Let others determine on which side lies the indication of the more quiet, delicate, and reflecting people.

*galantuomo*. A well-dressed man is a man of honour, *uomo di garbo*.

Pride is offended at selling anything: the shop-keeper tells you that he gives you his yard of shoe-ribbon: *dà*, not *vende*.

Misfortune is criminal: the captive is a wicked man, *cattivo*.

*Meschino*, formerly *poor*\*, is now mischievous, or *bad*.

A person is not rendered vile by any misconduct or criminality: but if he has the tooth-ache, he is *avvilito*.

*Opera* was among the Romans *labour*, as *operæ pretium*, &c. It now signifies the most contemptible of performances, the vilest office of the feet and tongue, whenever it stands alone *by excellence*.

*Ostia*, a sacrifice (*hostia*) now serves equally to designate the Almighty and the wafer that seals a billet-doux †.

\* Teseo era stato anch' egli un certo protettore e difensore, e benignamente e con amorevolezza haveva ascoltato i preghi degli uomini *meschini*.—Vite di Plutarco da M. Ludovico Domenichi MDLX.

† The following distich on the eucharist, as it is called, does not appear to have been written by any of the Jesuits.

Oblita butyro quanta es mea crustula! quanta,  
Vel sine butyro quum deus esse potes!

Your Highness will permit me to add one more example. If injustice is done and redress claimed, it is requisite to perform an execrable act, if the words mean anything, *umiliare una supplica*. Language so base and infamous was never heard in the palace of Domitian, who commanded that he should be called lord and God.

I could select many more such expressions. In this perversion of moral feeling, it is not to be expected that the laws can always stand upright. It is dangerous for a forener not to visit a commissary of police; but to omit in an address to him the title of *Illustrissimo*, is fatal. I conversed the other day with an English gentleman, who had conducted his wife and family to Pistoja, for the benefit of the air. He rented a villa at the recommendation of the proprietor, who assured him that the walls were dry; the only doubt he entertained. Within a few days it rained, and the bedchambers were covered with drops. His wife and child suffered in their health: he expostulated: he offered to pay a month's rent and to quit the premises, insisting on the nullity of an agreement

The comparison in this next between St. Martinus and Pætus, is more in their manner.

Major uter? tunicam, Martine, rogantibus offers;

Pæte, dares ultro quod tegitur tunicâ.



founded on fraud. The proposal was rejected: a court of judicature declared the contract void. The gentleman, to prove that there was nothing light or ungenerous in his motive, gave to his banker, M. Cassigoli, the amount of the six months' rent, to be distributed among respectable families in distress. The proprietor of the house, enraged at losing not only what he had demanded, but also what was offered, circulated a report in the coffeehouses and wherever he went, that the gentleman might well throw away his money, having acquired immense sums by piracy. He is, on the contrary, a literary man, of a life extremely retired. Such expressions could not fail to be injurious to a stranger, in any place whatever, and particularly in a town where perhaps until then no stranger had resided. He appealed to the tribunals, with a result far different from the former. The commissary, to whom the business was referred by them, called the offender to him in private, without informing the plaintiff of his intention. Hence no proof was adduced, no witness was present, and the gentleman knew nothing of the result for several weeks afterwards. It was, an admonition to be more cautious in future, given to a man, who had in succession been servant to two masters, both of whom were found dead with-

out illness; a man who, without any will in his favour, any success in the lottery, any dowry with his wife, any trade or profession, any employment or occupation, possessed twelve thousand crowns. Where justice is refused, neglected, or perverted, the *Presidente del buon Governo* is the magistrate who receives the appeal. The forener stated his case fully to the president, from whom he obtained no redress\*.

\* The following circumstances have just occurred. A girl in the service of an English family, warned to leave it, for the commonest if not the slightest of offences, walked away from the teatable to the other side of the room, equally distant from the door, and poured boiling water on a beautiful boy four years old. She expressed no concern whatever, nor even lifted the child from the ground on which he fell. The father ordered her to quit the apartment. She disobeyed: he pushed her out with some violence, and, as it appeared, not without a bruise on the face. She went directly to live, at a cheap rate, with a judge, who probably gave her directions how to act, instead of saying, as a more honest man would, "*You have done a greater mischief than you have received: I cannot countenance you in your prosecution.*" The manservant who caused her dismissal, was called to declare that she had received some dozen blows on the breast: he swore so: it was proved by an Italian marquis and an English gentleman, who were present, that he was not in the room: neither he nor the girl was reproved for perjury and subornation to perjury; the one being a spy, the other living with a judge. The matter was then brought before three judges: they decided unanimously against her. It was again tried before three others: two were of the same opinion. The youngest, a friend of the girl, and of whose protection she boasted openly, gave his sentence in her favour. It was tried a third time, before three friends of the protecting judge; and they, as

## LEOPOLD.

As I covered my ears at the commencement, I must at the conclusion. But ill and scandalously as my servants acted, the rank and character of the injured gentleman were imperfectly known to the commissary and the president, who also are ignorant that many of the best families in England are untitled. Here counts and marquisses are more

might be expected, reversed the former sentences, remarking that the gentleman might recover, from the hundred livres he was condemned by them to pay, as much as should, *after another legal process*, appear just and reasonable for the injury his family had sustained, his wife in thirtysix days of fever and convulsions from her fears, his child in a scald, on the head, neck, and shoulders, cured within a month. He was condemned to discharge all the costs of the prosecution, *because the girl could not*, and because her lawyer was a very young man and wanted encouragement.

The salary of a judge in Tuscany is that of a cook in England; the regard to character far lower: yet that the office is considered as more illustrious, is demonstrated by the fact, of the president *del buon governo*, having been promoted to this station from the former. The English gentleman did not offer to profit by this knowledge.

More injustice is committed in the name of the mild and virtuous Ferdinand than of the most ferocious and faithless prince in Christendom.

A courier who had been in the service of Prince Borghese, went openly by day into the Postmaster's office, stabbed him in the body, fired a pistol through his hand, was confined at Volterra, and released at the intercession of Prince Borghese *in six weeks*.

Whoever shall publish a periodical work, containing a correct and detailed account of irregularities and iniquities in the various courts of law throughout Europe, will accomplish

plentiful than sheep and swine, families have orders of knighthood who have not credit for a pound of polenta, and the bravest of whose members would tremble to mount a goat, in their worst breeches.

PRESIDENT.

Your predecessors have softened what was already too soft: and your Highness must give some consistency to your mud, by exposing and working it, if you desire to leave upon it any durable or just impression. I am afraid it will close upon your footstep the moment you go away.

LEOPOLD.

I hope not. Tuscany is a beautiful landscape with bad figures: I must introduce better. I must begin with what forms the moral character, however my conduct may be viewed by the catholic princes. Few amongst them are better than whipt children, or wiser than unwhipt ones. They are puppets in the hands of priests: they nod their heads, open their mouths, shut their eyes, and the greatest of all literary undertakings, and will obtain the merit of the staunchest, the truest, and the best of all reformers. No subject is so humble that it may not be recommended by a fit simplicity of style; no story so flat that it may not solicit attention if edged by pointed remarks. The writer will perform one of those operations which are often so admired in Nature, by eliciting a steady, broad, and beautiful light, from rottenness and corruption.

their blood is liquefied or congealed at the touch of these impostors. I must lessen their influence by lessening their number. To the intent of keeping up a numerous establishment of satellites in the church militant, a priest is punished more severely for performing twice in the day the most holy of his ceremonies, than for almost any violation of morality. But the popes perhaps have in secret a typical sense of the mass, permitting the priest to celebrate it only once, in remembrance that Christ was sold once only. When we arrive at mystery, a single step farther and we tumble into the foss of fraud. The Romish church is the general hospital of all old and incurable superstitions from the Ganges to the Po. It is useful to princes as a pigstie is to farmers, but it shall not infect my palace, and shall do as little mischief as possible to my people.

PRESIDENT.

Your Highness, by diminishing the number of priests, will encrease the rate of masses. A few days ago I went into San Lorenzo, and saw a clergyman strip off his gown before the altar with violence and indignation. Enquiring the reason, I was informed that four *pauls* had been offered to him for a mass, which he accepted, and that on his coming into the church, the negotiator said he

could afford to pay only three\*. There are offices in the city where masses are bargained for publicly. Purgatory is the Peru of Catholicism: the body of Christ in some of our shops is at the price of a stockfish, in others a fat goose will hardly reach it, and in *Via de' Calzaioli* it is worth a sucking pig.

LEOPOLD.

The Roman states are sadly worse in proportion.

PRESIDENT.

There are more *religious* in that territory than

\* The Italians were always, far exceeding all other nations, parsimonious and avaricious; the Tuscans beyond all other Italians; the Florentines beyond all other Tuscans. So scandalous an example of it, as occurred a few months ago, is, I hope and believe, unparalleled. Prince \*\*\*\*\* married a woman of immense fortune, by whom he has a family of eight children. He took a mistress: the wife languished and died. He gave orders that all her cloaths should be sold by auction in his palace; old gowns, old petticoats, old shifts, old shoes, old gloves; even articles at the value of one penny, such as excited the derision of some, the blushes of others, the horror of not a few.

There had been no quarrel between the wife and husband. She was beautiful, engaging, sweet-tempered, compliant, domestic. She sank from the world which her virtues had adorned, and had been seven days in her grave, when prostitutes paraded the street before her palace, wearing those dresses in which the most exemplary of mothers had given the last lessons of morality to her daughters. The prince is one of the richest men on the continent: he is supposed to spend about a tenth of his income: and the sale produced fourteen pounds.

slavemasters in our American islands, and their gangs are under stronger and severer discipline. The refuse of manhood exercises the tyranny of Xerxes in the cloak and under the statutes of Pythagoras.

LEOPOLD.

I would willingly see several religions in my states, knowing that in England and Holland they are checks one upon another. The quaker inverts his eye and rebukes his graceless son, by shewing him how industrious and tractable is the son of some fierce presbyterian: the catholic points to the daughter of a socinian, and cries shame upon his own, educated as she was in the purity of the faith, in the religion of so many forefathers. Catholicism loses somewhat of its poisonous strong savour, by taking root in a well-pulverized well-harrowed soil. As competition levels the price of provisions, so maintains it the just value of sects. Whatever is vicious in one, is kept under by the concourse of others, and each is emulous to prove the superiority of its doctrines by honesty and regularity of life. If ever the English could be brought to one opinion in politics or religion, they would lose the energy of their character and the remains of their freedom. In England the catholics are unexceptionably good members of

society, although the gentlemen of that persuasion, I hear, are generally more ignorant than others, partly by the jealous spirit of their church, and partly by an ungenerous exclusion from the universities. They keep, as here, a chaplain in their houses, but always a man of worth, and not combining as in Italy a plurality of incongruous offices. Here a confessor, in many instances, is tutor to the children, house-steward to the father, and *cavaliere serviente* to the mother. He thinks it would be a mockery of God to call her to confess, without a decent provision of slight transgressions. He cures her indigestions by a dram, her qualms of conscience by a sacrament.

## PRESIDENT.

Both morality and learning require the sound of feet running fast behind them, to keep them from loitering and flagging. When Calvinism was making a progress in France, the catholic bishops were learned men; indeed so learned, that Joseph Scaliger, himself a calvinist, acknowledged in the latter part of his life their immense superiority over the rising sect. At present there is only one bishop in France capable of reading a chapter in the Greek testament, which every schoolboy in England, for whatever profession he is intended, must do at eleven years of age. I



would then recommend a free commerce both of matter and of mind. I would let men enter their own churches with the same freedom as their own houses; and I would do it without a homily on graciousness or favour: for *tyranny* itself is to me a word less odious than *toleration*.

LEOPOLD.

I am placed among certain small difficulties. Tuscany is my farm: the main object of all proprietors is their income. I would see my cattle fat and my labourers well-cloathed; but I would not permit the cattle to break down my fences, nor the labourer to dilapidate my buildings. I will preserve the catholic religion, in all its dogmas, forms, discipline, and ceremonies: it is the pommel of a sovran's sword, and the richest jewel in his regalia: no bull however shall squeeze out blood under me, no faggot sweat out heresy, no false key shall unlock my treasury. The propensity will always exist. The system has been called *imperium in imperio*, very unwisely: it was *imperium super imperio*, until it taught kings to profit by its alphabet, its cyphers, and its flagellations. You complain that I have softened my mud. This is the season for treading and kneading it; and there are no better means of doing so, none cheaper, none more effectual, than by keep-

ing a *posse* of priests upon the platform. America will produce disturbances in Europe by her emancipation from England. The example will operate in part, not principally. Wherever there is a national debt, disproportionably less rapid in its extinction than in its formation, there is a revolutionary tendency; this will spread where there is none, as maladies first engendered in the air are soon communicated by contact to the sound and healthy. Various causes will be attributed to the effect; even the books of philosophers. All the philosophers in the world would produce a weaker effect in this business than one blind ballad-singer. Principles are of slower growth than passions: and the hand of Philosophy, holden out to all, there are few who press cordially: and who are those? the disappointed, the contemplative, the retired, the timid. Did Cromwel read Plato? did the grocers of Boston read Locke? The true motives, in political affairs, are often very improbable. Men who never heard of philosophy but to sneer at it after dinner, will attribute to it all those evils which their own venality and corruption have engendered, and not from any spirit of falsehood, but from incompetency of judgement and reflection. What is the stablest in itself is not always so in all places: marble is harder and more durable

than timber: but the palaces of Venice and Amsterdam would have sunken into the deep without wooden piles for their foundation. Single government wants those manifold props which are supplied well-seasoned by catholicism. A king indeed may lose his throne by indiscretion or inadvertency, but the throne itself will never lose its legs in any catholic state. Never will any republican or any mixed constitution exist seven years, where the hierarchy of Rome hath exerted its potency. Venice and Genoa shew no proofs to the contrary: they arose and grew up while the popes were bishops, and ere mankind had witnessed the wonderful spectacle of an inverted apotheosis. God forbid that any corrupt nation should dream of becoming what America is: if it possesses one single man of reflection, he will demonstrate the utter impracticability of citizenship, where the stronger body of the state, as the clergy must morally be, receives its impulse and agency from without, where it claims to itself a jurisdiction over all, excluding all from any authority over its concerns. This demonstration leads to a sentence, which policy is necessitated to pronounce and humanity is unable to mitigate.

PRESIDENT.

Theories and speculations, which always subvert

religious, never subvert political establishments. Uneasiness makes men shift their postures. National debts produce the same effects as private ones; immorality and a desire of change; the former universally, the latter almost so. A man may well think he pays profusely, who pays a tenth as an ensurance for his property against all the perils of the sea. Does he reason less justly who deems the same sum sufficient for the security of the remainder, in his own lands, in his own house? No conquered people was ever obliged to surrender such a portion of its wealth, present and reversionary, as in our times has been expended voluntarily, in the purchase of handcuffs and fetters for home-consumption. Free nations, for the sake of doing mischief to others, and to punish the offence of pretending to be like them, have consented that the preparation of grain shall be interdicted in their families, that certain herbs shall never be cultivated in their fields and gardens, that they shall never roast certain beans, nor extract certain liquors, and that certain rooms in their houses shall admit no light. Domitian never did against his enemies, what these free nations have done against themselves.

The sea-tortoise can live without its brains, an

old discovery! men can govern without theirs, an older still!

LEOPOLD.

I am influenced but little by opinions: they vary the most where they are strongest and loudest. Here they breathe softly, and not against me; for I excite the hopes of many by extinguishing those of few. What I have begun I will continue, but I see clearly where I *ought* to stop, and know to a certainty, which few reformers do, where I *can*. Exempt from all intemperance of persecution, as from all taint of bigotry, I am disposed to see Christianity neither in diamonds nor in tatters: I would take down her toupee and sell her rouge-box, to procure her a clean shift and inoffensive stockings.

I must persuade both clergy and laity that God understands Italian. Ricci, the bishop of Pistoja, is convinced of this important truth: but many of his diocesans, not disputing his authority, argue that, although God indeed may understand it, yet the saints, to whom they offer up incense, and in whom they have greater confidence, may not; and that being, for the greater part, old men, it might incommode them in the regions of bliss to alter pristine habits... Warmly and heartily do I thank you, M. Du Paty, for your observations. You have treated me really as your equal.

## PRESIDENT.

I should rather thank your Imperial Highness for your patience and confidence. If I have presented one rarity to the Palazzo Pitti, I have been richly remunerated with another. There are only two things which authorise a man out of office to speak his sentiments freely in the courts of princes; very small stature and very small probity. You have abolished this most ancient statute, in favour of a middle-sized man, who can reproach himself with no perversion or neglect of justice in a magistrature of twenty years.

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Italy has been reinstated in all her privileges and enjoyments; and the beneficent hands by which they have been rescued and restored are preparing the same for the rest of Europe. In the following verses may be found something like the sentiments attributed to the interlocutors in this Conversation.

Italia! omnigenis salve ditissima divis!  
 Scirem, utinam, quando sis genitura viros.  
 Te quondam populosque tuos urbs una subegit,  
 Maternæque dedit viscera secta lupæ:  
 Et nunc obtinuit Capitolia Noricus hostis,  
 Castraque Taurini, Parthenopeæque sinum;  
 Imposuit profugos sua post perjuria reges...  
 Accipe... sunt meritis præmia digna tuis.

The same poet, five years ago, wrote these iambics.

Fugit Tyrannis exultatque; vicimus  
 O milites civesque! nunc lætamini,  
 Nunc sæta nectite orbis omnes incolæ,  
 Amoris omnes viva sæta nectite!  
 Eia! unde triste vos tenet silentium?  
 Respondeas, Ibere! quid mussas, Tage!  
 Bæti! at beata rura tu certe colis...  
 Argute Minci, cur fleas, cur ingemas?  
 Avena quid vult illa quam sic abjicis?  
 Tuque ante cunctos, magne divorum comes,  
 Cælo fluenta solus educens tua,  
 Eridane! vultum cur paternum averteris?  
 Sequar fugacem in ultima ostia, in mare  
 Sequar, latentes proderunt parum Hadriæ  
 Specus... Quid est quodd, immemor tot urbium  
 Utrâque ripâ, non poetarum choris,  
 Non montibus juveris, aut campo, aut freto?  
 Quocunque vertor orbe terrarum, simul  
 Videtur eloqui omnium indignatio...

“ O Servitutis execranda hæreditas,

“ Vel hâc vel illâ (quàm parum refert!) manu

“ Impertienda es! heu neque immerentibus!

“ Promissa, sed promissa regibus novis,

“ Lux liberorum ubi occidit! mortalium

“ Non es, futura semper es, Felicitas!

“ Tu verò amice hos qui locos deveneris,

“ Poeta, faustam gratulaturus vicem,

“ Abi... idque crede, ne nimis serò scias,

“ Culpa est fuisse consciùm nostri statûs.”

# CONVERSATION XIV.

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DEMOSTHENES

AND

EUBULIDES.



## DEMOSTHENES

AND

## EUBULIDES.

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EUBULIDES.

You have always convinced me, O Demosthenes, while you were speaking; but I had afterwards need to be convinced again; and I acknowledge that I do not yet believe in the necessity, or indeed in the utility of a war with Philip.

DEMOSTHENES.

He is too powerful.

EUBULIDES.

This is my principal reason for recommending that we should abstain from hostilities; when you have said that *he* is too powerful, you have also said that *we* are too weak: we are still bleeding from the Spartan.

DEMOSTHENES.

All I could offer in reply, O Eubulides, I have

already spoken in public, and I would rather not enlarge at present on the subject. Come, tell me freely what you think of my speech.

EUBULIDES.

In your language, O Demosthenes, there is a resemblance to the Ilissus, whose waters, as you must have observed, are in most seasons pure and limpid and equable in their course, yet abounding in depths of which, when we discern the bottom, we wonder that we discern it so clearly: the same river at every storm swells into a torrent, without ford or boundary, and is the stronger and the more impetuous from resistance.

DEMOSTHENES.

Language is part of a man's character.

EUBULIDES.

It often is artificial.

DEMOSTHENES.

Often both are so. I spoke not of such language as that of Gorgias and Isocrates and other rhetoricians, but of that which belongs to eloquence, of that which enters the heart, however closed against it, of that which pierces like the sword of Perseus, of that which carries us away upon its point easily as Medea her children, and holds the world below in the same suspense and terror.

I had to form a manner, with great models on one side of me and Nature on the other. Had I imitated Plato (the writer then most admired) I must have fallen short of his amplitude and dignity; and his sentences are seldom such as could be admitted into a popular harangue. Xenophon is elegant, but unimpassioned, and not entirely free, I think, from affectation. Herodotus is the most faultless and perhaps the most excellent of all: what simplicity! what sweetness! what harmony! not to mention his sagacity of inquiry and his accuracy of description: he could not however form an orator for the times in which we live. Aristoteles and Thucydides were before me: I trembled lest they should lead me where I might raise a recollection of Pericles, whose plainness and conciseness and gravity they have imitated, not always with success. Laying down these qualities as the foundation, I have ventured on more solemnity, more passion; I have also been studious to bring the powers of *action* into play, that great instrument in exciting the affections which Pericles disdained. He and Jupiter could strike any head with their thunderbolts and stand serene and motionless; I could not.

EUBULIDES.

Your opinion of Pericles hath always been the

same, but I have formerly heard you mention Plato with much less esteem than today.

## DEMOSTHENES.

When we talk diversely of the same person or thing, we do not of necessity talk inconsistently. There is much in Plato which a wise man will commend, there is more that will captivate an unwise one. The irony in his Dialogues has amused me frequently and greatly, and the more because in others I have rarely found it accompanied with fancy and imagination. If I however were to become a writer of dialogues, I should be afraid of using it so constantly, often as I am obliged to do so in my orations. Woe betide those who force us into it by injustice and presumption! Do they dare to censure us? they who are themselves the dust that sullies the wing of genius. Had I formed my opinion of Socrates from Plato, I should call Socrates a sophist. Who would imagine on reading Plato, that his master instead of questioning and quibbling, had occupied his time in shewing the uses and offices of Philosophy? There is as wide a difference between the imputed and the real character of this man, as there is between him who first discovered corn growing, and him who first instructed us how to grind it and purify it and prepare it for our sustenance.

## EUBULIDES.

Before him Pythagoras and Democritus and, earlier still, Pherecydes . . .

## DEMOSTHENES.

Of the latter our accounts are contradictory. I entertain no doubt that the knowledge, the prudence, the authority of Pythagoras were greater than those of any man, who, under the guidance of the Gods, hath enlightened the regions of Europa.

## EUBULIDES.

He must have been a true lover of wisdom, as he modestly called himself, to have traveled so far into countries known hardly by name in Greece.

## DEMOSTHENES.

He sought some congenial soul. If two great men are existing at the extremities of the earth, they will seek each other.

## EUBULIDES.

Greatness is unsociable.

## DEMOSTHENES.

It loves itself, it loves what generates it, what proceeds from it, what partakes its essence. If you have formed any idea of greatness, O Eubulides, which corresponds not with this description, efface it and cast it out. I admire in Pythagoras a disdain and contempt of dogmatism amidst the plenitude of power. He adapted his institutions

to the people he would enlighten and direct. What portion of the world was ever so happy, so peaceable, so well-governed, as the cities of Magna Græcia? While they retained his manners they were free and powerful: some have since declined, others are declining, and perhaps at a future and not a distant time they may yield themselves up to despotism. In a few ages more, those flourishing towns, those inexpugnable citadels, those temples which one would deem eternal, will be hunted for in their wildernesses, like the boars and stags. Already there are philosophers who would remedy what they call popular commotions by hereditary despotism, and who think it as natural and reasonable, as that children who cry should be compelled to sleep: and there likewise are honest citizens who, when they have chewed their fig and swallowed it, say; *yes, 'twere well*. What an eulogy on the human understanding! to assert that it is dangerous to choose a succession of administrators from the wisest of mankind, and advisable to derive it from the weakest! There have been free Greeks within our memory, who would have entered into an holy alliance with the most iniquitous and most insolent of usurpers, Alexander of Pheræ, a territory in which Thebe, who murdered her husband, is praised above all

others of both sexes. O Juno! may such marriages be frequent in such countries!

Look at history: where do you find in continuation three hereditary kings, of whom one at the least was not inhuman or weak in intellect? Either of these qualities may subvert a state, exposing it first to many sufferings. In our Athenian constitution, if we are weakly governed or capriciously, which hardly can happen; the mischief is transitory and reparable; one year closes it; and the people, both for its satisfaction and its admonition, sees that no corruption, no transgression, in its magistrates, is unregarded or unchastized. This of all advantages is the greatest; the most corroborative of power, the most tutelary of morals. I know that there are many in Thrace, and some in Sicily, who would recall my wanderings with the most perfect good-humour and complacency. Demosthenes has not lived, has not reasoned, has not agitated his soul, for them: he leaves them in the quiet possession of all their moulten arguments, and in the persuasive hope of all their bright reversions. Pythagoras could have had little or no influence on men like these: he raised up higher, who kept them down. It is easier to make an impression upon sand than upon marble, but it is easier to make a just one upon marble than upon sand.

Uncivilized as were the Gauls, he with his moderation and prudence hath softened the ferocity of their religion, and hath made it so contradictory and inconsistent that the first man amongst them who reasons will subvert it. He did not say, *You shall no longer sacrifice your fellow creatures*: he said, *sacrifice the criminal*. Other nations do the same; often wantonly, always vindictively: the Gauls appease by it, as they imagine, both society and the Gods. He did not say, *After a certain time even this outrage on Nature must cease*; but he said; *We have souls which pass into other creatures: our dreams prove it: if they are not reminiscences of what has happened or been represented in our actual life, they must be of what passed before: for from a confusion of brain, to which some attribute them, there can arise nothing so regular and beautiful as many of these visions which you have all experienced*.

A belief in the transmigration of souls will abolish by degrees all inhumanity. I know nothing else that can: in other words, I know nothing else that is worthy to be called religion.

EUBULIDES.

But what absurdity!

DEMOSTHENES.

I discover no absurdity in making men gentler and kinder. I would rather worship an onion or



a crust of bread, than a God who requires me to kill an ox or kid. The idea, not of having lost her daughter, but of having lost her by a sacrifice, fixed the dagger in the grasp of Clytæmnestra. Let us observe, O Eubulides, the religion of our country, be it what it may, unless it command us to be cruel or unjust. In religion, if we are right, we do not know that we are so; if we are wrong, we would not. Above all, let us do nothing and say nothing which may abolish or diminish in the hearts of the vulgar the sentiments of love and fear: on the contrary, let us perpetually give them fresh excitement and activity, by baring them to the heavens. On the modifications of love it is unnecessary to expatiate; but I am aware that you may demand of me what excitement is required to fear. Amongst its modifications are veneration and obedience, against the weakening of which we ought to provide and guard, particularly in what relates to our magisterial and military chiefs.

## EUBULIDES.

I do not conceive that Pythagoras hath left behind him in Gaul, unless at Massilia, the remembrance of his doctrines or of his name.

## DEMOSTHENES.

We hear little of the Gauls. It appears however that this most capricious and most cruel of

nations is building cities and establishing communities. The most arrogant, the most ungrateful, the most unthinking of mankind have not forgotten the wisdom or the services of Pythagoras. Ask them who was their legislator . . . they answer you Samotes: ask them who was Samotes, they reply, *A wise man who came amongst us long ago from beyond the sea*: for barbarians have little notion of times, and run wildly into far antiquity. The man of Samos was in fact their legislator, or rather their teacher, and it is remarkable that they should have preserved the name in such integrity.

Democritus, whom you mentioned, contradicts our senses: he tells us that colours have no colour. But his arguments are so strong, his language so clear, his pretensions so modest and becoming, I place more confidence in him, than in others: future philosophers may demonstrate to calmer minds what we have not the patience to investigate\*.

EUBULIDES.

Plato hath not mentioned him.

DEMOSTHENES.

O greatness! what art thou, and where is thy foundation! I speak not, Eubulides, of that which

\* Newton has elucidated the theory of colours first proposed by Democritus, the loss of whose voluminous works is the greatest that Philosophy has sustained.

the vulgar call greatness, a phantom stalking forward from a saltmarsh in Bœotia, or from a crevice in some rock of Sunium, or of Taxos\*, but the highest, the most illustrious, the most solid among men, what is it! Philosophy gives us arms against others, not against ourselves, not against those domestic traitors, those homestead incendiaries, the malignant passions; arms that are brilliant on the exercise-ground, but brittle in the fight, when the most dangerous of enemies is pressing us. Early love was never so jealous in any one as Philosophy in Plato. He resembles his own idea of God, whose pleasure in the solitudes of eternity is the contemplation of himself.

## EUBULIDES.

It has been suggested to me, that Aristoteles, when he remarks that, by the elongation of the last member in a sentence, a dignity is added to composition, looked towards you who, as you have often heard the rhetoricians say, are sometimes inattentive or indifferent to nobility of expression.

## DEMOSTHENES.

When Aristoteles gives an opinion upon eloquence I listen with earnestness and respect; so wise a man can say nothing inconsiderately: his

\* Taxos was rich in silver-mines.

own style on all occasions is exactly what it should be: his sentences, in which there are no cracks or inequalities, have always their proper tone: whatever is rightly said, sounds rightly.

Ought I to speak nobly, as you call it, of base matters and base men? ought my pauses to be invariably the same? would Aristoteles wish that a coat of mail should be as flowing as his gown? Let peace be perfect peace, war decisive war: but let Eloquence move upon earth with all the facilities of change that belong to the Gods themselves; only let her never be idle, never be vain, never be ostentatious; for these are indications of debility. We, who have habituated ourselves from early youth to the composition of sonorous periods, know that it requires more skill to finger and stop our instrument than to blow it. When we have gained over the ear to our party, we have other work to do, and sterner and rougher. Then comes forward *action*, not unaccompanied by vehemence. Pericles, you have heard, used none, but kept his arm wrapped up within his vest. Pericles was in the enjoyment of that power which his virtues and his abilities so well deserved. If he had carried in his bosom the fire that burns in mine, he would have kept his hand outside. By the contemplation of men like me, Aristoteles is what he is; and,

instead of undervaluing, I love him the better for it. Do we not see with greater partiality and fondness those who have been educated and fed upon our farms, than those who come from Orchomenos or Mantinea? If he were now amongst us in Athens, what would he think of two or three haranguers, who deal forth his metaphysics by the pailful in their addresses to the people?

EUBULIDES.

I heard one, some little time since, who believed he was doing so, ignorant that the business of metaphysics is rather to analyse than to involve. He avoided all plain matter, he rejected all idiom...

DEMOSTHENES.

What an admirable definition have you given, unintentionally, of the worst public speaker possible! I will add, with equal confidence, of the worst writer. If I send to Hymettus for a hare, I expect to distinguish it at dinner by its flavour, as readily, as before, by its ears and feet. The people you describe to me, soak out all the juices of our dialect.

EUBULIDES.

They could do nothing better. To come again with you into the kitchen, if they can only give us tripe, let them give it clean.

## DEMOSTHENES.

I have been careful to retain as much of our idiom as I could, often at the peril of being called ordinary and vulgar. Nations in a state of decay lose their idiom, which loss is always precursory to that of freedom. What your father and grandfather used as an elegance in conversation, is now abandoned to the populace, and every day we miss a little of our own and collect a little from strangers: this prepares us for a more intimate union with them, in which we merge at last altogether. Every good writer has much idiom; it is the life and spirit of language; and none ever entertained a fear or apprehension that strength and sublimity were to be lowered and weakened by it. Speaking to the people, I use the people's phraseology: I temper my metal according to the uses I intend it for. In fact no language is very weak in its natural course, until it runs too far; and then the poorest and the richest are ineffectual equally. The habitude of pleasing by flattery makes a language soft; the fear of offending by truth makes it circuitous and conventional. Free governments, where such necessity cannot exist, will always produce true eloquence.

## EUBULIDES.

We have in Athens young orators from the

schools, who inform us that no determinate and masculine peculiarities of manner should appear in public: they would dance without displaying their muscles, they would sing without discomposing their lips.

## DEMOSTHENES.

I will drag them, so help me Jupiter! back again to their fathers and mothers: I will grasp their wrists so tight, the most perverse of them shall not break away from me. Tempestuous times are coming . . . another month or two at farthest, and I will throw such animation into their features and their gestures, you shall imagine they have been singing to the drum and horn, and dancing to dithyrambics. The dustbox of metaphysics shall be emptied no more from the schoolroom into the street. I suspect that I also have heard the very chatterer you mentioned. The other day in the marketplace, I saw a vulgar and clumsy man lifted on a honey-barrel by some grocers and slave-merchants, and the crowd was so dense around me that I could not walk away. A fresh-looking citizen near me nodded and winked at the close of every sentence. Dissembling as well as I could my impatience at his importunity, "*Friend,*" said I, "*do believe me, I understand not a syllable of the discourse.*" "*Ah Demosthenes,*" whispered

he, "*your time is fairly gone by: we have orators now whom even you, with all your acuteness and capacity, as you yourself have acknowledged to me, cannot comprehend.*" "*Whom will they convince?*" cried I. "*Convince! we come already convinced: we want surprize, as at our theatres, astonishment, as at the mysteries of Eleusis.*" "*But what astonishes, what surprizes you?*" "*To hear an Athenian talk two hours together, hold us all silent and immovable as the figures of Mercury before our doors, and find not a single one amongst us that can carry home with him a thought or an expression.*" "*Thou art right,*" I exclaimed; "*he is greater than Triptolemus: he not only gives you a plentiful meal out of chaff and husks, but he persuades you that it is a savoury repast.*" "*By Jupiter!*" swore aloud my disenchanted friend, "*he persuades us no such thing: but every one is ashamed of being the first to acknowledge, that he never was master of a particle out of all he had listened to and applauded.*" I had the curiosity to inquire who the speaker was. "*What! do not you know Anædestatus!*" said he, making a mark of interrogation upon my ribs, with a sharper elbow than from his countenance I could have imagined had belonged to him; "*the clever Anædestatus, who came*



into notice as a youth, by the celebration in verse of a pebble at the bottom of the Cephisus. He forthwith was presented to Anglus, who experienced a hearty pleasure in seducing him away from his guardians. Anglus on his deathbed (for the Gods allowed him one) recommended the young Anædestatus warmly to his friends: such men have always many, and those the powerful. Fortunate had it been for our country if he had pilfered only the verses he pronounced. His new patrons connived at his withdrawing from the treasury no less than six hundred talents." "Impossible! six hundred talents are sufficient for the annual stipend of all our civil magistrates, from the highest to the lowest, and of all the generals in our republic and its dependencies." "It was before you came forward into public life, O Demosthenes: but my father can prove the exactness of my statement. The last little sip from the reservoir was seventy talents\* for a voyage to Lesbos, and a residence there of about three months, to settle the value of forty skins of wine owing to the Lesbians in the time of Thrasybulus. This, I know not by what oversight, is legible among the accounts." Indignant at what I heard,

\* Seventy talents, in round numbers, 14000 pounds sterling.

I threatened to call him before the people . . . .  
“*Let him alone;*” said slowly in an undervoice my prudent friend: “*he has those about him who will swear, and adduce the proofs, that you are holding a traitorous correspondence with Philip or Artaxerxes.*” I began to gaze in some indignation on his florid and calm countenance, he winked again, again accosted me with his elbow and withdrew.

## EUBULIDES.

Happy Athenians! who have so many great men of so many kinds, all peculiar to yourselves, and can make one even out of Anædestatus.

**CONVERSATION XV.**

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**THE ABBÉ DELILLE**

**AND**

**WALTER LANDOR.**

# THE ABBÉ DELILLE

AND

WALTER LANDOR.

---

THE Abbé Delille was the happiest of creatures when he could weep over the charms of innocence and of the country in some crowded and fashionable coterie at Paris. We embraced most pathetically on our first meeting there, as if the one were condemned to quit the earth, the other to live upon it.

DELILLE.

You are reported to have said that descriptive poetry has all the merits of a pocket-handkerchief that smells of roses.

LANDOR.

This, if I said it, is among the things which are neither false enough nor true enough to be displeasing. But the Abbé Delille has merits of his own. To translate Milton well, is more laud-

able than originality in trifling matters; just as to transport an obelisk from Egypt, and to erect it in one of the squares, must be considered a greater labour than to build a new chandler's shop.

DELILLE.

Milton is indeed extremely difficult to translate; for, however noble and majestic, he is sometimes heavy, and often rough and unequal.

LANDOR.

Dear abbé, porphyry is heavy, gold is heavier: Ossa and Olympus are rough and unequal. On the contrary, the steppes of Tartary are high, but of uniform elevation: there is not a rock, nor a birch, nor a cytusus, nor an arbutus, upon them, great enough to shelter a new-dropt lamb. Level the Alps one with another, and where is their sublimity? Raise up the vale of Tempe to the downs above, and where are those sylvan bays and harbours, in which the imagination watches while the soul reposes; those recesses in which the Gods partook the weaknesses of mortals, and mortals the enjoyments of the Gods!

You have treated our poet with all courtesy and attention: in your trimmed and measured dress he might be taken for a Frenchman. Do not think me flattering. You have conducted Eve from Paradise to Paris, and she really looks pret-

tier and smarter than before she tripped. With what elegance she rises from a most awful dream! you represent her (I repeat your expression) as springing up *en sursaut*, as if you had caught her asleep, and tickled the young creature on that sofa.

Homer and Virgil have been excelled in sublimity by Shakespear and Milton, as the Caucasus and Atlas of the old world by the Andes and Cordilleras of the new: but you would embellish them all.

DELILLE.

I owe to Voltaire my first sentiments of admiration for Milton and Shakespear.

LANDOR.

He stuck to them as a woodpecker to an old forest-tree, only for the purpose of picking out what was rotten. He has made the holes deeper than he found them, and, after all his cries and chatter, has brought home but scanty sustenance to his starveling nest.

DELILLE.

You must acknowledge that there are fine verses in the tragedies of Voltaire.

LANDOR.

Whenever such is the first observation, be as-

sured, M. l'Abbé, that the poem, if heroic or dramatic, is bad. Should a work of this kind be excellent, we say, "*How admirably the characters are sustained! what delicacy of discrimination! There is nothing to be taken away or altered without an injury to the part or to the whole.*" We may afterwards descend on the versification. In poetry there is a greater difference between the good and the excellent than there is between the bad and the good. Poetry has no golden mean: mediocrity here is of another metal, which Voltaire however had skill enough to encrust and polish. In the least wretched of his tragedies, whatever is tolerable is Shakespear's; but, gracious heaven! how deteriorated! When he pretends to extoll a poet, he chooses some defective part, and renders it more so whenever he translates it. I will repeat a few verses from Metastasio in favour of my assertion. Metastasio was both a better critic and a better poet, although of the second order in each quality; his tyrants are less philosophical, and his chambermaids less dogmatic. Voltaire was however a man of abilities, and author of many passable epigrams, besides those which are contained in his tragedies and heroics, though it must be confessed, that, like

your Parisian lackeys, they are usually the smartest when out of place.

DELILLE.

What you call epigram gives life and spirit to grave works, and seems principally wanted to relieve a long poem. I do not see why what pleases us in a star, should not also please us in a constellation. This and versification are the main secrets of French poetry, to which must be added an exactness of thought and a brevity of expression, such for instance as we admire in Boileau. But you promised me something of Metastasio.

LANDOR.

I will repeat the lines with Voltaire's observations.

The king of Parthia is brought in chains before the emperor Hadrian. He has leisure for all the following paraphrase, by which he would signify that his ruin itself shall be subservient to his revenge.

Sprezza il furor del vento  
 Robusta quercia, avvezza  
 Di cento verni e cento  
 Le ingiurie a tolerar.  
 E se pur cadde al suolo,  
 Spiega per l' onde il volo,  
 E con quel vento istesso  
 Va contrastando il mar.



Con quel vento istesso! it must make haste then... Voltaire had forgotten the art of concealing his insincerity, when he praised as a *sublime air* the worst and most farfetched thought in all the operas of Metastasio. He could read Italian poetry, he could write French: we have seen how he judged of the least familiar, let us now inquire how he judges of the most. He considers then the following lines in *Mithridate* as a model of perfection.

J'ai sçu par une longue et penible industrie  
Des plus mortels venins prévenir la furie.  
Ah! qu'il m' eut mieux valu, plus sage ou plus heureux,  
Et repoussant les traits d' un amour dangereux,  
Ne pas laisser remplir d' ardeurs empoisonées  
Un cœur déjà glacé par le froid des années.

Alas! the cold of his years, in comparison with the cold of his wit, is but as a flake of snow to a mass of frozen mercury.

DELILLE.

Acknowledge at least that in tales and in history he has done something.

LANDOR.

Yes, he has united them very dexterously. In the lighter touches of irony and derision he excels both Rabelais and Moliere; but in that which requires a certain vigour of conception, and there is a kind which does require it, he falls short of Cer-

vantes and of Swift. You have other historians not only more faithful, but more powerful in style and more profound in thought. I do not even place him on a level with our Hume, and hardly with Robertson, although in composition he may have an advantage over both, certainly over the latter greatly; nor is he at all comparable to Gibbon, whose manner, which many have censured, I think admirably suited to the work. In the decline and fall of the Roman empire there is too much to sadden and disgust: a smile in such a narrative on some occasions is far from unacceptable: if it should be succeeded by a sneer, it is not the sneer of bitterness, which falls not on debility, nor of triumph, which accords not with contempt. His colours, it is true, are gorgeous, like those of the setting sun; and such were wanted. The style is much swayed by the sentiment: would that which is proper for the historian of Fabius and Scipio, of Hannibal and Pyrrhus, be proper too for Augustulus and the popes? Gibbon could be grave when an emperor like Julian commanded it; but could he, or could any one, on rising from the narration of a Greek historian, who has described how an empress played "the royal game of goose?"

DELILLE.

Gibbon, one would imagine, was a mixt production of two different races in Africa, and borrowed the moral features from the one, the physical from the other. The Kabobiguas have no worship, sacrifice, ceremonies, or priests; and the Housouanas have a nose which projects little more than five or six lines; half the face seems to be forehead.

LANDOR.

When Voltaire calls the French poetry strong and energetic, he shews himself insensible that the nature both of the language and of the metre prohibits it: when he calls the Italian weak and effeminate and unfit for action, he overlooks his inconsistency in remarking that "we respect Homer but read Tasso." No continental poet is less weak and effeminate than Chiabrera; whose works, I apprehend, Voltaire was just as incapable of appreciating as Homer's. Did he ever hear of Filicaja? rich in thought as Pindar himself, and more enthusiastic.

DELILLE.

Enthusiastic as Pindar! ah M. Landor!

LANDOR.

Abbé, I said *more* enthusiastic, for in criticism,

I love correctness. We have lost the greater and perhaps the better part of Pindar's poetry: what remains is more distinguished for exquisite taste, than for enthusiasm. There is a grandeur of soul which never leaves him even in domestic scenes. His genius does not rise on points or peaks of sublimity, but pervades all things with a vigorous and easy motion, such as the poets attribute to the herald of the Gods. He is remarkable for the rich economy of his ideas and the temperate austerity of his judgement: he never says more than what is proper nor otherwise than what is best, and he appears the superior of mortals in the perfection of wisdom as of poetry.

The business of this art is to chasten and elevate the mind by exciting and regulating the better passions, and to impress on it lessons of terror and of pity by exhibiting the self-chastisement of the worse. There should be as much of passion as is possible with as much of reason as is compatible with it. How admirable is the union of these in the ode of Filicaja to Sobieski!

DELILLE.

Do you really then prefer this Italian to Boileau? his ode to the king is fine.

LANDOR.

There is almost as much difference between his

ode and the Italian, as between Sobieski and Louis; almost as much as between the liberation of Europe and the conflagration of the Palatinate. Give me the volume, if that in your hand is it.

“The *high* wisdom of a *young* hero is not the *tardy* fruit of *slow old* age.”

Dear Abbé, can you ever have read this commencement, and call the author a man of genius or taste?

... Ma muse tremblante  
Fuit d'un si grand fardeau la charge trop pesante.

Vulgarity in the metaphor and redundancy in the expression; and look! it occurs again at the conclusion. Addison tells you that he does, what he gives no signs of doing, that he

“*Bridles* in his struggling Muse with pain.”

But it is better to turn a Muse into a mare than into a mule or ass; and Addison has redeemed the wretchedness of his poetry by the suavity and humour of his prose.

Et tandis que ton bras des peuples redouté  
Va le foudre à la main retablir l'équité.

I always fancied that the *foudre* is rather a destroyer than an establisher. But why was the arm of Louis feared by the nations, if it was armed only to establish equity? The *arm* with

the thunderbolt in the *hand* is worse than tautology, if indeed any thing can be worse in a poet than this most obvious proof of debility.

Let us turn to his satires.

## SATIRE I.

Et puis, comment percer *cette foule effroyable*  
 De rimeurs affamés...dont le nombre l'accable...  
 Un lit et deux placets composoient tout son bien ;  
 Ou, pour en mieux parler, Saint-Amant n'avoit rien.

It would puzzle me to divine in what this *mieux parler* consists. There never was a verse more perfectly idle than this better-spoken one, or what would incur more ridicule in any notoriously bad writer. The bed and the *deux placets* shew the extremes of Saint-Amant's poverty, without any expenditure of wit or fancy to light up the chamber: any other piece of worthless furniture might have been added. This however did not suit the Rhyme, Boileau's goddess of Necessity. He therefore ridicules the man for not having what he had just before ridiculed him for having.

## SATIRE II.

Pour qui tient Apollon tous ses trésors ouverts,  
 Et qui sçais à quel coin se marquent les bons vers.

Behold the art of sinking! Moliere goes into Apollo's treasury, and finds out in it how he marks his pocket-handkerchief.

## SATIRE III.

Nothing can be more flat and out of character than the last lines, from a person who professes just before an utter indifference to the pleasures of the table.

## SATIRE IV.

Tout hérissé de grec, tout bouffi d' arrogance.

All this, excepting the last word, is in another place. The idea of *hérissé de grec* arose, I presume, from the sharp and slender forms of the Greek letters, as we see them printed. A line of Greek appeared to Boileau like a hedge of aloes.

La même erreur les fait errer diversement.

A contradiction the more apparent, as he had mentioned the *hundred* roads in which the travellers wandered, some to the right, some to the left. He has ridiculed the errors into which men have run from the imperfection of their reason: a great folly! he now gravely rails at reason itself: a greater!

Que si d'un sort facheux la maligne inconstance.

The inconstancy of a *sort facheux* was never before complained of, still less called *malignant*.

Enfin un médecin fort expert en son art  
Le guérit ... par adresse ou plutôt par hazard.

It is quite unimportant to the story, if not so to the verse, whether the physician cured the man by skill or chance; but to say that he was *fort expert en son art*, and subjoin that he effected his cure *plutôt par hazard*, proves that the poet must have chosen his expressions altogether at hazard.

## SATIRE V.

*On fait cas d'un coursier qui, fier... et plein de cœur...*  
does what?

Fait paroître en courant sa bouillante vigueur.

This is natural enough: and could not well be otherwise: but what think you of a horse that *jamais ne se lasse*? Do not be surprized: he becomes just like another, and

dans la carrière  
S'est couvert *mille fois* ... d'une noble poussière ...

That is, as your countrymen would have said, not Monsieur Poussiere, but Monsieur *de* Poussiere, a most important distinction.

## SATIRE VI.

A man who reasons, must be aware how silly it is to write an angry satire on *cats*: yet the first thing that provokes the complaints of Boileau



against Paris, is the noise of these animals, and their dangerous conspiracies, in league with the rats, against his repose. He then calls this disturbance the least of his misfortunes, and attacks the cocks, who, of course, are a plague peculiar to Paris. Yet neither the cocks nor the blacksmith, who falls next under his displeasure, are, if we may judge from the outcry he makes, so grievous an evil to him, as the former licentious disturbers of his peace.

Les voleurs à l'instant s'emparent de la ville.  
Le bois *le plus funeste* et le moins fréquenté  
Est, au prix de Paris, un lieu de sûreté.

Exaggeration may be carried to any highth where there is wit, but rolls down like a load of gravel where there is none.

Malheur donc a celui qu'une affaire imprévue  
Engage un peu trop tard au détour d'une rue!

He does not seem aware that all the praises he has been lavishing on Louis are worth nothing, if there is the slightest foundation for this complaint. Thieves are not subjects for satire; but those are truly so whose capitals are crowded with them.

Il faudroit, dans l'enclos d'un vaste logement,  
Avoir loin de la rue un autre appartement.

This is curious: for it demonstrates to us that

there certainly must have been a time, when it was considered or offered, as wit, satire, or moral.

## SATIRE VII.

Mais tout fat me deplait...et me blesse les yeux ;  
Je le poursuis partout.

This is idle and silly; if it were practicable, it would be the ruin of Satire.

## DELILLE.

Turn over, and you will find Boileau warmed by the fine French sentiment of loyalty to his king. Aye, that pleases you, I see.

## LANDOR.

No sentiment is more just or reasonable than loyalty, but it should belong as much to kings as to their people: where it is not reciprocal it is worth nothing. What insincerity! what baseness! to rave against the wild ambition of Alexander, who had all the spirit and all the talents of a consummate warrior, and to crouch at the feet of Louis with every expression of homage and admiration; of Louis, who had no such talents, no such spirit, who exposed his person in no battle, but who ordered a massacre to win the favour of a saint, and consumed a province to cure a heresy: a coward, a bigot, perfidious, ungrateful, perjured, sacrilegious, who died so despised and hated, that his worshippers jumped up from their kneeling,

and pelted his carcase with mire and ordure as it went to burial.

DELILLE.

Ah, M. Landor, you cannot do him justice. You must exaggerate. He is the Grand Monarque.

LANDOR.

This satire is borrowed in many parts from Horace, in many from Juvenal, yet Boileau has contrived to sink all the gaiety of the one, and to weaken with cold and hoarseness all the declamation of the other.

SATIRE IX.

C'est à vous, mon Esprit, à qui je veux parler.

It is a pity that his *Esprit* was not summoned to this conference earlier; but even now it is only called to be talked to, and has more to hear than to say.

Mais moi qui, *dans le fond*, sçais bien ce . . . .

Significant nod, to give the sentence the appearance of wit, which, if it lies anywhere in it, lies *dans le fond*.

Phebus a-t-il pour vous applani le Parnasse?

The word *applani* is not a very happy one. The difficulties of Parnassus are the triumphs of the poet. I must observe here, that Apollo, Par-

nassus, &c. are too frequently used by your poets, and that nothing shows a barrenness of invention more evidently, than this perpetual recurrence to mythology on subjects unconnected with it.

Et ne sçavez-vous pas que, sur ce mont sacré,  
Qui ne vole au sommet tombe au plus bas degré.

This is neither true nor ingenious. Horace has misled him by being misunderstood, where he says

... mediocribus esse poetis  
Non homines, non di, non concessere columnæ.

Now Horace himself, and Catullus, and Tibullus, have never reached nor attempted to reach the summit of Parnassus; and equally certain is it that they have not fallen *au plus bas degré*. Their poetry is excellent in its kind; so is that of La Fontaine. It is only those whose poetry has risen no higher than to mediocrity in its kind, whatever that kind may be, whose existence as poets is destined to a short duration. Catullus and Horace will be read as long as Homer and Virgil, and more often and by more readers.

Par l' éclat d'un fardeau trop pesant à porter.

This is the third time, within a few pages, that I have observed the metaphor, but I never heard until now that a *fardeau* could have an *eclat*. If

it ever is attended by one, it must be, not while it is borne, but at the moment when it is thrown off.

Peindre Bellone *en feu*, tonnant de toutes parts . . .

And what else? Mars, Minerva, Jupiter, the Fates, the Furies!

Et le Belge effrayé . . .

but surely in some act of awful devotion . . . that, if we fall from such a highth, it may be into the bosom of Pity. Ah no!

. . . fuyant sur ses ramparts.

How contemptible are these verses on Bellona and the Dutchman, in comparison with those they are intended to imitate.

Cupidum, pater optime, vires  
Deficiunt: neque enim quivis horrentia pilis  
Agmina, nec fractâ pereuntes cuspide Gallos,  
Aut labentis equo describat vulnera Parthi.

DELILLE.

This satire contains the line which has been so often quoted,

Et le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile,

in which Boileau has scarcely shewn all his wonted discrimination. Surely Tasso is a superb poet.

## LANDOR.

A few remarks on that foolish verse. Your poets have always felt a violent jealousy of the Italian. If Virgil had lived in the age of Tasso, and Tasso in the age of Virgil, Boileau would have transferred and commuted the designations, and have given the tinsel to Virgil, the gold to Tasso. There is little of tinsel in the Gerusalemme, and much of gold. The poet fails whenever he attempts the sublime, generally so called, but he seldom overloads his descriptions with idle words or frivolous decorations. His characters are more vivid and more distinct than Virgil's, and greatly more interesting. The heroes of the Eneid are like the half-extinct frescoes of Raphael; but what is wanting in the frescoes of the painter is effaced by time, what is wanting in the figures of the poet was wanting to his genius. No man ever formed in his mind an idea of Dido, or perhaps ever wished to form it; particularly on finding her memory so extensive and her years so mature, that she could recollect the arrival of Teucer at Sidon. Mezentius is called a despiser of the Gods; yet the most pious speech in the Eneid comes from the lips of Mezentius, the most heroic of all the characters in that poem, and the most resigned to the will of heaven.

Ast de me divôm pater atque hominum rex  
Viderit.

But who would walk among the delightful scenery of woods and waterfalls, of glades and forests, of vallies in their retirement, and of corn-fields in their richness and profusion, for the sake of bringing home a few dry sticks and stubble? or who could receive more pleasure from such an occupation than from surveying the majestic growth of the trees and the rich variety of the foliage?

DELILLE.

I would rather walk through a garden, listening to a fountain, culling roses or sprigs of jessamine, and meditating upon beautiful Nature. But I am very happy that you admire Tasso. I never could determine, whether he or Virgil had the most grace, and the most elegance, and have often wondered that the same country should have produced, even with the interval of fifteen centuries, two poets almost equal to our Racine.

LANDOR.

Virgil has blemishes like Tasso, and Tasso has beauties like Virgil. The Eneid, I venture to affirm, is the most mis-shapen of epics; an epic of episodes; for these constitute the greater and better part. The Gerusalemme Liberata is, of all such compositions, the most perfect in its plan.

In regard to execution, read any one book attentively, and I am persuaded, M. l'Abbé, that you would rather have written it than all the poetry of Voltaire and Boileau; if indeed there is any thing in either of them that could augment your reputation.

Let us go on with the volume before us.

de sang-froid . . . et sans être amoureux,  
Pour quelque Iris en l'air faire le langoureux.

The superfluous on the superfluous! Boileau is one of the *forty* who has done the very thing. One would imagine that there had lived in Paris some lady of this name either by baptism or convention, celebrated as was Phryne. The French poets, if they wished to interest the reader, should at least have engaged a name less hackneyed. Delia, Corinna, Lesbia bring with them great recollections: they are names not taken in vain by all the Romans, in the days of Roman glory. The women to whom they were first given were not ideal. Synonymous with beauty, grace, fondness, tenderness, they delight the memory by locality. We turn with indifference or with disgust from the common *Palais-Royal* face of Iris. Boileau might have said to a patron, "you shall be my Apollo, my Richelieu, my Louis:" the expression



has something to rest upon; and why should not love enjoy the same privileges as patronage?

La Satire, en leçons, en nouveautés fertile,  
Sait seule assaisonner le plaisant et l'utile.

Rhyme consists in similarity of sound, not in identity: an observation that has escaped all your poets, and, what is more wonderful, all the Italian. Satire is less fertile in novelty than any other kind of poetry; and possesses not *alone* the power attributed to it, but, on the contrary, in a less degree than the rest. If it alone were endowed with this faculty, why should poets employ any kind else? Who would write what cannot be pleasant? who what cannot be useful? Satire alone would serve all the purposes both of poetry and of prose; and we might expect to find a good satire in every good treatise on geometry, or metaphysics, or music, or cookery.

Hé! mon dieu! craignez tout d'un auteur en courroux,  
Qui peut...Quoi?...Je m'entends...Mais encor?...Taisez vous.

Thus ends this long monologue between Boileau and his *Esprit*, which must have rejoiced heartily at its dismissal. Perhaps no line is more suitable to the general French taste than this last... so

many short sentences, coming out singly and with breaks between them, like the notes in a cock's morning hymn, which, allow me to observe, seems to have been taken by your countrymen as a model for their verse, not omitting even the interjectional scream with which it closes;... so many things of which almost every man fancies that he alone is in the secret. I must confess, it is really one to me; and, after all the interpretations it will bear, I find neither wit nor satire in it, not even the sting of a dead epigram.

DELILLE.

When you compare the tenth satire of Boileau with the manner in which women are attacked by Juvenal, you must be filled with admiration at perceiving how superior French morality is to Roman.

LANDOR.

That is a knotty question, M. l'Abbé: we might bruise our hands, if we were to lay hold of it. It is safer to confine our observations to poetry.

*Que, si sous Adam même...et loin avant Noé.*

The same fault incessantly recurring! What was under Adam, was long before Noah. Your marquisses were not very profound in chronology:

but even the most ignorant of them probably knew this fact; notwithstanding the league between his confessor and his vices to keep him from reading the book where it is recorded. In Boileau there is really more of diffuseness than of brevity: few observe this, because he abounds in short sentences; and few are aware that sentences may be very short and the writer very prolix; as half a dozen white stones rising out of a brook give the passenger more trouble than a plank across it, not to mention the greater chance of wetting the feet.

Villon et Saint-Gelais,  
Arioste, Marot, Bocace, Rabelais.

One of the beauties at which Boileau aimed, was the nitching of several names together in a verse, without any other word. Caligula spoke justly and admirably, when he compared the sentences of Seneca to lime without sand. Montesquieu, Voltaire, and their imitators, Frederick of Prussia and Catharine of Russia, were perhaps not aware how perversely they imitated this blameable model of style, and how far they were in general from his gravity and acuteness. Florus however seems chiefly to have captivated the attention and to have formed the manner of Voltaire; as the style of our historian Hume is evi-

dently taken from a French translation of Machiavelli.

Seul avec des valets, souvent voleurs et traîtres,  
Et toujours, a coup sûr, ennemis de leurs maîtres.

Why so? in any other respect than as *voleurs et traîtres*.

Et, pour le rendre libre, il le faut enchaîner.

This verse alone was worth a pension from Louis. It is the most violent antithesis that ever was constructed: but, as a maxim in politics, it is admirably adapted to your nation, most happy under a despot and most faithful under an usurper.

Et ne presume pas que Vénus ou Satan, &c.

The two mythologies ought never to be confounded. This is worse than Bellona and the Dutchman, or than Mars *et le fameux fort de Skink*,

L'honneur est comme une île escarpée et sans bords:  
On n'y peut plus rentrer dès qu'on en est dehors.

The simile is imperfect because the fact is untrue. If an island can be entered once, it can be entered twice.

Avec un air plus sombre  
S'en aller méditer une vole au jeu d'ombre.

There is no reason, except the rhyme, for this *air plus sombre*. When the lady only *thinks* of playing, she has encountered no ill success, and expects none; otherwise she would not play.

Comme ce magistrat de hideuse mémoire...

The story of this magistrate is badly told: the progress of his passion is untraced. How much superior is the Sir Balaam of Pope.

Mais qui pourroit compter le nombre des haillons?

This picture is much overcharged. It appears to me that the author had written two descriptions, and, not wishing to lose either, nor knowing what to do with both, tacked them together to compose the tenth satire. He confesses that le récit passe un peu l'*ordinaire*, and desires to know whether it could be given in fewer words. Horace may shew that it can be given both in fewer and better.

Mais qui la priveroit huit jour *de ses plaisirs*,  
Et qui, loin d'un galant...objet *de ses désirs*.

It is natural enough that the lady's gallant should be the object of her desires: but what shall we think of a versification which permits *de ses plaisirs* to be followed by *de ses désirs*?

Sa tranquille vertu conserve tous ses crimes.

A violent counterpoint! Antithesis was always fond of making inroads on the borders of absurdity.

## NATURE XII.

Et partout sa doctrine en peu de tems portée...

what can be added to its extent if it was partout?  
why

Fut du Gange, du Nil, et du Tage écoutée.

Another falling off! Who in the world ever made a voyage to the Ganges for the purpose of arriving at the Tagus? The verse itself did not exact this penance. It could have been written as easily,

Fut du Tage, du Nil, et du Gange écoutée.

This would have described, as it was intended, the progress of the Christian faith. I know not where, in any language, to find such lethargic verses as the following;

Sans simonie on peut contre un bien temporel  
Hardiment échanger un bien spirituel.

Of all the wretched poets ridiculed by Boileau, not one, I believe, has written any thing so signally stupid. Turn to the Discours au-Roi.

Je vais de toutes parts où me guide ma veine,  
Sans tenir en marchant une route certaine;

Et, sans gêner ma plume en ce libre métier,  
Je la laisse au hazard courir sur le papier.

This is untrue: if it were not, he would have written greatly worse than he did. Horace has misled him here, as on other occasions, by being misunderstood: he says,

Ego apis Matinæ  
More modoque  
Grata carpentis thyma *per laborem*  
*Plurimum, &c.*

This relates to the diversity of subjects chosen by the lyric poet: instead of which Boileau speaks merely of satires, and tells us that he corrects the age at hazard, and without the view or intention of correcting it.

Quand je vois ta sagesse en ses justes projets  
D'une heureuse abondance enrichir tes sujets.

Here indeed he is a satirist, and a very bold one, and one who does not let his pen run at random over the paper.

Que je n' ai ni le ton, ni la voix assez forte.

This verse resembles that in his translation of Sappho,

Je ne scaurois trouver...de langue...ni de voix.

He places the tone and the voice in contradistinction: but what is the difference? Where the

tone is loud, the voice is loud, at least for the time. Here, as everywhere, you find the never-failing characteristic of your verse. Your heroic line rises and falls at a certain pitch, like the handle of a pump.

## DELILLE.

You know, M. Landor, even the glorious orb of Phœbus is defaced by spots. Besides, Boileau's satires were his earliest compositions in verse; and some blemishes in them have been detected by our own critics. But they are excusable, or rather they were inevitable. My experience has taught me that perfection is the offspring of labour, and that the Muses must be wooed before they can be won. You will have remarked, I doubt not, that my later works are much more delicately finished than my earlier. The former put me in mind of some rude village in a remote province, the latter more resemble the gardens of Versailles. It is the same in every art. Vestris himself, though, as you are aware, he was Nature's favorite child, could not invest his limbs with all those graces of attitude and motion, which electrified Paris and the world, until Time had organized his budding powers, and Practise had modulated their rich luxuriance. But turn to Boileau's Epistles,



and in some of them at least you will find nothing against which you can object: the dust with which detraction has rubbed them, has only served to renew their exquisite polish.

LANDOR.

With your permission then we will continue our walk, and if we kick up diamonds instead of dirt, or if my blacking, instead of smearing a face, polishes a shoe, we shall be so much the gainers.

ÉPIQUE I. AU ROI.

Boileau had just issued a long and laborious writ against *Equivoque*; he had despatched against it Noah's ark by sea and Heresy by land, when Apollo *éperdu* makes him suddenly the prize of his adversary. He has the simplicity to tell Louis that Apollo has cautioned him thus;

Cette mer où tu cours est célèbre en naufrages.

I hope Louis read this line some years afterwards, when the application of it would scourge him severely. Deprived of all he had acquired by his treachery and violence, unless the nation that brought him upon his knees, had permitted two traitors, Harley and St. John, to second the views of a weak woman and to obstruct those of policy and of England, he had been carted to condign

punishment in the *Place de Grève* or at Tyburn. Such examples are much wanted, and, as they can rarely be given, should never be omitted.

This man is here called *grand roi* seven times within 200 lines; and to shew that he really was so, the words are-written in grand characters.

Te livrer le Bosphore, et...d'un vers incivil  
Proposer au Sultan de te céder le Nil.

Can any one doubt that, if the letter *e* could have been added to *vers*, the poet would have written *civil* instead of *incivil*. I do not remember in any language an epithet so idle and improper.

Ne t'avons-nous pas vu dans les plaines Belgiques,  
Quand l'ennemi vaincu, désertant ses remparts,  
Au devant de ton joug courroit de toutes parts,  
Toi-même te borner ?

Yes, with the assistance of William. Your poets and writers of every kind make all the world French. It has been well remarked, that a Frenchman when victorious is most truly called *vain-cœur*, and that yours is the only nation upon earth which, when defeated, still retains this characteristic quality, though transferring it to the part which it exposes to the enemy, and to specify which more particularly would not be decorous.

Au devant de ton joug.

Surely a beneficent prince has no occasion to impose a yoke upon those who run toward him so willingly from all parts: nevertheless the sentiment is national.

Iront de ta valeur *effrayer l'univers...*

A wise, beneficent, godlike action! but what follows?

Et camper devant Dôle au milieu des hyvers!!!

He grows more and more reasonable.

On verra les abus par ta main réformés,  
La licence et l'orgueil en tous lieux réprimés,  
Du débris des traitans ton épargne grossie,  
Des subsides *affreux* la rigueur adoucie,  
Le soldat, dans la paix, sage et...*laborieux*,  
Nos artisans grossiers rendus...*industrioux*.

What idea must that nation entertain of poetry, which can call this so? To encounter these wretched lines, truly

C'est camper devant Dôle au milieu des hyvers.

What more does Louis perform?

Tantôt je tracerai tes *pompeux* bâtiments,  
Du loisir d'un héros *nobles* amusements.

These noble amusements, with some others of the same hero, brought France into a state of

poverty and wretchedness, which, neglected by his successors, hurled the least vicious of the family to the scaffold.

## ÉPITRE III.

I turn over the leaves hastily...Here we shall discover what happened when Adam was fallen.

Le chardon importun hérissa...les guérets,  
Le serpent *venimeux* rampa dans...les forêts.

According to this, matters were bettered. If the serpent had always been there, Adam would have lost nothing, and the importunity of the thistle would have been little to be complained of, if it had only been in the *guérets*.

## ÉPITRE IV. AU ROI.

Comment en vers heureux assiéger Doësbourg,  
Zutphen, Wagheninghen, Harderwic, Knotzenbourg?

These names are tacked together for no other purpose than the rhyme: he complains that they are difficult to pronounce, meaning to say difficult to spell; for certainly none of them is very harsh; but whenever a Frenchman finds a difficulty in spelling a word, he throws in a handful of consonants to help him over; these are the fascines of M. Boileau's approaches. The sound of *Wurts* is not offensive to the ear, without which, the poet says,

Que j'allois à tes yeux étaler de merveilles !

As you French pronounce *Zutphen*, &c. they are truly harsh enough ; but that is owing to your nasal twang, the most disagreeable and disgusting of all sounds, being produced by the same means as a stink is rejected, and thus reminding us of one. The syllable *Zut* is not harsher than the first in *Zetes*, or *Phen* than the first in *Phenix*. In fact the sounds of *Grand Roi* are considerably harsher than any that so powerfully offend him, as to stop him with his *raryshew* on his back when he had promised the king a peep at it. I well remember the difficulty I experienced, in teaching a learned countryman of yours that,

*'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won...*

is really a verse, and that *'twas* should not be pronounced *it was*, inviting him to read the first line of the *Iliad*, in which he stumbled at *thea*, and fell flat upon his face at *Peleiadeo*. I will now shew you what to any organs sensible of harmony is really disagreeable ; three similar sounds for instance in one verse, which occur in the four last of this Epistle, that seems to have been written when the din of the blacksmith's shop, before complained of, was ringing in his ears.

*Non, non, ne faisons plus de plaintes inutiles :  
Puisqu' ainsi dans deux mois tu prends quarante villes,  
Assuré des bons vers dont ton bras me repond,  
Je t' attends dans deux ans aux bords de l' Hellespont.*

I know nothing of the Dutch language, but I will venture a wager with you, M. l'Abbé, that the harshest verse in it is less so than these; and a Greek or an Italian shall decide. There are dozens similar.

*Je vais faire la guerre aux habitans de l' air.  
Il me faut du repos, des prés et des forêts.  
Ont cru me rendre affreux aux yeux de l' univers.  
Ses écrits pleins de feu partout brillent aux yeux.*

The man must have been born in a sawmill, or in France, or under the falls of Niagara, whose ear can suffer these. In the same Epistle we find,

*A ces mots, essayant sa barbe limoneuse,  
Il prend d' un vieux guerrier la figure poudreuse.*

Another *equivoque!* Surely if Boileau had found such poetry in an author of small repute, he would have quoted it as a thing too low to kick up, too flat to ridicule.

What does the Rhine, after wiping the mud off his moustaches with a clean cambric handkerchief, and assuming the powdered face of an old warrior? he

*Da fameux fort de Skink prend la route connue!*

And Louis, what is he about?

Louis, les animant du feu de son courage,  
Se plaint de sa grandeur...qui l'attache au rivage.

He had many such complaints to make against his grandeur: Cesar and Alexander had none. A Gascon ran away from a fortress about to be bombarded. He was intercepted and brought back; and, on his trial before a court-martial, said in his defence that he had wished to shew his courage in the plain. If this had been permitted, it would probably have been found to be of the same kind as that of Louis.

Turn to the eighth Epistle which is again addressed to the King. I pass over the intermediate, because it is reasonable to presume that if Boileau looks not well in a court-dress, he never looks well. In other cases indeed it would be unjust to confound the poet with the courtier; in him the courtier is the better part. I observe too that these Epistles are particularly celebrated by the Editor for "the suppleness and grace of the versification, and for the equableness, solidity, and fulness of the style."

Et mes vers en ce style, ennuyeux, sans appas,  
Deshonorent ma plume et ne t'honorent pas.

If the verses were *ennuyeux et sans appas*, it

is evident enough that they dishonoured his pen ; and what dishonoured his pen could not honour his prince. This thought, which Boileau has repeated so often, and so ill, is better expressed by several other of your poets, and shortly before by Malleville, in these words.

Mais je sçais quel effort demande cet ouvrage ;  
 La grandeur du sujet me doit épouvanter ;  
 Je trahirois sa gloire au lieu de l'augmenter,  
 Et ferois à son nom moins d'honneur que d'outrage.

DELILLE.

That sonnet of Malleville is very beautiful.

LANDOR.

Particularly in the conclusion : yet your critics preferred, to this and all others, one which displays Phillis and Aurora and Zephyr and Olympus, and in which a most polite apology is offered to the Sun, for the assertion that the brightness of Phillis was as much superior to his, as his was superior to that of the stars. They, who reason so profoundly on all things, seem to argue thus. If it requires more skill in a tailor to give a fashionable cut and fresh glossiness to an old court-dress, than to make a new one, it requires a better poet to refurbish a trite thought than to exhibit an original.



Dans les *nobles douceurs* d'un séjour *plein de charmes*  
 Tu n'es pas moins héros qu'au milieu des alarmes.

In the second line, another equivocal! It is perfectly true that he was just as much a hero, abed and asleep as in battle, but his heroism was chiefly displayed in these *nobles douceurs*. Pity that Boileau has written no ode on his marriage with a poor peasant girl whom he met while he was hunting. The Virgin Mary would perhaps have been bridesmaid, and Apollo would have presented the Gospel on which he swore. How many of your most glorious kings would, if they had been private men in any free country, have been condemned to the pillory and the galleys!

De ton trône agrandi portant seul tout le faix.

This is the favorite metaphor of your poet: he ought to have known that kings do not carry the burden of thrones, but that thrones carry theirs, and that therefore the metaphor here is not only inelegant, as usual, but imperfect and misapplied.

J' amasse de tes faits le pénible volume.

Again equivocal!... In turning over the leaves to arrive at the Art Poétique, my eye rests on this verse in the twelfth Epistle.

Qui n'eut jamais pour dieu que glace...

A strange God enough! it is not to be wondered at if there is no other in his company: but there is: who?

..... et que froideur.

There are follies on which it would be a greater folly to remark. Who would have the courage to ask whether there is not coldness where there is ice? A Latin poet however has written almost as ill;

*Alpes*

*Frigidus aerias atque alta cacumina.*

Read the first lines in the Art Poétique.

C'est en vain qu'au Parnasse un *téméraire auteur*  
Pense de l'art des vers atteindre la *hauteur*...

*Auteur* answers to *hauteur*. After this fashion an echo is the most accomplished of rhymers.

S'il ne sent point du ciel l'influence secrète.

In that case he is not *temeraire*, and the epithet is worse than useless.

Fuyez de ces auteurs l'abondance sterile,  
Et ne vous chargez point d'un detail inutile.

The first verse forestals the second, which is flat, and the three following are still worse.

Ou le Temps qui s'enfuit...une horloge à la main.

He thinks it unreasonable that such an allegory should be censured. Now Time should be represented with no very modern inventions to designate him. I presume that M. Boileau means the *hourglass* by his *horloge à la main*; but although we often see in prints an allegorical figure of this description, no poet should think that a sufficient reason for adopting it, but rather (if a better were wanting) for its rejection. An *hourglass* in the hand of this mighty and most awful Power is hardly less ridiculous than a watch and seals.

Soyez vif et pressé dans vos narrations,  
Soyez riche et pompeux dans vos descriptions.

I know not which to call the worse, the lines or the advice. But to recommend a man to be *rich* in any thing, is a hint that cannot always be taken.

J' aime mieux Arioste et ses fables comiques  
Que ces auteurs toujours froids et melancholiques.

Really! This he intends as a *pis-aller*. Ariosto is a plagiarist, the most so of all poets; Ariosto is negligent; his plan inartificial, defective, bad: but divide the Orlando into three parts and take the worst of them, and although it may contain a large portion of extremely vile poetry, it will contain more of good than the whole French language.

Mais aussi pardonnez, si, plein de ce beau zèle,  
De tous vos pas *fameux* observateur fidele,  
Quelques fois du bon or je separe le faux.

What has *gold* to do, false or sterling, with *steps, zeal, and observation*? *Fameux*, I must remark, is a very favorite expression with him, and is a very unpoetical one. Poetry is the voice of Fame, and celebrates, not what is famous, but what deserves to be so. Of this Boileau is ignorant. He uses the same epithet at the beginning of the *Lutrin*.

Et toi, *fameux* heros, dont la sage entremise  
De ce schisme naissant débarrassa l'Eglise,  
Viens d'un regard heureux *animer mon projet*,  
Et garde-toi de rire en si grave sujet.

The last advice destroys all facetiousness; to *animate a project* is nonsense.

Et de longs traits de *feu* lui sortent par les yeux.

This is just as euphonous as the verse,

Ses écrits pleins de *feu* partout brillent aux yeux.

Another such is,

De ses ailes dans l'*air* secouant la poussiere.

Another no less so,

... Invisible en ce *lieu* ...

Je ne pourrai donc plus être vu que de Dieu.

And another,

Là Xenophon dans l'air heurte contre un la Serre.

In the translation of Sappho's ode, all is wretchedly bad after the first stanza.

Je sens de veine en veine une subtile flamme  
 Courir par tout mon corps.  
 Je ne sçaurois trouver de langue...ni de voix.  
 Un nuage confus se repand sur ma vie.  
 Je n'entends plus...je tombe en de douces langueurs...

He had talked about *doux* transports two lines above.

Et pale, sans haleine, interdite, éperdue...

This is the very contrary to the manner of Sappho, as praised by Longinus, and nothing can be more diffuse, more tautological, more prosaic.

You must have remarked, M. l'Abbé, that I have frequently turned over several pages together, and that, *familiar*, as you may call me, of the *Holy Office*, I never have invested my meagre and hollow-eyed delinquent with colours of flame and images of devils. Ridicule has followed the vestiges of Truth, but never usurped her place. I have said nothing of the Odes, from an unwillingness to insult over their helpless fatuity. Only throw a glance over that on the taking of Namur.

Quelle *docte* et sainte ivresse  
Aujourd'hui *me fait la loi*?

Violent absurdity!

Et par cent bouches *horribles*  
L'airain sur ces monts *terribles*.—  
*Dix mille vaillant Alcides*.—  
C'est Jupiter en personne,  
Ou c'est le vainqueur...de Mons!—  
Saint-Omer, Besançon, Dole,  
Ypres, Mastricht, et Cambrai!!!—  
Accourez, Nassau, Baviere,

to do what?

*Considerer ...ces approches!*!—  
Louis, à tout donnant l'âme,  
Marcher, courir avec eux.

He might have marched with 'em, but he ran  
before 'em.

Son gouverneur, *qui se trouble*.—  
De corps morts, de rocs, de *briques*.

Here, I observe, the editor says, le son de  
ces mots repond à ce qu'ils expriment. Pray,  
M. l'Abbé, which is the sound among them that  
resembles the dead bodies?

DELILLE.

The odes of Boileau, I confess, are inferior to  
the choruses of Racine in Athalie.

LANDOR.

Diffuse and feeble paraphrases from the Psalms!  
The best ode in your language is in the form of a  
sonnet by Gombaud.

La voix qui retentit &c.

The most admired verse of Racine,

Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, &c.

is borrowed almost literally from Godeau. *Cher Abner* favours the theft. The line preceding is useless, and shews, as innumerable other instances do, his custom of making the first *for* the second, and *after* it. He has profited much from the neglected poets of your country, and wants energy because he wants originality. You pause, M. l'Abbé.

DELILLE.

I cannot well believe, that if Boileau, to say nothing of Racine, was a poet so faulty as you represent him, he would have escaped the censure of such sound critics and elegant writers as Johnson and Warton.

LANDOR.

Add poets also; the former so powerful that he made the tempests sigh...

O'er the sad plains perpetual tempests sigh...

the latter, that he reduced the flames to the temperature of new milk.

How burnt their bosoms with warm patriot flame!

DELILLE.

Well! what is amiss?

LANDOR.

I perceive, my dear Abbé, that you slide easily on the corruptions of our language. In fashionable life we say, "I am very *warm*," never "I am very *hot*:" the expression is wrong. Warmth is temperate heat: we never say *red-warm*, but *red-hot*; never *burning-warm*, but *burning-hot*; we use a *warming-pan* for our beds, a *heater* of red-hot iron for our tea-urns. The epithet of *warm* applied to *flame* is worse than childish; for children speak as they feel; bad poets, from reminiscences and arrangements. Johnson had no feeling for poetry: Warton was often led astray by a feverish and weak enthusiasm.

DELILLE.

Johnson may not have been quite so learned as some, whose celebrity is less, for I believe that London is worse furnished with public libraries of easy access, than any city in Europe, not excepting Constantinople, and his private one, from his contracted circumstances, must have been scanty.

LANDOR.

He was studious; but neither his weak eyes, nor many other infirmities, on which very severe



mental disquietude worked incessantly, would allow him all the reading he coveted : besides he was both too poor and too wise to collect a large body of authors.

DELILLE.

Ignorant men are often more ambitious than the learned of copious libraries and curious books, as the blind are fonder of sunshine than the sighted. Surely the judgment of Johnson was correct, the style elegant.

LANDOR.

I have spoken of his judgment ; it was alike in all things. In regard to elegance of style, it appears to me that a sentence of Johnson is like that article of dress which your nation has lately made peace with ; divided into two parts, equal in length, breadth, and substance, with a protuberance before and behind. Warton's Essay on Pope is a cabinet of curiosities, in which are many trifles worth looking at, nothing to carry about or use.

DELILLE.

That Racine and Boileau were great borrowers is undeniable.

LANDOR.

And equally so that they sometimes paid only a small portion of the debt.

DELILLE.

Even your immortal Shakespear borrowed from others.

LANDOR.

Yet he was more original than the originals. He breathed upon dead bodies and brought them into life.

DELILLE.

I think however that I can trace Caliban, that wonderful creature, when I survey attentively the Cyclops of Euripides.

LANDOR.

He knew nothing of Euripides or his Cyclops. That poet, where he is irregular, is great; and he presents more shades and peculiarities of character, than all the other poets of antiquity put together. Yet in several scenes he appears to have written principally for the purpose of inculcating his political and moral axioms. Almost every character introduces them, and in almost every place. There is a regular barter of verse for verse; no credit is given for a proverb, however threadbare; the exchange is paid on the nail for the commodity. The dogmas, like *valets de place*, serve any master and run to any quarter. Even when new, they nevertheless are miserably flat and idle: how different from the striking sentences employed un-

sparingly by Pindar, which always come recommended by some simple and appropriate ornament, like images on days of festival in the temples. Virgil and Ovid have interspersed them throughout their works, with equal felicity. The dialogue of Euripides is sometimes dull and heavy; the construction of his fable infirm and inartificial; and if in the chorus he assumes another form and becomes a more elevated poet, he still is at a loss to make it serve the interests of the piece. Wearied by his dialectics, and again refreshed by his chorus, I cannot but exclaim

There be *two* Richards in the field today.

Aristophanes, who ridicules him in his Comedies, treats him disdainfully as the competitor of Sophocles, and speaks probably the sense of the Athenians in the meridian of their literature. If however he was not considered by them as the equal of Sophocles in dramatic power, still sensible men in all ages will respect him, and the more so, because they will fancy that they discover in him greater wisdom than others have discovered: for while many things in his tragedies are direct, and many proverbial, others are allusive and vague, occurring in various states of mind and temperatures of feeling. There is little of the theatrical

in his works; and his characters are more anxious to shew their understandings than their sufferings.

Euripides came down farther into common life than Sophocles, and he farther down than Æschylus: one would have expected the reverse. But the marvellous had carried Æschylus from the earth, and he filled with light the whole region in which he rested. The temperate greatness and pure eloquence of Pericles formed the moral constitution of Sophocles, who had exercised with him a principal magistracy in the republic; and the demon of Socrates, not always unimportant, followed Euripides from the school to the theatre. The decencies of the boudoir were unknown to him: he would have shocked your chambermaids. Talthybius calls Polyxena a calf; her mother had done the same. Hercules, in *Alcestis*, is drunk.

DELILLE.

This is horrible, if true. Virgil (to venture nothing further about Racine), Virgil is greatly more judicious in his *Dido*.

LANDOR.

The passion of *Dido* is always true to Nature. Other women have called their lovers cruel: she calls Æneas so, not chiefly for betraying and deserting her, but for hazarding his life by encountering the tempests of a wintry sea.

“ Even if it were not to foren lands and unknown habitations that you were hastening, even if Troy were yet in existence, and you were destined thither, would you choose a season like this? would you navigate a sea of which you are ignorant, under the stars of winter?”

I must repeat the lines, for the sake of proposing an improvement.

Quinetiam *hyberno* moliris sidere classem,  
 Et mediis properas aquilonibus ire per altum...  
 Crudelis! quod si non arva aliena domosque  
 Ignotas peteres, et Troja antiqua maneret,  
 Troja per *undosum* peteretur classibus æquor?

If *hybernum* were substituted for *undosum*, how incomparably more beautiful would the sentence be for this energetic repetition! Adjectives ending with *osus* express abundance and intensity to such a degree, that some learned men derive the termination from *odi*, the most potent and universal of feelings. If it be so, *famosus*, *jocosus*, *nemorosus*, *fabulosus*, *sabulosus*, &c. must have been a later brood.

*Undosum*, with all its force, would be far from an equivalent for *hybernum*, even if the latter held no fresh importance from apposition.

My admiration of the author of the *Æneid*, as you see, is not inferior to yours: but I doubt whether he has displayed *on the whole* such poetical powers as the author of *Alcestis*, who far

excels in variety and peculiarity of character all poets excepting Shakespear. He has invented, it is true, nothing so stupendous nor so awful as the Prometheus: but who has? The Satan of Milton himself sinks below it; for Satan, if he sometimes appears with the melancholy grandeur of a fallen Angel, and sometimes as the antagonist of Omnipotence, is often a thing to be thrown out of the way, among the rods and foolscaps of the nursery.

Still I wish that Virgil were a little more followed by our sweepers of the Haram; he might be, without diminution to their grace or dignity. He has been once in his riddle:

*Dic quibus in terris (et eris mihi magnus Apollo)  
Tres pateat cœli spatium non amplius ulnas.*

The family of Cœlius, you know, was of Verona, and occasionally, it is probable, a visitant of Mantua. He upon whose tomb the invention of Menalcas was about to be exercised, is perhaps the same to whom, fifteen years before, Catullus addressed two of his lighter compositions. Now, Abbé,

“ Know you the land,  
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,  
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute?”

DELILLE.

Out upon it! I have it: a grocer's shop kept by one Nightingale. It cannot be otherwise; for olives and citrons in their natural state are ugly enough, but preserved and pickled they fairly beat almonds and raisins, figs, pistachios, and prunes.

LANDOR.

I have heard the paradox, that he intended no enigma.

DELILLE.

His enemies and rivals may assert it.

LANDOR.

They declare that he really means Turkey.

DELILLE.

Ha! ha! ha! spiteful rogues! If it were indeed not a man's house, but a region of the earth, it must be one where there is no peach, apricot, plum, raspberry, strawberry, cranberry, cherry, grape, currant, or crab; and I conceive that in such a situation there can hardly be citron or olive. Then the nightingale...He sings for a shorter season than any other bird. His song continues few weeks. There is something in it like the happiness of man before the Fall; vivid and exuberant, but melancholy from its solitude, and from the shades that we perceive are closing on it.

LANDOR.

You have earned your release from doubt. Whatever was the poet's first intention, he himself now declares that he has no concern in Nightingale's shop; that his idea is not borrowed from Virgil, and that the land, upon his faith,

Is the clime of the East, is the land of the Sun.

DELILLE.

Pray which? A pleasant release from doubt! a release like a push given by a jailor to his prisoner in the cell, with a cry of "*Get out, you rogue!*" as he turns the key upon him.

LANDOR.

We may observe also that really

"The voice of the nightingale never is mute."

DELILLE.

O yes surely. I am supported by Buffon.

LANDOR.

Songs may be mute, for songs may exist unsung; but voices exist only while they sound. In the same poem I find that,

"If ought his lips *essay'd* to groan,  
The rushing billows choak'd the tone."

They need not take the trouble: I will answer



for lips doing no harm in the way of groaning, let them *essay* it as long as they list.

We have in England, at the present time, many poets far above what was formerly thought mediocrity; but our national taste begins to require excitement. Our poems must contain *strong things*. We call for essences, not for flowers. We run across from the old grove and soft meadow, into the ruined abbey, the Albanian fortress, and the Sultan's garden. We cut down our oaks and plant cypresses: we reprove our children for not calling a *rose a gul*: we kick the first shepherd we meet, and shake hands with the first cut-throat. We still excite tears; but we conjure them forth at the point of the dagger, and, if they come slower than we could wish, we bully and blaspheme.

DELILLE.

Nothing is easier than to catch the air of originality now blowing. Do not wonder that it pleases the generality. You and I perhaps have stopped, like the children and the servants, to look at a fine transparency on a staircase, while many, who called themselves professors, have passed a Raphael by and have never noticed it. Let us censure no one for being easily pleased, but let us do the best we can. Whenever I find a critic or satirist vehement against the writers of his age

and country, I attribute more of his inspiration to vanity than to malignity, much as I may observe of this. No good writer was ever long neglected; no great man overlooked by men equally great. Impatience is a proof of inferior strength, and a destroyer of what little there may be. Whether, think you, would Shakespear be amused or mortified, if he were sitting in the pit during the performance of his best tragedy, and heard no other exclamation from his next neighbour, than, *How beautifully those scenes are painted! what palaces, waterfalls, and rocks!*

LANDOR.

He, whose poems are worth all that have been composed from the Creation to the present hour, was so negligent or so secure of fame, as to preserve no copy of them. Homer and he, the one by necessity, the other by choice, confided to the hearts of men the treasures of their genius, which were, like conscience, unengraved words. A want of sedulity, at least in claiming the property of thoughts, is not among the deficiencies of our modern poets. Some traveller, a little while ago, was so witty as to call Venice Rome, not indeed the Rome of the Tiber, but the Rome of the sea. A poet, warm with keeping up the ball from gazette to gazette,

runs instantly to the printers, out of breath at so glorious an opportunity of perpetuating his fame, and declares to all Europe that he had called Venice Rome the year before. We now perceive, but too late for the laurel which they merited, what prodigious poets were your Marat and Bonaparte and Robespierre, with whom England one day was Tyre, another day Carthage, and Paris the Rome of the Seine.

We have wandered (and conversation would be tedious unless we occasionally did so) far from our subject: but I have not forgotten your Cyclops nor my Caliban. The character of the Cyclops is somewhat broad and general, but worthy of Euripides, and such as the greatest of Roman poets was incapable of conceiving: that of Caliban is peculiar and stands single; it is admirably imagined and equally well sustained. Another poet would have made him spiteful: Shakespear has made the infringement of his idleness the origin of his malice. He has also made him grateful: but then his gratitude is the return for an indulgence granted to his evil appetites. Those who by nature are grateful are often by nature vindictive: one of these properties is the sense of kindness, the other of unkindness. Religion and com-

fort require that the one should be cherished and that the other should be suppressed. The mere conception of the monster, without these qualities, without the sudden impressions which bring them vividly out, and the circumstances in which they are displayed, would not be, to considerate minds, so stupendous as it appeared to Warton, who little knew that there is a *nil admirari* as requisite to wisdom as to happiness.

No new fiction of a supernatural being exists in poetry. Hurd traced the genealogy of the Faeries, and fancied he made a discovery. The Sylphs have only another name. Witches and wizards and giants, apparently powerful agents, generally prove the imbecility of the author who has any thing to do with them. Dragons and demons awaken our childish fancies, some of which remain with us to the last. Dreams perhaps generated them, superstition presented them with names and attributes, and the poet brings them forth into action.

Take your Boileau. Some morning, when we are both of us quite at leisure, I will engage to make out the full hundred of puerilities in your grave, concise, elegant poet.

DELILLE.

There are excellences, my friend, in Boileau,

of which you cannot judge so correctly as a native can: for instance his versification.

LANDOR.

I would not creep into the secrets of a versification, upon which even you, M. Delille, can ring no changes; a machine which must be regularly wound up at every six syllables, and the construction of which is less artificial than that of a cuckoo-clock. The greater part of the heroic verses in your language may be read with more facility as anapestic than as iambic: there is not a syllable which may not become either short or long, however it usually be pronounced in conversation. The secret of conciseness I know and will communicate to you, so that you may attain it in the same manner and with the same facility as Boileau and Voltaire have done.

DELILLE.

Indeed it costs me infinite pains, and I almost suspect that I have sometimes failed.

LANDOR.

Well then, in future you may be master of it without any pains at all. Do what they did: Throw away the little links and hinges, the little cramps and dovetails, which lay upon the tables of Homer and of Virgil, which were adjusted, with equal nicety, by Cicero, Plato, and Demosthenes,

and were not overlooked by Bossuet and Pascal; then dock the tail of your commas, and behold a period.

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The French are firmly persuaded that all poetry, to be quite perfect, must be theirs or like it. I never conversed with one of them on the subject, who did not remark to me the obligations that Milton lay under to the Abbé Delille, and Shakspeare to Voltaire. Among the proofs of national vanity, not indeed equal to this, but still amusing enough, is the declaration of a grave writer on heraldry, that Raphael, Correggio, Leonardo, were incapable of painting a *fleur de lis*, and that none but a Frenchman by birth and *courage* could arrive at this summit of glory. His words are these:

J'estime qu'il est fort difficile, de bien faire et représenter une fleur de lis *mignonement troussée*, qui n'est peinte excellent et François *de nation et de courage*: car un Allemand, un Anglois, Espagnol, et Italien, n'en sauront venir à son honneur, pour la bien proportionner.—Theatre d'honneur par Fauyn b. 2. c. 6. p. 185.

What is called a fleur de lis is in fact a spear-head. Chifflet wrote a treatise to prove that it was a *bee*. Joannes Ferrandus Aniciensis composed an Epinicion *pro liliis*. It is wonderful that painters so dexterous left any serious doubt whether what they had drawn so accurately were a flower, a spear-head, or a bee.

The good Abbé Delille entertained a sincere and high esteem for Monsieur Milton, but felt assured that Adam and Eve, Michael and Satan, could not be *mignonement troussés* unless by the hand of a Parisian.

I should be sorry to have debased these *Conversations* by attention to a writer of so mean a cast as Boileau, if it might

not be useful to some of our popular critics, who never suspected that he was deficient in correctness of thought or expression, and who recommend him to the rising poets as a perfect model. A grub, if you hook it with dexterity, may catch a tunny. I throw mine upon the water, and leave it there.

**CONVERSATION XVI.**

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**THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER**

**AND**

**CAPO D'ISTRIA.**



# THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER

AND

## CAPO D'ISTRIA.

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CAPO D'ISTRIA.

YOUR Majesty now perceives all the benefits of the Holy-Alliance, and may remember my enumeration of them. Here is a fact for every word. The Holy-Allies cannot retract: they have admitted the principle: they have gone to work upon it. Austria possesses Italy: turbulence in neighbouring states may be repressed by invasion: there is not a monarch in Europe who denies it; not one who, whatever his fears, whatever his impudence may be, will oppose by action or word your long-meditated conquest of the Turkish empire.

ALEXANDER.

Capo d'Istria, you are a Greek, and would en-

gage me, prepared or unprepared, in war, for the defence of your native country.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Pardon me, my emperor! a Greek, it is true, I am, but you will find me not precipitate. The country of a statesman is the council-board of his prince. Let the pack bark in the kennel; but the shepherd-dog sleeps upon the wallet of his master.

ALEXANDER.

Come, give me your opinions, supposing war inevitable.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

First then, if war is inevitable, I must publish in all the journals, on the testimony of merchants and bankers, that the differences are all accommodated. Fifteen thousand roubles will purchase you the principal gazetteers of England; one thousand those of France. The violence and pride of the Turkish character will indeed at last break off accommodation. Your good allies, at your earnest entreaty, will zealously interfere, to avoid the effusion of blood. You must request their advice how to avert this tremendous evil: you must weep over the decrepid fathers of families, the virtuous wives, the innocent children, the priests at the altar, with God in their mouths, weltering in their blood.

ALEXANDER.

How will France, England, Sweden, act upon this occasion?

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Your Majesty must know that England is not in a condition to equip twenty thousand troops, and that the maintenance of such a force in the field would cost her more than a hundred thousand would cost Russia. Her last year's expenses in the contest with France were three times greater than all the expenses in all the campaigns of Peter the Great, and her march to Paris cost more than the building of Petersburg. If her ministers had ever been men of calculation, as they should have been above all others from the habits and wants of their country, they would have avoided, as Walpole did, nearly all continental wars, and would have been contented to throw in a military and monied force, there only where its weight and its celerity must turn the balance.

ALEXANDER.

England is a brilliant performer, but bad timist.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Employments in England are properties, holden under certain families. Victories and conquests are secondary objects in her wars. Against the most consummate generals and the most enthu-

siastic troops in Europe, was despatched an inexperienced young prince, in whom the soldiers having no confidence, lost that which personal courage and national pride had implanted in themselves. Every new disgrace and disaster was a new reason for employing him. Expedition followed expedition, defeat followed defeat. On another occasion, republicans were taken out of the prisons, and brigaded with royalists, to fight for the king of France. They landed on the shores of their country, and slew their comrades. The city of Ferrol was to be attacked: neither the general nor any person under him knew its fortifications or its garrison. They saw the walls, and turned back; although the walls, on the side where they landed, were incapable of sustaining one discharge of artillery, and the garrison consisted of half an imperfect regiment; and although the city of Corunna, twenty miles distant, is commanded by the hills above it, in that direction, with walls even more feeble, and a garrison still more defective. Even the state of Antwerp was unexamined when an attack was to be made against it; nay, the English ministers had never heard that the island of Walcheren was unhealthy; by which ignorance they lost three thousand men.

The duke of Wellington himself, then untitled;

was superseded by two old generals, one after the other, at the moment when he had gained the most arduous of his victories. Nelson's brave heart was almost broken by persevering injustice and by proud neglect. He returned, like another Bellerophon, from unexpected and undesired success. Constantinople, which never contains fewer than forty thousand fighting men, was to be assailed by four thousand English; a number not sufficient to garrison the Seraglio, as your Majesty will find next October.

The ministers of England have squandered away the vast resources of their country among their supporters and dependents. The people are worn down with taxes, and hardly any thing short of an invasion could rouse them again to war. Besides, in times of discontent, it is dangerous to collect together so large an army as would be sufficient for any important purpose. The armies of Europe have not yet done all they are destined to do. The pertinacity of rulers, in making them the instruments of their ambition, has made them the arbiters of their fate. I would not speak so clearly, if I were not convinced that your Majesty will find full occupation for yours. Soldiers can never stand idle long together: they must turn into

citizens or into rebels. The Janisaries are only a *translation* of the Pretorian-guards.

ALEXANDER.

This seems true: and certain I am that England is not formidable to me just now.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Strike the blow and she will be less so. If she attack you let her attack you in possession of Turkey, not in writing a declaration of war. Threaten her with exclusion for twenty years from all your ports, if she moves.

ALEXANDER.

Her high spirit would not brook this language.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Her spirit must rise and fall with her condition. She has thrown her enemy upon the ground, but he will rise up first. In a time of the greatest plenty England removes a tax upon malt to the advantage of the brewer only. She will proceed in conciliating first one trade then another, until she sacrifices her *sinking-fund*, which ought to be sacred as the debt itself. It should never have been diminished: on the contrary it should have been augmented with whatever could have been curtailed from unnecessary and ostentatious offices.

## ALEXANDER.

The interference of France is much to be apprehended: do not you think so, Capo d'Istria?

## CAPO D'ISTRIA.

The good king of France is occupied in rocking to sleep the martial spirit of his children, as he calls them. He is the most clear-sighted man in his dominions; and had he been king of France five-and-thirty years ago, a reform, which might afterwards have been done away, would have prevented the revolution. The better part of his army is favorable to the cause of Greece; and the Spartan fife is pitched to the carmagnole. France wants colonies; England has too many. To England the most successful war is, on this account, more disastrous than to her defeated adversary: her conquests are the worst of evils to her colonies, and the destruction of another's commerce is a violent shock to hers. Cyprus, or Egypt preferably, would abundantly compensate France: either would accelerate the ruin of her rival, or at least increase her distresses. France will be persuaded by England to make some feeble remonstrances, but your Majesty will be informed of their import. Supposing, for nothing is impossible, that England should confide in the sincerity of her neighbour, it could produce no more

than an intemperance of language, the echoes of which boisterousness would sound but feebly on the shores of the Bosphorus.

ALEXANDER.

The spirit of your countrymen is not a spirit which I am at all disposed to encourage. I abhor republicanism.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

So your Majesty should. I feel no such abhorrence; but your Majesty shall find that all my speculations are lowered down to policy and duty. Leave the Greeks, my countrymen, to their own efforts for a time: every day will produce some new atrocity: mutual hatred will increase: mutual efforts will be made incessantly: both parties will exhaust themselves: but above all, the Turkish cavalry, the strength of the empire, will perish where it cannot act. Among the mountains and defiles it will want both exercise and provender. The Greeks, on becoming your subjects, under whatever form of government, whether absolute, mixt, (permit me an absurdity) or free, will be heartily glad to repose; and granting that their fibre still quivers, their strength will be unable to trouble or molest you. Propose to the king of Persia the invasion and possession of the best Turkish provinces, such as Bagdad



and Damascus; offer him either a great or a small force, whichever he chooses, of the infantry now quartered on his borders. This will prove your sincerity and ensure his success. You may *mediate* afterwards, and recover the whole, when the sons contend for the kingdom.

ALEXANDER.

But Austria will not assist and may oppose me.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

God grant it! Her assistance, at the best, would only be in cutting up the prey; but her opposition would end in being cut up herself. The united kingdoms of Poland and Hungary! We must be fashionable, may it please your Majesty...*united* is the word of the day...unless we talk of marriages. The next year may produce that which must happen within the next twenty. The Adriatic is the boundary of the Eastern empire: the line above it is imaginary both to geographer and politician.

ALEXANDER.

I again acknowledge my apprehension of France, both from her perpetual favour towards Turkey, since the reign of Francis the first, and from her jealousy of any continental superior.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Apparently there is reason from these motives;

but others operate in a contrary direction. France will be very cautious of raising up a military chief. She remembers how much has been effected by one little worthy of her confidence, one great only by the littleness of his competitors. She remembers that her king was imposed upon her by the conqueror; and in vain will you demonstrate, as you easily may, that she has produced no man so temperate and wise within the memory of the living. The command of armies excites to ambition, and every officer expects promotion under a new dynasty. The king will avoid this by the preservation of peace, which is as necessary to him as war ever was to his predecessor.

Let us now take another view of the subject, and look beyond the king towards the army. Three hundred thousand French bodies lay exposed and stiff along your territory. Place the French army between a Russian and a Turkish, and say to it "*Frenchmen, here are those who slew your companions in arms, unprovoked aggressors; and here, on the other side, are those with whom hitherto you have lived in amity, the slaughterers and oppressors of the Greeks, those children of Leonidas and Epaminondas, the nation which founded Marseilles and Toulon, Ajaccio and Aleria, and left imprinted its finest features on*

*your character :*" they would consult their glory rather than their revenge, and their only hesitation would be, whether it allowed them to attack the weaker enemy. A glorious and great nation! A single spark fires and explodes them.

I must remark to your Majesty that Russia is the sole country in the world whose policy is immutable. Russia, like the star that shines above her, must remain for ever a guide to steer by. The policy of England has varied more frequently than that of any other nation on record, because in general a new administration deems it necessary to change the system of the former. The persons who now administer the affairs of that country, are persons of humble birth and humbler genius, but are maintained in their places by the timidity of the aristocracy, and by the contempt of all classes for the leaders of opposition. They will hazard nothing: they are far more prudent (weak as they are) than any past ministry for nearly half a century. As we have entered into the French national feeling, so will we now into the English, and I am confident of discovering that no hostility is to be apprehended by your Majesty, from the system of either cabinet or the spirit of either people.

The Englishman, in all respects the contrary of

his neighbour, is too great and too fierce a creature to be gregarious. He has little public honour, much private. His own heart makes large demands upon him, national glory none. The innermost regions of Hindostan, the wildest shores of the American Lakes, should have repeated the language of England. This is power; this is glory: Rome acquired it, and civilized the world by it; with how much scantier stores of intellect, how much less leisure, how much less intercourse, how much less philanthropy, how much less wealth! England would not assist the Greeks from any regard to their past glory, or with any prospective view to her own, but because they have suffered much and fought bravely. When the populace has pelted the king amidst his guards, a ceremony not uncommon, and some have been dismounted in the performance of their duty, they have always been hailed with loud cheers. Let a forener be attacked and defend himself in London, he raises up an army in his favour by the first effort of courage, and the brother of his antagonist clears the ground and demands *fair play* for him: such is the characteristic expression of this brave unbloody people. All, in other countries, crowd about the strong: he alone who prevails is in the right; he alone who wants no assistance is as-

sisted: the Englishman is the friend of the desolate and the defender of the oppressed. Hence his hatred and contempt of those who presume to an equality with him in other states, and the suddenness with which he breaks off all intercourse from the few whom he has admitted to his society. On these principles your Majesty will prepossess a most powerful and generous people in your favour: and although the national interest is concerned in maintaining the Turkish empire, the popular mind will aid you in its overthrow.

On no other resolution than the conquest of Turkey was it prudent in your Majesty to grant the dominion of Italy to Austria. The occupation of Naples does not require an army: four regiments and four hangmen could keep the whole peninsula in subjection. We wanted from all governments an acknowledgement of the dogma, that every ebullition of the public sentiment should be compressed. We obtained it; we saw it acted on: the first regiment of Austria that marched to Naples paved a road for your guards to Constantinople. Why should we break it up again? why abandon a line of policy, both ends of which are in our hands? Supposing, which is impossible, that any continental power should dare to oppose you, is there any that would be so powerful in

hostility as the Greeks in amity? Every male of that nation, from puberty to decrepitude, would take up arms; even her women, her bishops, her hospodars. But France, England, Austria, might confederate. Their confederation would act more feebly than the efforts of any one singly, and would ruin the finances of the only state amongst them which, at any time hereafter, might injure you long or materially. They could not hold together three months, no, nor one; the very first would serve for the seed-time of discord. France has a long account to settle with several of her neighbours: they know it, and will keep themselves shut closely up at home. Sweden and Prussia have one only guarantee for their integrity. Prussia may expect and obtain much, particularly if England moves a foot. Whatever your Majesty could take away from Sweden, is of no value to you, and would be taken only as a punishment for defection. She will therefor seek to cultivate the friendship of a potentate, interested more in preserving than in ruining her, alone capable of either, and alike capable of both. She sees the necessity of peace: for although her soldiers have been at all times the best that ever marched upon the earth, they never marched without some great object; and none such is now

before them. The Swedes are the most orderly and the most civilized people on the continent. Lovers as they are of their country, if they felt any unnecessary weight of taxes, they would change their habitations, well knowing that Swedes make Sweden, in whichever hemisphere. The finest countries in the world are still unoccupied. Avarice hath seized a few bays, a few river-banks, a few savannahs, a few mines, of America: the better and greater part remains unoccupied. Emigration has only begun: the colonists, at present there, are merely *avant-couriers* and explorers. What rational creature would live where the earth itself is taken away from him, by Nature, one-half of the year, where he sees nothing but snow and sky one-half of his lifetime, if the produce of his labour and the exercise of his will were not perfectly his own? Are light and warmth worth nothing? They cost much in every cold climate. There must also be a great expenditure, in more costly cloathing, in more copious food, in more spirituous beverage, in more profuse and wasteful hospitality. For solitude is intolerable even to the morose and contemplative without warmth or light. Every man then is severely taxed by the North itself: rewards, comforts, enjoyments,

privileges, should be proposed and invented to detain him; not impositions, not hardships. Sweden, whoever be her king, whatever her constitution, must avoid them, and must employ all imaginable means of procuring, from her own soil, her food, her raiment, and her luxuries. She should interdict every unnecessary importation. Her worst land should be proved to be capable of producing fruits, from which may be extracted strong and delicious and salutary liquors. Such is the beneficence of Providence, rarely well seconded, and often thwarted and intercepted, that the least fertile countries and the least genial climates, would mature vinous fruits, and administer a beverage more wholesome, and more grateful, than fifty-nine parts in sixty of the grape-wines, brewed in Italy and Spain. This is perhaps the first time, since the reign of Cyrus, that a minister of state ever talked on such matters. When I was twenty years younger I should have come forward with fear and blushes, if I had a word to say to my emperor on plums, cherries, currants, and raspberries. But a labourer may forget his weariness amidst the murmur of his hives, and a citizen be attached to his native soil by an apple-tree and a gooseberry-bush. Gar-



deners are never bad subjects. Sweden will encourage agriculture, plantation, and fishery. The latter is the most fertile of her possessions, and wants no garrisons or encampments. These occupations will deaden excitability to war, without injuring the moral and physical force by which, whenever it is necessary, it may be supported. But she appears to me farther removed from such a necessity than any other nation in the world, and your Majesty may calculate, for the remainder of your life, on her neutrality.

One argument answers all objections. If they all agreed that Naples should be invaded, when not a single act of violence had been committed, because the Neapolitans were turbulent, how greatly more forcible is the reason, when a more powerful nation is not only more turbulent, but when the same principles as those of the Neapolitans are in action on one side, and a fanaticism in hostility to Christianity on the other! Your Majesty is head of the Greek church: bishops and patriarchs have been massacred by the Mahometans. It becomes not your dignity to listen to any accommodation on such outrages. You might have pardoned (which would have been too much) the insult offered to your ambassador; you might have yielded to the entreaties of your allies, in forbear-

ing from the same steps as had been taken by Austria; you might have permitted the aggrandisement of that powerful neighbour; but you cannot abandon the church of God, placed under your especial care and sole protection.

ALEXANDER.

Capo d'Istria! is it you who talk so?

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

No; it is your Majesty.

ALEXANDER.

My armies cannot stir in this season of the year; the Turks can march all winter.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Let them: we shall have occupation enough in preparing stores and shewing our sincerity. We shall be compelled into the war when we are ready. Wait only until after the Ramadan: the fierceness of the Turks will subside by fasting, and differences will arise between the European and Asiatic troops.

ALEXANDER.

We cannot speculate on the latter case, and our soldiers also will fast...

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Or not; as your Majesty pleases. The Christian is the only religion, old or new, in which individuals and nations can dispense, by another's per-

mission, with their bounden duties; such are fasts, curtesies, crosses, genuflexions, processions, and other bodily functions.

ALEXANDER.

This would be a religious war; and Islamism may send into the field half a million of combatants.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Then is victory ours. Devastated provinces cannot furnish provisions to one-third of the number in one body, and they would fight not for articles of faith, but for articles of food; Turk against Turk, not against Greek and Russian. He who has the best commissariate has the strongest army. Your Majesty can bring into the field as large a force as the enemy, a force better disciplined and better supplied: hence the main body will be more numerous; and with the main body the business of the war will be effected. March directly for Constantinople. All great empires have been lost and gained by one battle, your own excepted. The conquest of the Ottoman will be achieved by one: twenty would not win Rhodes. He who ruined the Persians at Marathon was repulsed from the little rock of Paros. I beg your Majesty's pardon for such an offence against the dignity of diplomacy, as a quotation of ancient

history, at a time when the world abounds with young *attachés à la legation*, all braver than Miltiades, all more eloquent than Herodotus, all more virtuous than Aristides, and all more wise than Solon. Your Majesty smiles. I have heard their patrons swear it upon their honour.

ALEXANDER.

The very thing on which such an oath should be sworn; the altar is worthy of the offering, and the offering of the altar.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

A great encounter within sight of Constantinople throws the most distant dominions of the sultan into your hands: Selim, the Prophet, and Fate bend before you. Precedents are good for all, even for Russia: but Russia has great advantages, which other powers have never had, and never will have. Remember, now and for ever, that she alone can play deep at every table and stake nothing.

**CONVERSATION XVII.**

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**KOSCIUSKO**

**AND**

**PONIATOWSKI.**

KOSCIUSKO  
AND  
PONIATOWSKI.

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PONIATOWSKI.

A SHORT and hasty letter, brought by my courier, will have expressed to you, general, with what pleasure I obtained leave of absence for ten days, that I might present you my affectionate homage here in Switzerland.

KOSCIUSKO.

No courier can have arrived, sir; for we hear the children at play in the street, and they would have been earnest to discover what sort of creature is a courier.

PONIATOWSKI.

I myself am no bad specimen of one: I have traversed three kingdoms in five days; such a power of attraction has Kosciusko on Poniatowski.

KOSCIUSKO.

Poniatowski! my brave countryman, I embrace you heartily. Sit down, rest yourself...not upon that chair...the rushes are cut through in the middle...the boys and girls come in, when I am reading in the window or working in the garden, and play their old captain these tricks.

PONIATOWSKI.

I must embrace you again, my general! Always the same kind, tender heart, the same simplicity and modesty! There is little of poetry or of ingenuity in the idea that your nativity was between the Lion and the Virgin. O with what enthusiasm would our legions follow you! why not return amongst us and command us?

KOSCIUSKO.

Where is Poland?

PONIATOWSKI.

She rises from her ashes with new splendour: in every battle she performs the most distinguished part...do you sigh at hearing it!

KOSCIUSKO.

Poniatowski! her blood flows for strangers, and her heroism is but an interlude in the drama of Ambition. She is intoxicated from the cup of Glory to be dismembered with the less feeling of her loss. When she recovers her senses, in vain

will she look around for compassion or for gratitude. Beyond a doubt I am a feeble and visionary politician; nevertheless I will venture to express my opinion, that gratitude, although it never has been admitted among the political virtues, is one; that whatever is good in morals is also good in politics; and that, by introducing it opportunely and dexterously, the gravest of old politicians might occasionally be disconcerted. Do not let us be alarmed at the novelty: many have presumed to recommend the observance of Justice; and Gratitude is nothing more than Justice in a fit of generosity, and permitting a Love or a Genius to carry off her scales.

PONIATOWSKI.

We live in an age when no experiments of this kind are tried, and when all others are exhausted.

KOSCIUSKO.

True, we see nothing in battle but brute force, nothing in peace but unblushing perfidy. War, which gave its name to strategems, would recall them, and cannot; they are shut up within the cabinet and counter, where they never should have entered, and the wisest of them are such as would disgrace the talents of a ringdropper.

If the person, to whom Fortune seems to have given the disposal of mankind, had known any-



thing of our national character, he would have augmented the dominions of Poland, instead of diminishing them: if he had known as much of policy as a peasant or a professor, he would have united with it Royal Prussia and Hungary, and its southern boundaries would have been the Danube and the Dnieper. Every German province, excepting a few I am about to mention, would have been erected into a kingdom, under the most powerful or the most popular of its princes, its nobles, its magistrates; representatives would have been elected, standing armies would have been abolished. Thus the existence of the governors and the prosperity of the governed would have been his work, and that work would have been indestructible. The erection of twenty kings in twenty minutes would have abundantly gratified his vanity...a consideration not unimportant when we discourse upon crowned heads, and particularly upon heads crowned recently, or indeed upon heads of any kind subject to the vortices of power. The Scandinavian Peninsula should have been strengthened by the junction of Denmark, Mecklenburgh, and Pomerania, forming a barrier against the maritime force of England, and (united by confederacy with Poland) against the systematic and unsuspected march of Muscovite aggression.

No German kingdom should have contained much more than one million of inhabitants. It was his business to lessen not only the kingly authority but the kingly name.

History has given us no example of a man whose errors have been so manifold and so destructive. I confess that I have been mistaken in foretelling his downfall: I calculated from observations on mankind in ages less effete. I could not calculate the forces that resisted him, for I knew only the military and financial force, and this but numerically; I knew not by whom and where and to what specific object it was to be applied. Fortunate! to spring up in a season of rankness and rottenness, when every principle of vitality had been extinguished in the state, either by the *malaria* of despotism, or by the tempests of democracy; when all who came against him from without were weaker in judgment than himself, and when the wildest temerity was equally sure of success as the most prudent combinations and the best measured conduct. No general, I believe, in the lowest degree versed in war, has been consulted by the principal of the belligerents; this we know, persons the least practised in it have been employed as commanders in chief. The good people of England is persuaded that to open a campaign is as

easy as to open an oyster, and to finish it is a thing to be done as quickly as to swallow one.

PONIATOWSKI.

England will alter her system from one of these two causes. Either (at the end of twenty years perhaps) all the families of her aristocracy will be sufficiently enriched, which is the prime motive in all her undertakings, or a serious and earnest effort will be made against increasing danger, and some general of capacity will at last be appointed to satisfy the clamours of the people, and to keep the government, or rather the governors, unshaken. I have heard however that Pichegru and Dumourier have sometimes been consulted by that cabinet.

KOSCIUSKO.

The name of the latter I remember in old gazettes; and I will readily believe that he may have given his advice. Pichegru had no influence there; he received no marks of confidence, few of courtesy. His wisdom, his modesty, his taciturnity, his disdain of puppets in power, beating each other head against head and chuckling each other's language when uppermost, a disdain his stern countenance ill concealed, would be my proofs and vouchers, if I had not also his own declaration. He was incomparably the best general in Europe,

and could not often have failed in what he thought expedient. He had however two great defects, either of which might have brought his loyalty into suspicion: he wore no other powder in his hair than what it collected on a march; and he put on boots, when he should have put on buckles.

## PONIATOWSKI.

I have heard young Englishmen of distinction say, that they could hardly suppose him to be a Frenchman, unless from his ugliness: that he spoke slowly, contradicted no one, interrupted no one, delivered no opinion of his own unasked, nor indeed at all when he could adduce another's; never aimed at a witticism, never smiled at a misfortune, an awkwardness, or a sneer, never sang, never danced, never spat upon the carpet, or in the presence of a lady, bowed ungracefully and gravely, and had been seen to blush.

## KOSCIUSKO.

They might have added, that he refused to execute the decree of the Convention, when no quarter was to be given them; that he hazarded his life for his humanity; and that he invaded and conquered the richest country in the world, and took not away from it one grain of gold. If he had been facetious and eloquent he would have

been almost a Phocion: no other man in Europe can be weighed against his scabbard.

PONIATOWSKI.

The French accuse him of betraying the Republic.

KOSCIUSKO.

He saw one thing clearly, and firmly believed another. He saw that the French character could retain no stamp of republicanism; and he believed that the Bourbons would be chastened by adversity. As the Republic must die by a natural death or a violent one, he preferred the former, and he desired that the supreme magistracy should return to that family which had the most orderly and peaceable for its partisans. He knew enough of the Bourbons, to be certain that they never would recompense his services, and enough of human nature in its most exalted state, to feel that a man great as himself could alone be his rewarder. We hear many complaints of princes and of fortune; but believe me, Poniatowski, there never was a good or generous action that met with much ingratitude.

PONIATOWSKI.

Is it possible you can say so! you, to whom no statues are erected, no hymns are sung in public

processions; you, who have no country... and you smile upon such injuries and such losses.

KOSCIUSKO.

My friend, I have lost nothing: I have received no injury: I am in the midst of our country day and night. Absence is not of matter: the body does not make it. Absence quickens our love and elevates our affections. Absence is the invisible and incorporeal mother of ideal beauty. Were I in Poland, how many things are there which would disturb and perhaps exasperate me! Here I can think of her as of some departed soul, not yet indeed cloathed in light, nor exempted from sorrowfulness, but divested of passion, removed from tumult, and inviting to contemplation. She is the dearer to me because she reminds me that I have performed my duty towards her... Permitt me to go on... I said that a good or generous action never met with much ingratitude. I do not deny that ingratitude may be very general; but even if we experience it from all quarters, there is still no evidence of its weight or its intensity. We bear upon our heads an immense column of air, but the nature of things has rendered us insensible of it altogether: have we not also a strength and a support against what is equally external, the breath of worthless men?

Very far is that from being much or great, which a single movement of self-esteem tosses up and scatters. Slaves make out of barbarians a king or emperor; the clumsiest hand can fashion such misshapen images; but the high and discerning spirit spreads out its wings from precipices, raises itself up slowly by great efforts, acquires ease, velocity, and might, by elevation, and suns itself in the smiles of its Creator.

**CONVERSATION XVIII.**

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**MIDDLETON**

**AND**

**MAGLIABECHI.**



M I D D L E T O N

AND

MAGLIABECHI.

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MAGLIABECHI.

THE pleasure I have enjoyed in your conversation, sir, induces me to render you such a service, as never yet was rendered by an Italian to a stranger.

MIDDLETON.

You have already rendered me several such, M. Magliabechi, nor indeed can any man of letters converse an hour with you and not carry home with him some signal benefit.

MAGLIABECHI.

Your life is in danger, M. Middleton.

MIDDLETON.

How! impossible! I offend no one, in public or in private: I converse with you only: I avoid all others, and above all, the busybodies of litera-

ture and politics. I court no lady: I never go to the palace: I enjoy no favours: I solicit no distinctions: I am neither poet nor painter\*. Surely

\* Whatever is said on the envy of poets and painters, who appear to be more subject to this distemper than any other description of men, must owe its merit to the manner in which it is expressed, and to the occasion on which it is brought forward. The same idea is found in the lines below.

Si sint Invidiæ strigosiora  
 (Ut sunt) ubera pelle viperinâ,  
 Si sint flaccidiora quàm vel utres  
 Queis tu admoveris os, amice Lotti,  
 Salsâ halece meridieque siccum,  
 Quid mirum? assiduè trahenda præbet  
 Tot pictoribus atque tot poetis.

The verses were addressed to the rev. Dr. Lotti of Lizzano, on the confines of the Modenese. This gentleman, the reputed son of the emperor P. Leopold, to whom (if I may judge from the coins) he bore a perfect resemblance, was the most learned and courteous man I have ever conversed with in Tuscany. He was rather fond of wine; but with decorum. I spent one of the happiest days of my life in his society, and was about to repeat my visit the following summer, when I heard that my quiet, inoffensive, beneficent friend had been stoned to death by a parishioner. No inquiry was instituted by government: he had nothing but erudition and virtue to recommend him, and the tears and blessings of the poor. I asked how so unmerited a calamity could have befallen so warm-hearted a creature, and in the decline of life: the reply was, *Chi sa? forse uno sbaglio*. "Who knows? perhaps it was done by mistake." What a virtuous and happy people must that be, to which such a loss is imperceptible! I saw him but three times, and lament it, more than I think it right to express, at the distance of nearly two years. Rest thee with God, kind, gentle, generous Lotti!

then I, if any one, should be exempt from malignity and revenge.

MAGLIABECHI.

To remove suspense, I must inform you that your letters are opened and your writings read by the Police. The servant whom you dismissed for robbing you, has denounced you.

MIDDLETON.

Was it not enough for him to be permitted to plunder me with impunity? does he expect a reward for this villainy? will his word or his oath be taken?

MAGLIABECHI.

Gently, M. Middleton. He expects no reward: he received it when he was allowed to rob you. He came recommended to you as an honest servant by several noble families. He robbed them all, and a portion of what he stole was restored to them by the police, on condition that they should render to the Government a mutual service when called upon.

MIDDLETON.

Incredible baseness! can you smile upon it, M. Magliabechi! can you have any communication with these wretches, these nobles, as you call them, this servant, this police!

MAGLIABECHI.

My opinion was demanded by my superiors,

upon some remarks of yours on the religion of our country.

MIDDLETON.

I protest, sir, I copied them in great measure from the Latin work of a learned German.

MAGLIABECHI.

True: I know the book: it is entitled *Facetiæ Facietiarum*. There is some wit and some truth in it; but the better wit is, the more dangerous is it; and Truth, like the Sun, coming down upon us too directly, may give us a brain-fever.

In this country, M. Middleton, we have *jealousies* not only to our windows but to our breasts: we admit but little light to either, and we live the more comfortably for so doing. If we changed this custom, we must change almost every other, all the parts of our polity having been gradually drawn closer and closer, until at last they form an inseparable mass, of religion, laws, and usages. We condemn as a dangerous error the doctrine of Galileo, that the earth moves about the sun; but we condemn rather the danger than the error of asserting it...

MIDDLETON.

Pardon my interruption. When I see the doctors of your church insisting on a demonstrable falsehood, have I not reason to believe that they

would maintain others less demonstrable, and more profitable?

## MAGLIABECHI.

Among your other works I find a manuscript on the inefficacy of prayer. I defended you to my superiors by shewing that Cicero had asserted things incredible to himself merely for the sake of argument, and had probably written them before he had fixed in his mind the personages to whom they should be attributed in his dialogues; that, in short, they were brought forward for no other purpose than discussion and explosion. This impiety was forgiven. But every man in Italy has a favorite saint, for whose honour he deems it meritorious to draw (I had almost said the sword) the stiletto.

## MIDDLETON.

It would be safer to attempt dragging God from his throne, than to splitt a spangle on their petticoats, or to puff a grain of powder from their perukes. This I know. Nothing in my writings is intended to wound the jealousy of the Italians. Truth, like the juice of the poppy, in small quantities calms men, in larger heats and irritates them, and is attended by fatal consequences in its excess. For which reason, with plain ground before me, I would not expatiate largely, and often

made an argument, that offered itself, give way altogether and leave room for inferences. My treatise on prayer was not to be published in my lifetime.

MAGLIABECHI.

And why at any time? Is not the mind exalted by prayer, the heart purified, are not our affections chastened, our desires moderated, our enjoyments enlarged by this intercourse with the Deity? and are not men the better, as certainly they are the happier, for a belief that he interferes in their concerns? They are persuaded that there is something conditional between them, and that, if they labour under the commission of crimes, their voice will be inaudible as the voice of one under the night-mair.

MIDDLETON.

I wished to demonstrate that we often treat God in the same manner as we should treat some doating or some passionate old man: we feign, we flatter, we sing, we cry, we gesticulate.

MAGLIABECHI.

Worship him in your own manner, according to the sense he has given you, and let those who cannot exercise that sense, rely upon those who can. Be convinced, M. Middleton, that you never will supplant the received ideas of God: be no

less convinced that the sum of all your labours in this field will be, to leave the ground loose beneath you, and that he who comes after you will sink. In sickness, in our last particularly, we all are poor wretches: we are nearly all laid on a level by it: the dry rot of the mind supervenes, and loosens whatever was fixt in it except religion. Would you be so inhumane as to tell any friend in this condition, not to be comforted? so inhumane as to prove that the crucifix, which his wandering eye finds at last its resting-place, is of the very same material as his bedpost?

## MIDDLETON.

Far be it from my wishes and from my thoughts, to unhinge those portals through which we must enter to the performance of our social duties: but I am sensible of no irreligion, I acknowledge no sorrow or regret, in having attempted to demonstrate that God is totally and far removed from our passions and infirmities. I would inculcate entire resignation to the divine decrees, acquiescence in the divine wisdom, confidence in the divine benevolence. There is something of frail humanity, something of its very decrepitude, in our ideas of God: we are foolish and ignorant in the same manner, and almost to the same degree, as those painters are, who append a grey beard to

his chin, draw wrinkles across his brow, and cover him with a gaudy and flowing mantle. I admitt the benefit and the necessity of enuring the mind to repose upon the contemplation of the divine perfections, and to purify itself by looking upwards to the purity of heaven: but I see neither wisdom nor piety in the prayers of your Capuchins and their besotted hearers to God and his Saints for a Parmesan cheese, or a new pair of breeches.

MAGLIABECHI.

Prayer, at all times serviceable, may apparently on some occasions be misapplied. Father Onesimo Sozzifante, on his return from England, presented to me a singular illustration of my remark. He had resided some years in London, as chaplain to the Sardinian envoy: in the firstfloor of his lodginghouse dwelt Mr. Harbottle, a young clergyman, learned, of elegant manners, yet fond of fox-hunting. Inconsistencies like these are found nowhere but in your country: in others, those who have enough for one side of the character, have not enough for the opposite: you in general are sufficiently wellstored to squander much of your intellectual property, to neglect much, and to retain much.

Mutual civilities had always passed between the two ecclesiastics, and father Onesimo had received



many invitations to dinner from his neighbour. After the first, he had declined them, deeming the songs and disputations in a slight degree indecorous. The party at this was clerical: and, although he represented it as more turbulent in its conclusion than ours are, and although there were many warm disputants, chiefly on jockies or leaders in parliament, he assured me he was much edified and pleased, when, at the removal of the dishes, all drank devoutly to old friendships. "*I thought of you,*" said he, "*my dear Magliabechi, for every one had then before his eyes the complacent guide of his youth. Mine shed a few tears; at which my friends glanced one upon another and smiled; for from an Englishman not Shakspear, no, nor even the crucifix, can extort a tear.*"

Onesimo was at breakfast with Mr. Harbottle, when an Italian ran breathless into the room, kissed the father's hand, and begged him to come instantly and attend a dying man. "*We will go together,*" said Mr. Harbottle. Following their informant, they passed through several lanes and allies, and at last mounted the stairs of a garret, in which was lying a youth, stabbed the night before by a Livornese, about one of those women who excite the most quarrels and deserve the

fewest. "*Leave me for a moment,*" said father Sozzifante, "*I must hear his confession.*" Hardly had he spoken, when out came all whom kindness or piety or curiosity had collected, and *he is in paradise!* was the exclamation. Mr. Harbottle then entered, and was surprised to hear the worthy confessor ask of the dead man whether he forgave his enemy, and answer in another tone, "*Yes, father, from my heart I pardon him.*" On returning, he remarked that it appeared strange to him. "*Sir,*" answered Onesimo, "*the catholic church enjoins forgiveness of injuries.*" "*All churches enjoin the same,*" replied Mr. Harbottle. "*He was unable to speak for himself,*" said the father, "*and therefor I answered for him like a christian.*"

Mr. Harbottle, as became him, was silent. On their return homeward they passed by a place which, if I remember, is called New-gate, a gate, above which, it appears, criminals are hanged. At that very hour the cord was around the neck of a wretch who was repeating the Lord's prayer: the first words they heard were, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" The father looked at his companion with awe, spreading his fingers on his sleeve, and pressing it until he turned his face towards him. They both pushed on; but,

such was the crowd, they could not pass the suppliant before he had uttered, "*And lead us not into temptation.*" The good father stepped before Mr. Harbottle, and, lifting his hands above his ears, would have said something; but his companion cried smartly, "*I have seals to my watch, Signor Sozzifante, and there is never a fellow hanged but he makes twenty fit for it: pray walk on.*" Fairly out of the crowd, "Poor sinful soul!" said the father, "ere this time thou art in purgatory! *thy* daily bread! alas, thou hast eaten the last mouthful! *thy* temptation! thou wilt find but few there, I warrant thee, my son! Even these divine words, Mr. Harbottle, may come a little out of season, you perceive."

Mr. Harbottle went home dissatisfied: in about an hour a friend of his from Oxford called on him: as the weather was warm, the door standing ajar, Sozzifante heard him repeat the history of their adventure, and add; "I will be damned if in my firm persuasion the fellow is not a Jesuit: I never should have thought it: he humbugged me about the dead man, and perhaps got another hanged to quiz me. Would you believe it? he has been three good years in getting up this farce, the first I have ever caught him, and the last he shall ever catch me at."

Father Onesimo related to me these occur-

rences, without a word of reproach or an accent of illhumour. "The English is a strong language," said he placidly, "and the people, the least deceivers in the world, are naturally the most indignant at a suspicion of deceit. Mr. Harbottle, who, I dare to say, is ripened ere this time into an exemplary and holy man, was then rather fitter for society than for the church. Do you know," said he in my ear, although we were alone, "I have seen him pay his laundress (and there was nothing between them) five shillings for one week only! a sum that serves any cardinal the whole winter-quarter...in April and May indeed, from one thing or other, linen wants washing oftener."

M. Middleton, I have proved my candour, I trust, and my freedom from superstition: but he that seeks will find: and perhaps he that in obstinacy closeth his eyes long together, will open them just at the moment when he shall meet what he avoided.

I will inform you of some facts I know, shewing the efficacy of prayer to saints.

Giacomo Pastrani of Genoa, a citizen not abundant in the gifts of fortune, had however in his possession two most valuable and extremely rare things, a virtuous wife and a picture of his patron,

saint Giacomo, by Leonardo. The wife had long been ill: her malady was expensive: their substance was diminishing: still no offers had tempted him, although many had been made, to sell the picture. At last, he refused to alienate it indeed, but in favour of a worthy priest, and only as the price of orations to the Virgin. "*Who knows how many it may require?*" said the holy man; "*and it is difficult to make an oration which the Virgin has not heard before: perhaps fifty will hardly do. Now fifty crowns would be little for such protection.*" The invalide, who heard the conversation, wept aloud. "*Take it, take it,*" said the husband, and wept too, lifting it from the nail, and kissing for the last time the glass that covered it. The priest made a genuflexion, and did the same. His orations prevailed; the wife recovered. The priest, hearing that the picture was very valuable, although the master was yet uncertain, and that in Genoa there was no artist who could clean it, waited for that operation until he went to Milan. Here it was ascertained to be the work of Leonardo, and a dealer gave him four thousand crowns for it. He returned in high glee at what had happened, and communicated it to all his acquaintance. The recovered woman, on hearing it, fell sick again immediately, and died. Wishing to forget the sacrifice of her

picture, she had prayed no more to saint Giacomo; and the Virgin, we may presume, on that powerful saint's intercession, had abandoned her.

Awful fact! M. Middleton. Now mark another perhaps more so.

Angiolina Cecci, on the day before her nuptials, took the sacrament most devoutly, and implored of our Florentine saint, Maria Bagnesi, to whose family she was related, her intervention for three blessings: that she might have one child only; that the *cavaliere servente*, agreed on equally by her father and her husband, might be faithful to her; and lastly that, having beautiful hair, it never might turn grey. Now mark me. Assured of success to her suit, by a smile, as she believed, on the countenance of the saint, she neglected her prayers and diminished her alms henceforward. The moneybox, which is shaken during the celebration of mass, to recompense the priest for the performance of that holy ceremony, was shaken aloud before her day after day, and never drew a *crazia* from her pocket. She turned away her face from it, even when the collection was made to defray the arrears for the beatification of Bagnesi. Nine months after her marriage she was delivered of a female infant. I am afraid she expressed some discontent at the dispensations of Providence, for within an hour afterwards she

brought forth another of the same sex. She became furious, desperate, sent the babes, without seeing them, into the country, as indeed our ladies very often do; and spake slightly and maliciously of Saint Maria Bagnesi. The consequence was a puerperal fever, which continued several weeks, and was removed at great expense to her family, in masses, waxcandles, and processions. Pictures of the Virgin, wherever they were found by experience to be of more peculiar and more speedy efficacy, were hired at heavy charges from the convents: the Cordeliers, to punish her pride and obstinacy, would not carry theirs to the house for less than forty scudi.

She recovered; admitted her friends to converse with her; raised herself upon her pillow, and accepted some faint consolation. At last it was agreed by her physicians that she might dress herself and eat brains and liver. Probably she was ungrateful for a benefit so signal and unexpected; since no sooner did her *cameriera* comb her hair than off it came by the handful. She then perceived her error, but, instead of repairing it, abandoned herself to anguish and lamentation. Her *cavaliere servente*, finding her bald, meagre, and eyesore, renewed his addresses to the mother. The husband, with two daughters to provide for,

the only two ever reared out of the many entrusted to those peasants, counted over again and again the dowery, shook his head, sighed piteously, and, hanging on the image of Bagnesi a silver heart of five ounces, which, knowing it to have been stolen, he bought at a cheap rate of a Jew upon the bridge, calculated that the least of impending evils was, to purchase an additional bed just large enough for one.

You ponder, M. Middleton: you appear astonished at these visitations: you know my sincerity: you fully credit me: I cannot doubt a moment of your conviction: I perceive it marked strongly on your countenance.

MIDDLETON.

Indeed, M. Magliabechi, I now discover the validity of prayer to saints, and the danger of neglecting them. Recommend me in yours to Saint Maria Bagnesi.



## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

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### NOTE TO CONVERSATION I. PAGE 12.

“ *Such as no Emperor of Germany can refuse.*”—*Emperor* is the title usually given to the heads of the Germanic league: but in fact there never was an *emperor of Germany*. Adrien Valois, in a letter to Albert Portner, writes thus. *Legi Conringii librum de finibus Imperii Germanici, cujus libri titulum jure quis arguat...nullum enim usquam imperium Germanicum fuit unquam, nullum est hodieque; nec imperator, etiamsi in Germaniâ sedem habeat, Germanorum imperator est, sed, ut ipse se more majorum appellat, rex Germaniæ et Romanorum imperator.* Here we see the *rex* is before the *imperator*: if in the patents of Charles the fifth it is otherwise, the reason is that the title of king is applied to the dominion of several states which his ancestors had acquired more recently. Valois proceeds, *Si tamen Romanorum imperator vocari debet qui urbi Romæ non imperat, et ab episcopo ecclesiæ Romanæ, Romæ, ac senatûs populique Romani sententiâ, dudum desiit consecrari.* This letter is not printed among the works of Valois or his brother, but is of unquestionable authenticity, and may be found entire in the *Amœnitates Literariæ* of Schelhorn, Tom. V. p. 542. Valois was a good scholar, but he errs in his latinity when he objects to the expression *imperium Germanicum*, for that expression would be correct whether Germany were governed by a king, an emperor, an aristocracy, or a democracy. The Roman state was just as

## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

much *imperium Romanum* under the consuls and tribunes as under Tiberius or Caligula. The justice of the remark made by Valois is proved by the patents of Charles V, which always began, Carolus V, divina favente clementia, Romanorum Imperator Augustus, ac rex Germaniæ, Hispaniarum, utriusque Siciliæ, Hierusalem, Hungariæ, &c." The present emperor of Austria formally laid down a title which never belonged to him: he and all his ministers were ignorant of this, and I doubt whether there was any statesman in all Europe who knew it.

### NOTE TO CONVERSATION II. PAGE 17.

"*Bowls and ninepins for their Sunday-evening.*"—Amusements were long permitted the English on Sunday evenings, nor were they restricted until the puritans gained the ascendancy. Even labour on certain occasions, was not only allowed but enjoined. By an order of Edward VI the farmer was encouraged to harvest upon the Sunday, and in the same article it is called a great offence to God to be scrupulous and superstitious in foregoing such occupations.

### NOTE TO CONVERSATION VIII. PAGE 105.

"*That a kingdom shall have two chief magistrates.*"—Casaubon must here be supposed to mean, two magistrates each of whom pretended to power independently of the other. For in Sparta were two kings; and in Japan was a kind of pope, reported, by those who are interested in the parallel, to possess an equal authority with the emperor. Unquestionably, where any such magistrate exists, a short time is requisite for his growth into inordinate power: wherever there is an hierarchy there will be usurpation. The Japanese pope, or daïro, is reduced to order, and his chief legitimate privileges are, the keeping of twelve wives, with as many concubines as

### ADDITIONAL NOTES.

are necessary for the prosperity of the state and the interests of religion. The number of these, no doubt, would be diminished, if no serious danger were to be apprehended from the example of innovation, particularly in an age so prone to immorality and infidelity, and among a people of so little *unction* and *recueillement*.

END OF VOL. I.

## ERRATA.

- Page 4, line 5, *for result, read insult.*  
— 52, line 4, *for sugarbakers, read sugarbakers' wives.*  
— 108, Note line 16, *for are, read is.*  
— 176, line 8, *for qui dveri, read quid veri.*  
— 221, line 10, *for serviente, read servente.*  
— 256, line 15, *for empoisonées, read empoisonnées.*  
— 276, line 19, *for jour, read jours.*  
— 284, line 8, *for Zetes, read Zeteo.*  
— 288, line 1, *for dourcurs, read douceurs.*

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# IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

OF

*Literary Men and Statesmen.*

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, ESQ.

*THE SECOND VOLUME.*

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1824.

TO  
GENERAL MINA.

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SIR,

I INSCRIBE with your illustrious name the second volume of these dialogues, not because, of all the generals who have appeared in our age, you have displayed the greatest genius, the greatest constancy, and, what is equally rare, the greatest contempt of pleasure and titles and wealth and offices, but because your energies have been all exerted, under severe and unremitting adversity, in defence of law and civilization. Neither of these can exist in that country where any one is above them, and can dictate through any organ, how far they shall go, when they shall

speaking, on whom they shall act feebly, on whom strongly. All the nations of Europe are in this condition, even those few the forms of whose government bear the image and superscription of Freedom. Turn your eyes upon the only republic (for such it is still called) now left in this quarter of the globe, and where will you find readier slaves to execute the mandates of Despotism? All conquerors and oppressors have imposed an oligarchy, where it was possible, some under one name, some under another: such was imposed by Sparta on the Athenians, such upon the Swiss, as now upon the Spaniards, by France. Switzerland, the asylum once of the persecuted, is hence become a mere porter's-lodge to the great prison-house, Europe. Law and Religion are the watch-words! I am not in a temper for irony, nor could you bear it ... but what is the reason, to speak gravely, why religion and law are in a

worse condition now than they were seventeen centuries ago, while every other part of human knowledge has been so much improved? It is because the two greatest classes of men, two entire professions, and governments, altogether, such as they are constituted, are interested in maintaining their abuses, and because the sceptre is rather the prop of weakness than the symbol of authority. Hence the cant to keep the child quiet, and the indulgence to let him grasp and beslaver and break in pieces what is not his . . .

Every state, however small, contains more people than the wisest and most virtuous prince can render happy; why then want more? O! but making them happy is quite another thing: subjects are to give happiness as a tribute, and to receive it as a gratuity. . . . If few subjects bring anxiety, many will bring more: if neither the fewer nor the numerous bring any,



then the worth of them can be but small to the proprietor: his want therefor is childish, and should be corrected and coerced like other childish wants.

You Spaniards have committed two great errors: the first, in not removing to Cuba six or seven hundred known and proven traitors, condemning three or four of the most eminent to death; the second, in not drawing closer the ties of affinity and commerce with Columbia, with a full acknowledgment of her independence. The former of these two duties can alone be questioned. Remove the case out of Spain into Rome, and ask yourself whether, if Lepidus had been crushed while he could be, Rome would not have been saved a hundred thousand of her best citizens at the expense of one among the most worthless. We should calculate for Humanity, and not leave the account in her hands, lest she drop it or lay it down.

The insolence of Despotism will urge her into schemes, if not subversive of her power, injurious to her quiet. The *Holy Allies* should in sound policy desire the establishment of republics in Greece, considering that country as a mere drain, whereby the ill humours of their subjects may be carried off. It should serve them as a galley of deportation, for those whose opinions are dangerous; just as America is in regard to England: and there is also this additional and paramount advantage, that, if they should publish their sentiments, neither the kings nor their subjects can read them: the former then cannot be offended, nor the latter led astray.

I know not, sir, whether you are a pious man, but if you are, you will see the finger of Providence in the midst of the calamities which distract your country.

Under it there springs forth in letters of fire a warning to the nations, of whatso-

ever race, language, or rites, throughout the new world, as (from the rapid vegetation, if I may say so, of its prosperity, and from the dissimilarity in every feature to this of ours) it may now indeed be called most emphatically.. to form instantly a confederacy against external rule, against all dependence and usurpation, against institutions not founded upon that equable, sound, beneficent system, to which the best energies of Man, the sterner virtues, the milder charities, the comforts and satisfactions of life, its regulated and right affections, the useful arts, the ennobling sciences, with whatever is innocent in glory or exalted in pleasure, owe their origin, their protection, their progress, and their maturity. Columbia, without this invigorating shock, would have longer lain dormant or restless: Washington, to whom we principally are indebted for what little is left of freedom in the uni-

verse, would have set before her the bright example, and Bolivar would have followed it, in vain. She will receive into her bosom those whom circumstances armed against her, rather than jealousies or animosities or antipathies ; and she will number among her children, not only those who have stood forward to defend her, but those also who, confiding in her generosity, call upon her in their adversities for defence. Rising on the wreck of Spain, she will invite to her from Europe those whom wars have ruined, those whom commerce has deserted, those whom letters have cast into dungeons, those whom the ancient institutions of their country have blinded with unseasonable love, and the new ones have marked with reprobation. The veteran, still bleeding for the king who banished him, may rest his bones a little while on her fresh turf, forbidden to repose them

in death under that which covers his father's.

Your unconquerable mind, sir, cannot be depressed ; mine is, and perhaps ought not to be.

God preserve you many years.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Florence, November, 1823.

# IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

IN

## THE SECOND VOLUME.

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# CONVERSATION I.

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MILTON

AND

ANDREW MARVEL.



MILTON  
AND  
ANDREW MARVEL.

---

MILTON.

FRIEND Andrew, I am glad to hear that you amuse yourself in these bad times by the composition of a comedy, and that you have several plans in readiness for others. Now let me advise you to copy the better part of what the Greeks and Romans called the *old*, and to introduce songs and music, which, suitable as they are to Tragedy, are more so to the sister Muse. Furthermore, I could desire to see a piece modeled in all parts on the Athenian scheme, with the names and characters and manners of times past. For surely you would not add to the immorality of the age, by representing any thing of the present mode upon the theatre. Although we are more abundant in follies, which rather than vices are the ground-

work of comedy, we experience less disgust in touching those of other times than of our own; and in a drama the most ancient would have the most novelty. I know that all the periods and all the nations of the world united have less variety of character than we find in this one city: yet, as you write to amuse yourself and a few learned friends, I am persuaded you would gladly walk out of it for once, and sit down to delineate a Momus or a Satyr with at least as much complacency as a vulgar fopling or a partycoloured buffoon.

O Andrew! although our learning raiseth up against us many enemies among the low, and more among the powerful, yet doth it invest us with grand and glorious privileges, and grant to us a largess of beatitude. We enter our studies, and enjoy a society which we alone can bring together. We raise no jealousy by conversing with one in preference to another: we give no offence to the most illustrious, by questioning him as long as we will, and leaving him as abruptly. Diversity of opinion raises no tumult in our presence: each interlocutor stands before us, speaks, or is silent, and we adjourn or decide the business at our leisure. Nothing is past which we desire to be present; and we enjoy by anticipation somewhat

like the power which I imagine we shall possess hereafter of sailing on a wish from world to world. Surely you would turn away as far as possible from the degraded state of our country; you would select any vices and follies for description, rather than those that jostle us in our country-walks, return with us to our house-doors, and smirk on us in silks and satins at our churches.

Come, my old friend; take down your hortus-siccus: the live plants you would gather do both stink and sting: prythee leave them to wither or to rot, or to be plucked and collated by more rustic hands.

## MARVEL.

I entertain an utter contempt for the populace, whether in robes or tatters; whether the face be bedawbed with cinnabar, or with dirt from the allies and shops. It appears to me, however, that there is as much difference between tragedy and comedy as between the heavens and the clouds, and that comedy draws its life from its mobility. We must take manners as we find them, and draw from the individual, not the species; into which fault Menander fell and seduced his followers. The characters on which he raised his glory were trivial and contemptible.

*Dum fallax servus, durus pater, improba lena  
Vivent, dum meretrix blanda, Menander erit.*

His wisdom towered high above them, and he cloathed with smiles what Euripides charged with spleen. The beauty of his moral sentences was hurtful to the spirit of comedy, and I am convinced that, if we could recover his works, we should find them both less facetious and less dramatic than those of Plautus. Once, by way of experiment, I attempted to imitate his manner: I will give you a specimen: it is the best I have.

Friendship, in each successive stage of life,  
 As we approach him, varies to the view:  
 In youth he wears the face of Love himself,  
 Of Love without his arrows and his wings;  
 Soon afterwards with Bacchus and with Pan  
 Thou findest him, or hearest him resign  
 To some dog-pastor by the quiet fire,  
 With much good-will and jocular adieu,  
 His ageworn mule or brokenhearted steed.  
 Fly not, as thou wert wont, to his embrace,  
 Lest, after one long yawning gaze, he swear  
 Thou art the best good fellow in the world,  
 But he had quite forgotten thee, by Jove!  
 Or laughter wag his newly-bearded chin  
 At recollection of his childish hours.  
 But wouldst thou see, young man, his latest form,  
 When e'en this laughter, e'en this memory, fails?  
 Look at yon figtree statue, golden once,  
 As all would deem it; rottenness falls out  
 At every little chink the worms have made,  
 And if thou triest to lift it up again  
 It breaks upon thee: leave it, touch it not,  
 Its very lightness would encumber thee...  
 Come, thou hast seen it...tis enough...away!

MILTON.

This indeed is in the manner I would propose.

MARVEL.

Yet if it were spoken on our theatre, I should be condemned as a man ignorant of the art... and justly too...for it accords not with its complexion. Inevitable events and natural reflexions, but reflexions not exhibited before and events not expected, please me better than the most demonstrable facts, the most sober truths, the most clever improbabilities, and the most acute repartees. In comedy we should oftener raise reflexions than present them.

Now for plot.

Intricacy was always held necessary on the modern stage, and the more so when delicacy was the least. It was however so difficult to make the audience keep watch and ward for it, and to command an uninterrupted attention for five whole acts, that many of the best writers, from Terence to the present age, have combined two plots, hoping that what is twisted together will untwist together, and leaving a great deal to the goodness of Providence and to the faith and charity of their fellow creatures.

MILTON.

True enough: your plotters bring many great

changes into many whole families, and sometimes into several and distant countries, within the day; and, what is more difficult and incredible, send off all parties well satisfied, excepting one scape-goat. For my own share, I am contented with seeing a fault wittily rebuked and checked effectually, and think *that* surprising enough, considering the time employed in doing it, without the formation of attachments, the begetting or finding of children, bickerings, buffetings, deaths, marriages, distresses, wealth again, love again, whims and suspicions, shaking heads, and shaking hands. All these things are natural, I confess it; but one would rather breathe between them, and perhaps one would think it no bad husbandry to put some of them off until another season. The combination of them, after all, marvelous as it appears, is less difficult to contrive than to credit.

## MARVEL.

I have always been an idle man, and have read or attended the greater part of the plays that are extant, and will venture to affirm that, exclusive of Shakespear's, and some Spanish pieces never represented nor translated, there are barely half a dozen plots amongst them, comic and tragic. So that it is evidently a much easier matter to run over the usual variations, than to keep entirely in

another tune and to raise up no recollections. Both in tragedies and comedies the changes are pretty similar, and nearly in the same places. You perceive the turns and windings of the road a mile before you, and you know exactly the precipice down which the hero or heroine must fall: you can discover with your naked eye, who does the mischief and who affords the help; where the assassin bursts forth with the dagger, and where the old gentleman shakes the crabstick over the shoulder of his dissolute nephew.

MILTON.

I do not wish direction-posts to perplexities and intrigues: I oppose this agrarian law, this general-inclosure-act: I would not attempt to square the circle of poetry; and am avowedly a nonjuror to the doctrine of grace and predestination in the drama.

MARVEL.

In my project, one action leads to and brings about another, naturally but not necessarily. The event is the confusion of the evil-doer, whose machinations are the sole means of accomplishing what their motion seemed calculated to thwart and overthrow. No character is introduced that doth not tend towards the developement of the plot;

no one is merely prompter to a witticism or master of the ceremonies to a repartee.

Characters in general are made subservient to the plot: here the plot is made subservient to the characters. All are real: I have only invited them to meet, and bestowed on them those abilities for conversation, without which a comedy might be very natural, but would not possess the nature of a comedy. I expose only what arises from the headiness of unruly passions, or is precipitated by the folly that verges upon vice. This exposure is in the corner of a room, not in the stocks nor in the marketplace. Comedy with me sits in an easy chair, as Menander is represented by the statuary: for it is as possible to be too busy on the scenic theatre as it is on the theatre of life. To those who admire the double plot and the machinery of the rope-walk, I only say, *Go to my betters whom you have so long neglected; carry off from them as much as you can bear; you are then welcome to rip up my sheet, and to sew a scene in wherever the needle will go through: in this manner, the good may be made acceptable by the new, and the new can be no loser by the good.*

MILTON.

You say nothing about the chorus. I have in-



roduced it, you know, in my *Samson Agonistes*, and intend to bring it forward in my *Macbeth*.

MARVEL.

Dear John! thou art lucky in having escaped two Stuarts; and luckier still wilt thou be if thou escapest one Macbeth. Contend with Homer, but let Shakespear rest: drop that work; prythee drop it for ever: thou mayest appear as high as he is (for who can measure either of you?) if thou wilt only stand some way off.

In tragedy the choruses were grave people called upon, or ready without it, to give advice and consolation in cases of need. To set them singing and moralizing amidst the dolefullest emergencies, when the poet should be *reporting progress*, is like sticking a ballad upon a turnstile to hasten folks on. The comic poet called out his regular chorus in imitation of the tragic, till the genius of Menander took a middle flight between Aristophanes and Euripides, Comedy had among the ancients her ovations but not her triumphs.

MILTON.

Menander's form, which the Romans and French have imitated, pleases me less than the older. He introduced better manners, but employing no variety of verse, and indulging in few sallies of mer-

riment, I incline to believe that he more frequently instructed than entertained.

The verse itself of Aristophanes is a dance of Bacchanals: one cannot read it with composure. He had however but little true wit, whatever may be asserted to the contrary. There is abundance of ribaldry, and of that persecution by petulance which the commonalty call banter.

MARVEL.

He takes delight in mocking and ridiculing the manner of Euripides. In my opinion, if a modern may form one upon the subject, he might, with his ingenuity, have seized more points to let his satire lighten on, and have bent them to his purpose with more dexterity and address.

MILTON.

His ridicule on the poetry is misplaced, on the manners is inelegant. Euripides was not less wise than Socrates nor less tender than Sappho. There is a tenderness which elevates the genius, there is also a tenderness which corrupts the heart. The latter, like every impurity, is easy to communicate; the former is difficult to conceive. Strong minds alone possess it; virtuous minds alone value it. I hold it abominable to turn into derision what is excellent. To render undesirable what ought to

be desired, is the most mischievous and diabolical of malice. To exhibit him as contemptible, who ought, according to the conscience of the exhibitor, to be respected and revered, is a crime the more odious, as it can be committed only by great violence to his feelings, against the loud reclamations of Justice and amongst the struggles of Virtue. And what is the tendency of this brave exploit? to cancel the richest legacy that ever was bequeathed to him, and to prove his own bastardy in relation to the most illustrious of his species. If it is disgraceful to demolish or obliterate a tombstone, over the body of the most obscure among the dead; if it is an action for which a boy would be whipped, as guilty of the worst idleness and mischief; what is it to overturn the monument that Gratitude has erected to Genius, and to break the lamp that is lighted by Devotion overagainst the image of Love? The writings of the wise are the only riches our posterity cannot squander: why depreciate them? To Antiquity again...but afar from Aristophanes.

MARVEL.

Our admiration of Antiquity is in part extraneous from her merits: yet even this part, strange as the assertion may appear, is well founded. We learn many things from the ancients which it cost

them no trouble to teach, and upon which they employed no imagination, no learning, no time. Those amongst us who have copied them, have not succeeded. To produce any effect on morals or on manners, or indeed to attract any attention, which, whatever be the pretext, is the principal if not the only aim of most writers, and certainly of all the comic, we must employ the language and consult the habits of our age. We may introduce a song without retrospect to the old comedy; a moral sentence, without authority from the new. The characters, even on their improved and purified stage, were, we know, of so vulgar and uncleanly a cast, that, with all their fine reflexions, there was something like the shirt of Lazarus patched with the purple of Dives. Do not imagine I am a detractor from the glory of our teachers, from their grace, their elegance, their careful weeding away of small thoughts, that higher and more succulent might have room.

MILTON.

No, Marvel, no. Between their poetry and ours you perceive as great a difference as between a rose and a dandelion. There is, if I may express myself so, without pursuing a metaphor till it falls exhausted at my feet, a sort of refreshing odour flying off it perpetually; not enough to op-

press or to satiate; nothing is beaten or bruized; nothing smells of the stalk; the flower itself is half-concealed by the Genius of it hovering round. Write on the same principles as guided them.

MARVEL.

Yes; but I would not imitate them further. I will not be pegged down to any plot, nor follow any walk, however well rolled, where the persons of the drama cannot consistently lead the way.

MILTON.

Reasonable enough: but why should not both comedy and tragedy be sometimes so disciplined as may better fitt them for our closets? I allow that their general intention is for action: it is also the nature of odes to be accompanied by voices and instruments. I only would suggest to you, that a man of learning, with a genius suited to comedy, may as easily found it upon antiquity, as the tragedian of equal abilities his tragedy, and that the one might be made as acceptable to the study as the other to the stage. I would not hamper you with rules and precedents. Comply with no other laws or limits than such as are necessary to the action. There may be occasion for songs; and there may not: besides, a poet may be capable of producing a good comedy who is incapable of composing a tolerable stanza; and,

on the other hand, Pindar himself might have been lost in a single scene.

MARVEL.

True: but tell me, friend John, are you really serious in your proposal of interspersing a few antiquated words, that my comedy may be acceptable to the readers of Plautus and Terence? This I hear.

MILTON.

I have, on several occasions, been a sufferer by the delivery of my sentiments to a friend. Antiquated words, used sparingly and characteristically, give often a force, and always a gravity to compositions. It is not every composition that admits them: a comedy *may* in one character, but charily and choicely.

There is in Plautus a great fund of language and of wit: he is very far removed from our Shakespear, but resembles him more than any other of the ancients. In reading him and Terence, my delight arises not so materially from the aptitude of character and expression, as from a clear and unobstructed insight into the feelings and manners of those times, and an admission into the conversations to which Scipio and Lælius attended.

MARVEL.

Now, what think you about the number of acts?

## MILTON.

There is no reason, in nature or in art, why a drama should occupy five. Be assured, my friend Andrew, the fifth-act-men will hereafter be thought as absurd as the fifth-monarchy-men. The number of acts should be optional, like the number of scenes, and the division of them should equally be subordinate to the convenience of the poet in the procession of his events. In respect to duration, nothing is requisite or reasonable but that it should not loiter nor digress, and that it should not exhaust the patience nor disappoint the expectation of the audience. Dramatists have gone to work, in this business, with so much less of wisdom than of system, that I question, when they say a *comedy or tragedy in five acts*, whether they should not rather say in *five scenes*; whether, in fact, the scenes should not designate the divisions, and the acts the subdivisions: for, the *scene* usually changes to constitute a new *act*, and when a fresh *actor* enters we usually call it a new *scene*. I do not speculate on any one carrying the identity of place, strictly, throughout a whole performance, least of all a tragedy, unless for the purpose of ridiculing some late French critics. As a tragedy must consist of opposite counsels and unforeseen events, if the author should exhibit his whole action in one hall

or chamber, he would be laughed to scorn. Comedy is not formed to astonish: she neither expects nor wishes great changes. Let her argue rarely; let her remark lightly; if she reasons too well, her audience will leave her, and reflect upon it. Those generally are the most temperate, who have large and well-stored cellars. You have every thing at home, Andrew, and need not step out of your way. Those shew that they possess much who hold much back.

MARVEL.

Be not afraid of me: I will not push my characters forward, and make them stare most one upon another when they are best acquainted. The union of wisdom with humour is unexpected enough for me: I would rather see it than the finest piece of arras slit asunder, or the richest screen in christendom overturned; than the cleverest trick that was ever played among the scenes, or than a marriage that should surprize me like an Abissinian's with a Laplander.



# CONVERSATION II.

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WASHINGTON

AND

FRANKLIN.

# WASHINGTON

AND

# FRANKLIN.

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WASHINGTON.

Yes, Benjamin, let us render thanks to the disposer of events, under whom, by the fortitude, the wisdom, and the endurance of our Congress, the affairs of America are brought at last to a triumphant issue.

FRANKLIN.

Do not refuse the share of merit due to yourself, which is perhaps the largest.

WASHINGTON.

I am not of that opinion: if I were, I might acknowledge it to you, although not to others. Suppose me to have made a judicious choice in my measures; the Congress then made a judicious choice in me; so that whatever praise may be allowed me, is at best but secondary.

## FRANKLIN.

I do not believe that the world contains so many men, who reason rightly, as New England. Serious, religious, peaceable, inflexibly just and courageous, their stores of intellect are not squandered in the regions of fancy, or in the desperate ventures of new-found and foggy metaphysics, but warehoused and kept sound at home, and ready to be brought forth in good and wholesome condition at the first demand. Their ancestors had abandoned their estates, their families, and their country, for the obtainment of peace and freedom, and they themselves were ready to traverse the vast wildernesses of an unexplored continent rather than submit to that moral degradation which alone can satisfy the capriciousness of despotism. Their gravity is converted into enthusiasm: even those amongst them who never, in childhood itself, expressed in speech or countenance a sign of admiration, express it strongly in their old age at your exploits.

## WASHINGTON.

Benjamin, one would imagine that we both had been educated in courts, and that I were a man who could give, and you a man who could ask. Prythee, my friend, be a philosopher in somewhat more than books and bottles, and, as you have

learned to manage the clouds and lightnings, try an experiment on the management of your fancies. I declare, on my conscience, I do not know what I have done extraordinary, unless we are forced to acknowledge, from the examples to which we have been accustomed, that it is extraordinary to possess power and to remain honest. I believe it may be so: but this was a matter of reflection with me: by serving my country I gratified my heart and all its wants. Perhaps I am not so happy a creature as the fellow who smokes his pipe upon the bench at the tavern-door; but I am as happy as my slow blood allows; and I keep my store of happiness in the same temperature the whole year round, by the double casement of action and integrity.

## FRANKLIN.

I do not assert that there never was a general who disposed his army in the day of battle with skill equal to yours: that, in many instances, must depend almost as much on his adversary as on himself: but I assert that no man ever displayed such intimate knowledge of his whole business, guarded so frequently and so effectually against the impending ruin of his forces, and shewed himself at once so circumspect and so daring. To

have inoculated one half of your troops under the eye of the enemy.....

WASHINGTON.

Those actions are great, which require great calculation, and succeed in consequence of its correctness; those alone, or nearly alone, are called so, which succeed without any. I knew the supineness of the British general, his utter ignorance of his profession, his propensity to gaming, to drinking, in short to all the camp vices. I took especial care that he should be informed of my intention to attack him, on the very day when my army was, from the nature of its distemper, the most disabled. Instead of anticipating me, which this intelligence, credited as it was, would have induced a more skilful man to do, he kept his troops unremittingly on the alert, and he himself is reported to have been sober three days together. The money which he ought to have employed in obtaining just and necessary information, he lost at cards; and when he found that I had ventured to inoculate my army and that the soldiers had recovered, he little imagined that half the number was at that moment under the full influence of the disease.

Attribute no little of our success to the only

invariable policy of England, which is, to sweep forward to the head of all her armaments the grubs of rotten boroughs and the droppings of the gamingtable; and, Benjamin, be assured that although men of eminent genius have been guilty of all other vices, none worthy of more than a secondary name has ever been a gamester. Either an excess of avarice, or a deficiency of what in physics is called stimulus and excitability, is the cause of it; neither of which can exist in the same bosom with genius, with patriotism, or with virtue. Clive, the best English general since Marlborough, was apparently an exception: but he fell not into this degrading vice, until he was removed from the sphere of exertion, until his abilities had begun to decay, and his intellects in some measure to be deranged.

## FRANKLIN.

I quite agree with you in your main proposition, and see no exception to it in Clive, who, although he gained the most glorious victory that has been obtained since the battle of Poitiers, was more capable of ruining a country than of raising one. Those who record that chess was invented in the Trojan war, would have informed us if Ulysses, Agamemnon, or Diomedes ever played at it; which

however is usually done without a stake, nor can it be called in any way a game of chance. Gustavus Adolphus and Eugene of Savoy, who hold, I think I have heard you say, the most distinguished rank among the generals of modern nations, and Marlborough who united with military science an equal share of political sagacity and dexterous conciliation, and Frederic of Prussia, and Charles XII of Sweden, and William III of England, had springs and movements within themselves, which did not require to be wound up every night. They deemed it indecorous to be selvages to an ell of green cloth, and scandalous to cast upon a card what would cover a whole country with plenteousness.

Gaming is the vice of those nations which are too effeminate to be barbarous and too depraved to be civilized, and which unite the worst qualities of both conditions; as for example the rags and lace of Naples, its lazaroni and other titulars. The Malays, I acknowledge, are less effeminate, and in all respects less degraded, and still are gamesters: but gaming with the Malays is a substitute for beetel; the Neapolitan games on a full snuffbox. Monarchs should encourage the practise, as the Capets have done constantly; for

it brings the idle and rich into their capitals, holds them from other intrigues and from more active parties, makes many powerful families dependent, and satisfies many young officers who would otherwise want employments. Republics, on the contrary, should punish the first offence with fine and imprisonment, the second with a public whipping and a year's hard labour, the third with deportation.

## WASHINGTON.

As you please in monarchies and republics: but prythee say nothing of them in mixt governments: do not affront the earliest coadjutors and surest reliances of our commonwealth. The leaders of party in England are inclined to play: and what was a cartouche but yesterday will make a roulean tomorrow.

## FRANKLIN.

Fill it then with base money, or you will be overreached. They are persons of some reputation for eloquence; but if I conducted a newspaper in that country, I should think it a wild speculation to pay the wiser of them half a crown aday for his most elaborate composition. When either shall venture to publish a history, a dialogue, or even a speech of his own, his talents will then be appreciated justly. God grant (for our differences have not yet annihilated the remembrance of our re-



lationship) that England may never have any more painful proofs, any more lasting documents of their incapacity. Since we Americans can suffer no further from them, I speak of them with the same indifference and equanimity as if they were among the dead.

## WASHINGTON.

But come, come...the war is ended, God be praised! Objections have been raised against our form of government, and assertions have been added that the republican is ill adapted to a flourishing or an extensive country. We know from the experience of Carthage and of Holland that it not only can preserve but can make a country flourishing, when Nature herself has multiplied the impediments, and when the earth and all the elements have conspired against it. Demonstration is indeed yet wanting that a very extensive territory is best governed by its people: reason and sound common sense are the only vouchers. Many may fancy they have an interest in seizing what is another's, but surely no man can suppose that he has any in ruining or alienating his own.

## FRANKLIN.

Confederative states, under one president, will never be all at once, or indeed in great part, deprived of their freedom.

## WASHINGTON.

Adventurers may aspire to the supreme power illegally; but none can expect that the majority will sacrifice their present interests to his ambition, in any confidence or hope of greater. He never will raise a standing army, who cannot point out the probable means of paying it, which no one can do here; nor will an usurper rise up any where, unless there are mines to tempt the adventurous and avaricious, or large and well-cultivated estates to parcel out, and labourers to cultivate them, or many slaves to seduce and embody, or rich treasures to confiscate, or enemies to invade whose property may be plundered.

## FRANKLIN.

The objections bear much more weightily against monarchical and mixt governments; because these, in wide dominions, are always composed of parts considerably at variance in privileges and interests, in manners and opinions, and the inhabitants of which are not unreluctant to be employed one against the other. Hence while we Americans leave our few soldiers to the states where they were levied, the kings of Europe will cautiously change the quarters of theirs, and send them into provinces as remote as possible. When they have ceased to have a home, they have ceased to have a

country; for all affinities are destroyed by breaking the nearest. Thrones are constructed on the petrification of the human heart.

## WASHINGTON.

Lawless ambition has no chance whatever of success where there are neither great standing armies nor great national debts; (I am not speaking of usurpation but of encroachment;) where either of those exist, freedom must waste away, and perish. We are as far from this danger, as from the other.

## FRANKLIN.

Excellent pens have written, I know not from what motive, that liberty is never more perfect or more safe than under a mild monarch: History teaches us the contrary. Where princes are absolute, more tyranny is committed under the mild, than under the austere: for the latter are jealous of power, and entrust it to few; the mild delegate it inconsiderately to many: and the same easiness of temper which allows them to do so, permits their ministers and those under them to abuse the trust with impunity. It has been said that in a democracy there are many despots, and that in a kingdom there can be one only. This is false: in a republic the tyrannical temper creates a check to itself in the very person next it: but in a monarchy all en-

trusted with power become tyrannical by a nod from above, whether the nod be of approbation or of drowsiness. Royalty not only is a monster of more heads, but also of more claws, and sharper. It is amusing to find us treated as visionaries. All the gravest nations have been republics, both in ancient times and in modern. The Dutch, the Venetians, the Spaniards, will always, unless an insuperable force oppresses them, aspire to the dignity of manhood; the Neapolitans and the French will dream of it and shake it off. I shall believe that a king is better than a republic, when I find that a single tooth in a head is better than a set, and that in its solitariness there is a warrant for its strength and soundness.

## WASHINGTON.

Let us look forward; let us consider what our country will be, a century after our departure; for the sound sense of our people, their speculative habits, their room for enterprise around home, and their distance from Europe, ensure to them, if not a long continuance of peace, exemption from such wars as can affect in any material degree their character or their prosperity. We might have continued the hostilities until a part or even the whole of Canada had been ceded to us. The Congress has done, what, if my opinion had been asked, I should

have strongly recommended. Let Canada be ours when she is cultivated and enriched; let not the fruit be gathered prematurely; indeed let it never be plucked; let it fall when our bosom can hold it. This must happen within the century to come; for no nation is, or ever has been, so intolerably vexatious to its colonies, its dependencies, and its conquests, as the British. I have known personally several governors, many of them honest and sensible men, many of them of mild and easy character, but I never knew one, nor ever heard of any from older officers, who attempted at all to conciliate the affections, or systematically to promote the interests, of the governed. Liberality has been occasionally extended to them, but it has been the liberality of a master towards a slave, and only after grievous sufferings. Services have then been exacted, not hard perhaps in themselves, but in a manner to cancel all recollection, and deaden all sense of kindness. What greater political, what more incorrigible moral evil! The French and Spaniards act differently: they extract advantage from their undisturbed possessions, appealing to the generosity of their children, and softening their commands by kind offices and constant attentions. Wherever a French regiment is quartered, there are balls and comedies; wherever an

English, there are disturbances in the street, and duels. Give the Spaniard a bull-fight, and you may burn his father at the stake, commending him to the God of Mercy in a cassock painted with the flames of hell. The English (and we their descendants are the most deserving of the name) require but justice. Whatever comes as a favour comes as an affront. To what a pitch then must our indignation be excited, when we are not permitted even to pay that which is required of us, unless we present it with the left hand, or upon the nose, or from our knees amidst the mire! The orators of the British parliament, while they are colouring all this insolence and injustice, keep the understanding of the people at tongue's length.

FRANKLIN.

In good truth then the separation is no narrow one. I have been present while some of them have thrown up the most chaffy stuff two hours together, and have never called for a glass of water. This is contemplated as the summit of ability, and he who is capable of performing it, is deemed capable of ruling the two hemispheres. The rich families that govern this assembly have made us independent; they have given us thirteen provinces, and they will people them all for us in less

than fifty years. Religious and grave men, for none are graver or more religious than the beaten, are praising the loving-mercies of God in loosening from their necks the mill-stone of America : otherwise the national debt which has only been trebled, would have soon been quintupled. What a blessing to throw aside such an extent of coast, which of itself would have required an immense navy for its defence ! No one dreams that England in confederacy with America would have been so strong in sailors, in ports, in naval stores, as to have become (I do not say with good management, I say in spite of bad) not invincible only, but invulnerable.

## WASHINGTON.

If she turns her attention to the defects of her administration, in all its branches, she may recover not much less than she has lost. Look at the nations of Europe, and shew me one, despotic or free, of which so large a portion is so barbarous and wretched as the Irish. The country is more fertile than Britain ; the inhabitants are healthy, strong, courageous, faithful, patriotic, and quick of apprehension. No quality is wanting, which constitutes the respectability of a state or the happiness of individuals : yet from centuries of

misrule they are in a condition more hopeless than any other nation or tribe upon the globe, civilized or savage.

## FRANKLIN.

There is only one direct way to bring them into order, and that appears so rough, that it never will be trodden. The chief misery arises from the rapacity of the gentry as they are called, and the nobility, who, to avoid the trouble of collecting their rents from many poor tenants, and the greater of hearing their complaints, have leased their properties to what are called *middle-men*. These harass their inferiors in the exact ratio of their industry, and drive them into desperation. Hence slovenliness and drunkenness; for the appearance of ease and comfort is an allurements to avarice. To pacify and reclaim the people, all leases to middle-men must be annulled: every cultivator must have a lease for life, and (at the option of his successor) valid for as many years afterwards as will amount in the whole to twenty-one. The extent of ground should be proportionate to his family and his means. To underlet land should be punished by law as *regrating*. Authority would here be strongly exercised, not tyrannically, which never can be asserted of plans sanctioned by the representatives of a people, for



the great and perpetual benefit of the many, to the small and transient inconvenience of the few. Auxiliary to this reform should be one in church-livings. They should all embrace nearly the same number of communicants. Suppose three thousand souls under each cure: a fourth part would consist of the infirm and of children not yet prepared for the reception of doctrine. The service, as formerly, should be shorter, and performed thrice each Sunday; so that all might in turn be present, and that great concourse would be avoided, which frequently is the prelude to licentiousness and brutality. Abolishing tithes, selling the property of the crown, the church, and corporations, I would establish a fund sufficient to allow each clergyman, in addition to his house, one hundred and forty pounds annually. The catholic priest should have the same number of communicants, and should receive a gratuity of fifty pounds annually, and should also possess his parsonage-house: offerings and gifts, as at present, would accrue to him from the piety and gratitude of his parishioners. The church, as established by government, would be maintained in its supremacy, and the papal priest would be remunerated not for his profession, but for services done towards the state by his attention to the

morals of his communicants. If the English pay forty pounds for taking up a felon, would they not willingly pay fifty for reclaiming a dozen? I would grant eight hundred pounds yearly to each protestant bishop, obliging him to constant residence in his diocese; four of these are sufficient: I would grant two thousand to one arch-bishop. The catholics should have the same number, and their stipends should be the same; for although the priests are ignorant and vulgar men in all catholic countries, it is highly requisite for the maintenance of order, that the bishops and arch-bishop here should possess whatever gives authority. Knowledge in some measure gives it, but splendour in a much greater. Elagabalus would attract more notice and lead after him more followers than Lycurgus, and not merely from the lower orders but also from the higher.

## WASHINGTON.

True enough: and indeed some of the wise become as the unwise in the enchanted chambers of Power, whose lamps make every face of the same colour. Gorgeousness melts all mankind into one inert mass, carrying off and confounding and consuming all beneath it, like a torrent of lava, bright amidst the darkness and dark again amidst the light.

The reductions you propose would bring about another: they would remove the necessity of a standing army in that unfortunate country, and further would enable the government to establish three companies for fisheries, the herring, the cod, and the whale. The population is already too great, and is increasing, which of itself is the worst of curses, unless when high civilization regulates it, and the superflux must be diverted by colonization, or occupied on the seas by commerce. Manufactures all tend to deteriorate the species, but begin by humanizing it. Happy those countries which have occasion for no more of them than may supply the home consumption! National debts are evils, not so much because they take away from useful and honest gains, as because they create superfluous and dishonest ones, and because, when carried as far as England would carry hers, they occasion half the children of the land to be cooped up in buildings which open into the brothel and the hospital.

In assenting to you, I interrupted your propositions; pray go on.

FRANKLIN.

I would permit no Englishman to hold in Ireland a place of trust or profit, whether in church or state. I would confer titles and offices on

those Irish gentlemen, who resided in the country on their properties: they would in time become habituated to a regular and decorous mode of life: The landlord and clergyman would in the beginning lose something of current coin; but if you consider that their lives, houses, and effects would become safe, that provisions would be plentiful in proportion to the sacrifices they made, and that in no year would their rents and incomes fail, as they now do at least twenty in each century, you would find that their situation, like the situation of their inferiors, would be much improved.

## WASHINGTON.

Many would exclaim against the injustice of taking from one class alone a portion of its property as insurance-money.

## FRANKLIN.

Not from one alone: all property should be protected at its own cost: this is the right and the object of all governments. The insurance is two-fold; that of the private man, and that of the community: the latter is the main consideration. I perceive nothing arbitrary, nothing novel, in its principle\*. If a government exerts the power of

\* There is an argument which I could not attribute to Franklin, because it is derived from an authority to which he never appealed, and the words containing it are unlikely to

taxing one trade or profession, it does the same thing or more. Suppose it should levy a tax of a hundred pounds on every man who begins the business of apothecary or lawyer, is not the grievance even heavier, as pressing on those whose gains are yet uncertain, and to be derived from others, than it would be if bearing upon those whose emoluments are fixt, and proceed from the government which regulates and circumscribes them? But they have been accustomed, you will say, to the enjoyment of more. So much clear

have lain within the range of his reading. I derive it from the *Aphorisms of Confessors*, by Emanuel Sa: p. 528.

Le Pape peut revoquer la loi etablie par lui ou par predecesseur, et oster *mesme sans occasion* les effects procedens d'icelle, et le benefice valide à un chacun: car il a entiere disposition sur les benefices.

The king of England and Ireland, as head of the church, succeeds by consent of Parliament to the disposal of benefices. He surely can do in his own kingdom, what the Pope can do in another's, where property is concerned. The religion of a state is established for the correction of its morals, and its morals are requisite to the maintenance of the laws. Religion then, in the view of a statesman, is only a thing that aids and assists the laws, removing from before them much of their painful duties, and lessening (if good and effectual) the number of their officers and executioners. So that, in political economy there is between them a close and intimate connection, and both alike are subject to regulations in them from the same authority. The salary of a clergyman should be as much subject to the state, as the stipend of a custom-house officer and exciseman.

gain for them. I hope they may have made a liberal and wise use of the superfluity. Those, who have done so, will possess minds ready to calculate justly their own lasting interests, and the interests of the community for whose benefit they have been appointed. If there is any thing the existence of which produces great and general evil, and the abolition of which will produce great and general good, in perpetuity, the government is not only authorised by right but bound by duty to remove it. Compensation should be made to the middle-men for all losses; it should be made even to the worst; these losses may as easily be ascertained as those occasioned to proprietors and tenants, through whose lands we open a road or a canal.

Methods far short of what I indicate will be adopted and will fail. Constitutional lawyers (now England is persuaded that her judicature and her parliament contains them, and even the Irish too!) will assent that Ireland be subject to martial law for thirty years in the century and to little or none for the remainder, but will not assent that every thing unlawful shall be also unnecessary, and unprovoked. In consequence of which, within the life-time of some in existence, we shall have two millions of Irishmen in America,

all reclaimed from their ferocity, by assuaging their physical and moral wants, and addicted to industry by the undisturbed enjoyment of its sweets. Experience seems to have given no sort of information to their rulers: they profit by nothing old, they venture on nothing new. If I were a member of the British ministry, I should think I acted wisely, not in attempting to prove that the constitution is the best in the world, but in demonstrating, if I could, the reverse. For in proportion as they labour to extoll it, in the same proportion do they oblige us to suppose them its most impudent and outrageous violators, or, at the least, ignorant of its spirit, and incapable of its application. Otherwise how could this excellent form be the parent of deformity? how could the population where the country is so fertile and the race so industrious contain a larger number of indigent families, and those among the most laborious and the most virtuous, than any other upon earth? Such is the beneficence of the supreme Power, unmixed evil, in its exposure to the air and heavens, may contract or produce, by a certain stimulating agency, a somewhat of good, however scantily and slowly; but evil never flows from good unmixed. If the constitution were what it is represented, its agents could not abuse

it; and if its agents could not abuse it, America would not have been, at this time, separated from England, nor would Ireland have been condemned to a massacre once at furthest in two generations; nor would the British people be more heavily taxed in its comforts and its necessaries than the Algerines and Turks, when its industry is so much greater, and when its territory has not been occupied, nor invaded, nor endangered, by an enemy. I suspect that its wars are systematical in their periods, however little so in their conduct: that they must recurr about every twenty years, as a new generation springs up from the aristocracy, for which all the great civil employments, however multiplied, are insufficient, and which disdains all other professions than the military and the naval.

The conduct of England towards us resembles that of Ebenezer Pollock towards his eldest son Jonas. Jonas had been hunting in the woods, and had contracted a rheumatism in the face, which drew it awry, and either from the pain it occasioned or from the medicines he took to cure it, rotted one of his grinders. Old Ebenezer was wealthy, had little to do, or to care about, made few observations on his family, sick or sound, and saw nothing particular in his son's countenance. However one day after dinner, when he had eaten



heartily, he said to Jonas, "Son Jonas, methinks thy appetite is not over-keen: pick and welcome the other half of that hog's-foot."

"Father," answered he, "I have had a pain in my tooth the last fortnight; the northerly wind does it no good today: I would rather, if so be that you approve of it, eat a slice of yon fair cheesecake in the closet."

"Why what ails the tooth?" said Ebenezer.

"Nothing more," replied Jonas, "than that I cannot chew with it what I used to chew."

"Drive a nail in the wall," quoth stoutly and courageously Ebenezer, "tie a string to one end and lace the other round thy tooth."

The son performed a part of the injunction, but could not very dexterously twist the string around the grinder, for his teeth were close and the cord not over-fine. Then said the father kindly, "Open thy mouth, lad! give me the twine: back thy head: back it, I tell thee, over the chair."

"Not that, father, not that...the next," cried Jonas.

"What dost mean?" proudly and impatiently said Ebenezer. "Is not the string about it? dost hold my hand too, scape-grace? dost give me all this trouble for nought?"

“Patience now, father,” meekly said Jonas, with the cord across his tongue...“let me draw my tooth my own way.”

“Follow thine own courses, serpent!” indignantly exclaimed Ebenezer...“as God’s in Boston, thou art a most wilful and undutiful child.”

“I hope not, father.”

“Hope not! rebel! Did not I beget thee, and thy teeth, one and all? have not I lodged thee, cloathed thee, and fed thee, these forty years, come Candlemas? and now, I warrant ye, all this bustle and backwardness about a rotten tooth! should I be a groat the richer for it, out or in?”

WASHINGTON.

Dignity in private men and in governments has been little else, than a stately and stiff perseverance in oppression; and spirit, as it is called, little else than the foam of hard-mouthed insolence. Such at last is become the audacity of Power, from a century or more of holidays or riot, it now complains that you deprive it of its prerogative, if you limit the exercise of its malignant passions. I lament that there are those who can learn no lesson of humanity, unless we write it broadly with the point of the sword.

FRANKLIN.

Let us hope however that we may see the

day, when these scholars shall be turned out of school.

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I understand that some remarks on the government of the church in Ireland have been offered to Parliament, I know not by what Scotch member, much resembling those which I attribute to Franklin. The dialogue was sent to England for publication long before, but although I required no participation of profit by it, some printers were reluctant to undertake it from the unfashionableness of the sentiments, and others from the obscurity of the author. It has passed through several hands; so that many things, it is reasonable to suppose, may have transpired, partly from the extravagance of the matter, and partly from the peculiarity of the style. What has been represented to me as the most visionary and absurd, is, the supposition that the catholic church in England, or elsewhere, could ever admitt any directing power which emanates not from the bishop of Rome.

I would dogmatize with none; I would dispute with few: instead of either, I transcribe some sentiments from Carriën, a catholic author...*Itaque instituit Gregorius per cæremonias Ecclesiæ statum in concordiam revocare. Orta est et contentio hoc tempore de primatu: voluit enim Mauritius Cæsar, ut patriarcha Constantinopolitanus œcumenicus, sive Episcopus universalis, in Ecclesiâ christianâ diceretur. Sed Gregorius id suo adsensu comprobare non voluit, et christianâ constantiâ usus scripsit, Neminem id sibi arrogare debere ut inter Christianos Episcopus universalis velit nominari. Anno Christi DLXXXIV. Chron: lib. iv. p. 272. Venetiis ad signum Spei 1548.*

Bonifacius the third obtained from the emperor Phocas, who had assassinated his master and benefactor Mauritius, that he should be styled Œcumenicus or Universal Bishop. It is worthy of remark, that the popes have obtained every

fresh accession of power from usurpers; and that for the first six hundred years, however dark and turbulent, they abstained from those pretensions which they have since so pertinaciously asserted. The ambition of Bonifacius raised up that of a much wiser and still bolder imposter. The churches of the east received with scorn and anger the intelligence of this usurpation; and the spirit of discord, which never breathed so violently and so uninterruptedly in any other religion, and which has not intermitted one moment in the eighteen hundred years since peace and goodwill towards man was first preached upon earth, induced an Arab to collect a few of his countrymen, disbanded and defrauded by Heraclius, and to preach to them plainer doctrines. Provinces, kingdoms, empires, yielded to him; and while Arians and Catholics were fighting for Christ against the command of Christ, the more populous, warlike, and civilized part of the world revolted from both standards. In that which still countenances the system, about a sixth of the wealth is possessed by the clergy, for teaching what every mother is capable of inculcating, and what Christ taught plainly once for all. To favour the establishment of this order, it was necessary to reverse the prophecy of Isaiah; instead of making the rough smooth, to make the smooth rough, and to excite disputes on words, unintelligible and unimportant. Hence we find perpetually the terms, *pernicious* errors, *impious* doctrines, *execrable* heresies; but are rarely told of the perniciousness, impiety, and execrableness of cruelty, malice, falsehood, lust, ambition. Hence the people are not permitted to read the precepts of Christ, but are ordered to believe the legend of Saint *Hankerkchief* or Saint *Eleventhousand*, to embrace the holy faith of an enthusiast who gravely tells us he believes a thing because it is impossible, and to place the same confidence in a lying old dotard who asserts that he filed his teeth in order to speak Hebrew.

While there are religious establishments paid by the people, against their consent, or even partially with it, there will always be dissatisfaction and discontent. Unhappily most of Christ's doctrines are superseded: there is one which was

never in fashion, and which, where all are good, is among the best: *Commune with thine own heart in thy chamber, and be still.* This, if attended to, would put the bishops' bench on three legs; but it would empty our poor-houses, fill our manufactories, and pay our debt.

When certain men are loudest, they feel least. Indeed there is a great deal less bigotry in the world, than is usually supposed, and a great deal more insincerity. Our faith is of little moment to those who declaim against it; they are angry, not at our blindness, as they call it, but that the blind man will trust his own dog and staff rather than theirs, and, above all, that he will carry the scrip. This is wilfulness in him; they would fain open his eyes to save him from the sin of such wilfulness; and they break him a limb or two because he will not take them for his oculists.

Love of power resides in the heart of every man, and is well regulated and discreet in few. Accompanied by genius, it is also too frequently accompanied by pride and arrogance. Although it assumes to itself the highest character, it is really among the weakest of our affections. Those who differ from the domineering party are always stigmatized by them with the name of sectaries; and what reflecting man has not remarked the force that lies in a name? Yet when the Pope called Luther a sectary, a little learning would have shewn him that the title better suited himself, and that, according to Cato the elder, *Sectarius porcus est qui gregem præcedens ducit.*

# CONVERSATION III.

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ROGER ASCHAM

AND

THE LADY JANE GREY.

## ROGER ASCHAM

AND

## THE LADY JANE GREY.

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ASCHAM.

THOU art going, my dear young lady, into a most awful state; thou art passing into matrimony and great wealth. God hath willed it so: submitt in thankfulness.

Thy affections are rightly placed and well distributed. Love is a secondary passion in those who love most, a primary in those who love least. He who is inspired by it in a great degree, is inspired by honour in a greater: it never reaches its plenitude of growth and perfection, but in the most exalted minds... Alas! alas!

JANE.

What aileth my virtuous Ascham? what is amiss? why do I tremble?

ASCHAM.

I see perils on perils which thou dost not see, although thou art wiser than thy poor old master. And it is not because Love hath blinded thee, for that surpasseth his supposed omnipotence, but it is because thy tender heart having always leaned affectionately upon good, hath felt and known nothing of evil.

I once persuaded thee to reflect much; let me now persuade thee to avoid the habitude of reflection, to lay aside books, and to gaze carefully and stedfastly on what is under and before thee.

JANE.

I have well bethought me of all my duties: O how extensive they are! what a goodly and fair inheritance! But tell me, wouldst thou command me never more to read Cicero and Epictetus and Polybius? the others I do resign unto thee: they are good for the arbour and for the grave-walk: but leave unto me, I beseech thee, my friend and father, leave unto me, for my fireside and for my pillow, truth, eloquence, courage, constancy.

ASCHAM.

Read them on thy marriagebed, on thy child-bed, on thy deathbed! Thou spotless undrooping lily, they have fenced thee right well! These



are the men for men: these are to fashion the bright and blessed creatures, O Jane, whom God one day shall smile upon in thy chaste bosom... Mind thou thy husband.

JANE.

I sincerely love the youth who hath espoused me; I love him with the fondest, the most solicitous affection. I pray to the Almighty for his goodness and happiness, and do forget at times, unworthy supplicant! the prayers I should have offered for myself. O never fear that I will disparage my kind religious teacher, by disobedience to my husband in the most trying duties.

ASCHAM.

Gentle is he, gentle and virtuous: but time will harden him: time must harden even thee, sweet Jane! Do thou, complacently and indirectly, lead him from ambition.

JANE.

He is contented with me and with home.

ASCHAM.

Ah Jane, Jane! men of high estate grow tired of contentedness.

JANE.

He told me he never liked books unless I read them to him. I will read them to him every evening: I will open new worlds to him, richer

than those discovered by the Spaniard; I will conduct him to treasures... O what treasures!... on which he may sleep in innocence and peace.

ASCHAM.

Rather do thou walk with him, ride with him, play with him, be his faery, his page, his every thing that love and poetry have invented; but watch him well, sport with his fancies; turn them about like the ringlets round his cheeks; and if ever he meditate on power, go, toss up thy baby to his brow, and bring back his thoughts into his heart by the music of thy discourse.

Teach him to live unto God and unto thee: and he will discover that women, like the plants in woods, derive their softness and tenderness from the shade.

# CONVERSATION IV.

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LORD BACON

AND

RICHARD HOOKER.

LORD BACON  
AND  
RICHARD HOOKER.

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BACON.

HEARING much of your worthiness and wisdom; master Richard Hooker, I have besought your comfort and consolation in this my too heavy affliction: for we often do stand in need of hearing what we know full well, and our own balsams must be poured into our breasts by another's hand. Withdrawn as you live from court and courtly men, and having ears occupied by better reports than such as are flying about me, yet haply so hard a case as mine, befalling a man heretofore not averse from the studies in which you also take delight, may have touched you with some concern.

HOOKER.

I do think, my lord of Verulam, that, un-

happy as you appear, God in sooth has foregone to chasten you, and that the day which in his wisdom he appointed for your trial, was the very day on which the king's majesty gave unto your ward and custody the great seal of his English realm. And yet perhaps it may be, let me utter it without offence, that your features and stature were from that day forward no longer what they were before. Such an effect do power and rank and office produce even on prudent and religious men.

A hound's whelp howleth if you pluck him up above where he stood: man, in much greater peril of falling, doth rejoyce. You, my lord, as befitteth you, are smitten and contrite, and do appear in deep wretchedness and tribulation, to your servants and those about you; but I know that there is always a balm which lies uppermost in these afflictions, and that no heart rightly softened can be very sore.

BACON.

And yet, master Richard, it is surely no small matter, to lose the respect of those who looked up to us for countenance, and the favour of a right learned king, and, O master Hooker! such a power of money! But money is mere dross. I should always hold it so, if it possessed not two qualities;

that of making men treat us reverently, and that of enabling us to help the needy.

HOOKER.

The respect, I think, of those who respect us for what a fool can give and a rogue can take away, may easily be dispensed with: but it is indeed a high prerogative to help the needy; and when it pleases the Almighty to deprive us of it, let us believe that he foreknows our inclination to negligence in the charge entrusted to us, and that in his mercy he has removed from us a most fearful responsibility.

BACON.

I know a number of poor gentlemen to whom I could have rendered aid.

HOOKER.

Have you examined and sifted their worthiness?

BACON.

Well and deeply.

HOOKER.

Then must you have known them long before your adversity, and while the means of succouring them were in your hands.

BACON.

You have circumvented and entrapped me, master Hooker. Faith! I am mortified...you the schoolman, I the schoolboy!

HOOKER.

Say not so, my lord. Your years and wisdom are abundantly more than mine, your knowledge higher, your experience richer. Our wits are not always in blossom upon us. When the roses are overcharged and languid, up springs a spike of rue. Mortified on such an occasion! God forefend it! But again to the business...I should never be over-penitent for my neglect of needy gentlemen, who have neglected themselves much worse. They have chosen their profession with its chances and contingences. If they had protected their country by their courage, or adorned it by their studies, they would have merited, and, under a king of such learning and such equity, would have received in some sort their reward. I look upon them as so many old cabinets of ivory and tortoiseshell, scratched, flawed, splintered, rotten, defective both within and without, hard to unlock, insecure to lock up again, unfit to use.

BACON.

Methinks it beginneth to rain, master Richard. What if we comfort our bodies with a small cup of wine against the ill temper of the air.

Wherefor in God's name are you affrightened?

HOOKER.

Not so, my lord, not so.

BACON.

What then affects you?

HOOVER.

Why indeed, since your lordship interrogates me...I looked, idly and imprudently, into that rich buffette; and I saw, unless the haze of the weather has come into the parlour, or my sight is the worse for last night's reading, no fewer than six silver pints. Surely six tables for company are laid only at coronations.

BACON.

There are many men so squeamish, that forsooth they would keep a cup to themselves, and never communicate it to their neighbour or best friend; a fashion which seems to me offensive in an honest house, where no disease of ill repute ought to be feared. We have lately, master Richard, adopted strange fashions; we have run into the wildest luxuries. The lord Leicester, I heard it from my father...God forefend it should ever be recorded in our history...when he entertained queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth-castle, laid before her Majesty a fork of pure silver. I the more easily credit it, as master Thomas Coriatt doth vouch for having seen the same monstrous sign of voluptuousness at Venice. We are surely the especial favorites of Providence, when such wan-



tonness hath not melted us quite away. After this portent, it would otherwise have appeared incredible, that we should have broken the Spanish Armada!

Pledge me: hither comes our wine.

Dolt! villain! is not this the beverage I reserve for myself?

The blockhead must imagine that malmsey runs in a stream under the ocean, like the Alpheus. Bear with me, good master Hooker, but verily I have little of this wine, and I keep it as a medicine for my many, and growing infirmities. You are younger; weaker drink is more wholesome for you. The lighter ones of France are best of all accommodated by Nature to our constitutions, and therefor she hath placed them so within our reach, that we have only to stretch out our necks, in a manner, and drink them from the vat. But this malmsey, this malmsey, flies from centre to circumference, and makes youthful blood to boil.

HOOKER.

Of a truth, my knowledge in such matters is but spare. My lord of Canterbury once ordered part of a goblet containing some strong Spanish wine to be taken to me from his table, when I dined by sufferance with his chaplains, and although a most discreet prudent man, as becometh his high station,

was not so chary of my health as your lordship. Wine is little to be trifled with, physic less. The Cretans, the brewers of this malvasy, have many aromatic and very powerful herbs amongst them. On their mountains, and notably on Ida, grows that dittany which works such marvels, and which perhaps may give activity to this hot medicinal drink of theirs. I would not touch it, knowingly: an unregarded leaf dropped into it above the ordinary might add such puissance to the concoction as almost to break the buckles in my shoes: since we have good and valid authority, that the wounded hart, on eating thereof, casts the arrow out of his haunch or entrails, although it stuck a palm deep.

## BACON.

When I read of such things I doubt them. Religion and politics belong to God, and to God's vicegerent the king: we must not touch upon them unadvisedly: but if I could procure a plant of dittany on easy terms, I would persuade my apothecary and my gamekeeper to make some experiments.

## HOOKER.

I dare not distrust what grave writers have declared, in matters beyond my knowledge.

## BACON.

Good master Hooker, I have read many of your reasonings, and they are admirably well sustained: added to which, your genius has given such a strong current to your language, as can come only from a mighty elevation and a most abundant plenteousness. Yet forgive me, in God's name, my worthy master, if you descried in me some expression of wonder at your simplicity. We are all weak and vulnerable somewhere: common men in the higher parts; heroes, as was feigned of Achilles, in the lower. You would define to a hair's breadth, the qualities, states, and dependencies, of Principalities, Dominations, and Powers; you would be unerring about the Apostles and the Churches; and 'tis wonderful how you wander about a potherb.

## HOOKER.

I know my poor weak intellects, most noble lord, and how scantily they have profited by all my hard painstaking. Comprehending few things, and those imperfectly, I say only what others have said before, wise men and holy; and if, by passing through my heart into the wide world around me, it pleaseth God that this little treasure shall have lost nothing of its weight and pureness, my exulta-

tion is then the exultation of humility. Wisdom consisteth not in knowing many things; nor even in knowing them thoroughly; but in choosing and in following what conduces the most certainly to our lasting happiness and true glory. And this wisdom, my lord of Verulam, cometh from above.

## BACON.

I have observed, among the well informed and the ill informed, nearly the same quantity of infirmities and follies: those who are rather the wiser keep them separate, and those who are wisest of all keep them better out of sight. Now examine the sayings and writings of the prime philosophers; and you will often find them, master Richard, to be untruths made to resemble truths: the business with them is to approximate as nearly as possible and not to touch it: the goal of the charioteer is *evitata fervidis rotis*, as some poet saith. But we who care nothing for chaunts and cadences, and have no time to catch at applauses, push forward over stones and sands straitway to our object. I have persuaded men, and shall persuade them for ages, that I possess a wide range of thoughts unexplored by others and first thrown open by me, with many fair inclosures of choice and abstruse knowledge. I have incited and instructed them

to examine all subjects of useful and rational inquiry: very few that occurred to me have I myself left untouched or untried. One however hath almost escaped me, and surely one worth the trouble.

HOOKER.

Pray, my lord, if I am guilty of no indiscretion, what may it be?

BACON.

Francis Bacon.

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Lest it be thought that authority is wanting for the strong expression of Hooker on the effects of dittany, I refer the reader to the curious treatise of Plutarch on the reasoning faculties of animals, in which, near the end, he asks "Who instructed the deer, wounded by the Cretan arrow, to seek for dittany? on the tasting of which herb, the bolts fall immediately from their bodies."

I do not remember to have read in other authors that the effect is quite so instantaneous; and I have not leisure for an index-hunt... a good half-hour's work.

**CONVERSATION V.**

---

**GENERAL LASCY**

**AND**

**THE CURATE MERINO**

# GENERAL LASCY

AND

## THE CURATE MERINO.

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MERINO.

GENERAL, we have fought in the same cause, and I shall be sorry if our sentiments at last diverge. What is peace, if there be not concord?

LASCY.

Enthusiasm makes way for reflection, and reflection leads to that concord which we both desire. We think first of our wrongs, and afterwards of our rights. Injustice may become, where there is anything to be stirred, a lighter evil to the sufferer than to the worker.

MERINO.

We talk of the people and of parliaments, and, as it appears to me, are blindly following the restless and changeful French. In fact we are ready in our politics to build up a tower of Babel. Shall these miscreants persuade us that they are the

cleverest people in the world, by sweetening us a cup of chocolate with a bunch of turnips or a truss of hay, or by whipping us off a leg while we are saying an ave-maria. Let them instruct us in surgery and chemistry, but let them always be considered as our inferiors in morality and government.

LASCY.

Here, señor Curado, we agree perfectly. Prosperity has made them so giddy, adversity cannot sober them. The varnish, that once covered their sharp and shallow character, cracked off in the dogdays of the revolution, and they have lost the greatest of their virtues, their hypocrisy. Although I have fought against them and against their partisans, while they were under the same banners, yet I would gladly see all Spaniards in amity and at home. The French faction, as you call it, fought for the same object as we did.

MERINO.

How! they fought for our beloved Ferdinand!

LASCY.

They fought for our beloved Spain, for her independence, for her freedom. Ought they to be persecuted, because they were betrayed? Should we murder a man, because he has fallen into a pit? or starve him to death, because he has gone



for bread to another baker than ours? and liberty is surely, like bread, an article of the first necessity to a Spaniard.

MERINO.

They followed not their lawful king.

LASCY.

Did we? did any wise man? did not all implore him to remain? did not all deprecate and detest that lowest of degradation, which he neither scorned nor shunned, but ran into and courted?

MERINO.

It was God's will. As for those rebels, the finger of God...

LASCY.

Prythee, señor Curado, let God's finger alone. Very worthy men are apt to snatch at it upon too light occasions: they would stop their tobacco-pipes with it, if they could. If Spain, in the opinion of our late opponents, could have obtained a free constitution by other means, they never would have joined the French. True, they persisted: but how few have wisdom or courage enough to make the distinction between retracting an error and deserting a cause! He who declares himself a party-man, let his party profess the most liberal sentiments, is a registered and enlisted slave: he begins by being a zealot, and ends by being a

dupe: he is tormented by regret and anger; yet is he incapable, from shame and irresolution, of throwing off the badge and livery under which he sweats and fumes, as though under the poisoned garment of the Centaur.

MERINO.

How much better is it to abolish all parties, by fixing a legitimate king at the head of affairs!

LASCY.

The object, thank God, is accomplished. Ferdinand is returning to Madrid, if perverse men do not mislead him.

MERINO.

And yet there are Spaniards mad enough to talk of cortes and chambers of peers.

LASCY.

Of the latter I know nothing: but I know that Spain formerly was great, free, and happy, by the administration of her cortes; and as I prefer in policy old experiments to new ones, I should not be sorry, if the madness, as you call it, spread in that direction.

There are many forms of government, but only two kinds; the free and the despotic: in the one the people has its representatives, in the other not. Freedom, to be, must be perfect: the half-free can no more exist, than the half-entire. Re-

straints laid by a people on itself are sacrifices made to Liberty, and it never exerts a more beneficent or a greater power than in imposing them. The nation that pays taxes without its own consent is under slavery: whosoever causes, whosoever maintains, that slavery, subverts or abets the subversion of social order. Whoever is above the law is out of the law, just as evidently as whoever is above this room is out of this room. . . . If men will outlaw themselves by overt actions, we are not to condemn those who remove them by the means least hazardous to the public peace. If even my daughter brought forth a monster, I could not arrest the arm that should smother it: and monsters of this kind are by infinite degrees less pernicious, than such as rise up in society by violation of law.

In regard to a chamber of peers, Spain does not contain the materials. What has been the education of our grandees? how narrow the space between the hornbook and the sanbenito! The English are amazed and the French are indignant that we have not imitated their constitutions. All constitutions formed for the French are provisional. Whether they tripp or tumble, whether they stepp or slide, the tendency is direct to slavery: none but a most rigid government will

restrain them from cruelty or from mischief: they are scourged into good humour, and starved into content. I have read whatever I could find written on the English constitution. It appears to me, like the Deity, an object universally venerated, but requiring a Revelation. I do not find the house of peers, as I expected to find it, standing between the king and people. Throughout a long series of years it has been only twice in opposition to the Commons: once in declaring that the slave-trade ought not to be abolished; again in declaring that those who believed in transubstantiation were unfit to command an army or to decide a cause.

MERINO.

Into what extravagances does infidelity lead men, otherwise not unwise! Blessed virgin of the thousand pains, and great Santiago of Compostella, deign to bring that benighted nation back again to the right path!

LASCY.

On deity we reason by attributes, on government by metaphors. Wool or sand, embodied, may deaden the violence of what is discharged against the walls of a city: hereditary aristocracy has no such virtue against the assaults of despotism, which on the contrary it will maintain in op-

position to the people; since its power and wealth, although they are given *by* the king, must be given *from* the nation, and the latter has not an interest in enriching it, the former has. All the countries that ever have been conquered, have been surrendered to the conqueror by the aristocracy, which stipulates for its own property, power, and rank, yielding up the men, cattle, and metals, on the common. Nevertheless in every nation the project of an upper chamber will be warmly cherished. The richer aspire to honours, the poorer to protection. Every family of wealth and respectability wishes to count a peer among its relatives, and, where the whole number is yet under nomination, every one may hope it. Those who have no occasion for protectors desire the power of protecting, and those who have occasion for them desire them to be more efficient.

You would imagine that the British peers have given their names to beneficent institutions, wise laws, and flourishing colonies: no such thing: instead of which, a slice of meat between two slices of bread derives its name from one, a tumble of heels over head, a feat performed by beggar-boys on the roads, from another. The former, I presume, was a practical commentator on the Roman fable of the belly and the members, and maintained

with all his power and interest the supremacy of the nobler part; and the latter was of a family, in which the head notoriously was lighter than the legs. Others divide their titles with a waistcoat, a bonnet, and a boot; the more illustrious with some island inhabited by sea-calves.

MERINO.

I deprecate such importations into our monarchy. God forbid that the ermine of his Catholic Majesty be tagged with the sordid tail of such a rough monster as feudality.

LASCY.

If kings, whether by reliance on external force, by introduction of external institutions, or by misapplication of what they may possess within the realm, shew a disposition to conspire with other kings against its rights, it may be expected that communities will, some secretly and others openly, unite their moral, their intellectual, and, when opportunity permits it, their physical powers against them. If alliances are holy, entered into upon the very soil just usurped, surely not unholy are those which are formed for defence against all kinds and all methods of spoliation. If men are marked out for banishment, for imprisonment, for slaughter, because they assert the rights and defend the liberties of their country, can you wonder

at seeing, as you must ere long, the confederacy of all free countries, formed for the apprehension or extinction of whoever pays, disciplines, or directs, under whatsoever title, those tremendous masses of human kind, which consume the whole produce of their native land in depopulating another? Is it iniquitous or unnatural, that laws be opposed to edicts, and constitutions to despotism? O señor Merino, there are yet things holy: all the barbarians and all the autocrats in the universe cannot make that word a byword to the Spaniard. Yes, there may be holy alliances; and the hour strikes for their establishment. This beautiful earth, these heavens in their magnificence and splendour, have seen things more lovely and more glorious than themselves. The throne of God is a speck of darkness, if you compare it with the heart, that beats only, and beats constantly, to pour forth its blood for the preservation of our country. Invincible Spain! how many of thy children have laid this pure sacrifice on the altar! The Deity has accepted it...and there are those who would cast its ashes into the winds.

If ever a perverseness of character, or the perfidy taught in courts, should induce a king of Spain to violate his oath, to massacre his subjects, to proscribè his friends, to imprison his defenders, to

abolish the representation of the people, Spain will be drawn by resentment to do what Policy in vain has whispered in the ear of Generosity. She and Portugal will be one; nor will she be sensible of any disgrace in exchanging a prince of French origin for a prince of Portuguese.

MERINO.

Educated as kings are, we cannot wonder if they see a chimera in a popular assembly.

LASCY.

Those who refuse to their people a national and just representation, calling it a chimera, will one day remember that he who purchases their affections at the price of a chimera, purchases them cheaply: and those who, having promised the boon, retract it, will put their hand to the signature, directed by a hand of iron. State after state comes forward in asserting its rights, as wave follows wave; each acting upon each; and the tempest is gathering in regions where no murmur or voice is audible. Portugal pants for freedom, in other words is free. With one foot in England and the other in Brazil, there was danger in withdrawing either: she appears however to have recovered her equipoise. Accustomed to fix her attention upon England, wisely will she act if she imitates her example in the union with Ire-



land; an union which ought to cause no other regret than in having been celebrated so late. If on the contrary she believes that national power and prosperity are the peculiar gifts of independence, she must believe that England was more powerful and prosperous in the days of her heptarchy than fifty years ago. Algarve would find no more advantage in her independence of Portugal, than Portugal would find in continuing detached from the other portions of the peninsula. There were excellent reasons for declaring her independence at the time; there now are better, if better be possible, for a coalition. She, like ourselves, is in danger of losing her colonies: how can either party by any other means retrieve its loss? Normandy and Brittany, after centuries of war, joined the other provinces of France: more centuries of severer war would not sunder them. We have no such price to pay. Independence is always the sentiment that follows liberty; and unfortunately it is always the most ardently desired by that country, which, supposing the administration of law to be similar and equal, derives the greatest advantage from the union. According to the state of society in two countries, to the justice or injustice of government, to proximity or distance, independence

may be good or bad. Normandy and Brittany would have found it hurtful and pernicious: they would have been corrupted by bribery, and overrun by competitors, the more formidable and the more disastrous from a parity of force. They had not however so weighty reasons for an union with France, as Portugal has with Spain.

MERINO.

To avoid the collision of king and people, I wish an assembly to be composed of the higher clergy and principal nobility.

LASCY.

What should produce any collision, any dissension or dissidence between king and people? Is all the wisdom of a nation less than an individual's? Can it not see its own interests? and ought *he* to see any other? Surround the throne with state and lustre, but withhold from it the means of corruption, which must overflow upon itself, and sapp it. To no intent or purpose can they ever be employed, unless to subvert the constitution; and beyond the paling of a constitution a king is *feræ naturæ*. Look at Russia and Turkey: how few of their czars and sultans have died a natural death! unless indeed in such a state of society the most natural death of all is a violent one. I would not accustom

men to daggers and poisons; for which reason, among others, I would remove them as far as possible from despotism.

To talk of France is nugatory: England then, where more causes are tried within the year, than among us within ten, has only twelve judges, criminal and civil, in her ordinary courts. A culprit, or indeed an innocent man, may lie three months in prison before his trial, on suspicion of having stolen a petticoat or pair of slippers. As for her civil laws, they are more contradictory, more dilatory, more complicated, more uncertain, more expensive, more inhumane, than any now in use among men. All who appeal to them for redress of injury, suffer an aggravation of it; and when Justice comes down at last, she alights on ruins. Public opinion is the only bulwark against oppression, and the voice of wretchedness is upon most occasions too feeble to excite it.

#### MERINO.

Democracy itself must be contented with the principal features of the English constitution. The great leaders are not taken from the ancient families.

#### LASCY.

These push forward into parliament young per-  
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sons of the best talents they happen to pick up, whether at a ball or an opera, at a gaming-table or a college-mess, who from time to time, according to the offices they have filled, mount into the upper chamber and make room for others: but it is understood that in both chambers they shall distribute honours and places at the command of their patrons. True indeed, the ostensible heads are not of ancient or even of respectable parentage. The more wealthy and powerful peers send them from their boroughs into the house of commons, as they send race-horses from their stables to Newmarket, and cocks from their training-yards to Doncaster. This is, in like manner, a pride, a luxury, a speculation. Even bankrupts have been permitted to sit there, men who, when they succeeded, were a curse to their country, worse than when they failed\*.

Let us rather collect together our former institutions, cherish all that brings us proud remembrances, brace our limbs for the efforts we must make, train our youth on our own arena, and

\* The opinions on our house of Commons which I have attributed to Lascy, are those of a contemptuous Spaniard, not perfectly well informed: we know better; but his character required them so. My own veneration for that assembly may be found expressed at the conclusion of the third Dialogue.

never deem it decorous to imitate the limp of a wrestler writhing in his decrepitude.

The chamber of peers in England is the dormitory of Freedom and of Genius. Those who enter it have eaten the lotus and forget their country. A minister, to suit his purposes, may make a dozen, or a score, or a hundred, of peers in a day: if they are rich they are inactive; if they are poor they are dependent. In general he chooses the rich, who always want something; for wealth is less easy to satisfy than poverty, luxury than hunger: he can dispense with their energy if he can obtain their votes, and they never abandon him unless he has contented them.

MERINO.

Impossible! that any minister should make twenty, or even ten peers, during one convocation.

LASCY.

The English, by a most happy metaphor, call them *batches*, seeing so many drawn forth at a time with all the rapidity of loaves from an oven, and moulded to the same ductility by less manipulation. A minister in that system has equally need of the active and the passive, as the creation has equally need of males and females. Do not imagine I would discredit or depreciate the house of peers: never will another land contain one com-

posed of characters in general more honorable; more distinguished for knowledge, for charity, for generosity, for equity; more perfect in all the duties of men and citizens. Let it stand; a nation should be accustomed to no changes, to no images, but of strength and duration: let it stand then, as a lofty and ornamental belfry, never to be taken down or lowered, until it threatens by its decay the congregation underneath: but let none be excommunicated who refuse to copy it, whether from faultiness in their foundation, or from deficiency in their materials. Different countries require different governments. Is the rose the only flower in the garden? is Hesperus the only star in the heavens?

England in the last twenty years has undergone a much greater revolution than any she struggled to counteract: a revolution more awful, more pernicious, more hopeless. Half a century ago she was represented chiefly by her country-gentlemen: Pitt made the richer peers, the intermediate pensioners, the poorer exiles; and his benches were overflowed with honourables from the sugar-cask and indigo-bag. He changed all the features both of mind and matter. Old mansions were converted into workhouses and barracks: children who returned from school at the holidays, stopped

in their own villages and asked why they stopped. More oaks followed him than ever followed Orpheus; and more stones, a thousand to one, leaped down at his voice than ever leaped up at Amphion's. The weakest of mortals was omnipotent in parliament: he dreamed in his drunkenness that he could compress the spirit of the times, and he rendered the wealthiest of nations the most distressed. The spirit of the times is only to be made useful by catching it as it rises, to be managed only by concession, to be controlled only by compliancy. Like the powerful agent of late discovery, that impells vast masses across the ocean or raises them from the abysses of the earth, it performs everything by attention, nothing by force, and is fatal not only from coercion but from neglect. That government is the best which the people obey the most willingly and the most wisely: that state of society, in which the greatest number may live and educate their families becomingly, by unrestrained bodily, and unrestrained intellectual exertion; where superiority in office springs from worth, and where the chief magistrate has no higher interest in perspective, than the ascendancy of the laws. Nations are not ruined by wars: for convents and churches, palaces and cities are not nations. The Messenians and Jews and Arau-

canians saw their houses and temples levelled with the pavement: the mightiness of the crash gave the stronger mind a fresh impulse, and it sprang high above the flames that consumed the last fragment. The ruin of a country is not the blight of corn, nor the weight and impetuosity of hailstones; it is not inundation nor storm, it is not pestilence nor famine; a few years, perhaps a single one, may cover all traces of such calamity: but that country is too surely ruined, in which morals are lost irretrievably to the greater part of the rising generation; and there are they about to sink and perish, where the ruler has given, by an unrepressed and an unreprieved example, the lesson of bad faith.

MERINO.

Sir, I cannot hear such language.

LASCY.

Why then converse with me? Is the fault mine if such language be offensive? Why should intolerance hatch an hypothesis, or increase her own alarm by the obstreperous chuckle of incubation?

MERINO.

Kings stand in the place of God amongst us.

LASCY.

I wish they would make way for the owner. They love God only when they fancy he has



favoured their wild passions, and fear him only when they must buy him off. If indeed they be his vicegerents on earth, let them repress the wicked and exalt the virtuous. Wherever in the material world there is a grain of gold, it sinks to the bottom; chaff floats over it: in the animal, the greatest and most sagacious of creatures hide themselves in woods and caverns, in morasses and in solitudes, and we hear first of their existence when we find their bones. Do you perceive a resemblance anywhere? If princes are desirous to imitate the Governor of the universe, if they are disposed to obey him, if they consult religion or reason, or, what oftener occupies their attention, the stability of power, they will admitt the institutions best adapted to render men honest and peaceable, industrious and contented. Otherwise, let them be certain that, although they themselves may escape the chastisement they merit, their children and granchildren will never be out of danger or out of fear. Calculations on the intensity of force are often just, hardly ever so those on its durability.

## MERINO.

As if truly that depended on men! a blow against a superintending Providence! It always

follows the pestilential breath that would sully the majesty of kings.

LASCY.

Señor Merino, my name, if you have forgotten it, is Lascy: take courage and recollect yourself. The whole of my discourse has tended to keep the majesty of kings unsullied by preserving their honour inviolate. Any blow against a superintending Providence is too insane for reproach, too impotent for pity: and indeed what peril can by any one be apprehended for the Almighty, when he has the curate Merino to preach for him and the Holy Inquisition to protect him?

MERINO.

I take my leave, general. May your Excellency live many years!... I breathe the pure street-air again... Traitor and atheist! I will denounce him: he has shaved for the last time: he shall never have Christian burial.

---

I wrote an inscription for the cenotaph of Lascy, which I will insert here, together with some others composed for those who have fallen the first victims of the Holy Alliance or its priests.

## Pro Cœnotaphio Laciî ducis.

IN . MINORE . BALEARIUM . JACET . CORPUS . LACII  
 PRÆCLARI . DUCIS . VIRI . INTEGERRIMI  
 CUJUS . SI . PATRIAM . ET . RES . GESTAS  
 ET . GERENDARUM . CONSIDERES . CAUSAS  
 NECESSE . NON . EST . ADDERE  
 FUISSE . REGIO . FERNANDI . JUSSU  
 QUEM . SALVUM . FBCERAT . INTEREMPTUM  
 HOC . HABE . LECTOR  
 QUOD . PERCUSSORIBUS . ET . REGE . VIVENTIBUS  
 UBI . DEBET . INSCRIBI . NON . POTEST  
 VOS . AUTEM . QUI . VOBIS . LIBERTATEM  
 IN . ALTERA . TERRARUM . PARTE . VINDICATIS  
 RECORDAMINI . HUNC . MERITIS . VESTRUM . ESSE  
 ATQUE . ITA . VOS . ET . CONJUGES . ET . LIBEROS  
 JUVET . DEUS  
 STATUAM . EJUS . PRO . FOCIS . PONITOTE .

## Pro Cœnotaphio Porlierii ducis.

SUB . MARMORE . HOC . JACERET  
 SI . SINNERET . REX . FERNANDUS  
 CADAVER . TRUNCUM . PORLIERII  
 PRO . EODEM . REGE . DIMICABAT . QUI  
 DUM . E . TYRANNI . VICINI . COGNATIS  
 IN . MATRIMONIUM . DARI . QUAMLIBET . SIBI . PETERET  
 DOLO . CAPTUS . EST . ET . GALLIAM . VI . ABDUCTUS  
 GALLICO . EXERCITU . A . BRITANNIS . DELETO  
 IPSO . AUTEM . FERNANDO . LIBERATO  
 JURAVIT . LEGES . PATRIAE . PRISTINAS . RESTITUERE  
 NE . FALSO . JURARET . REX  
 PUGNATURUS . ERAT . ITERUM . PORLIERIUS  
 QUÆDAM . EST . PRUDENTIA  
 QUAE . NEC . STRENUIS . NEC . PROBIS  
 CONVENIT . ET . PORLIERIO . SOLA . DEFUIT  
 CUM . OMNIBUS . AD . XXX . CAPITUM . MILLIA  
 QUI . COLUERANT . LITERAS  
 VEL . PATRUM . CONSULTA . SERVAVANT  
 VEL . SANGUINEM . SUUM . PRO . FERNANDO

DEVOVERANT . PRIMI . FUDERANTQUE  
 VINCTUS . EST . CLUSUS . IN . CARCERE . AMICIS . LIBRIS  
 VITAE . DENIQUE . OMNI . COMMODO  
 OMNI . CONSOLATIONE . PRIVATUS  
 ET . NECE . VIOLENTA . ATQUE  
 ID . SI . BONIS . ACCIDERE . QUEAT . INFAMI  
 JUSSU . FERNANDI . SUI . TRUCIDATUS .

REPUTATE . VOBISCUM . REGES . VICTORES  
 PUBLICI . UT . VULTIS . APPELLARI . JURIS . VINDICES  
 INDIGNA . PERPETI . VOS . HAUD . SOLOS . POSSE  
 PECCARE . HAUD . SOLAM . LIBERTATEM .

## CALVUS . ROSAS

QUUM . TORMENTO . ALLIGATUS . ESSET : QUUMQUE  
 ARTIUM . NEXUS . DIRUMPERENTUR , NEC . TAMEN . DE-  
 SPONDERET . ANIMUM , NEC . VOCEM . EMITTERET . RO-  
 GATUS . A . CARNIFICE . ET . A . SACRIFICULO . NUMQUID  
 FATERETUR . POSSE . ENIM . SI . VELLE . LOQUI . . . . HOC  
 POSSUM . INQUIT . . . . CALVUS . ROSAS . EADEM . CONSTAN-  
 TIA . MEMBRIS . OMNIBUS . FRACTIS . MORITURUS . EST  
 QUA . CAESARAEAM . AUGUSTAM . DEFENDIT . ET . AD  
 ULTIMUM . USQUE . VITAE . SPIRITUM . TYRANNORUM  
 LIBIDINI . OBSISTET . DERIDEBIT . IMPOTENTIAM  
 PROGREDERE . SI . CIVIS . ES . ET . ESSE . TANTI . GAUDE .  
 SI . PEREGRINUS . ES . PARCE . SAXO .

ZORRAQUIN . DUX . HEIC . JACET  
 APUD . VICUM . UT . DICITUR . URBS : MUNITA . TARRA-  
 CONENSEM  
 A . GALLIS . VULNERATUS . AD . ATHANAGIAM . ASPORTATUS  
 IN . SINUM . LACRYMAS . QUUM . ACEPISSET  
 IMPERATORIS . MINÆ  
 QUAS . PRIMAS . POST . INFANTIAM  
 VIR . CONSTANS . FUDERAT  
 PATRIÆ . VITAM . DEDIT . EJUSDEMQUE . MEMORIAM .  
 Pro monumento super milites régis jussu interemptos .

## VIATOR

OSSA . QUAE . CALCAS . RÉGIS . FERNANDI . JUSSU . FRACTA  
 TORMENTIS . ERANT . PRO . PARENTIBUS . ET . LIBERIS

PRO . ARIS . ET . FOCIS . PRO . LEGIBUS . ET . REGE . PUG-  
 NAVIMUS . EMERITI . LUBENTER . QUIESCEREMUS . LI-  
 BERTATE . PARTA . QUIESCIMUS . AMISSA . PERLUBEN-  
 TER .

The slaughterer should be commemorated as well as the  
 slaughtered. The following verses were written, when he,  
 who is the subject of them, was reported to have been flying  
 to Rome.

Vos Flavii manes concedite, vosque Neronis.  
 Nobilior vobis improbitate venit.  
 Fortes, salva fuit per quos sua vita, tyrannus  
 Exilio, vinclis, carnificique dedit.  
 En venit ille fugax, qui semper ab hoste minaci  
 Abdidit os pavidum, deseruitque suos.  
 Parce tui simili, (si acis ignoscere, parces)  
 Huic miseræ muscæ, frater acerbe Titi.  
 Ne premat invidia, O soboles extrema Neronum.  
 Abscondat profugo fida latrina caput!  
 Sin minus, ultorum toties qui videris uncum,  
 Tibri, sit huic limus mollis, et unda levis.  
 Pro statua Cosciusconis in Soleta Helvetiorum.

HOC . IN . OPPIDO . E . VITA . MIGRAVIT . IMPERATOR . ILLE  
 QUI . CONSTANTIA . ET . CAUSA . SUA . FRETUS  
 ET . DEI . OPT : MAX : JUSTITIA  
 NEC . DESPERAVIT . IN . PESSIMIS . TEMPORIBUS  
 NEC . SUOS . DESPERARE . PASSUS . EST  
 THADDEUS . COSCIUSCO  
 PRO . SARMATIÆ . ET . AMERICÆ . LIBERTATE  
 VULNERIBUS . MULTIS . ET . GRAVIBUS . QUUM . LABORARET  
 IN . HELVETIAM . SECESSIT  
 ET . AGRIMONIA . OB . AMISSAM . PATRIAM . ATQUE . OB  
 INCOMMODA . REIPUBLICÆ . CONFECTUS . EST .  
 HEIC . O . HOSPES . UBI . NEMO . TE . REPREHENDET  
 STRENUUM . LIBERTATIS . VINDICEM . VENERATOR  
 SI . DANUBIUM . VERSUS . AUT . PADUM . PROFICISCERIS  
 REFERRE . SALTEM . FAS . ERIT . CIVIBUS . TUIS  
 PROBUM . LIBERALEM . PERURBANUM . EUM . FUISSE  
 ET . SAPIENTEM . ET . ERUDITUM .

It would be unjust to praise the stranger and neglect our countryman. Although no persecution hastened the death of the illustrious commander who is celebrated in the following lines, a just sense of his merits induces me to insert them.

Mortuus est Chatamus, quondam tellure Batavâ  
 Nobilis...armato capta culina fuit.  
 Per totum ille diem solitus producere somnos,  
 Excitus est centum quum cecinere tubæ.  
 Clamat, et invictas dum tendit in æthera palmas,  
*Jupiter ! ut soles hac regione nitent.*  
 Nondum finierant, oculos quum clausit ovanti  
 Hac qua nunc premitur vix minus alta quies.  
 Vos frontem anguillae, frontem vos cingite betae !  
 Illi non faciet laurea sicca patris.

The expression in the last verse, which appears modern, is imitated from Propertius :

Non faciet capiti dura corona meo.

**CONVERSATION VI.**

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**PERICLES**

**AND**

**SOPHOCLES.**

PERICLES  
AND  
SOPHOCLES.

---

PERICLES.

O SOPHOCLES! is there in the world a city so beautiful as Athens? Congratulate me, embrace me; the Piræus and the Pœcile are completed this day\*; my glory is accomplished; behold it founded on the supremacy of our fellow-citizens.

\* Their decorations only; for the structures were finished before. The propylæa of Pericles were entrances to the citadel: other works of consummate beauty were erected as decorations to the city, but chiefly in the Pœcile, where also was seen the temple of Cybele, and her statue by Phidias. All the public works of London, and of Paris, would not form a third of the Piræus, the length of which exceeded six miles, the height was sixty feet, not reckoning the foundation, and the breadth at top about twelve: it was of square stones, fastened together by cramps of iron and insertions of lead: it was continued by two walls, one of four miles, the other somewhat less, each adorned with statues and propylæa.

The Romans did less in their city than in their colonies.



## SOPHOCLES.

And it arises, O Pericles, the more majestically  
from the rich and delightful plain of equal laws.

The greatest of their works was their wall against the Caledonians, the most majestic and solid was their bridge across the Danube. In theatres they excelled the Athenians; those at Athens were worthy of Pollio and Seneca, those at Rome of Æschylus and Sophocles. The Romans at all periods have built out of ruins. A band of robbers and outcasts found on the banks of the Tiber a city so little dilapidated, that it served them to inhabit: a place which some pestilence had devastated, or which the inhabitants had abandoned for its insalubrity. They roofed the houses with sedge and rushes, contracted the vast circumference of the walls, and amidst these occupations grew somewhat more orderly and civilized. As however from their habits of life they had brought few women with them, these they took by fraud and violence from their unwarlike neighbours. The Italians, who, whatever the Roman historians, to increase the glory of the conqueror, may represent them, were always the least martial and the least enterprising of the Europeans, could not recover their wives and daughters, and soon made peace with their violators. No splendid house, no ample temple, was erected for five hundred years: so barbarous was the genius of the people. The magnificence of Corinth and of Syracuse, the two most elegant and splendid cities that ever rose from the earth, had left no impression on their conquerors: their cups were of gold, while their temples and the Gods within them were of stone and clay. Lucullus was the first amongst them who had any idea of magnificence in architecture. Julius Cæsar, to whom Glory in all her forms was more familiar than his own Penates, fell a victim to his ambition, and left nothing memorable in Rome but Pompey's statue. Augustus did somewhat in adorning the city; but Augustus was no Pericles. Tiberius, melancholy at the loss of a wife torn away from him by policy, sank

The Gods have bestowed on our statuaries and painters a mighty power, enabling them to restore

into that dreadful malady which invaded all branches of the Claudian family, and, instead of embellishing Rome, darkened it with inquietudes and suspicions, and retired into a solitude which his enemies have peopled with monsters, such as, reason and reflection must convince us, were incompatible with the tenderness of his grief; and his mental powers were not always estranged. Nero, a most virtuous and beneficent prince, was soon affected by the same insanity, acting differently on his heart and intellect; he never lost sight of magnificence; he erected a palace before which all the splendours of Pericles fade away. Plutarch tells us, in the life of Publicola, that he had seen at Athens the columns of Pentelican marble for the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; that their thickness was reduced at Rome, to the great injury of their proportions; and that the gilding of the whole edifice cost twelve thousand talents, above two millions sterling. There were rooms in the palace of Nero as large, the ground on which it stood was thirty times the extent, the gilding as rich or richer. The masters of the world trembled to enter it and commanded its destruction, removed the works of Phidias and of Praxiteles, of Scopas and of Lysippus, of Apelles and of Zeuxis, of which probably all that were extant were assembled here, poured forth the lava of gold, from its cielings, its arches, and its architraves, and constructed out of its kitchens and stables a bath and amphitheatre for the Roman people. The conflagration of Rome, if the mention of it may be admitted here, I believe to have arisen from the same cause as the conflagration of London, the necessity of purifying the city after an endemical disease, and of leaving no narrow streets in the centre for its recurrence. The extreme love which the populace bore towards Nero during his whole life and long afterwards is a proof that they did not attribute it to his cruelty and caprice, and that the losses of all were abundantly recompensed by his wealth and liberality. Nothing was left for Hadrian but to copy the

our ancestors unto us, some in the calm of thought, others in the tumult of battle, and to present them before our children when we are gone.

finer works of the Athenians, which he brought together under his eye. Architecture then sank for ages.

The Moors introduced a kind of civility far preferable to any in existence among the later Romans, and a style of architecture more fanciful and ornamental, which also had this advantage, that it brought with it no recollections or ideas of deterioration and decline. The cathedrals in Spain are the most exquisite models of it; and illuminated books, which the Arabs, Turks, and Persians, still prize highly, gave, I imagine, those ideas on which the English raised so many noble edifices in their own country and in France, correcting by them the heavier and more confused masses of Italy; a style which still prevails.

*Parcius ista Italis tamen objicienda.*

In London with St. Paul's and St. Stephen's before us, in Bath with Queen's-square, the Crescent, and the Circus (to which last nothing in Rome or in the world is equal), we build cottages like castles, and palaces like cottages; and where the edifice is plain and simple, the window is a hole knocked in the wall, looking like an eye without eyebrow or lashes, or else is situated in the midst of an arch, as if a ruin had been patched up to receive it.

Let us reflect one moment more on Athens. A city not much larger than Liverpool or Bristol, and all whose inhabitants might have been lost in Syracuse, produced within the short period of two centuries, reckoning from the battle of Marathon, a greater number of exquisite models in war, philosophy, patriotism, eloquence, and poetry; in the semi-mechanical arts which always accompany or follow them, sculpture and painting; and in the first of the mechanical, architecture, than all the remainder of the universe in six thousand years. She

## PERICLES.

Shall it be so? Alas, how worthless an incumbance, how wearisome an impediment is life, if it separate us from the better of our ancestors, not in our existences only, but in our merits! We are little by being seen among men; because that phasis of us only is visible which is exposed towards them and which most resembles them; we become greater by leaving the world, as the sun appears to be on descending below the horizon. Strange reflection! humiliating truth! that nothing on earth, no exertion, no endowment, can do so much for us as a distant day. And deep indeed, O Sophocles, must be the impression made upon thy mind by these masterly works of art, if they annihilate in a manner all the living; if they lower in thee that spirit, which hath often aroused by one touch, or rather flash, the whole Athenian people at thy tragedies, and force upon thee the cold and ungenial belief, the last which it appears to be their

rises up again and is pushed back by common consent. The rulers of nations seem to think they have as much interest in abolishing all traces of her, if they can, as Alexander had to demolish (which he did) the monuments of the Argonautic expedition. Darius thought differently: had he less or more to fear? He established and cemented, by means of Mardonius, a republican form of government in all the Grecian cities of Ionia... There is policy in content both in keeping and in causing it.

nature to inculcate, that while our children are in existence it can cease to be amongst them.

SOPHOCLES.

I am only the interpreter of the heroes and divinities who are looking down on me. When I survey them I remember their actions, and when I depart from them I visit the regions they illustrated.

Neither the Goddesses on Ida nor the Gods before Troy were such rivals as our artists. *Æschylus* hath surpassed me\*: I must excell *Æschylus*. O Pericles, thou conjurest up Discontent from the bosom of Delight, and givest her an elevation of mien and character she never knew before: thou makest every man greater than his neighbour, and not in his own eyes but in another's. We still want historians: thy eloquence will form the style, thy administration will supply the materials. Beware, O my friend, lest the people hereafter be too proud of their city, and imagine that to have been born in Athens is enough.

\* Sophocles gained the first prize for which he contended with *Æschylus*, and was conscious that he had not yet deserved the superiority, which enthusiasm on the one side and jealousy on the other are always ready to grant a vigorous young competitor. The character of Sophocles was frank and liberal on all occasions, and was remarkably proved so on the death of his last rival Euripides.

## PERICLES.

And this indeed were hardly more irrational, than the pride which cities take sometimes in the accident of a man's birth within their walls, of a citizen's whose experience was acquired, whose virtues were fostered, and perhaps whose services were performed, elsewhere.

## SOPHOCLES.

They are proud of having been the cradles of great men, then only, when great men can be no longer an incumbrance or a reproach to them. Let them rather boast of those who spend the last day in them than the first: this is always accidental, that is generally by choice; for, from something like instinct, we wish to close our eyes upon the world in the places we love best, the child in its mother's bosom, the patriot in his country. When we are born we are the same as all others: at our decease we may induce our friends, and oblige our enemies to acknowledge that all others are not the same as we. It is folly to say, Death levels the whole human race: for it is only when he hath stripped men of every thing external, that their deformities can be clearly discovered or their worth correctly ascertained. Gratitude is soon silent; a little while longer and Ingratitude is tired, is satisfied, is exhausted, or

sleeps; lastly fly off the fumes of party-spirit, the hottest and most putrid ebullition of self-love. We then see before us, and contemplate calmly; the creator of our customs, the ruler of our passions, the arbiter of our pleasures, and under the Gods, the disposer of our destiny. What then, I pray thee, is there dead? nothing more than that which we can handle, cast down, bury; and surely not he who is yet to progenerate a more numerous and far better race, than during the few years it was permitted us to converse with him.

## PERICLES.

When I reflect on Themistocles, on Aristides, and on the greatest of mortal men, Miltiades, I wonder how their countrymen can repeat their names, unless in performing the office of expiation\*.

\* There are some who may deem this reflection unsuitable to the character of Pericles. I wish it were so: I would gladly have suppressed it. He saw injustice in others, and hated it; yet he caused the banishment of Cimon, as great a man as any of the three: it is true he had afterwards the glory of proposing, and of carrying to Sparta, the decree of his recall. Let us contemplate the brighter side of his character, such as it appeared at the time when I describe it, his eloquence, his wit, his clemency, his judgement and firmness in friendship, his regularity, his decorousness, his domesticity; let us then unite him with his predecessor, and acknowledge that such illustrious rivals never met before or since, in enmity or in friendship.

## SOPHOCLES.

Cities are ignorant that nothing is more disgraceful to them, than to be the birthplaces of the illustriously good, and not afterwards the places of their residence; that their dignity consists in adorning them with distinctions, in entrusting to them the regulation of the commonwealth, and not in having sold a crust or cordial to the nurse or midwife.

## PERICLES.

O Jove and Minerva! grant a right mind to the Athenians! If throughout so many and such eventful ages they have been found by you deserving of their freedom, render them more and more worthy of the great blessing you bestowed on them! May the valour of our children defend this mole for ever; and constantly may their patriotism increase and strengthen among these glorious reminiscences! Shield them from the jealousy of neighbouring states, from the ferocity of barbarian kings, and from the perfidy of those who profess the same religion! Teach them that

Could the piety attributed to Pericles have belonged to a scholar of Anaxagoras? Eloquent men often talk like religious men: and where could the eloquence of Pericles be more enflamed by enthusiasm, than in the midst of his propylæa, at the side of Sophocles and before the Gods of Phidias?



between the despot and the free all compact is a cable of sand, and alliance most unholy! and, O givers of power and wisdom! remove from them the worst and wildest of illusions, that happiness, liberty, virtue, genius, will be fostered or long respected, much less attain their just ascendancy, under any other form of government!

SOPHOCLES.

May the Gods hear thee, Pericles, as they have always done! or may I, reposing in my tomb, never know that they have not heard thee!

I smile on imagining how trivial would thy patriotism and ideas of government appear to Chlorus. And indeed much wiser men, from the prejudices of habit and education, have undervalued them, preferring the dead quiet of their wintry hives to our breezy spring of life and busy summer. The countries of the vine and olive are more subject to hailstorms than the regions of the north: yet is it not better that some of the fruit should fall than that none should ripen?

PERICLES.

Quit these creatures; let them lie warm and slumber; they are all they ought to be, all they can be: but prythee who is Chlorus, that he should deserve to be named by Sophocles?

## SOPHOCLES.

He was born somewhere on the opposite coast of Eubœa, and sold as a slave in Persia to a man who dealt largely in that traffic, and who also had made a fortune by displaying to the public four remarkable proofs of ability: first, by swallowing at a draught an amphora of the strongest wine; secondly, by standing up erect and modulating his voice like a sober man when he was drunk; thirdly, by acting to perfection like a drunken man when he was sober; and fourthly, by a most surprising trick indeed, which, it is reported, he learnt in Babylonia: one would have sworn he had a blazing fire in his mouth; take it out, and it is nothing but a lump of ice. The king, before whom he was admitted to play his tricks, hated him at first, and told him that the last conjuror had made him cautious of such people, he having been detected in filching from a royal tiara one of the weightiest jewels...but talents forced their way. As for Chlorus, I mention him by the name under which I knew him; he has changed it since: for although the dirt wherewith it was encrusted kept him comfortable at first, when it cracked and began to crumble it was incommodious.

The barbarians have commenced, I understand,

to furbish their professions and vocations with rather whimsical skirts and linings: thus for instance a chessplayer is *lion-hearted* and *worshipful*; a drunkard is *serenity* and *highness*; a hunter of fox, badger, polecat, fitchew and weazel, is *excellency* and *right honourable*; while, such is the delicacy of distinction, a rat-catcher is considerably less: he however is *illustrious*, and appears, as a tail to a comet, in the train of a legation, holding a pen between his teeth, to denote his capacity for secretary, and leading a terrier in the right hand, and carrying a trap baited with cheese and anise-seed in the left.

It is as creditable among them to lie with dexterity as it is common among the Spartans to steal. Chlorus, who performed it with singular frankness and composure, had recently a cock's feather mounted on his turban, in place of a hen's, and the people was commanded to address him by the title of *most noble*. His brother Alexaretes was employed at a stipend of four talents to detect an aduress in one among the royal wives: he gave no intelligence in the course of several months: at last the king, seeing him on his return, cried angrily, "*What hast thou been doing? hast thou never found her out?*" He answered, "*Thy ser-*

*vant, O king, hath been doing more than finding out an adultrous: he hath, O king, been making one."*

## PERICLES.

I have heard the story, with this difference, that the bed-embassador being as scantily gifted with spirit and facetiousness as with perspicacity and attention, the reply was framed satirically by some other courtier, who, imitating his impudence, had forgotten his incapacity. But about the reward of falsehood, that is wonderful, when we read that formerly the Persians were occupied many years in the sole study of truth.

## SOPHOCLES.

How difficult then must they have found it! no wonder they left it off the first moment they could conveniently. The grandfather of Chlorus was honest: he carried a pack upon his shoulders, in which pack were contained the coarser linens of Caria: these he retailed among the villages of Asia and Greece, but principally in the islands. He died: on the rumour of war, the son and grandson, then an infant, fled: the rest is told. In Persia no man inquires how another comes to wealth or power, the suddenness of which appears to be effected by some of the demons or genii of their songs and stories.

## PERICLES.

The ideas of such a man on government must be curious: I am persuaded he would far prefer the Persian to any... I forgot to mention that, according to what I hear this morning, the great king has forbidden all ships to sail within thirty parasangs of his coasts, and has also claimed the dominion of half ours.

## SOPHOCLES.

Where is the scourge with which Xerxes lashed the ocean? were it not better laid on the shoulders of a madman than placed within his hand?

## PERICLES.

Immoderate power, like other intemperance, leaves the progeny weaker and weaker, until Nature, as in compassion, covers it with her mantle and it is seen no more, or until the arm of indignant man sweeps it from before him.

We must, ere long, excite the other barbarians to invade the territories of this, and before the cement of his new acquisitions shall have hardened. Large conquests break readily off from an empire, by their weight, while smaller stick fast. A wide and rather waste kingdom should be interposed between the policed states and Persia... by the leave of Chlorus. Perhaps he would rather, in his benevolence, unite us with the great and happy

family of his master: perhaps you or I, my Sophocles, may be invited to repose our legs a little in the same stocks with Dorkas, or even to eat at the same table. Despots are wholesale dealers in equality; and, father Jupiter, was ever equality like this?

SOPHOCLES.

After all, my dear Pericles...do excuse my smile...is not that the best government, which, whatever be the form of it, we ourselves are called upon to administer?

PERICLES.

The Piræus and the Pœcile have a voice of their own, wherewith to answer thee, O Sophocles! and the Athenians, exempt from war, famine, taxes, debts, exiles, fines, imprisonment, delivered from monarchy, from oligarchy, and from anarchy, walking along their porticos, inhaling their sea-breezes, crowning their Gods daily for fresh blessings, and their children for deserving them, reply to this voice by the symphony of their applause...Hark! my words are not idle. Hither come the youths and virgins, the sires and matrons; hither come citizen and soldier...

SOPHOCLES.

A solecism from Pericles! Has the most elo-

quent of men forgotten the Attic language? has he forgotten the language of all Greece? can the father of his country be ignorant that he should have said hither *comes*? for citizen and soldier is one.

PERICLES.

The fault is graver than the reproof, or indeed than simple incorrectness of language: my eyes misled my tongue: a large portion of the citizens is armed.

O what an odour of thyme and bay and myrtle, and from what a distance, bruized by the procession!

SOPHOCLES.

What regular and full harmony! What a splendour and effulgence of white dresses! painful to aged eyes and dangerous to young.

PERICLES.

I can distinguish many voices from among others: some of them have blessed me for defending their innocence before the judges; some for exhorting Greece to unanimity; some for my choice of friends. Ah surely those sing sweetest! those are the voices, O Sophocles! that shake my heart with tenderness, a tenderness passing love, and excite it above the trumpet and the cymbal.

Return we to the Gods: the crowd is waving the branches of olive, calling us by name, and closing to salute us.

## SOPHOCLES.

O citadel of Minerva, more than all other citadels, may the Goddess of wisdom and of war protect thee! and never may strange tongue be heard within thy walls, unless from captive king!

Live, Pericles! and inspire into thy people the soul that once animated these heroes round us.

Hail, men of Athens! pass onward; leave me; I follow. Go; behold the Gods, the Demigods, and Pericles!

The colours of thy waves are not the same  
 Day after day, O Neptune! nor the same  
 The fortunes of the land wherefrom arose  
 Under thy trident the brave friend of man,  
 Wails have been heard from women, sterner breasts  
 Have sounded with the desperate pang of grief,  
 Gray hairs have strewn these rocks: here Egeus cried,

“ O Sun! careering o'er the downs of Sipylius,  
 If desolation (worse than ever there  
 Befell the mother, and those heads her own  
 Would shelter, when the deadly darts flew round)  
 Impend not o'er my house, in gloom so long,  
 Let one swift cloud illumined by thy chariot  
 Sweep off the darkness from that doubtful sail!”



Deeper and deeper came the darkness down ;  
The sail itself was heard ; his eyes grew dim :  
His knees tottered beneath him ... but availed  
To bear him till he plunged into the deep.

Sound, fives ! there is a youthfulness of sound  
In your shrill voices ... sound again, ye lips  
That Mars delights in ... I will look no more  
Into the times behind for idle goads  
To stimulate faint fancies ... hope itself  
Is bounded by the starry zone of glory ;  
On one bright point we gaze, one wish we breathe :

Athens ! be ever, as thou art this hour,  
Happy and strong, a Pericles thy guide.

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The Persian despots contented themselves with debasing the souls of the nations whom they had enslaved ; but do not appear to have been very covetous of their purses. Herodotus calls their taxation of the Ionian states a tranquillizing and pacificatory measure. In this respect the world has grown wiser as it has grown older. Appian states that Pompey imposed on the Syrians and Cilicians a *hundredth* of their income. Hadrian was accused of great severity towards the Jews, for having somewhat augmented the rate which Vespasian had fixed, and which, according to Zonaras and Xiphilinus, was two drachmas on each (about eighteen pence). Strabo remarks that Egypt brought a revenue of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds to the father of Cleopatra, which sum Augustus doubled. Paterculus says, that Gaul paid more than Egypt. According to Suetonius and Eutropius, Cesar imposed on Gaul a tax of twentyfour thousand pounds, which

Lipsius thinks an error, and quadruples the amount. He estimates the revenue drawn by Rome from Asia, Spain, Greece, Illyria, and the other provinces, at six millions sterling. He inclines to exaggeration. Plutarch, in the life of Pompey, informs us that he levied from Asia one hundred and ninetytwo thousand pounds. Marcus Antonius exacted from the same country, at one time, the tribute of ten years, about three million six hundred thousand pounds, reproaching the nations that they had paid as much to Brutus and Cassius in two. When Augustus was declared commander in chief against him, the senate, according to Xiphilinus, ordered that all citizens and others should pay a *property-tax of a twentieth*, and that all senators should besides pay four oboli (sixpence) for each chimney. Dion Cassius goes farther; and adds that they also paid two oboli for every *tile* of their houses both in town and country. Antonius and Augustus were the first that imposed a tax on slaves: it amounted to less than ten shillings for each. When they imposed one upon wills, it caused an insurrection... We are better subjects than they were, although they enjoyed under an *holy alliance* the benefits of regular government, and had been accustomed to the salutary discipline of proscription.

# CONVERSATION VII.

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LOUIS XIV

AND

FATHER LA CHAISE.

## LOUIS XIV

AND

## FATHER LA CHAISE.

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LOUIS.

FATHER, there is one thing which I never have confessed; sometimes considering it almost as a light matter, and sometimes seeing it in its true colours. In my wars against the Dutch I committed an action...

LA CHAISE.

Sire, the ears of the Lord are always open to those who confess their sins to their confessor. Cruelties and many other bad deeds are perpetrated in war, at which we should shudder in our houses at Paris.

LOUIS.

The people who were then in their houses did shudder, poor devils! It was ludicrous to see how such clumsy figures skipped, when the bombs fell

amongst their villages, in which the lower part of the habitations was under water, and children looked from the upper windows, between the legs of calves and lambs, and of the old household dog, struggling to free himself, as less ignorant of his danger. Loud shrieks were sometimes heard, when the artillery and other implements of war were silent; for fevers raged within their insulated walls, and wives execrated their husbands, with whom they had lived in concord and tenderness many years, when the father enforced the necessity of throwing their dead infant into the lake below. Our young soldiers on such occasions exercised their dexterity, and took their choice; for the whole family was assembled at the casement, and prayers were read over the defunct, accompanied with some firm and with some faltering responses.

By these terrible examples God punished their heresy.

LA CHAISE.

The Lord of Hosts is merciful: he protected your Majesty in the midst of these terrors.

LOUIS.

He sustained my strength, kept up my spirits, and afforded me every day some fresh amusement, in the midst of this rebellious and blasphemous people, who regularly, a quarter before twelve

o'clock, knowing that mass was then performed amongst us, sang their psalms.

LA CHAISE.

I cannot blame a certain degree of severity on such occasions: on much slighter, we read in the Old Testament, nations were smitten with the edge of the sword.

LOUIS.

I have wanted to find that place, but my Testament was not an old one; it was printed at the Louvre in my own time. As for the edge of the sword, it was not always convenient to use that; they are stout fellows: but our numbers enabled us to starve them out, and we had more engineers, and better. Besides which, I took peculiar vengeance on some of the principal families, and on some amongst the most learned of their professors: for if any had a dissolute son, who, as dissolute sons usually are, was the darling of the house, I bribed him, made him drunk, and converted him. This occasionally broke the father's heart: God's punishment of stubbornness!

LA CHAISE.

Without the especial grace of the Holy Spirit, such conversions are transitory. It is requisite to secure the soul while we have it, by the exertion of a little loving-kindness. I would deliver the

poor stray creatures up to their Maker straitway, lest he should call me to account for their backsliding. Heresy is a leprosy, which the whiter it is the worse it is. Those who appear the most innocent and godly, are the very men who do the most mischief, and hold the fewest observances. They hardly treat God Almighty like a gentleman, grudge him a clean napkin at his own table, and spend less upon him than upon a christmas dinner.

LOUIS.

O father La Chaise! you have searched my heart; you have brought to light my hidden offences. Nothing is concealed from your penetration. I come forth like a criminal in his chains.

LA CHAISE.

Confess, sire, confess! I will pour the oil into your wounded spirit, taking due care that the vengeance of heaven be satisfied by your atonement.

LOUIS.

Intelligence was brought to me that the cook of the English general had prepared a superb dinner, in consequence of what that insolent and vainglorious people are in the habit of calling a success. *We shall soon see*, exclaimed I, *who is successful: God protects France*. The whole army shouted, and, I verily believe, at that moment would

have conquered the world. I deferred it: my designs lie in my own breast. Father, I never heard such a shout in my life: it reminded me of Cherubim and Seraphim and Arcangels. The infantry cried with joy, the horses capered and neighed, and broke wind right and left, from an excess of animation. Leopard-skins, bear-skins, Genoa velvet, Mechlin ruffles, Brussels cravats, feathers and fringes and golden bands, up in the air at once; pawings and snortings, threats and adjurations, beginnings and ends of songs. I was Henry and Cesar, and Alexander and David, and Charlemagne and Agamemnon... I had only to give the word; they would swim across the Channel, and bring the tyrant of proud Albion back in chains. All my prudence was requisite to repress their ardour.

A letter had been intercepted by my scouts, addressed by the wife of the English general to her husband. She was at Gorcum; she informed him that she would send him a glorious *mincepie*, for his dinner the following day, in celebration of his victory. "Devil incarnate," said I on reading the despatch, "I will disappoint thy malice." I was so enraged, that I went within a mile or two of cannon-shot; and I should have gone within



half a mile if my dignity had permitted me, or if my resentment had lasted. I liberated the messenger, detaining as hostage his son, who accompanied him, and promising that if the *mincepie* was secured, I would make him a chevalier on the spot. Providence favoured our arms. But unfortunately there were among my staff-officers some who had fought under Turenne, and who, I suspect, retained the infection of heresy. They presented the *mincepie* to me on their knees, and I ate. It was Friday. I did not remember the day, when I began to eat; but the sharpness of the weather, the odour of the pie, and something of vengeance springing up again at the sight of it, made me continue after I had recollected: and for my greater condemnation, I had enquired that very morning of what materials it was composed. God set his face against me, and hid from me the light of his countenance. I lost victory after victory, nobody knows how; for my generals were better than the enemy's, my soldiers more numerous, more brave, more disciplined. And, extraordinary and awful! even those who swore to conquer or die, ran back again like whelps just gelt, crying, *It is the first duty of a soldier to see his king in safety.* I never heard so many fine

sentiments, or fewer songs. My stomach was out of order by the visitation of the Lord. I took the sacrament on the Sunday.

LA CHAISE.

The sacrament on a Friday's *gras*! I should have recommended an enema first, with a *de profundis*, a *miserere*, and an *eructavit cor meum*, and lastly a little oil of ricina, which administered by the holy and taken by the faithful is almost as efficacious in its way as that of Rheims. Penance is to be done: your Majesty must fast: your Majesty must wear sackcloth next your skin, and carry ashes upon your head before the people.

LOUIS.

Father, I cannot consent to this humiliation: the people must fear me. What are you doing with those scissars and that pill? I am sound in body; give it Villeroy or Richelieu.

LA CHAISE.

Sire, no impiety, no levity, I pray. In this pill, as your Majesty calls it, are some flakes of ashes from the incense, which seldom is pure gum: break it between your fingers, and scatter it upon your peruke: well done: now take this.

LOUIS.

Faith! I have no sore on groin or limb. A black plaister! what is that for?

LA CHAISE.

This is sackcloth. It was the sack in which Madame de Maintenon put her knitting, until the pins frayed it.

LOUIS.

I should have believed that sackcloth means...

LA CHAISE.

No interpretations of scripture, I charge you from authority, Sire. Put it on your back or bosom.

LOUIS.

God forgive me, sinner! It has dropped down into my breeches: will that do?

LA CHAISE.

Did it, in descending, touch your back, belly, ribs, breast, or shoulder, or any part that needs mortification, and can be mortified without scandal?

LOUIS.

I placed it between my frills.

LA CHAISE.

In such manner as to touch the skin sensibly?

LOUIS.

It tickled me, by stirring a hair or two.

LA CHAISE.

Be comforted then; for people have been tickled to death.

LOUIS.

But, father, you remitt the standing in presence of the people?

LA CHAISE.

Indeed I do not. Stand at the window, son of St. Louis!

LOUIS.

And perform the same ceremonies? no, upon my conscience! My almoner.

LA CHAISE.

They are performed.

LOUIS.

But the people will never know what is on my head or in my breeches.

LA CHAISE.

The penance is performed so far: tomorrow is Friday: one more rigid must be enforced. Six dishes alone shall come upon the table; and, although fasting does not extend to wines or liqueurs, I order that three kinds only of wine be presented, and three of liqueur.

LOUIS.

In the six dishes is soup included?

LA CHAISE.

Soup is not served in a dish; but I forbid more than three kinds of soup.

LOUIS.

Oysters of Concale...

LA CHAISE.

Those come in barrels: take care they be not dished. Your Majesty must either eat them raw

from the barrel, or dressed in scallop, or both; but beware, I say again, of dish in this article, as your soul shall answer for it at the last day. There are those who would prohibit them wholly. I have experienced...I mean in others...strange uncouth effects therefrom, which, unless they shadow forth something mystical, it were better not to provoke.

LOUIS.

Pray, father, why is that frightful day which you have mentioned just now, and which I think I have heard mentioned before, called the last? when the last in this life is over before it comes, and when the first in the next is not begun.

LA CHAISE.

It is called the last day by the Church, because after that day the Church can do nothing for the sinner. Her saints, martyrs, and confessors, can plead at the bar for him the whole of that day until sunset, some say until after *angelus*; then the books are closed, the candles put out, the doors shut, and the key turned: the flames of Purgatory then sink into the floor, and would not wither a cistus-leaf, full-blown and shed: there is nothing left but heaven and hell, songs and lamentations.

LOUIS.

Permitt me to ask another question of no less importance, and connected with my penance. The

bishop of Aix in Provence has sent me thirty fine quails...

LA CHAISE.

There are naturalists who assert that quails have fallen from heaven, like manna. Externally they bear the appearance of birds, and I have eaten them in that persuasion. If however any one, from grave authority, is convinced of the contrary, or propends to believe so, and eats thereof, the fault is venial. I conferred with Tamburini on this momentous point. He distinguishes between quails taken in the field, or quails taken in the air as they descend or pass, and tame quails, bred within coops and enclosures, which are begotten in the ordinary way of generation, and whose substance in that case must be different. I cannot believe that the bishop of Aix would be the conservator of creatures so given to fighting and wantonness; but rather would opine that his quails descended somewhere in his diocese, and perhaps as a mark of divine favour to so worthy a member of the Church. It is safer to eat them after twelve o'clock at night; but where there is purity and humility of spirit, I see not that they are greatly to be dreaded.

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The fiction of the quails, at the conclusion of this dialogue, will appear extravagant to those only who are in ignorance that such opinions have prevailed, not among casuists alone but among philosophers. A case more immediately in point is this. The Carthusians, to whom animal food is forbidden, whereby they mean solely the flesh of quadrupeds and of birds, may nevertheless eat the *gull*: it may be eaten by all catholics, even in Lent. I know not whether from this permission, and the acceptance of it, we derive our English verb and noun: I think it probable.

We often lay most stress on our slightest faults, and have more apprehension from things unessential than from things essential...When Lord Tydney was on his deathbed, and had not been shaved for two days, he burst suddenly into tears, and cried to his valet, "Are not you ashamed to abandon me? would you let me go *this figure* into the presence of my Maker?"

He was shaved, and (I hope) presented.

\* \* \* \*

Louis XIV is the great exemplar of kingship, the object of almost religious worship to countless declaimers against the ferocity of *the people*. The invasion of Holland, the conflagration of the Palatinate, the revocation of the edict of Nantes, have severally been celebrated, by French poets, French historians, French jurists, and French bishops. The most unprovoked act of cruelty on record was perpetrated by another king of France. I transcribe the words of an historian, the defender and panegyrist of them all, Bussieres. Victi Bulgari, et ex sociis in servitutem rapti, mox eorum plures relicta patriâ exulatum ultro abierunt. Ex iis ad *novem millia, uxoribus liberisque impliciti*, a Dagoberto sedes petunt...Jussi per hyemem hærere in Baviâ dum amplius rex deliberaret, in plures urbes domosque sparsi sunt; tum novo barbaroque facinore unâ nocte cæsi omnes simul. *Quippe Dagobertus immani consilio Boiarios jubet, singulos suis hospitibus necem inferre, ratione nullâ ætatis aut sexûs; et quâ truculentia imperatum, obtemperatum eadem. Conductâ nocte miseri ho-*

mines in asylo somni obtruncantur, imbelles feminæ, insontes pueri; totque funera hilaritati fuerunt, non luctui... This forms a peculiar feature in the national character, indestructible amidst all forms of government. It is amusing to read our jesuit's words in the sequel. Ad beneficiorum fontem se convertit, multa que dona elargitus templis, *emendabat scelerata liberalitate*... to priests and monks... Nec Dagoberto *liberalitas* pia frustra fuit: siquidem sancti quos in vivis multum coluerat, Dionysius, Mauritius, et Martinus, oblatis sunt Joanni monacho *vigilanti*, regis animam eripientes e potestate dæmonum sævisque tormentis, eamque secum in cæli regiam deducentes.



**CONVERSATION VIII.**

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**CAVALIERE PUNTOMICHINO**

**AND**

**MR. DENIS EUSEBIUS TALCRANAGH.**

## CAVALIERE PUNTOMICHIÑO

AND

MR. DENIS EUSEBIUS TALCRANAGH.

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THE Cavaliere Puntomichino was the last male representative of an ancient family. He was an honest and rich man: so that, when his intention was understood at Florence of traveling to England, it excited suspicion in some, and surprise in all; for Italians of that description were never known amongst them to have crossed the Channel. He went however, and remained there several years, reading our best authors, and wondering, as he informed me, at one thing only, which is, that there could really be in the whole human race so prodigious a diversity, as he found in almost every five individuals whom he conversed with in our metropolis.

“I have often observed,” said he, “more variety

in a single household, than I believe to exist in all Italy.”

He never had about him the slightest taint of affectation, yet became he singular, and glaringly so, at his first introduction to the academy of La Crusca: for he asserted three paradoxes: first, that no sentence in a comedy should exceed a fair page in octavo; secondly, that no witticism should be followed by an explanation, in the dialogue, of more than two pages; and thirdly, that Shakespear had nearly or quite as much humour as Goldoni. Henceforward he was a worthy man, but an oddity. His claim to the literary character I shall forbear to discuss; although I have many papers, not indeed of his own writing, but addressed to him by others, some of which go so far as to call him a nightingale, some a great doctor, some an eagle, some a phenix, some a sun, and one both a sun and a phenix. But this last was written by a rival of him who wrote the preceding, and therefor its accuracy may be suspected, and it was declared by the academy to be more ingenious than correct.

His sedentary life had been unfriendly to his health, and he was seized in the beginning of this winter with repeated and severe attacks in the breast. As he had inherited a good property,

and had collected many rare books, nearly all the canons and professors began to write *tributes, monodies, elegies, musæ plangentis, Etruriæ luctus*, and consolations to his heir, a very distant relative, whose brother, in the time of the French government, had been hanged for robbery at the age of eighteen, proving, as others have done in various ways, that misfortune is attendant on early elevation. He himself was in the galleys at Pisa for the murder of his father-in-law, who had educated him and had promised to leave him his estate. On the death of the cavaliere, it was foreseen that he, too late indeed for his happiness and sensibility, would be found innocent of an offence, for which the French laws in their precipitancy had condemned him. The proofs of this innocence were produced, the patron found, the sum stipulated, when the cavaliere, whose decease had been expected daily, died. On opening his will, it appeared that he had destined all his property to the maintenance of soldiers' widows and the redemption of slaves from Barbary. *Devils!* and *cazzo* and *cap-pari!* and *Bacco!* tripped up and exploded the muses and Etruria. The Pisan professor, their choregus, who, printer no less than professor and poet, had already struck off his *Lamentation*, spoke more calmly and reasonably than the rest, saying

manfully, *Gabriel, take down those sheets in papal quarto, and throw them upon the Codes of Napoleon...the thing wont do.* The expected and expecting heir was accused of falsifying the evidences, and fresh severities were added, for his attempts to corrupt justice.

Let me now revert to my first acquaintance with the cavaliere. I never in my life accepted a letter of introduction, nor ever expressed a wish, whatever I might have felt, for any man's society. By some accident this peculiarity was mentioned to Puntomichino, and he called on me immediately. Returning his visit, I found him in the library: several English books were upon the table, and there was seated at the window a young gentleman of easy manners and fashionable appearance, Mr. Denis Eusebius Talcranagh, of Castle-Talcranagh and of Skurrymore-Park, county Down, and first cousin, as he informed me, of Lord Cowslipmead, of Dove's-nest-Hall, county Meath, a great fire-eater. I bowed: on which he fancied that I had known his lordship intimately. On my confessing the contrary, he appeared at first rather mortified and surprised. *You must however have heard something, in your earlier days, of Sir Roderic James O'Rowran, my great uncle, who whenever he entered an inn with his friends,*

*placed himself at the head of the table, and cried, "whiskey and pistols for eight!"* It was now my turn to be mortified, and I could only reply that there were many men of merit whom it had never been my fortune to know. *Then, sir,* said he, *ten guineas to one you never were in Ireland in your life; for you must have known him if you had met him, whether you would or not.* There was an infinity of good-humour in Mr. Talcranagh; and if his ideas were not always luminous and perspicuous, they often came forth with a somewhat of prismatic brilliancy. He gave a decided preference to the writers of his own country over all others, *which, he said, we authors are not apt to do.* I then discovered that I had been conversing with a literary man, who had published an imperial folio of eleven pages on the Irish wolf-dog. *I sold all my copies,* said he, *and bought a tilbury and a leash of setters.* *And now, sir, if ever you should print any thing, take my advice; cuts in wood or cuts in stone, and a black-letter title-page for your life! I did it, without a knowledge of printer or publisher... to be sure, I was master of my subject, which goes a great way; and then indeed I had a pair of extraordinary capital buckskins, which, it is true, began to*

carry on the surface, as Southey says of Flemish scenery,

“a grey and willowy hue,”

but which I found a fellow in Cockspur-street who could clean neatly, and these I sent with my best compliments to the prime hand in the ——— Review, taking care to leave by accident a brand-new guinea in the watch-pocket. This was enough; I went no farther in expenditure, although ——— was constantly at the heels of my groom Honorius, pressing him to write a critique on the *Wolfdog of Erin* for the ——— ——— since I from ignorance of custom was too proud to do it, and assuring him that, look as he might and shake his head as he would, he was no Jew and would do the thing reasonably. Sir, added he smartly, are you a friend to dogs?

“A thousand thanks to you, Mr. Talcranagh,” cried I, “for asking me a question which I can answer in the affirmative. There is a sort of freemasonry amongst us, I verily believe; for no dog, except a cur, a pug, or a turnspit, ever barks at me: they and children love me universally: I have more than *divisum imperium*: these form the best part of the world.”

*Add the women*, shouted he aloud, *and here is my hand for you.* We saluted cordially.

“Indeed,” said I, “Mr. Talcranagh, you have reason to be proud of your countrywomen, for their liveliness, their beauty, and their genius. The book before us, which you were looking into, abounds in eloquence, philosophy, and patriotism; there is nothing of commonplace, nothing of sickly sentiment, nothing of insane enthusiasm. I read warily; and whenever I find the writings of a lady, the first thing I do, is to cast my eyes along her pages, to see whether I am likely to be annoyed by the traps and spring-guns of interjections, and if I happen to espy them, I do not leap the paling. In these volumes I see much to admire, and nothing that goads or worries me into admiration.”

“Gentlemen,” said the cavaliere, “I am as warm an admirer of Lady Morgan as either of you, and if she had consulted me on a few matters and persons, I could have rendered her some service by setting her right. Travelers are profuse of praise and censure, in proportion as they have been civilly or indecorously received, not inquiring nor caring whether the account be quite correct, if the personages of whom they write be of distinguished station; for censure no less than praise requires a



subject of notoriety. Lady Morgan has spoken of our patriots, the Russels of our city.

There may formerly have been a virtuous or a brave citizen in the family so extolled by her; and indeed in what family has there not been, earlier or later? but if those who now compose it are called Russels, with equal right may the cast horses of a sandcart be called Bucephali. Strangers are disposed to consider us as the vilest and most contemptible race in Europe, and they must appear to have reason on their side, if such creatures are taken for the best of us. Patriotism has here a very different meaning from what it has in England. A patriot, with us, is a man who is unfriendly to all established government, and who, while he flatters a native prince, courts over an invader. His only grievances are, to pay taxes for the support, and to carry arms for the defence, of his country. He would loosen all the laws, as impediments to the liberty of action, with a reserve of those which secure to him the fruits of rapine and confiscation: those are provident and conservative, and enthroned in light by the philanthropy of the age. Hospitality is the virtue of barbarians . . .”

“Blood and *hounds!*” cried indignantly my young friend, “I would ask him, whoever he is,

whether that was meant for me. If there is barbarism in a bottle of claret, there is as much of it in a corked as in an uncorked one."

"Sir," replied mildly Puntomichino, "I could shew you a Russel of the Italian school, who received unusual civilities in England, and of all those gentlemen there who treated him with attention and kindness, of all those with whom he dined constantly, not a single one, or any relative, was ever invited in his houses, even to a glass of stale barleywater or sugarless lemonade."

"Cavaliere," said I, "we more willingly give invitations than accept them: I speak of others, not of myself, for I have never been tempted to dine from home these last ten years; yet, although I am neither rich nor convivial, and hardly social, I have given at least a hundred in the time, if not superb, at least not sordid; and those who knew me long ago, say, Landor is become a miser... his father did otherwise."

"Cappari!" exclaimed Puntomichino; "this whole family, with thirty thousand crowns of income, has not done a ninetieth part of it within the memory of man."

"Faith! then," interrupted Talcranagh, "it must have come into the Russels by a forced adop-

tion. The Russels of England are of opinion, right or wrong, that the first thing are good principles, and the next...good cheer. I wish, sir," said he, looking mildly and somewhat mournfully at me, "I had not heard you say what you did: I began to think well of you, I know not why...and I doubt not still, God forbid I should, that you are a worthy and conscientious man; but I would fain have thought well of you. As for that other, I thank him for teaching me, what I never should have learned at home, that a fellow may be a good patriot with a very contracted heart, and as much ingratitude as he can carry to market. Why! you might trust a Correggio across his kitchen-chimney on christmas-day: aye, Signor Puntomichino?"

"Gentlemen," said our host, "under the least vindictive of princes we may talk as loudly as we please of liberty, which we could not do without fear and trembling when we were in the full enjoyment of it. What are you pondering so gravely, Mr. Talcranagh?"

"Woe!" replied he, "woe to the first family that ever dines yonder! Let them each take a bottle of thieves-vinegar, against the explosion of mould from the grand evolution of the tablecloth.

But about your ministers, there are some things not entirely to my mind, neither: your prince, I dare to say, knows nothing about them."

"Our ministers are liberal, my young friend. They have indeed betrayed in succession all the sovrans who have employed them, yet they let every man do his best or his worst; and if you are robbed or insulted, you may insult or robb again: all parties enjoy the same plenitude of power."

"Plenitude! by my soul, Sir Cavaliere, and a trifle, I think, to spare. One of them a few days ago did what a king of Great Britain and Ireland would not dare to do, and which, if the first potentate on earth had done in London, he would have been kicked down the stairs for his impudence. The exhibition of pictures at your Academy was announced as opening to the public at ten. His Excellency entered alone, and remained in the principal apartment until two, the doors of which were locked to others. If it had been possible for him to have acted so amongst us, he would have been tossed in a blanket till the stars blinked upon him; the people would have perfumed his frill and ruffles abundantly with home-made essences, would have added new decorations to his waist-

coatful of *orders*, and would have treated his eagles with more eggs than they could swallow.

“ Believe me, sirs, our government, which would be a detestable one for the English, is an excellent one for us. Every day in London brings with it what to a stranger looks like a rebellion, or at best a riot: no mischief is done thereby: your strength, which causes this irregularity, sustains you: but weak bodies bear little fermentation.”

“ Wisely thought and well expressed. I am convinced that if we had not a riot now and then in Ireland, we should be as mopish and sullen as the English, or as insincere and ferocious as the French. And I have observed, Signor Cavaliere, that, strange as it may appear, whenever there has been much of a riot there has been sunshine. Smile as you will, Mr. Landor, I swear to the fact.”

“ Your assertion, Mr. Talcranagh, is quite sufficient: but is it impossible that the fine weather may have brought together a great concourse of people to the fair or festival, and that whiskey or beauty or politics or religion may have incited them to the exertion of their prowess?”

“ There are causes that we know, and there are causes that we know not. Inquiry and reflection

are sensible things, but there is nothing like experience, nothing like seeing with one's own eyes. We must live upon the spot to judge perfectly and to collect all the evidences. Philosophy ought to lead us, but only to a certain point; there we leave her, and joy go with her. I have seen impudent rogues in Dublin, and have fancied that the world could not match them: now what think you of a set of fellows, with coats without a collar, who take us by the hand, and say with the gravest face upon earth, 'The elements shall be elements no longer,' and strip them one after another of their title-deeds, as easily as Lord \_\_\_\_\_ stripped the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. It is enough to make one grave to think on this abuse of intellect. The acutest men may be much mistaken even after long experience. I assure you, I have found grossly inaccurate the first piece of information given me by a very cautious, old traveler. He mentions the honesty of the Savoyards and the thievery of the Italians: now here have I been a fortnight, safe and sound, and have not lost a hair. I had not been twentyfour hours in Savoy when they had the meanness to steal my hatband. In future I shall be persuaded how illusory are sketches of national character. As for systems...come, Signor Cavaliere, you have

weighed them well; I have not patience to talk about them: conclusions are drawn even from skin and bones; eyes, noses, teeth; they will soon come (saving your presence) to..."

"I know not what they will come to," was the spirited and timely reply of the cavaliere, "but I can mention as wonderful a fact as the sunshine elicited by shilelahs. My father was a physiognomist, and when Lavater first published his work, 'Now,' cried he, rubbing the palms of his hands together, 'men begin to write again as they should do.' He insisted that a man's countenance, in all its changes, indicated his virtues or vices, his capacities or defects. The teeth, among other parts, were infallible indexes: they were in the human visage what consonants are in the alphabet, the great guides, the plain simple narrators. Amidst his apophthegms was, *never trust a man with a twisted tooth*. In fact, of all I had ever seen, and of all I have ever seen since, under that description, not an individual has proved worthy of trust. I once inquired of my father, with submission, whether age or accident might not alter the indications. *By no means*, exclaimed he emphatically; *if the indications are changed, the character is changed: God, before he removed the mark, removed the taint*. He remarked that,

where the teeth turned inward, there was wariness, selfishness, avarice, inhumanity; where they turned outward, there was lasciviousness, gaming, gluttony. I then doubted these indications, and imagined that a part of the latter was taken up against a priest, not indeed in high reputation for sobriety or continence, who had offended my father in a tender quarter. My father had erected a stile for the convenience of his peasants; but the inscription was so prolix\*, that he was forced to engrave the conclusion of it upon the church-

\* Lest an inscription on a stile should surpass the faith of my reader, I will transcribe one literally, *on a prince changing horses at a villa*, to the intent, as it says expressly, that *all men and nations and ages* should know it.

Honori Ferdinandi III. Aust:  
 qui ad veterem Etruriæ dominationem redux  
 in hoc Capponianæ gentis prætorio  
 xv. Kal. Octob. MDCCLXIV.  
 tantisper substitit,  
 dum rhedæ itinerariæ regalis substitueretur,  
 qua urbem principem inter communes plausus  
 et gaudii lacrimas introiret;  
 herisque ob faustitatem eventûs  
 dignitatemque sibi loquæ ab hospite magno impertitam  
 lætitiâ elatis  
 pristinam benevolentiam comitate alloqui  
 gratique animi significatione declaravit;  
 Marchio Petrus Robertus Capponius  
 ad memoriam facti postgenitis omnibus tradendam.



porch. The Latin, as the priest acknowledged, was very classical, but he requested that it might be removed to our dovecote, which was farther off, and not by the side of any road. The exoteric teeth of the reverend gentleman had by some unknown accident received a blow, which adjusted them between the two extremes; and my father was asked in joke whether he had a better opinion of his spiritual guide since his improvement in dentition. 'Indeed I have,' he answered gravely; 'for so sudden and so great a change, whether brought about by the organic mutations of the frame, or by an irresistible stress, with which certain sentiments or sensations may bear upon it, must be accompanied by new powers, greater or smaller, and by new qualities and propensities. Some internal struggle may, in length of time, have produced an effect not only on the fibres but also through them on the harder part of the extremities.' The favorable opinion of my father was carried to the priest; who lamented, he said, no dispensation of Providence, by which he conciliated the better sentiments of so enlightened and charitable a man. He was soon a daily visitant at the house; he entered into the studies of his Excellency, read his observations, praised them highly, and by degrees had the courage to submit to so experienced a

master a few remarks of his own. He pursued them farther: and I should blush to relate, if all Florence did not know it, that my stepmother, a young lady of twentyfour, aided him too deeply in his investigations, and confirmed my father, although not exactly by working the problem as he would have recommended, that an internal struggle may produce an effect, not only on the fibres, but also, through them, on the harder part of the extremities. Then too became it public, that another husband had been the holy man's dentist, in consequence of too close an application to similar studies in his house."

"Why! how! what! do you talk in this tone and manner! did not you nor your father flea the devil alive? did not you spigot him nor singe him?"

"I was at school: my father took his wife to Sienna; proof enough that he resented the injury. In our country, as you know, every lady of quality has her cavaliere servente, and you cannot pay a higher compliment to a man of rank than by calling him, in polite language, a son of a whore, which, if I remember, is somewhat like an affront in England, and not even the commonest person would thank you for it. Here however it serves to distinguish the superior order from the lower,

who aspire to nothing better than the liberty to stick their kneebuckles on their coats with a tag of scarlet. My father, as you may suppose, was indignant, that a priest out of the gates, neither a canonico nor a maestro di casa, should beget his children, and aspire, as he would have done by degrees, (for impudence is never retrogressive) to conduct his lady to her carriage. I have many books in which is the text written with his own hand, 'Never trust a man with a twisted tooth;' but I have searched in vain for any such sentence as 'Trust a man with an untwisted one.' His enthusiasm seems to have cooled, from the time that he found a scholar so capable of his place."

I have reported this Conversation in a manner differing from the rest. If illustrious characters have been invited to my entertainment,

*Locus est et pluribus umbris.*

The meaner of us have spoken but seldom, and indeed I have suppressed the greater part of my own remarks, and several of Mr. Talcranagh's. A conversation with a young Irishman of good natural abilities, and among no race of men are those abilities more general, is like a forest-walk; in which, while you are delighted with the healthy fresh air and the green unbroken turf, you must stop at

every twentieth step to extricate yourself from a briar. You acknowledge that you have been amused, but that you rest willingly, and that you would rather not take the same walk on the morrow.

**CONVERSATION IX.**

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**SAMUEL JOHNSON**

**AND**

**HORNE TOOKE.**

SAMUEL JOHNSON

AND

HORNE TOOKE.

---

TOOKE.

PERMITT me to congratulate you, Dr. Johnson, on the completion of your great undertaking: my bookseller sent me your Dictionary the day it issued from the press, and it has exercised ever since a considerable part of my time and attention.

JOHNSON.

Who are you, sir?

TOOKE.

My name is Horne Tooke.

JOHNSON.

What is my Dictionary, sir, to you?

TOOKE.

A treasure, I doubt not.

JOHNSON.

Keep it then at home and to yourself, sir, as you would any other treasure, and talk no more about it than you would about that.

TOOKE.

Doctor, my studies have led me some little way into etymology, and I am interested in whatever contributes to the right knowledge of our language.

JOHNSON.

Sir, have you redd our old authors?

TOOKE.

I have redd all of them that are printed and extant.

JOHNSON.

Prodigious! do you speak truth?

TOOKE.

To the best of my belief.

JOHNSON.

Sir, how could you, a firebrand tossed about by the rabble, a restless spirit, a demogorgon, find leisure for so much reading?

TOOKE.

The number of English books printed before the accession of James the first is smaller than you appear to imagine, and the manuscripts, I believe, are not numerous; certainly in the libraries

of our Universities they are rather scanty. I wish you had traced in your preface the changes made in the language these last three centuries, for which about three pages would have been sufficient. Our spelling hath undergone as many changes as the French, and worse.

JOHNSON.

The old writers had strange and arbitrary ways of spelling, which makes them appear more barbarous than they really are.

TOOKE.

You have now brought me to a question, which, if you will favour me a few moments, we will discuss. I perceive that you prefer the spelling of our gentlemen and ladies now flourishing, to that of Middleton and Milton.

JOHNSON.

Middleton is not so correct a writer as you fancy. He was an infidel, sir, and, what is worse, a scoffer.

TOOKE.

You will acknowledge that we have nothing so classical in our language as his *Life of Cicero*, nothing at once so harmonious and so unaffected.

JOHNSON.

Do you assert that Izaak Walton, who also wrote biography, is not equally unaffected?



## TOOKE.

Unaffected he is, and equally so, but surely less harmonious. Allow me to join with you in admiration of this most natural writer and most virtuous man, whose volumes I read with greater pleasure than any excepting Shakespear's. There is indeed, as you appear to indicate, no similitude between them; no more, I confess it, than there is between a cowslip and the sun that shines upon it; but there is a perpetually pleasant light, if I may use the expression, reflected from every thought and sentence, and no man ever redd him without being for a time both happier and better. I, like yourself, have detected a few inaccuracies in Middleton; not in his reasonings and conclusions, for in these he is clear and strong, but in expressions of small importance. He says in his *Letter from Rome*, "The temple of some heathen deity or that of the Paphian Venus," p. 134. as if the Paphian Venus was not a heathen deity. "Popery, which abounds with instances of the grossest forgeries both of saints and reliques, which have been imposed for genuine, &c." p. 171. To have been *forgeries*, they must have been *imposed for genuine*: here is also a confusion in the repetition of *which*, relating to two subjects; as again "The prejudices *which* the authority of so

celebrated a writer may probably *inject* to the disadvantage of my argument, *which, &c.*" p. 224.

JOHNSON.

If Warburton had been elegant in language as he was acute in argument, he would have exposed to ridicule such an expression as *inject a prejudice*.

TOOKE.

His acuteness seems usually to have forsaken him the moment he lost his malignity. Nothing is weaker than his argument on this question, nothing more inelegant than his phraseology. Our pugnacious bishop, although he defended the divine legation of Moses, would have driven the chariot of Pharaoh against him into the Red-sea. You remember the verses, I know not by whom.

If Warburton by chance should meet  
The twelve apostles in the street,  
He'd pick a quarrel with 'em all,  
And shove his Saviour from the wall.

He says, in allusion to Middleton, "How many able writers have employed *their* time and learning to prove christian Rome to have borrowed *their* superstitions from the pagan city?" He means her superstitions, and not the superstitions of the *able writers*, which the words, as they stand, designate. He surely could not dissent from Mid-

dleton, with whom nearly all the papists agree, drawing however far different inferences.

JOHNSON.

On this ground I go with Middleton; he states an historical fact: he states a thing visible: but while he pretends to approach Religion for the sake of looking at her dress, he stabs her. Come, sir! come, sir! philology rather than this!

TOOKE.

A little more then of philology: but first let me suggest to you that no stab, my good doctor, can inflict a dangerous wound on Truth. Homer had probably the design of impressing some such sentiment, when he said that celestial bodies soon unite again. If you have ever had the curiosity to attend a course of lectures on chemistry, or have resided in the house of any friend who cultivates it, you may perhaps have observed how a single drop of colourless liquid, poured on another equally colourless, raises a sudden cloud and precipitates it to the bottom. So unsuspected falsehood, taken up as pure and limpid, is thrown into a turbid state by a drop; and it does not follow that the drop must be of poison. Middleton is once or twice vulgar: he writes "*for good and all,*" p. 286. This is somewhat in the manner of your friend Edmund Burke, who uses the word

*anotherguess*; in which expression are both vulgarity and ignorance; the real term is *another-guise*; there is nothing of *guessing*.

JOHNSON.

Edmund Burke, sir, is so violent a reformer that I am confident he will die a tory. I am surprised that any thing he does or says should encounter your disapprobation. He, sir, and Junius should have been your favorites, if indeed they are not one and the same: for Edmund writes better when he writes for another, and any character suits him rather than his own. Shenstone, when he forgot his Strephons and Corydons, and followed Spenser, became a poet. Your old antagonist Junius (what makes you smile, sir?) wears an elegant sword-knot, and swaggers bravely. What think you?

TOOKE.

Of Junius I would rather say little, for more reasons than one. His words are always elegant, his sentences always sonorous, his attacks always vigorous, and rarely (although I may be a sufferer by asserting it) misplaced. Still however those only can be called great writers, who bring to bear on their subject more than a few high faculties of the mind. I require in him whom I am to acknowledge so, accuracy of perception, variety of

mood, of manner, and of cadence, imagination, reflection, force, sweetness, copiousness, depth, perspicuity. I require in him a princely negligence of little things, and the proof that although he hath seized much, he hath also left much unappropriated. Let me see nothing too trim, nothing quite incondite. Equal solicitude is not to be exerted upon all ideas alike; some are brought into the fullness of light, some are adumbrated: so on the beautiful plant of our conservatories, a part is in fruit, a part in blossom; not a branch is leafless, not a spray is naked. Then come those graces and allurements, for which we have few and homely names, but which among the ancients had many, and expressive of delight and of divinity, *illecebræ, veneres*: these, like the figures that hold the lamps on staircases, both invite us and shew us the way up: for, write as wisely as we may, we cannot fix the minds of men upon our writings, unless we take them gently by the ear.

JOHNSON.

Here we meet and agree, but you exact too much: you include too many great properties within your stipulations.

TOOKE.

In Junius several of these were uncalled-for;

some that would have been welcome were away; and in my opinion he is hardly a great writer in whom any thing that is great is wanting.

JOHNSON.

Sometimes even Cicero himself is defective both in ratiocination and in euphony.

TOOKE.

The two most perfect writers (I speak of style) are Demosthenes and Pascal; but all their writings put together are not worth a twentieth part of what remains to us of Cicero; nor can it be expected that the world will produce another (for the causes of true eloquence are extinct) who shall write at the same time so correctly, so clearly, so delightfully, so wisely.

JOHNSON.

Let him give way, sir, let him give way, for your *rump-parliament* and regicide. The causes of true eloquence are extinct! I understand you, sir: rump and regicide for ever!

TOOKE.

Doctor, I am not one of those who would agitate so idle a question, as, whether it is the part of a contemptible man, much less whether it is that of a criminal one, to scoff at superstitions forbidden by the religion of our country, or to punish with death and ignominy, a torturer, a

murderer, a tyrant, a violator of all his oaths, and a subverter of all his laws!

JOHNSON.

That sentence, sir, is too graceful for mouths like yours. *Burn, sink, and destroy* are words of better report from the hustings.

TOOKE.

I presume you mean, doctor, when they are directed by pious men, against men of the same language and lineage: for words, like cyphers, have their value from their place. I am sorry that you seem offended.

JOHNSON.

It is the nature of the impudent never to be angry.

TOOKE.

Impudence, I find, is now for the first time installed among the christian virtues.

JOHNSON.

No, sir: impudence is to virtue what cynicism is to stoicism: nothing is harder or crueller; nothing seems less so.

TOOKE.

Doctor, let me present to you this cup of tea.

JOHNSON.

Why! the man wears upon his mind an odd party-coloured jacket; half courtier, half rebel.

I do not think I have flattered him very much, yet he bowed as if he was suing me to dance with him.

Mr. Tooke, let us avoid these thorns and brambles... come forth, sir, and fight your battle with Dyche. What have you to say against our manner of spelling?

TOOKE.

Persons very unlearned, such as Swift and others, have from their natural acuteness perceived the utility of *fixing*, as they call it, our language. This is impossible in any: but it is possible to do much, and an authority like yours would have effected it, in perpetuating the orthography. On the contrary, I observe in your Dictionary some quotations, in which the words are spelt differently from what I find them in the originals; nor have you admitted all those in Littleton, who compiled his Latin Dictionary at a recent period.

JOHNSON.

First, I wrote the words as people now receive them; then, as to Littleton, many of his are vulgar.

TOOKE.

The more English for that: no expression, be it only free from indecency, is so vulgar, that a



man of learning and genius may not formerly have used it: but there are many so frivolous and fantastical, that they cannot, to the full extent of the word, ever become vulgar. There are but three places where such bad language is tolerated and acknowledged; the boxing-ring, the race-course, and the House of Commons.

## JOHNSON.

I could wish our Senate to have deserved as well of ours as the Roman did of theirs. Illiterate men, and several such are among the correspondents of Cicero, write with as much urbanity and purity as himself, and it is remarkable that the only one of them defective in these qualities is Marcus Antonius. But pray give me some instances in which the old spelling should be retained, for I am unwilling to suppose that you would innovate.

## TOOKE.

Many must escape me, and others are but analogical: I will then bring forward only those which occur principally. The very word which has just passed my lips, *occurr*, is written improperly with a single *r*. The impropriety is demonstrated by its preterite, which would be *occured*, for the sign of the preterite is *ed*, in similar verbs, not *red*. The same may be remarked on the verbs

*rebel, compel, &c. aver, demur, appal, acquit, permit, refit, confer, &c.* If these were printed as they ought to be, strangers would more easily know that the accent is on the final syllable. We ourselves in some instances have lost the right accent of words. In my youth he would have been ridiculed who placed it upon the first syllable of *confiscated, contemplative*, at which the ear revolts: in many other compounds we thrust it thus back with equal precipitancy and rudeness.

If we take away a letter from those I have stated, we add one with as little discernment to *therefor* and *wherefor*: we should as reasonably write *thereofe, whereofe, therein, wherein*: strictly, it would be better to take away one *e* more, and write *therfor, &c.* I know the origin of the error; the origin may *explain*, but not *excuse*. It is this: the ancients wrote *therforre*: the useless *r* was removed from an infinity of words, and those who removed it in this instance, were little aware that they had better left it, unless they also took away the *e*. Middleton writes *declame*, and elegantly. Milton writes *sovrán* and *foren*, equally so: for neither the pronunciation nor the etymology authorizes the vitiated mode in

common use. These writers may be considered as modern, and must be considered as learned and eloquent. Until men who are more so write differently, these shall be my guides. *Heighth* and *neighbour* should be written *highth* and *nighbour*: the former comes from *high*, not *heigh*! the latter from *nigh*, not *neigh*.

*Rind*, *bind*, *mind*, *find*, *wind* (the verb), *kind*, *blind*, &c. are better written as they were formerly, with a final *e*, as also *child*, *wild*, *mild*; that the sound may accord with the spelling, which should always be the case where no very powerful reason interposes its higher authority. I do not see why *little*, *able*, *probable*, &c. should not be written *littel*, *abil*, *probabil*: as *civil* forms *civility*, so *abil* forms *ability*, *probabil* forms *probability*: the others, as we corruptly use them, form *ablety* and *probablety*. There is also another reason: in verse there is an hiatus when they come before a vowel, which hiatus could not exist if we followed what analogy prescribes. I strongly object to *subtle* and *subtlety*, and would propose *subtil* and *subtility*. Those who polish language, like those who clean pictures, often rubb away the true colouring. Roughness, you will tell me, is removed by the process of the moderns. I could

adduce no few instances to the contrary. Now do you imagine that the fashionable way of writing *empress's son*, if we *could* pronounce it accordingly, would be better than *empressis*? No other language in the world (for though the serpent could once speak he could never write) presents four *esses* in conjunction. The final *s* hath nothing to do with, what Addison and others have substituted for it, *his*: it is among our few declined cases.

JOHNSON.

Who would not rather say *son of the empress*?

TOOKE.

I talk of what exists in the language, not of what is best in it: nor indeed would your alteration be preferable in all contingencies. What, for instance, think you of this? "*We have heard of the ill state of health of the son of the empress of Russia.*" The double genitive ought to be avoided as much as possible in all composition: it has however a worse effect in modern languages than in ancient. To ours the ancient termination designating it, is highly advantageous. It has not only two genitives, but, let me also remark to you, it has a greater variety of sounds in it than any other I know.

JOHNSON.

Surely not than the Greek.

TOOKE.

Beyond a question; if you acknowledge that the Greeks, who have never lost their language, know how to pronounce it better than we do. Their diphthongs are almost insensibly so: we give to their *ai* and *oi* our own deepmouthed tone, our own exclusively, as is that of *i* in *mine*, &c.

Returning to the *s*, although we have one word of nine letters in which it occurs five times, and another of only eight in which it appears as often (*possesses* and *assesses*), yet I once from curiosity examined a hundred verses in Shakespear and the same number in Sophocles, and found it more frequent in the latter. If I had counted the *eres* and *xis*, the *zeds* and *zetes*, and the *psis*, which contain it, the difference would have been still greater. It is true, the Greek iambic contains more syllables than ours, but the number of letters is very nearly the same in each.

JOHNSON.

I am unsatisfied, after all, that the English *is*, whether joined to the word or disjoined from it, whether in full or in contraction,

may not be *his*, as our grammarians have supposed.

## TOOKE.

That it has not relation to *his*, may be demonstrated; by its being common to both male and female, to both singular and plural: we say not only *Edwin's book*, but *Emma's book*, and, with as little hesitation, *men's minds*.

There are some words which, if we receive them, we cannot spell rightly; they have been so perverted by custom: such are *amaze*, a *newt*; the first of which was a *maze*, the last an *evet*. So the French *affaire*, and the Italian *affare*; *à faire*, *a fare*; demonstrable in the latter by the earlier word, still equally in common use, *facenda*, *res facienda*. We see written *mantua-maker*, for *man-teau-maker*, a vulgar and ludicrous error: we see also *ameliorate* for *meliorate*, although one would reasonably suppose that it signified the reverse. We write *posthumous*, in the silly opinion that the word is derived from *post* and *humus*: the termination in fact is nowise different from that of *maximus* and *optimus*, in the Latin; although, by one of the chances so common in language, it has escaped that change in the middle syllable which the others have undergone. There are also some few inaccuracies, wherinto our most

applauded speakers, and our least objectionable writers, have fallen. For instance, *I had rather not go: you had better not do it.* This error arises from ambiguity of sound... *I'd* rather, or *I'ou'd* rather; contractions of *would*, and pronounced more like *had*. We often hear, *the first amongst them.*

JOHNSON.

Well, why not?

TOOKE.

Because what is *first* or *before*, is not *amongst*.

JOHNSON.

You might argue then that what is *before* is not *of*, and that it has ceased to be so when, in the nautical phrase, it has parted company: yet surely you do not object to the expression, "the first of them."

TOOKE.

It has not ceased to be *of* by being *before*: for *of* is *off*, however we may, for obvious reasons, separate them in the parts of speech. You toss your head about, doctor: is there *facnum in cornu*? must I make my escape? or will you accept my apology for so deep an encroachment on your time and patience?

JOHNSON.

If your arguments were always as just and in-

nocent, I should not decline your conversation, but on the contrary should solicit from you a catalogue of such peculiarities and defects, as a profound insight into our language, and a steady investigation of its irregularities and intricacies, have enabled you to remark.



**CONVERSATION X.**

---

**ANDREW HOFFER, COUNT METTERNICH,**

**AND**

**THE EMPEROR FRANCIS.**

ANDREW HOFFER,  
COUNT METTERNICH,  
AND  
THE EMPEROR FRANCIS.

---

METTERNICH.

Who are you, man? I hear you have brought some intelligence from the Tyrol. Be brief; I have little time for audiences, and am surprised that you should have required one, although you mountaineers are somewhat used to liberties. What, in few words, have you brought from your country?

HOFFER.

This.

METTERNICH.

No enigmas: at the court of Vienna we understand no other than plain language.

HOFFER.

Your Excellency commanded me to be brief: I was so. This is the heron's feather which moved merrily over the Alps when not an eagle's was

stirring. If the slaughter of thirty thousand enemies is worth a recompense, I come, at the instigation of those who followed me, to ask one.

METTERNICH.

I expected it: never was an audience asked of me, or of any other minister, which did not begin or end so. But, friend, many years of war have exhausted the treasury, England is penurious, and we have innumerable young men, of high rank and great promise, disappointed in their hopes of preferment: besides, who ordered you to take up arms?

HOFFER.

My oath of allegiance, the voice of my country, my hatred of the French, and my contempt of the Italians, by whom principally our towns and villages were garrisoned.

METTERNICH.

You would fain be another William Tell.

HOFFER.

As willingly as William Tell, now among the saints in heaven, would, if he were living, be another Andrew Hoffer. We are creatures too humble for jealousy: we have neither rank nor beauty, neither silk breeches nor powdered wig; we write no poems, challenge no club for attention, and solicit no clerk for preferment.

METTERNICH.

I have read your name in the French gazettes, and you have just now mentioned it, I think, but really I quite forget what it may be.

HOFFER.

Andrew Hoffer!

METTERNICH.

Such is the tenderness of the emperor my master for those who have served him faithfully, that, although you are no longer his subject, still, as you are a person of known bravery, and of some repute in your neighbourhood, if you will only change your name and enter into the service as an Austrian, I myself will venture to mention you as worthy of the earliest promotion, and, within three or four years at farthest, I entertain the best founded hopes that you may be made a corporal.

HOFFER.

Excellent sir, I do not ask so much.

METTERNICH.

A little money, if I could dispose of it, should not be wanting...but...

HOFFER.

Pardon me, sir, an interruption to the current of your kindness. I have grain and wine, under a certain rock I could mention, with two hundred

crowns, and my freehold may be valued at twelve hundred more, and I have children who are brave and healthy, who love their father and fear God.

METTERNICH.

You want something, and it is neither money nor promotion. I believe I am as acute as most people, yet here I confess my dulness.

HOFFER.

If I have devoted my little property, which is always dearer to the possessor than a great one, as every shrub and hillock is familiar to him, and the scene of some joviality, some tenderness, or some kindness; if I have hazarded and exposed my life in all places and seasons, for him whom we both are serving, grant me only a cell or a dungeon in this city. I have a country to defend, I have a family to educate, I have duties to teach and to perform; and your Excellency knows that the French police has traced me into the Austrian states, and has demanded that I should be delivered up. Never shall this happen. I could not preserve the dominions of my master, but I will preserve his honour. Little did I ever dream of prisons: to us Tyrolese they are horrible as hell, and like hell the abodes of crime only; but he whom I have sworn to obey must do nothing unworthy of his name and station. Rather would I

waste away my strength in this dreary asylum, rather would I live among the unholy and unjust, rather would I, if such be God's ordinance, lose the blossoming of my brave lads at home, which is worth a thousand times more, not only than all the future, but than all the past of life. There are those about them who will tell them of me, and there are places to take them into, on the cliffs and in the vallies, in many a copse and craggy lane, where my name, summer or winter, will sound in their ears right well.

METTERNICH.

Mr. Hoffer, I cannot enter into these discussions. It appears by your own acknowledgement that there will be little loss on either side. Your children will be taken care of, you say, whatever may happen, and a trifle at most can be the damage to your affairs. What then do you miss?

HOFFER.

The sight of my native hills, my homestead, my gardenplot of sweet herbs, the young apple-trees in my croft, the friends of my youth, the companions of my dangers, and the associates of many a freak and frolic, requiring no less enterprise. I lose above all...but alas! what are the children of the great to them! You stared at me, sir count, when I spoke to you of mine. One

would imagine that *family* meant coaches, horses, grooms, liveries, and gravy-spoons: one would imagine there were some indecency in the word *child*. Believe me, sir, they are different things with us from what they are with you. If you happen to cherish them, it is that they may carry a lily, a lion, a bear, a serpent, a bird, when you have done with it. I love in them, yes, beyond my own soul, God forgive me! the very worst things about them; their unparriable questions, triumphant screams, and boisterous embraces. It is true, I never talked of them before so; but they are now beyond hale or whistle far enough.

METTERNICH.

I shall be happy to expedite the business of your petition, from which it appears to me, my friend, you have somewhat deviated, forgetting the exact place and circumstances where you are.

HOFFER.

Excuse me, sir, once more: I acknowledge my error: I have been discoursing as if all the cloth in the world were of one colour and one fineness, and as if a man who goes upon two legs were equal to one who goes upon eight or sixteen, with a varnished plank betwixt, and another man's rear at his nostrils.

METTERNICH.

The brute! Others may have the same pretensions as you, and it would be difficult to protect all we would favour.

HOFFER.

I stand alone in this proscription. Pretensions I have none: my country has used me as she would a trumpet: I was in her hands what she wished me to be and what she made me. Whether her brave hearts followed me or followed this feather, what matters it? I am not better than those of them who are with God: had I been so, he would have called me among the first. Those who are yet living wish to reserve me for another day, if another, such as brave men pant for, is decreed us.

FRANCIS, *entering*.

Sit still: who is that man, count, stroking his cock's feather with his fore-finger?

METTERNICH.

It is the Andrew...Hoffer...I think it is written.

FRANCIS.

I wish we were fairly rid of him.

HOFFER.

Sir, your countenance did not inspire me in the beginning with much confidence. When you en-



tered, I observed that you dared not meet an honest man's eye.

METTERNICH.

Audacious! do you know...

FRANCIS.

We may draw something from him: let him go on. Are we safe, Metternich? He is a strong rogue: I do not like his looks.

HOFFER.

It becomes not me to be angry with any one; but until I asked a favour from you, it would have been well in you to leave his Excellency to his own kind intentions. The little good that drips from the higher sources, is intercepted or corrupted by secretaries, clerks, valets, and other such people as you.

FRANCIS.

What does he want?

METTERNICH.

A place in prison.

FRANCIS.

Give him it.

HOFFER.

I thank you, friend. If you are idle, as you seem to be, pray shew me the way: come along: we are losing time.

FRANCIS.

Make out the order: send him off.

HOFFER.

The gentleman is gone then! He gave his advice very fluently, almost as if he directed. When I would have embraced him for his readiness to serve me, his breath drove me back. O for a fresh pipe of tobacco! a bundle of sweet hay! a sprig of thyme! a bean-flower. Other creatures have each his own peculiar ill savour, and that suffices for the whole of him; but men, and in particular those of cities, have beds and parterres and plots and knots of stinks, varying in quality from the dells and dingles to the mountain-top. There are people who stink heart and soul: their bodies are the best of them. Away with these fellows! I would not be a materialist if I could help it; I was educated in no such bestiality; but is it possible that God should ever have intended such spirits as these to be immortal?

METTERNICH.

Friend, it is not permitted in any public office to exceed the business to be transacted there. I will venture to pronounce that yours is the first reflection ever made in one; and it affords no proof of your delicacy or discretion. If you wish

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protection, never hazard a remark of any kind, unless you intend it for publication: in that case the censor will judge of its propriety, and it may do you no harm. Write freely; write every thing you please: high souls are privileged at Vienna.

Soldier, take this note to the governor, as directed: you may accompany him, Mr. Hoffer.

HOFFER.

To the governor! Do favour me, sir, with a prison.

METTERNICH.

I do so.

HOFFER.

But without sending me to his excellency the governor of the city.

METTERNICH.

My note is addressed to the governor of the prison.

HOFFER.

What! are jailers called governors?

METTERNICH.

God's blood! the fellow asks questions: he examines ranks and dignities. Fare you well, Mr. Hoffer: God preserve you, in reward of your zeal and fidelity.

FRANCIS (*returning*).

Is he gone?

METTERNICH.

This instant, sire.

FRANCIS.

The French minister is very urgent in the business: what is to be done?

METTERNICH.

I am afraid, he must be surrendered.

FRANCIS.

The empress says that all Europe would cry out against it, as an action the most ungenerous and ungrateful: such are her words.

METTERNICH.

With your Majesty's permission, I not only would oppose to them the opinion of all the archdukes and of the whole aulic council, but could also prove the contrary by plain and irrefragable arguments. Ungenerous it cannot be, because he desired no reward, and none was in question. Ungrateful it cannot be; for kings and emperors are exempt by the nature of things from that odious vice. It is the duty of all subjects to do their utmost for the advantage of the prince: nothing is owing to them for an act of duty: duty is the payer, not the receiver. Whatever is accorded by a sovran to his vassal is granted by special favour; a signification of being pleased, a testimonial of being served, a patent to the person

thus gratified that he is at full liberty to serve and please again. There can be gratitude only where there are obligations and duties; and to suppose any in reciprocity between prince and people, is rank jacobinism.

FRANCIS.

Insurgents talk always of their country; a term which I would willingly never hear at all, and which no good subject ever utters in the first place. *Emperor and country, king and country*, we may bear; but hardly; although I have been assured that such phrases are uttered by many well-meaning men: but who ever heard of *country and emperor, country and king*? The times are bad enough; still the subversion of right principles is not yet universal and complete.

METTERNICH.

What orders then would your Majesty give, relating to this Andrew Hoffer?

FRANCIS.

He appears an irreverent, rash, hot-headed man: he could however be kept in order, as I said yesterday, by entering into one of my Austrian regiments, by going into Transylvania, or by lying a few years in the debtor's prison; and perhaps the French government, after a time, would be satisfied with the arrangement. To deliver him up,

is, after all, the more conformable to the desires of Bonaparte; and he can do me more injury than Hoffer can do me good.

METTERNICH.

Your Majesty has contemplated the matter in its true political point of view; and is persuaded that those few diamonds, of which I informed your Majesty as usual, have no influence on my sentiments. I would not even deliver my opinion; but hearing your Majesty's, it is my duty to see that your imperial will and pleasure be duly executed.

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The following hendecasyllables were written on the surrender of Andrew Hoffer to the French.

Hoffer, quot misero vigere sæclo  
 Nuper vidimus, haud secunde cuiquam,  
 Quid profecerit ista tanta virtus!  
 An belli socius supersit unus  
 Qui tecum fuerit jugis nivosis,  
 Dum subter larices nigrasque pinus  
 Cælo sidera concidunt inani?  
 Clusus carcere providis amicis,  
 Ut longam effugeres manum tyranni;  
 A quo proderis? ah! quid hoc rogemus?  
 Natam tradiderat prius latroni.  
 Atqui mollior ala servitutis  
 Certe gentibus incubat receptis...  
 Quod ferrum fuit antea, ecce plumbum!

# CONVERSATION XI.

---

DAVID HUME

AND

JOHN HOME.

DAVID HUME

AND

JOHN HOME.

---

HUME.

WE Scotchmen, sir, are somewhat proud of our families and relationships: this is however a nationality which perhaps I should not have detected in myself, if I had not been favoured with the flattering present of your tragedy. Our names, as often happens, are spelt differently; but I yielded with no reluctance to the persuasion, that we are, and not very distantly, of the same stock.

HOME.

I hope, sir, our mountains will detain you amongst them some time, and I presume to promise you that you will find in Edinburgh a society as polished and literate as in Paris.



HUME.

As literate I can easily believe, my cousin, and perhaps as polished, if you reason upon the ingredients of polish: but there is certainly much more amenity and urbanity at Paris than anywhere else in the world, and people there are less likely to give and take offence. All topics may be discussed without arrogance and superciliousness: an atheist would see you worship a stool, or light a candle at noon, without a sneer at you; and a bishop, if you were well-dressed and perfumed, would argue with you calmly and serenely though you doubted the whole Athanasian creed.

HUME.

So much the worse: God forbid ~~we should ever~~ experience this lukewarmaness in Scotland.

HUME.

God, it appears, has forbidden it: for which reason, to shew my obedience and submission, I live as much as possible in France, where at present God has forbidden no such thing.

HUME.

Religion, my dear sir, can alone make men happy and keep them so.

HUME.

Nothing is better calculated to make men happy than religion, if you will allow them to manage it

according to their minds; in which case the strong men hunt down others, until they can fold them, entrapp them, or noose them. Here however let the discussion terminate. Both of us have been in a cherry orchard, and have observed the advantages of the jacket, hat, and rattle.

HOME.

Our reformed religion does not authorize any line of conduct diverging from right reason: we are commanded by it to speak the truth to all men.

HUME.

Are you also commanded to hear it from all men?

HOME.

Yes, let it only be proved to be truth.

HUME.

I doubt the fact: on the contrary, you will not even let it be proved: you resist the attempt: you blockade the preliminaries. Religion, as you practise it in Scotland, in some cases is opposite to reason and subversive of happiness.

HOME.

In what instance?

HUME.

If you had a brother whose wife was unfaithful to him, without his suspicion, if he lived with her

happily, if he had children by her, if others of which he was fond could be proved by you, and you only, not to be his, what would you do?

HOME.

O the strumpet! we have none such here, excepting the wife indeed (as we hear she is) of a little lame blear-eyed lieutenant, brought with him from Sicily, and bearing a *wee* Etna of her own about her, and truly no quiescent or intermittent one, which Mungo Murray (the apprentice of Hector Abercrombie) tells me *has boiled* over upon half the young dissolutes in the parish.

HUME.

But, if you had one such . . .

HOME.

Out upon her! should my brother cohabit with her? should my nephews be defrauded of their patrimony by bastards?

HUME.

You would then destroy his happiness, and his children's; for, supposing that you preserved to them a scanty portion more of fortune (which you could not do), still the shame they would feel from their mother's infamy would much outweigh it.

HOME.

I do not see clearly that this is a question of religion.

HUME.

All the momentous actions of religious men are referable to their religion more or less nearly; all the social duties, and surely these are implicated here, are connected with it.

Suppose again that you knew a brother and sister, who, born in different countries, met at last, ignorant of their affinity, and married.

HOME.

Poor blind sinful creatures! God be merciful to them!

HUME.

I join you heartily in the prayer, and would only add to it, man be merciful to them also! Imagine them to have lived together ten years, to have a numerous and happy family, to come and reside in your parish, and the attestation of their prior relationship to be made indubitable to you, by some document which alone could establish and record it; what would you do?

HOME.

I would snapp asunder the chain that the devil had ensnared them in, even if he stood before me, imploring God to pardon them, and to survey with an eye of mercy their unoffending bairns.

HUME.

And would not you also be disposed to behold them with an eye of the same materials?

HOME.

Could I leave them in mortal sin? a prey to the ensnarer of souls! No; I would rush between them, as with a flaming sword; I would rescue them by God's help from perdition.

HUME.

What misery and consternation would this rescue bring with it!

HOME.

They would call upon the hills to cover them, to crush and extinguish their shame.

HUME.

Those who had lived together in love and innocence and felicity! A word spoken to them by their pastor brings them into irremediable guilt and anguish. And you would do this?

HOME.

The laws of God are above all other laws: his ways are inscrutable: thick darkness covers his throne.

HUME.

My cousin, you who have written so elegant and pathetic a tragedy, cannot but have redd the best contrived one in existence, the Edipus of Sophocles.

HOME.

It has wrung my heart, and has deluged my eyes.

HUME.

Which would you rather do; cause and excite those sufferings, or assuage and quell them?

HOME.

Am I a Scotchman or an islander of the Red-sea, that a question like this should be asked me?

HUME.

You would not then have given to Edipus that information which drove him and Jocasta to despair.

HOME.

To him no: but as a christian and a minister of the gospel, I am commanded to defy the devil, and to burst asunder the bonds of sin.

HUME.

I am certain you would be greatly pained in doing it.

HOME.

I should never overcome the grief and anxiety so severe a duty would cause me.

HUME.

You have now proved better than I could have done in twenty *Essays*, that, if morality is not religion, neither is religion morality. Either of them, to be good, (and the one must be and the

other should be so) will produce good effects from the beginning to the end, and be followed by no remorse or repentance.

To produce as much happiness as we can, and to prevent as much misery, is the proper aim and end of all true morality and all true religion.

Only give things their right direction: there is room; do but place and train them well.

HOME.

What! room for vice and wickedness?

HUME.

There was a time when what is wine was not wine, when what is vinegar was not vinegar, when what is corruption was not corruption. That which would turn into vice, may not only not turn into it, but may, by discreet and attentive management, become the groundwork of virtue. A little watchfulness over ourselves will save us a great deal of watchfulness over others, and will permitt the kindest of religions to dropp her inconvenient and unseemly talk, of enmity and strife, cuirasses and breastplates, battles and exterminations.

HOME.

These carnal terms are frequent in the books of the Old Testament.

HUME.

Because the books of the Old Testament were written when the world was much more barbarous and ferocious than it is at present; and all legislators must accommodate their language to the customs and manners of the country.

HOME.

Apparently you would rather abolish the strong language and forcible expressions of our pious reformers than the abominations at which their souls revolted. I am afraid you would hesitate as little to demolish kirks, as convents, to drive out ministers, as monks.

HUME.

I would let ministers and their kirks alone. I would abolish monasteries; but gradually and humanely; and not until I had discovered how and where the studious and pious could spend their time better. I hold religion in the light of a medal, which has contracted rust from ages. This rust seems to have been its preserver for many centuries, but after some few more will certainly be its consumer, and leave no vestige of effigy or superscription behind: it should be detached carefully and patiently, not ignorantly and rudely scoured off. Happiness may be taken away from many with the design of communicating it to



more: but that which is a grateful and refreshing odour in a limited space, would be none whatever in a larger; that which is comfortable warmth to the domestic circle, would not awaken the chirping of a cricket, or stimulate the flight of a butterfly, in the forest; that which satisfies a hundred poor monks, would, if thrown open to society at large, contribute not an atom to its benefit and emolument. Placid tempers, regulated habitudes, consolatory visitations, are suppressed and destroyed, and nothing rises from their ruins. Better let the cell be standing than level it only for the thorn and nettle.

HOME.

What good do these idlers, with their cords and mallets, or, if you please, with those regularities?

HUME.

These have their value, at least to the possessor and the few about him. Ask rather, what is the worth of his abode to the prince or to the public? who is the wiser for his cowl, the warmer for his frock, the more contented for his cloister, when they are taken from them? Monks, it is true, are only as stars that shine upon the desert: but tell me, I beseech you, who caused such a desert in the moral world, and who rendered so faint a light, in some of its periods, a blessing? Ignorant

rulers, must be the answer, and inhuman laws. These should cease to exist some time before their antidotes, however ill-compounded, are cast away.

If we had lived seven or eight centuries ago, John Home would probably, at this hour, have been saying mass at the altar, and David Hume, fatter and lazier, would have been pursuing his theological studies in the convent. We are so much the creatures of times and seasons, so modified and fashioned by them, that the very plants upon the wall, if they were as sensible as some suppose them to be, would laugh at us.

HOME.

Fantastic forms and ceremonies are rather what the true philosopher will reprehend. Stripp away these, reduce things to their primitive state of purity and holiness, and nothing can alter or shake us, clinging, as we should do, to nothing but the anchor of Faith.

HUME.

People clung to it long ago; but many lost their grasp, benumbed by holding too tight. The church of Scotland brings close together the objects of veneration and abhorrence. The evil principle, or devil, was, in my opinion, hardly worth the expense of his voyage from Persia; but, since you

have him, you seem resolved to treat him nobly, hating him, defying him, and fearing him nevertheless. I would not however place him so very near the Creator, let his pretensions, from custom and precedent, be what they may.

HOME.

He is always marring the fair works of our heavenly Father: in this labour is his only proximity.

HUME.

You represent him as spurring men on to wickedness, from no other motive than the pleasure he experiences in rendering them miserable.

HOME.

He has no other, excepting his inveterate spite and malice against God, from which indeed, to speak more properly, this desire originates.

HUME.

Has he lost his wits, as well as his station, that he fancies he can render God unhappy by being spiteful and malicious? You wrong him greatly; but you wrong God more: for in all Satan's attempts to seduce men into wickedness, he leaves every one his free-will and liberty, either to resist or yield; but the heavenly Father, as you would represent him, predestines the greater part of mankind to everlasting pains and torments ante-

cedently to corruption or temptation. There is no impiety in asking you which is the worst: for impiety most certainly does not consist in setting men right on what is demonstrable in their religion, nor in shewing them that God is greater and better, than, with all their zeal for him, they have ever thought him.

HOME.

This is to confound religion with philosophy, the source of every evil, and of every error.

HUME.

Religion is the elder sister of philosophy; on whatever subjects they may differ, it is unbecoming in either to quarrel, and most of all so about their inheritance.

HOME.

And have you nothing, sir, to say against the pomps and vanities of other worships, that you should assail the institutions of your native country? To fear God, I must suppose then, is less meritorious, than to build steeples, and embroider surplices, and compose chaunts, and blow the bellows of organs.

HUME.

My dear sir, it is not that God is delighted with hymns and instruments of music, or that he prefers base to tenor or tenor to base, or Handel

to Giles Halloway, that nations throng to celebrate in their churches his power and his beneficence: it is not that Inigo Jones, or Christopher Wren, could erect to him an habitation more worthy of his presence, than the humblest cottage or the loneliest moor: it is that the best feelings, the highest faculties, the greatest wealth, should be displayed and exercised in the patrimonial palace of every family united... for such are churches both to the rich and poor.

HOME.

Your hand, David! Pardon me, sir; the sentiment carried me beyond custom; for it recalled to me the moments of blissful enthusiasm when I was writing my tragedy, and charmed me the more as coming from you.

HUME.

I explain the causes of things, and leave them.

HOME.

Go on, sir, pray go on; for here we can walk together. Suppose that God never heard us, never cared for us: do those hear you, whose exploits you celebrate at public dinners, our Wallaces and Bruces? Yet are not we the braver, the more generous, the more grateful?

HUME.

I do not see clearly how the more grateful: but

I would not analyse by reducing to a cinder a lofty sentiment.

## HOME.

Every act of Gratitude is rewarded by reproduction. Justice is often pale and melancholy; but Gratitude, her daughter, is constantly in the flow of spirits and the bloom of loveliness. You call out to her when you fancy she is passing, you want her for your dependents, your domestics, your friends, your children. The ancients, as you know, habitually asked their gods and goddesses, by which of their names it was most agreeable to them to be invoked: now let Gratitude be, what for the play of our fancy, we have just imagined her, a sensible living power; I cannot think of any name more likely to be pleasing to her, than Religion. The simplest breast often holds more reason in it than it knows of, and more than Philosophy looks for or suspects. We almost as frequently despise what is not despicable as we admire and reverence what is. No nation in the world was ever so enlightened, and in all parts and qualities so civilized as the Scotch. Why would you shake or unsettle or disturb those principles, which have rendered us peaceable and contented?

HUME.

I would not by any means.

HOME.

Many of your writings have evidently such a tendency.

HUME.

Those of my writings to which you refer will be read by no nation : a few speculative men will take them, but none will be rendered more gloomy, more dissatisfied, or more unsocial by them. Rarely will you find one who, five minutes together, can fix his mind even on the surface : some new tune, some idle project, some light thought, some impracticable wish, will generally run, like the dazzling haze of summer on the dry heath, betwixt them and the reader. A bagpipe will swallow them up, a strathspey will dissipate them, or Romance with the death-rattle in her throat will drive them away unto dark staircases and charnelhouses.

You and I, in the course of our conversation, have been at variance, as much as discreet and honest men ought to be : each knows that the other thinks differently from him, yet each esteems the other. I cannot but smile when I reflect that a few paces, a glass of wine, a cup of tea, conciliate those whom Wisdom would keep asunder.

HOME.

No wonder you scoff emphatically as you pronounce the word *wisdom*.

HUME.

If men would permitt their minds, like their children, to associate freely together, if they could agree to meet one another with smiles and frankness, instead of suspicion and defiance, the common stock of wisdom and of happiness would be centupled. Probably those very two men who hate each other most, and whose best husbandry is to sow burs and thistles in each other's path, would, if they had ever met and conversed familiarly, have been ardent and inseparable friends. The minister who may order my book to be burnt tomorrow by the hangman, if I, by any accident, had been seated yesterday by his side at dinner, might perhaps in another fortnight recommend me to his master for a man of such gravity and wisdom as to be worthy of being a privy counsellor, and might conduct me to the treasury bench.



# CONVERSATION XII.

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PRINCE MAUROCORDATO

AND

GENERAL COLOCOTRONI.

# PRINCE MAUROCORDATO

AND

# GENERAL COLOCOTRONI.

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## MAUROCORDATO.

GENERAL, I have received from an Englishman, who resides at Florence, a military map of Greece in which all those places are accurately marked where great battles have been fought, and to which a topographical description is added, wherever it was to be found either in ancient historians or modern travellers.

## COLOCOTRONI.

The ancients, who excell us in most things of importance, excell us principally in military science. Every great general was a great inventor. Within the memory of man, I believe, not a strategem has been thought of, by any one in Europe, be it old or new, original or borrowed. Campaigns are formed as much by a receipt as custards, and sieges

as cheesecakes. I know the better part of Greece perfectly, and only wish your English friend could devise the means for me, of bringing my enemy where beaten enemies were brought formerly.

The Greeks have performed, in the last three years, as many arduous actions as their ancestors ever performed within the same period, and have shewn a constancy such as they have never exhibited since the days of Pericles. The British force is composed of three nations, each striving for preeminence in valour. Hence whenever a large body of troops is assembled, there must be a considerable portion of each, and vigour is exerted by all; but when smaller detachments of one nation are sent out on what they call diversions, we generally find them fail; there being no such spirit, or at best a very faint one, of rivalry and emulation. It cannot be dissembled that all the victories of the English, in the last fifty years, have been gained by the high courage and steady discipline of the soldier; and the most remarkable, where the prudence and skill of the commander were altogether wanting. Place any distinguished general of theirs, where Murillo was placed in America, Mina in Spain, and then inform me what are your hopes, and whether you expect from him the same activity and the same expedients. What-

ever is done by the English, is done by open force, to which nothing is precursory or subsidiary. Our enemies the Turks are somewhat of this character. Now I lay it down as a maxim, that the weaker of two powers at variance should never employ the same weapons as the stronger: when it cannot find better, at least it should look for what are very different and very unexpected. If we Greeks ever form our regiments on the model of the English, we shall lose half our strength. By good fortune, our troops are composed of men united by blood or neighbourhood, and partly put into motion by the spirit of love and concord, partly by emulation; for the different regions of Greece, you know, are just as much rivals now as they were anciently. In no other part of Europe is there in the military establishment the least consideration of moral force: vices and virtues are equally compressed: men are filed and packeted like pins and needles, according to their length: an inch in stature divides two brothers, two friends, two rivals in the affections of the same mistress, leaving room for the union of the brave man and the coward. Nothing that is ridiculous, absurd, injurious, or offensive, is omitted in the modern practise: and if your English commentator draws his conclusions from it, and recommends it to our

imitation, we have only to thank him for his kind intention.

Greece has much to do, much not to do. God, who hath restored her miraculously to her enthusiastic and vigorous youth, will guide and protect her in it, and will open by degrees before her all the sources of knowledge, and all the means of improvement and prosperity.

MAUROCORDATO.

The paper I hold in my hand recommends the very thing on which you particularly insist, the diversity of weapon; nor does the author quote an English authority, but the authority of a far more illustrious character than any Englishman hath shewn himself within the recollection of the living, and who suggested it to his country, America, when she was about to contend with a military force, to which hers was disproportionate both in numbers and in discipline. The interest, says my correspondent, I feel and have always felt, in the fortune of those who struggle to be free, persuades me to submit some reflections, perhaps not unimportant to your country. If they were entirely my own, adds he, I might hesitate more to offer them, although of late years I have studied these matters with some attention and have examined them with some industry. Franklin proposed to

the consideration of the Anglo-Americans, whether the bow be not a more effectual weapon than the musket. Its lightness, the ease with which it may be kept dry, with which it may be concealed and recovered, with which it may be laden and discharged, with which it may be preserved in order, or replaced, are not its only advantages.

Patriotic as are the Greeks, there are many who, on receiving a musket from the government, would be induced to return home, that they might rather employ it in the chase than in battle. The bow, at least in the beginning, would not serve the purpose, and would never hold forth such an inducement.

When ammunition is exhausted in the villages and in the mountains, where we fight most frequently, the soldier can find no more, and is no longer a soldier for some days; while every wood and thicket, every house and shed, produces the material of arrows:

Youths, from their tender age or from their idle habits, incapable of carrying heavy arms, would carry a bow, it being no impediment either in attack or flight, and, being thrown away, it is little loss to them, and no advantage to the enemy.

The advice of Franklin was not rejected because it was irrational or reprehensible, but because the

Anglo-Americans were nearly all well exercised in the management of fire-arms, and because they found in the cities a superabundance of ammunition. It is not so in Greece; the choice is yet to be made, and you will surely make it, says our friend, of that material, which is at once the most plentiful and the most easy to work, that in which the exercise is the least laborious, and the attainment of skill the least difficult.

Suppose two kinds of arms, or, if you please, two kinds of tactics, equally good: if either of these be unexpected by the enemy, that is preferable. Even the worse, and considerably so, the first time it is practised, will give the advantage to those who employ it, unless its defects be too evident.

The ancients, he thinks with you, reasoned much more and much better on this business than the moderns, and they always used a great diversity of weapons in the same army, the advantage of which is demonstrated by Folard in his commentary on Polybius.

The arrow acts in three manners; rectilinearly, curvilinearly, and perpendicularly; the musket-ball in one only, the rectilinear.

Twelve arrows are discharged before the musket can be discharged the third time, even supposing

that it is always clean, and that it never misses fire.

The musket without bayonet, as are many of ours, is very inconvenient; for we must often draw the sword, and then what becomes of it? while the bow, thrown in a moment across the shoulder, leaves the right-hand at liberty, and the body unencumbered, for all the other ways of defence or of attack.

The Turks fight in close array; so that every arrow strikes either man or horse; and it is remarkable that a moderate puncture makes the horse intractable, while to a severe musket-shot he often seems for a time insensible.

The report of fire-arms by night or in ambuscade betrays the soldier; the arrow not. Even by day it sometimes is expedient that Death come veiled.

The lock of fire-arms is the most important part of them, and is the most liable to injury, from a blow, from a fall, or from service. The musket is composed of many parts, all subject to be detached or loosened, some to be lost, as the rod and the flint, and the loss may not be perceived until it is fatal.

If any considerable body of archers, well sup-



ported, drew upon an unprepared enemy, (and all at this day are so) they would gain, if not the battle, the advantage. No fire could produce such destruction, such confusion, or leave effects so immediately visible, so generally appalling.

He who carries a bow instead of a musket, may also carry provisions for five entire days; an incalculable advantage in a country laid waste on all sides, and which will enable him, in most situations, to choose and change his encampment as he pleases. When a foot soldier thus armed has taken the horse of an enemy, he may mount and use him, should circumstances require it, which he could not do with musket and bayonet, even in case of necessity.

The bow has no need of cleaning; the musket has need of it every day; and after a march or an engagement, when it may want it most, the soldier feels little inclination to this surcharge of labour, and often has not tow, sometimes not water, as ours experienced on the mountains very frequently last summer, when even in the plains occasionally there was barely a sufficiency to quench their thirst.

By the lightness of this weapon, and the little danger there is of its sounding loud by striking

against any thing, ammunition-waggons and stores may be set on fire, applying to the arrow inflammable substances.

The Turks are still masters of cities and fortresses which we must take. No nation defends a place so obstinately and courageously as they do. Here the bow is greatly a better weapon than the musket: for in the hurry of firing on those who mount to the assault, few balls are perfectly well rammed; hence they fall out or fall inoffensively: and nothing is more difficult than to hit a man, aiming at him perpendicularly. The arrow on this occasion would seldom miss.

COLOCOTRONI.

These observations are worth attention. What have you besides?

MAUROCORDATO.

The observations on defensive armour are original and important. Even so late as the reign of Louis XIV the officer wore it. In the battle of Waterloo, more glorious to the victor than any since that of Leuctra, (if perhaps you except two others won in distant times by the same nation, at Poitiers and at Blenheim) three regiments of light cavalry in succession were ordered to attack the French cuirassiers. Each made several charges, and lost the greater part of its men, in killed or

wounded. This, continues my author, belongs to history, and shall find its place there, together with the enquiries and reflections it excites...an imprudence unexampled! If, adds he, these English regiments had been defended by the armour I am about to propose for yours, they would have lost much fewer, and, although no troops are braver, more expert, or better disciplined, than the French cuirassiers, would probably have repulsed them: for the English horses were fresher, not having surmounted such acclivities, nor having toiled so long over a deep and tenacious clay.

Suppose it possible to discover a substance on which the seasons have little or no effect; which resists heat, cold, moisture...iron does not.

Suppose it possible to discover a substance which leaves every limb its elasticity, its full play and action...iron does not.

Suppose it possible to discover a substance in which the soldier, if necessary, may sleep...in iron he cannot.

In fact, general, he recommends the use of *cork* armour; the usual thickness of which material is sufficient to resist the bayonet, and which a musket-ball will rarely penetrate. By employing this, the soldier who cannot swim has all the advantages of him who can: he may be knocked

down in it, but he will not be killed nor badly wounded: seldom will a particle of it enter the flesh, and in case it should, no substance whatever is so easily extracted or so perfectly, nor will there ever be those contusions which are often mortal in the head: for although the sabre does not penetrate the metal helmet, it indents it so deeply as to produce the same effect. We have experienced the dizziness that the helmet occasions in a few hours of exertion: this destroys both activity and strength. Nothing is so cool to the head as cork, or presents so equal and wholesome a temperature in all seasons. Its additional weight is imperceptible to the horse, nor is the dismounted soldier lost, as the steel-cased cuirassier is. This armour is cheap and durable; it occupies no time in cleaning, no time in putting on: every one can mend or replace it.

Some other of the projects must be left to the discretion of our Government: they are political rather than military; they are calculated to act instantaneously and effectually. The author himself says on them, "There are circumstances in which Themistocles should be heard before Aristides, and indeed without him."

He recommends that the Acro-corinthos, and some other positions, should be flanked with strong

Martello towers, and gives an account of an English ship of seventy-four guns, utterly ruined off Corsica by such a tower, mounting one only. Here is also a proposal to construct, or rather to employ, for we have them in all our ports, gunboats similar to those used by the Russians in the battle of Tchesme.

COLOCOTRONI.

I hope we are not yet reduced to imitate the Russians in any thing. The least inventive of all the human races, and the most hostile to all inventions, can hardly be presented to Greeks for a model, by one who appears well acquainted with our history, with our capacities, and with our wants.

MAUROCORDATO.

He informs me that the invention of this is due to his countryman and friend, General Bentham, a man equally distinguished for courage, humanity, and science, and whose brother I have heard represented as the only true philosopher of his nation since Locke.

COLOCOTRONI.

Prince, I know almost as little of philosophy or philosophers, as the emperor of Turkey, or Morocco, or Austria. War is my pursuit: come to the point; let me see his project. I may recom-

mend it: for the wisest men and most useful things want recommendation; and the tongue of the fool is often requisite to the inventions of the wise.

## MAUROCORDATO.

General Bentham commanded the naval armament of Russia at the battle of Tchesme, under (in politics this word usually means *over*) prince Potemkin. Gunboats had always been built solidly, with strong traverses, to prevent the recoil of the gun. Hence, after every fire, the motion of the vessel was so violent and of so long continuance, that the discharges were intermitted and uncertain. One would imagine that very little experience was requisite to demonstrate how, leaving the cannon to its recoil, and the vessel to its own action upon the water, no violent shock could be given, and how the succeeding discharges would be more rapid and more easily directed. Instead of the old gunboat, constructed at much expense and soon ruined, he placed heavy cannon upon barks deemed before incapable of bearing them: but it was soon apparent that on still water, they were adequate to destroy the most formidable ships of the line. The general shewed the troops and mariners, that the water itself gives the proper degree both of recession and of resistance, without danger to the can-

noneer or detriment to the boat. The advantages of the invention are these. The boats, if they are to be built, do not cost a fifth of the others: that worse timber and a smaller quantity of it will serve: that all, even the lightest, may be adapted in little time: that merchant-ships taken from the enemy may be converted into them.

COLOCOTRONI.

Do the English use them constantly? for in these matters they have more authority with me than in others.

MAUROCORDATO.

They do not: because they have no need of gunboats on their coasts, commanding, as they do, the ocean: because too their seas are tempestuous, and their expeditions for the greater part distant: and because they are reluctant that their enemies should acquire from them the benefit of an invention, by which they themselves could not profit in the same degree. The small gunboat not presenting its side to an enemy, the Turk, the worst of cannoneers, would hardly ever strike it; while it would rarely miss him, and would never fail to discourage where it might not disable.

My correspondent is particularly urgent that every mariner and soldier on board should be armed with a bow, and with a longer and heavier pike

than any in common use. Recurring to actions by land, he observes that the length of the pike gave the victory to the Greeks in the first battle against Xerxes, when the *Immortals* of that autocrat were repulsed by the Lacedemonians, according to Herodotus, from this cause only. The bow is recommended at sea still more earnestly, and in our gunboats and small vessels most particularly, from the necessity of loading them lightly with ammunition.

## COLOCOTRONI.

Should any of these suggestions be introduced, it must be done suddenly, secretly, and diffusively.

## MAUROCORDATO.

The political reflections of my correspondent will be the subject of some future consideration. To obtain our independence, he would propose to the Turk the same annual subsidy *as comes into the treasury at present*, which is little more than a fifth of what is levied: he would engage that we should admitt into our ports no vessel of a potentate at war with Turkey, and that we should sign no treaty of alliance with any one upon her confines: he would consent that all the Greeks in Asia and other parts should be united in the territory bounded on the north by Olympus and the Cerauniana, on the East by the Egean sea, and in-



cluding Crete. Property should be exchanged by Turkish and Greek commissioners, aided by the consuls of France, England, and Sweden, and the contract should be terminated in three years in all parts of both countries.

He informs me that many Christian and Jewish families have still the records of places in Crete, where the treasures of private houses, as also of churches and of convents, were deposited on its subjugation. Turkey does not derive one hundred and eighty thousand zecchins annually from the conquest. She would readily compromise in a few years, probably on the breaking out of the first war, for the tax stipulated, and accept ten or twelve years purchase. Indeed on her expressing any doubt of security in our faith, we might offer as much, with no fear of refusal, and could obtain it from England. So moderate a debt would rather be a bond to unite us than a burden.

#### COLOCOTRONI.

A society of Englishmen, no less patriotic, has kindly sent to me three hundred bibles, in readiness for the next campaign; with an exhortation to prohibit all dancing in private houses, unless among persons of a certain age and rank; a remonstrance against the letting of urine at the corners of streets, or lanes, or stable doors;

and a form of prayer to be offered up in our churches.

## MAUROCORDATO.

Instead of this latter, our patriarch may be requested to insert in the Litany a petition to the Almighty, that, in the bowels of his compassion, it may please him to retain in the government of the *Seven Isles* his Excellency Sir Thomas Maitland, so that the people shall never cease to sigh for union with us; and that likewise, in his infinite mercy, he may remove all impediment to his Excellency, by removing for ever Lord Guildford, in whose presence Learning would almost forget her losses, and dismembered Greece her sufferings.

## COLOCOTRONI.

Greece, whatever arms she takes up, may look forward to years of agony, and to more enemies than the Turk. All the old governments in Europe will attempt to increase our difficulties, and, when they have augmented them to the utmost in their power, will point them out as the natural fruits of insubordination, for such they call resistance, which is the more criminal in their eyes the longer and the more patiently you have borne oppression. Happily we have no allie: we have an oppressor the less. If

Spain or Portugal had any, that allie would model the adopted form of government; in other words, would change the features without diminishing the weight of slavery. Providence, I trust, will favour our exertions: I would propose then to leave a wide space between us, and the dominions of a government more systematically and more degradingly tyrannical. Indignant as we justly are at the unworthy treatment we have received, and conscious, as we cannot but be, that we are the undegenerate descendents of a people, which never since the foundation of the world hath beheld a rival in glory, we must acknowledge that no conqueror is milder than the Turkish, no religion more tolerant, no judge more dispassionate, no law more equitable. But many countries, once Grecian, lie desolate: Crete can hardly discover the traces of five amidst her hundred cities. True; islands, which when free are the happiest of countries, are the most miserable when they are subjected. For the subjection endured under modern governments, is far different in its effects from that endured under our ancestors and the Romans. Towns, harbours, and marts, arose upon it: be my witnesses on one side, Cyprus, Lesbos, Chios, and ye starry host of Cyclades! stand on the other, Sicily, Sardinia, Ireland, with

your herds of mendicants, your bands of robbers, your pestiferous marshes, and your deserted ports. What countries are naturally more fertile? what more wretched? Wild theories have not rendered them so; and yet the only mischiefs to be extirpated are wild theories. The cities of the Valtelline, under the protection of Switzerland, Ragusa, Genoa, Venice, had enjoyed a long prosperity, all several hundred, some past a thousand years, and one had arrived, by its prudence and wisdom, at an age which appeared forbidden to human institutions, when suddenly a sage, too autocratical to be taught any thing by sages of another class, draws around his shoulders a cat-skin hung with saints, and is informed, as he swallows his morning draught of brandy, that if they really were happy, they were happy from wild theories, and must be all corrected. Tyranny alone has rights; usurpation alone has privileges. “*You shall enchain Poland; you shall do with Italy and with Illyria what you please; you shall dismember free and happy Saxony.*” “*What! no more? my brothers!*” “*Wait a little, our brother, wait a little! Wait, our brother, four years at farthest: then advance: you will be hailed as a deliverer from within and from without.*

“*His most christian Majesty is anxious to re-*

cover the influence of his family in Spain: the English, who waged war to prevent it from having any, are not in a condition to interpose the slightest impediment, and the ministers are more interested in suppressing what are called constitutions, than in maintaining the dignity of their throne.”

Thus argue the holy Allies.

England is indeed the only country in the world where the ministers are chosen from their dissimilitude to the people. I never think of them without the idea of the bear ridden by the monkey; the strong by the weak, the grave by the pert, the quiet by the mischievous. Since the time of Pitt the First (in this manner will politicians teach historians to write) she has been governed, with hardly an interval, by the most inordinate and desperate gamesters that ever her *subscription-houses* drove pennyless down stairs.

MAUROCORDATO.

There is an axiom, that the best if corrupted is the worst. It grieves me to think of England, once the favorite of Liberty, and sitting in light alone. All the French, however, cannot have lost entirely that spirit with which twenty millions were animated so lately. His most christian Majesty is said in the chamber of deputies to be *destined by Providence to close the abyss of re-*

*volution*s. He may perhaps close that abyss (as he would any other) by falling into it.

## COLOCOTRONI.

To rise against oppression; to teach our children their duties and their rights; to remind them of their ancestors, and to rescue them from the *se-raglio*, these are crimes! They are crimes, in the eyes of whom? of those who profess the religion of Christ! holy men! sacred allies! apostolic! catholic! We, *Maurocordato*, are inconsiderate, rash, frantic; for what gain we by our vigils, fasts, and toils; by our roofless houses, our devastated farms, our long marches, our broken sleep upon the snowy mountains, unless it be the approbation of our fathers now in bliss, and the consolatory hope of it from our posterity? The rest of Europe is reduced to slavery, one heroic race excepted: God alone can foresee the termination of our conflict; but of this we both are certain; that, whenever we fall, in whatever part of Greece our bodies lie, they will lie by the side of those who have defended the same cause; and that there is not a pillar, in ancient days erected by a grateful country, that does not in its fragments tell our story.

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The emperor of Russia has had the address, by the congress of Verona, to involve the states of Europe in war again. He will within a year or two be able to put into execution his project on the side of Turkey, having first enfeebled Persia, by pushing her forward so precipitately. I foresaw and foretold all this. In the animal world the insects have the largest empire, in the political the Russians. The dominions of the czar extend over a space equal to a third of the old world, the parent of so many vast empires, uncounted tribes, and unknown generations, and are seven times larger than the nearest planet, including in the calculation all its gulphs and oceans. His subjects are educated in blind submission to his will; and at least two millions of them either are soldiers, or may become so without any loss to agriculture and the other arts. Is there then no danger to Europe from so enormous a power, put into motion and directed by ministers who have been raised from obscurity and want, who have abjured their country, and who must flourish on the decomposition of others? How large a portion of North-America has been publickly claimed by the autocrat, the dominions of Spain, of England, and of the United-States, from the thirty-first to the sixtieth degree! enough to constitute three great empires.

No nation seems yet to have divined the importance of California: the Russians are destined to teach it... The wisest work on political relations is that of my old acquaintance the late Governor Pownal... too wise ever to be adopted by our government, even if no impediments had been thrown in the way since it was written.

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The notes I intended for this Conversation were numerous; but as they contained some particulars which I think it imprudent to divulge at present, I shall insert some verses in their place, not very remote from the subject.

#### TO CORINTH.

Queen of the double sea, beloved of him  
Who shakes the world's foundations, thou hast seen

Glory in all her beauty, all her forms ;  
 Seen her walk back with Theseus when he left  
 The bones of Sciron bleaching to the wind,  
 Above the ocean's roar and cormorant's flight,  
 So high that vastest billows from above  
 Shew but like herbage waving in the mead ;  
 Seen generations through thine Isthmian games,  
 And pass away ... the beautiful, the brave,  
 And them who sang their praises.

But, O Queen,

Audible still (and far beyond thy cliffs)  
 As when they first were uttered, are those words  
 Divine which praised the valiant and the just,  
 And tears have often stopt, upon that ridge  
 So perilous, him who brought before his eye  
 The Colchian babes.

“ Stay ! spare him ! save the last !

Medea ! ... is that blood ? again ! it drops  
 From my imploring hand upon my feet ...  
 I will invoke the Eumenides no more,  
 I will forgive thee, bless thee, bend to thee  
 In all thy wishes ... do but thou, Medea,  
 Tell me, one lives.”

“ And shall I too deceive ?”

Cries from the fiery car an angry voice ;  
 And swifter than two falling stars descend  
 Two breathless bodies : warm, soft, motionless,  
 As flowers in stillest noon before the sun,  
 They lie three paces from him : such they lie  
 As when he left them sleeping side by side,  
 A mother's arm round each, a mother's cheeks  
 Between them, flushed with happiness and love.  
 He was more changed than they were ... doomed to shew  
 Thee and the stranger, how defaced and scarred  
 Grief hunts us down the precipice of years,  
 And whom the faithless prey upon the last.



To give the inertest masses of our Earth  
Her loveliest forms was thine, to fix the Gods  
Within thy walls, and hang their tripods round  
With fruits and foliage knowing not decay.  
A nobler work remains: thy citadel  
Invites all Greece: o'er lands and floods remote  
Many are the hearts that still beat high for thee:  
Confide then in thy strength, and unappalled  
Look down upon the plain, while yokemate kings  
Run bellowing, where their herdsmen goad them on:  
Instinct is sharp in them and terror true,  
They smell the floor whereon their necks must lie.

**CONVERSATION XIII.**

---

**ALFIERI**

**AND**

**SALOMON, THE FLORENTINE JEW.**

ALFIERI  
AND  
SALOMON, THE FLORENTINE JEW.

---

ALFIERI.

LET us walk to the window, Signor Salomon... and now, instead of the silly simpering compliments repeated at introductions, let me assure you that you are the only man in Florence with whom I would willingly exchange a salutation.

SALOMON.

I must think myself highly flattered, Signor Conte, having always heard that you are not only the greatest democrat, but also the greatest aristocrat, in Europe.

ALFIERI.

These two things, however opposite, as your smile would indicate, are not so irreconcilable as you imagine. I see no aristocracy in the children of sharpers from behind the counter, nor, placing

the matter in the most favorable point of view, in the descendents of free citizens, who accepted from any vile enslaver, French, Spanish, German, priest or monk, with a honeycomb on his head and a key at his girdle, the titles of counts and marquisses. In Piedemont the matter is different: we must either have been the rabble or their lords: we were military; and we retain over the populace the same rank and spirit as our ancestors held over the soldiery.

SALOMON.

Signor Conte, I have heard of levelers, but I have never seen one: all are disposed to level down, but nobody to level up. As for nobility, there is none in Europe, beside the Venetian. Nobility must be self-constituted and independent: the free alone are noble; slavery, like death, levels all. The English come nearest to the Venetian: they are independent, but want the main characteristic, the *self-constituted*. You have been in England, Signor Conte, and can judge of them better than I can.

ALFIERI.

England, as you know, is governed by Pitt, the most insidious of her republicans, and the most hostile to aristocracy. Jealous of power, and distrustful of the people that raised him to it, he

enriches and attaches to him the commercial part of the nation, by the most wasteful prodigality both in finance and war, and he loosens from the landed all the leading proprietors, by raising them to the peerage. Nearly a third of the lords have been created by him, and shew themselves devotedly his creatures\*. Pitt possesses not the advantage possessed by insects, which, if they see but one inch before them, see that inch distinctly. He knows not that the machine which at present runs on so briskly, will fall to pieces the moment it stops. He will indeed carry his point in debasing the aristocracy, but he will equally debase the people. Undivided power he will continue to enjoy; but, after his death, none will be able to say from any visible proof or appearance, *how glorious a people did he govern!* He will have changed its character in all ranks and conditions. After this it is little to say that he will have exalted its rival, who, without his interposition, would have sunk

\* All this refers to a state of things belonging to history, but past away from us; it being evident that nothing can be more respectable than the present English nobility. Alfieri spoke scornfully and disdainfully; because he was generally ill received in England; for although he was at that time the greatest man in Europe, he was not acknowledged or known to be so.

under distress and crime. But interposition was necessary to his aggrandisement, enabling him to distribute in twenty years, if he should live so long, more wealth among his friends and partisans, than has been squandered by the uncontrolled profusion of French monarchs, from the first Louis to the last.

SALOMON.

How happens it that England, richer and more powerful than all other states, should still contain fewer nobles ?

ALFIERI.

The greater part of the English nobility has neither power nor title. Even those who are noble both *de jure* and *de facto*, the hereditary lords of manors with large estates attached to them, claim no titles, at home or abroad. Hence in all foren countries the true English gentleman is placed below his rank, which naturally and necessarily is far higher than that of your slipshod counts and lottery-office marquisses, whose game-keepers with their high plumes, cocked hats, and hilts of rapiers, have no other occupation than to stand behind the carriage, if the rotten plank will bear them; whose game is the wren and the red-breast, and whose beat is across the market.

Father Menestrier, who, both as a Frenchman and as a jesuit, speaks very contemptuously of English nobility, admits the gentlemen to this dignity. Their property, their information, their political influence, and their moral character, place them beyond measure above the titularies of this country, be the rank what it may; and it is a remarkable proof of moderation in some, and of contemptuousness in others, that they do not openly claim from their king, or assume without any such intervention, the titles arising from landed wealth, which conciliate the attention and civility of all classes, and indeed of all individuals, abroad.

It is among those who stand between the peerage and the people, that there exists a greater mass of virtue and of wisdom than all the rest of the universe contains. Much of their dignified simplicity may be attributed to the plainness of their religion, and, what will always be imitated, to the decorous virtue of their king; for whatever may be the defects of either, if we compare them with others round us, they are excellent.

## SALOMON.

A young religion jumps upon the shoulders of an older one, and soon becomes like her, by

mockery of her tricks, her cant, and her decrepitude. Meanwhile the old one shakes with indignation, and swears there is neither relationship nor likeness. Was there ever a religion in the world that was not the true religion, or was there ever a king that was not the best of kings?

## ALFIERI.

In the latter case we must have arrived very nigh to perfection; since it is evident from the authority of the gravest men, theologians, presidents, judges, corporations, universities, senates, that every prince is still better than his father, *of blessed memory now with God*. If they continue to rise thus transcendently, earth in a little time will be incapable of holding them, and higher heavens must be raised upon the highest heavens for their reception. The lumber of our Italian courts, the most crazy part of which is that which rests upon a red cushion in a gilt chair, with stars and sheep and crosses dangling from it, must be approached as Artaxerxes and Domitian. These automatons, we are told, nevertheless, are very condescending. Poor fools who tell us it! ignorant that where on one side is condescension, on the other side must be baseness. The rascals have



ruined my physiognomy. I wear an habitual sneer upon my face, God confound them for it! even when I whisper a word of love in the prone ear of my *donna*\*.

SALOMON.

This temper or constitution of mind I am afraid may do injury to your works.

ALFIERI.

Surely not to all: my satire at least must be the better for it.

SALOMON.

I think differently. No satire can be excellent where displeasure is expressed with acrimony and vehemence. When satire ceases to smile it should be momentarily, and for the purpose of inculcating a moral. Juvenal is hardly more a satirist than Lucan: he is indeed a vigorous and bold declaimer, but he stamps too often, and splashes up too much filth. We Italians have no delicacy in wit, we have indeed no conception of it; we fancy we must be weak if we are not offensive. The scream of Pulcinello is imitated more easily, than the masterly strokes of Plautus, or the sly insinuations of Catullus and of Flaccus.

\* She who was the *donna* of Alfieri is now the *donna* of a French picture-dealer, a maker and vender of Poussins.

ALFIERI.

We are the least witty of men because we are the most trifling.

SALOMON.

You would persuade me then that to be witty one must be grave: this is surely a contradiction.

ALFIERI.

I would persuade you only, that banter, pun, and quibble, are the properties of light men and shallow capacities; that genuine humour and true wit require a sound and capacious mind; which is always a grave one. Contemptuousness is not incompatible with them; worthless is that man who feels no contempt for the worthless, and weak who treats their emptiness as a thing of weight. At first it may seem a paradox, but it is perfectly true, that the gravest nations have been the wittiest; and in those nations some of the gravest men: in England Swift and Addison, in Spain Cervantes. Rabelais and La Fontaine are recorded by their countrymen to have been *re-veurs*.

SALOMON.

It is indeed a remarkable thing that such should be the case among the moderns: it does not appear to have been so among the ancients.

## ALFIERI.

I differ from you, M. Salomon. When we turn toward the Athenians, we find many comic writers but few facetious. Menander, if we may judge from his fragments, had less humour than Socrates, and Aristophanes himself than Phocion. Among the Romans, the gravest of nations after the English, I think Cicero\* and Catullus were the wittiest. The former, from his habits of life and studies, must have been grave; and the latter we may believe to have been so, from his being tender and impassioned in the more serious part of his poetry.

## SALOMON.

This to me is no proof; for the most tender and impassioned of all poets is Shakespear, who certainly was himself far removed from gravity, however much of it he imparted to some personages of his drama.

## ALFIERI.

That Shakespear was gay and pleasurable in

\* Quintilian says of Demosthenes, non displicuisse illi jocos, sed non contigisse. In this he was much less fortunate than Phocion and Cicero. Facility in making men smile occasionally gives a natural air to a great orator, and adds thereby much effect to what he says, provided it come discreetly. It is in him somewhat like affability in a prince; excellent, if used with caution. Every one must have perceived how frequently these are brought over by a touch of humour, who have resisted the force of argument and entreaty.

conversation I can easily admitt, for there never was a mind at once so plastic and so pliant; but, without much gravity, could there have been that potency and comprehensiveness of thought, that depth of feeling, that creation of imperishable ideas, that sojourn in the souls of other men? He was amused in his workshop; such was society; but when he left it, he meditated most intensely upon those limbs and muscles on which he was about to bestow new action, grace, and majesty; and so great an intensity of meditation must have strongly impressed his whole character.

## SALOMON.

I imagine it to have been an Englishman who composed on the Florentines the lines I am about to repeat; I heard them from one; and they tend to illustrate the peculiar humour of that nation.

Giunto in Firenze, ammirava un Inglese  
 Nè campanil nè duomo nè tribuna  
 Di Venere, che intorno a se raduna  
 Le grazie di ogni secolo e paese,  
 Non la Sabina e il rapitor feroce,  
 Palazzo Vecchio nè Palazzo Pitti, ...  
 Il popolo ammirava, ... e, ad alta voce,  
 Ma! comè queste merde stanno dritte.

You will however allow that we have no proof of gravity in Horace or Plautus.

## ALFIERI.

On the contrary I think we have many. Horace,

like all the pusillanimous, was malignant: like all courtiers, he yielded to the temper of his masters. His lighter touches were agreeable less to his own nature than to the nature of Augustus and Mæcenæ, both of them fond of trifling; but in his Odes and his Discourses there is more of gravity than of gaiety. That he was libidinous is no proof that he was playful; for often such men are even melancholic.

Plautus, who appears to me to have been by far the first of comic writers, rich in language, rich in reflection, rich in character, rich in humour, is oftener grave than could have suited the inclinations of a coarse and tumultuous populace. What but the strong bent of his nature could have moved him to it?

SALOMON.

The French are witty.

ALFIERI.

This I concede to them; and no person will accuse me of partiality in their favour. They are witty; and when they discover a witty thing, they value it so highly, that they reserve it for the noblest purposes, such as tragedies, sermons, and funeral orations. Whenever a king of theirs is inaugurated at Rheims, a string of witty things is

prepared for him during his whole reign, regularly as the civil list; regularly as menageries, oratories, orangeries, wife, confessor, waterworks, fireworks, gardens, parks, forests, and chases. Sometimes one is put into his mouth when he is too empty, sometimes when he is too full; but he always hath his due portion, take it when or how he may. A decent one, somewhat less indeed than that of their sovran; is reserved for the princes of the blood; the greater part of which is usually packed up with their camp-equipage; and I have seen a label to a *bon mot*, on which was written, *Brillant comme la réponse de Henri IV, quand...*

We Italians sometimes fall into what, if you will not call them witticisms, you may call the plasma of witticisms, upon their ground, by mere mistake, and against our genius. Reading in a gazette, *Hier le roi a travaillé avec ses ministres*, and knowing the man's character, a young courtier cried innocently, "What! his Most Christian Majesty condescends to dine with his subjects! and they joke upon it!" In another, *Les enfans de France se promenant en carosse &c.*, his sister enquired of her confessor how many there were of them: he answered "Twentyfour or twentyfive millions." A blunder, by its very stumbling, is

often carried a little beyond the plain sense that was aimed at, and falls upon something which, if it be not wit, is invested with its qualities and powers.

## SALOMON.

I have had occasion to observe the obtuseness of the Tuscans in particular on these matters. Lately I lent my Moliere to a man of talents, and when he returned the volumes, I asked him how he liked them: *Per Bacco*, he exclaimed, *the names are very comical, Sganarelli, and those others.* They who have no wit of their own, are ignorant of it when it occurs, mistake it, and misapply it. A sailor found upon the shore a piece of amber, too large to be put into his jacket. He carried it home under his arm, and, as he was fond of fiddling, began to rub it across the strings of his violin. It would not serve. He then broke some pieces off, boiled them in blacking, and found to his surprise and disquiet that it gave no fresh lustre to the shoe. *What are you about?* cried a messmate...*smell it man; it is amber. The devil take it,* cried the finder, *I fancied it was rosin,* and he threw it into the sea. We despise what we cannot use.

## ALFIERI.

Your observations on Italian wit are correct.

Even our comedies are declamatory: long speeches and inverted sentences overlay and stifle the elasticity of humour. The great Machiavelli is, whatever M. de Voltaire may assert to the contrary, a coarse comedian; hardly better than the cardinal Bibiena, poisoned by the Holiness of our Lord, pope Leo, for wearying him with wit\*.

\* If Cardinal Bibiena was poisoned by Leo, an opinion to which the profligacy of the pope gave rise, and the malignity of men reception, it should be recorded in justice to his Holiness that he wished to protect the family. I find among the letters of Bembo a very beautiful and energetic one, written in the name of Leo to Francis I. There is something not unsuspecting in the mode of expression. He repeats that, although Bibiena thinks himself sure of dying, *there appears to be no immediate danger ... if it should happen, &c.* I collect below the similar expressions.

Cum Bernardus Bibiena cardinalis aliquot jam dies ex stomacho laboret, magisque timore quodam suo quam morbi vi urgente, brevi se existimet moriturum... Quanquam enim nihildum sanè video, quo quidem de illius vitâ sit omnino magnopere timendum... Yet he goes on rather less securely... Si id accadat quod ipse *suspiciatur*, tua in illum munificentia tuumque præclarum munus non statim neque unâ cum ipsius vitâ extinguatur, præsertim cum ei tam breve temporis spatium illo ipso tuo munere frui licuerit, ut ante amissum videri possit quam quale quantumve fuerit percipi ab illo cognoscive potuerit... Ut ipse, si moriendum ei sit, &c.

The Italians are too credulous on poison, which at one period was almost a natural death amongst them. Englishmen were shocked at the confidence with which they asserted



## SALOMON.

His Holiness took afterwards a stirrup-cup of the same brewery, and never had committed the same offence, poor man !

it of two personages, who occupied in the world a rank and interest due to neither, and one of whom died in England, the other in her dependencies.

The last words of the letter make me an unbeliever of Leo's guilt in this business. What exquisite language ! what expressions of zeal and sincerity !

Quæ quidem omnia non tam propterea colligo, quod non illud unum existimem apud te plurimum valiturum, amorem scilicet erga illum tuum, itemque incredibilem ipsius in te cultum, quod initio dixi, sed ut mihi ipse, qui id magnopere cupio, satisfaciam ; ne perfamiliari ac pernecessario meo, mihi-que charissimo, ac suavissimo atque in omni vitæ munere probatissimo, mea benevolentia meusque amor hoc extremo ejus vitæ tempore, si hoc extremum erit, plane defuisse videatur.

In the tenth book of these epistles there is one addressed to the cardinal, by which the church of Loretto is placed under his care, with every mark of friendship and partiality.

De tuâ enim in Divam pietate, in rem Romanam studio, in me autem, cui quidem familiæque meæ omnia pæne usque a puero summæ cum integritatis et fidei, tum vero curæ atque diligentia egregia atque præclara officia præstitisti, perveteri observantiâ voluntateque admonitus, nihil est rerum omnium quod tibi recte mandari credique posse non existimem.

It is not in human nature, I think, that a man ever capable of these feelings towards any one, should poison him afterwards, when no powerful interest or deep revenge was to be gratified : the opinion nevertheless has prevailed ; and I attribute it to a person not altogether free from malignity, a scorner of popes and princes, and especially hostile to the Medicean family.

## ALFIERI.

Indignation and contempt may be expressed in other poems than such as are usually called satires. Filicaia, in his celebrated address to Italy, steers a middle course.

## SALOMON.

True, he is neither indignant nor contemptuous: but the verses of Michel-Angelo would serve rather for an example, added to which they are much better.

## ALFIERI.

In fact the former part of Filicaia's is verbose and confused: let us analyse them.

Italia, Italia, o tu cui die' la sorte  
 Dono infelice di bellezza, onde hai  
 Funesta dote d' infiniti guai,  
 Che in fronte scritti *per gran doglia* porti.

Fate gives the *gift*, and this gift gives the dowery, which dowery consists of infinite *griefs*, and these griefs Italy carries written on her brow, through great *sorrow*!

Deh, fosti tu *men* bella o *almen* più forte!

*Men* and *almen* sound wretchedly: he might have written *oppur*. There are those who would persuade us that verbal criticism is unfair, and that few poems can stand it. The truth of the

latter assertion by no means establishes the former : all good criticism hath its foundation on verbal. Long dissertations are often denominated criticisms, without one analysis ; instead of which it is thought enough to say ; “ *There is nothing finer in our language...we can safely recommend... imbued with the true spirit...destined to immortality,*” &c.

A perfect piece of criticism must shew *where* a work is good, or bad ; *why* it is good, or bad ; in what degree it is good, or bad ; must also shew in what manner and to what extent the same ideas or reflections have come to others, and, if they be cloathed in poetry, why, by an apparently slight variation, what in one author is mediocrity, in another is excellence. I have never seen a critic, I do not say of Florence or of Pisa, but of Milan or Bologna, where letters are cultivated with more assiduity and success, who did not commend and admire the sonnet of Cassiani on the rape of Proserpine, without a suspicion of its manifold and grave defects. Few sonnets are indeed so good ; but if we examine it attentively, we shall discover its flaws and patches.

Die' un alto strido, gittò i fiori, e volta  
 All' improvvisa mano che la cinse,  
 Tutta in se per la tema onde fù colta  
 La Siciliana vergine si strinse.

The *hand* is inadequate to embrace a body: *strinse*, which comes after, would have done better. The two last verses tell only what the two first had told; and feebly; nothing can be more so than the *tema onde fù colta*.

Il nero dio la calda bocca involta  
 D'ispido pelo a ingordo bacciò spinse,  
 E di stigia fuligin con la folta  
 Barba l'eburnea gola e il sen le tinse.

Does this describe the brother of Jupiter? does it not rather the devils of our carneval, than him at whose side, upon asphodel and amaranth, the sweet Persephone sits pensively contented, in that deep motionless quiet, which mortals pity and which the Gods enjoy; than him who, under the umbrage of Elysium, gazes at once upon all the beauties that on earth were separated by times and countries.. Helena and Eriphyle, Polyxena and Hermione, Deidamia and Deianira, Leda and Omphale, Atalanta and Cydippe, Laodamia, with her arm around the neck of a fond youth, whom she still seems afraid of losing, and apart, the daughters of Niobe, though now in smiles, still clinging to their parent; and many thousands more, each of whom is worth the dominions, once envied, of both brothers?

## SALOMON.

These images are better than satires; but continue, in preference to all other thoughts or pursuits, the noble career you have entered. Be contented, Signor Conte, with the glory of our first great dramatist, and neglect altogether any inferior one. Why vex and torment yourself about the French? They buzz and are troublesome while they are swarming; but the master will soon hive them. Is the whole nation worth the worst of your tragedies? All the present race of them, all the creatures in the world which excite your indignation, will lie in the grave, while young and old are clapping their hands or beating their bosoms at your *Bruto Primo*. Consider, to make one step further, that kings and emperors should in your estimation be but as grasshoppers and beetles: let them consume a few blades of your clover, without molesting them, without bringing them to crawl on you and claw you. The difference between them and men of genius, is almost as great as between men of genius and those higher Intelligences who act in immediate subordination to the Almighty. Yes, I assert it, without flattery and without fear, the Angels are not higher above mortals, than you are above the proudest that trample on them.

ALFIERI.

I believe, sir, you were the first in commending my tragedies.

SALOMON.

He who first praises a good book becomingly is next in merit to the author.

ALFIERI.

As a writer and as a man I know my station : if I found in the world five equal to myself, I would walk out of it, not to be jostled.

I must now, Signor Salomon, take my leave of you ; for his Eminence my coachman and their Excellencies my horses are waiting.

**CONVERSATION XIV.**

---

**LOPEZ BAÑOS**

**AND**

**ROMERO ALPUENTE.**

# LOPEZ BAÑOS

AND

# ROMERO ALPUENTE.

---

BAÑOS.

AT length, Alpuente, the saints of the holy alliance have declared war against us.

ALPUENTE.

I have not heard it until now.

BAÑOS.

They have directed a memorial to the King of France, inviting him to take such measures as his Majesty in his wisdom shall deem convenient, in order to avert the calamities of war and the dangers of discord from his frontier.

ALPUENTE.

God forbid that so great a king should fall upon us! O Lord, save us from our enemy, who would eat us up quick, so despitely and hungrily is he set against us.



## BAÑOS.

Read the manifesto... why do you laugh? is not this a declaration of hostilities?

## ALPUENTE.

To Spaniards, yes. I laughed at the folly and impudence of men, who, for the present of a tobacco-box with a fool's head upon it, string together these old peeled pearls of diplomatic eloquence, and foist them upon the world as arguments and truths. Do kings imagine that they can as easily deceive as they can enslave? and that the mind is as much under their snaffle, as the body is under their axe and halter? Shew me one of them, Lopez, who has not violated some promise, who has not usurped some territory, who has not oppressed and subjugated some neighbour: then I will believe him, then I will obey him, then I will acknowledge that those literary heralds who trumpet forth his praises with the newspaper in their hands, are creditable and upright and uncorrupted. The courage of Spain delivered these wretches from the cane and drum-head of a Corsican: which of them did not crouch before him? which did not flatter him? which did not execute his orders? which did not court his protection? which did not solicit his favour? which did not entreat his forbearance? which did not implore his pardon? which did not

abandon and betray him? No ties either of blood or of religion led or restrained these neophytes in holiness. And now forsooth the calamities of war and the dangers of discord are to be averted, by arming one part of our countrymen against the other, by stationing a military force on our frontier, for the reception of murderers and traitors and incendiaries, and by pointing the bayonet and cannon in our faces. When we smiled at the insults of a beaten enemy, they dictated terms and conditions. At last his *most christian majesty* tells his army, that the nephew of Henry the fourth shall march against us...with his feather.

BAÑOS.

Ah! that weighs more. The French army will march over fields which cover French armies, and over which the oldest and bravest part of it fled in ignominy and dismay, before our shepherd-boys and hunters. What the veterans of Napoleon failed to execute the household of Louis will accomplish. Parisians! let your comic-opera-house lie among its ruins; it cannot be wanted this season.

ALPUENTE.

Shall those battalions which fought so many years for freedom, so many for glory, be supplementary bands to barbarians from Caucasus and Imaus? shall they shed the remainder of their

blood to destroy a cause, for the maintenance of which they offered up its first libation? Time will solve this problem, the most momentous in its solution that ever lay before man. If we are conquered, of which at present I have no apprehension, Europe must become the theatre of new wars, and be divided first into three parts, afterwards into two, and the next generation will see all her states and provinces the property of one autocrat, and governed by the most ignorant and lawless of her nations.

#### BAÑOS.

Never was there a revolution, or material change in government, effected with so little bloodshed, so little opposition, so little sorrow or inquietude, as ours. Months had passed away, years were rolling over us, institutions were consolidating, superstition was relaxing, ingratitude and perfidy were as much forgotten by us, as our services and sufferings were forgotten by Ferdinand, when emissaries and gold and arms, and *Faith*, inciting to discord and rebellion, crossed our frontier. The religion of Constantine and of Charlemagne, falsely called the christian, and subversive of its doctrines and its benefits, roused brother against brother, son against father, and our fortresses were garnished with the bayonets of France, and echoed with the watch-

words of the Vatican. If Ferdinand had regarded his oath, and had acceded, in *our* sense of the word *faith*, to the constitution of his country, from which there hardly was a dissentient voice, among the industrious and the unambitious, among the peaceable and the wise, would he have eaten one dinner with less appetite, or have embroidered one petticoat with less taste? would the saints along his chapel-walls have smiled upon him less graciously, or would thy tooth, holy Dominic, have left a less pleasurable impression on his lips? Only two strong truths could have shocked him, instead of the many personal ones he drew upon his head; namely, that *damnable* does not mean *combustible*, and that *there* is the worst heresy where is imposture for the sake of power or profit. Such truths however are now, it appears, to be bundled up with gorse, broom, and hazel; and he who exposed the mysteries of the Inquisition, may soon be a prisoner in its lowest chambers, having been expelled from the territory, as might be expected, of the most christian king. His most christian majesty demands *that Ferdinand the seventh may give his people those institutions which they can have from him only*. Yes, these are his expressions, Alpuente; these the doctrines

for the propagation of which our country is to be invaded with fire and sword; this is government, this is order, this is faith! Ferdinand *was* at liberty to give us his institutions: he gave them: what were they? the inquisition in all its terrors, absolute and arbitrary sway, scourges and processions, monks and missionaries, and a tooth of saint Dominic to crown them all. Our priests are more powerful than God himself. So strange and intractable a creature was man, not only when he was made but when he was making, that God rested himself immediately after the operation: now, Señor, here comes before you, from Astorga or Las Kerreras, a clever young prig of a priestling, puts a wafer into a watchcase, lifts it up half an ell above the louse-roost, and, by the body of Saint Iacomo, out come a brace or leash of Gods created at a word, and astart at the tinkling of a bell. To support the throne that crushes us, and the altar that choaks us, march forward the warlike Louis and the preux Chateaubriant, known among his friends to be firm in belief, as Hobbes, Talleyrand, or Spinoza; and behold them advancing side by side against the calm opponents of Roman bulls and French charts. Although his majesty be brave as Maximin at a breakfast,

he will find it easier to eat his sixtyfour cutlets than to conquer Spain. I doubt whether the same historian shall have to commemorate both exploits.

ALPUENTE.

An imprudent step, amidst armies raised for the defence of other principles, may be ruinous to his dynasty.

BAÑOS.

Principles do not much influence the unprincipled, nor mainly the principled. We talk on principle, but we act on interest. The French army will find little plunder; and the French people must endure new taxes and impositions. A Spanish war may precipitate Louis XVIII where an American war dragged in its consequences Louis XVI, to a fate which, if he had not experienced it, he would be acknowledged to have deserved.

ALPUENTE.

In wars the least guilty are the sufferers. In these, as in every thing, we should contract as much as possible the circle of human misery. The deluded and enslaved should be so far spared as is consistent with security: the most atrocious of murderers and incendiaries, the purveyors and hirers of them, should be removed at any expense

or hazard. If we shew little mercy to the robber who enters a house by force, and if less ought to be shewn to him who should enter it in the season of distress and desolation, what portion of it ought to be extended towards those who assail every house in our country? How much of crime and wretchedness may often be averted, how many years of tranquility may sometimes be ensured to the world by one wellchosen example! Is it not better than to witness the grief of the virtuous for the virtuous, and the extinction of those bright and lofty hopes, for which the best and wisest of every age contended? Where is the man, worthy of the name, who would be less affected at the lamentation of one mother for her son, slain in defending his country, than at the extermination of some six or seven usurpers, commanding or attempting its invasion? National safety legitimates every mean employed upon it. Criminals have been punished differently in different countries: but all enlightened, all honest, all civilized men must agree *who* are criminals. The Athenians were perhaps as well-informed and intelligent as the people on lake Ladoga: they knew nothing of the knout, I confess, and no family amongst them boasted a succession of as-

sassins, in wives, sons, fathers, and husbands ; but he who endangered or injured his country was condemned to the draught of hemlock. They could punish the offence in another manner ; if any nation cannot, shall that nation therefore leave it unpunished ? and shall the guiltiest of men enjoy impunity, from a consideration of modes and means ? Justice is not to be neglected because what is preferable is unattainable. A housebreaker is condemned to die, a city-breaker is celebrated by an inscription over the gate. The murder of thousands, soon perpetrated and past, is not the greatest mischief he does : it is followed by the baseness of millions, deepening for ages. Every virtuous man in the universe is a member of that grand Amphictyonic council, which should pass sentence on the too powerful, and provide that it be duly executed. It is just and it is necessary, that those who pertinaciously insist on an unnatural state of society, should suffer by the shock things make in recovering their equipoise.

We may indeed avoid a war if we will adopt the rickety children of our neighbours : if we will only build a house of peers we may live quietly in our own.

BAÑOS.

A peerage I consider as the parkpaling of de-



spotism; arranged to keep in creatures tame and wild for diversion and luxury, and to keep out the people. Kings are to peerages, what poles are to ropedancers, enabling them to play their tricks above the heads of the people with greater confidence and security\*. The wisest and the most independent of the English parliaments declared the thing useless. If the opinion of that nation is now favorable to it, let us respect it, but let us also teach that nation to respect ours, always less biassed by private interests and less addicted to party. The principal gods of antiquity had each his favorite tree; and some nations too, the English for example, theirs...the oak. The Spaniard has rather the qualities of the cedar: patient of cold and heat, nourished on little, lofty and dark, unbending and incorruptible.

Nothing should stand between the people and the chief magistrate: the laws alone should be checks: a free people can acknowledge no other. In these religion is included, which indeed is the great law-head whence they all emanate. It is written in the heart of every man; but it is often

\* This (as must be evident from the Commentary of judge Blackstone, and from the sermons of many dignitaries of the church) is inapplicable to England.

so misspelt as to become a matter of contest, by the notaries that would traffic in transcribing it.

The French, ridiculous as it may appear, would be our teachers. Let us not envy them the facility with which they build up constitutions and pull them down again, with which they take oaths and counter-oaths, with which while they violate honesty they declaim on honour; let us only ask of them who of their most applauded public men has not been both traitor and perjurer; who among them has not been the deserter of his country or its deluder. Ingratitude, the most odious of crimes in other countries, is not even a blemish there: the sign of the cross laid over the uniform heals it perfectly. Read over the list of marshals: which of them has not abandoned his benefactor? which of them does not drink to the health of Louis from wine poured out to them by Napoleon?

Dignity without pride was formerly the characteristic of greatness: the revolution in morals is completed, and it is now pride without dignity. Republics give commissions for robbery, and despots give keys to secure it; so that every thief, issuing from the foul and slippery allies of politics, is glad to creep under the ermine. Look again at the French marshals, whose heads are now peeping out from it, in quest of fresh plunder! to

which of all the number does not my remark apply, even of those whose palms and foreheads are the least deeply branded?

France is strong by the weakness of Spain, in some degree; and the elder branch of the Bourbons has always had the means of inculcating this truth on the younger, and of indemnifying it for its acquiescence: if your people are flourishing they will be strong; if they are strong they will be turbulent: the richer they are, the poorer will you be. Let them recover their rights, as they call them, and you will lose your mines and your chases. The most wretched nations make the most splendid kings, as the thinnest rags the most lustrous paper.

ALPUENTE.

England, I trust, will exert her influence and her authority. She loses what France gains.

BAÑOS.

There are two which you cannot trust at once; Experience and England. She seems resolved to adopt the principles of the holy alliance; her king, it is said, has approved them, and has expressed his regret that the Constitution did not permit him to enter into the confederacy: the first time, I believe, that a king of England has openly regretted the precautions imposed on him, by the

constitution which placed his family on the throne. If we should go farther than we have done, if we should vote, on proofs of treason, that our king has abdicated his, will England condemn in us what in herself she glorifies? No, England will not condemn us, but her government will abandon us.

## ALPUENTE.

Yet at this moment she could obtain from us more than all her wars have given her. By the cession of a fortress, from which she derives no other advantage than the appointment of an old drowsy governor to about one hundred thousand crowns yearly, she might possess our African harbours, which alone would give her the dominion both of the Atlantic sea and of the Mediterranean: she might also, for other trifling sacrifices, which in the end would strengthen and enrich her, be mistress of that American island which secures and provisions all the others, if well managed, and which gives her advantages, beyond her calculation, in those dreadful conflicts that must decide hereafter whether the mother or the daughter shall be mistress of the seas.

## BANOS.

Spain once ruled them; England rules them

now: Spain was as confident that her supremacy would be eternal as England now is. From the time that we adopted a French family and French principles we began to decay, and it is in vain that purblind politicians seek the germs of our corruption in America. Let us, Alpuente, rather look to that country for regeneration. There the Spaniard shoots up again: there also we perhaps may lay our bones at last.

ALPUENTE.

Eighty years have thrown their burden upon mine: they are not worth the freight. I can still watch for my country: I can still mount guard. No voice is such an incentive to valour as the feeble voice of age; neither flag nor trumpet marshals it, like a man of eighty dead on his threshold.

# CONVERSATION XV.

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HENRY VIII

AND

ANNE BOLEYN.

## HENRY VIII

AND

## ANNE BOLEYN.

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HENRY.

Dost thou know me, Nanny, in this yeoman's dress? Blood! does it require so long and vacant a stare to recollect a husband, after a week or two? No tragedy-tricks with me! a scream, a sob, or thy kerchief a trifle the wetter, were enough. Why! verily the little fool faints in earnest. These whey faces, like their kinsfolk the ghosts, give us no warning. Hast had water enough upon thee? take that then...art thyself again?

ANNE.

Father of mercies! do I meet again my husband, as was my last prayer on earth! do I behold my beloved lord...in peace...and pardoned, my partner in eternal bliss! It was his voice. I cannot

see him...why cannot I? O why do these pangs interrupt the transports of the blessed!

HENRY.

Thou openest thy arms: faith! I came for that: Nanny, thou art a sweet slut\*: thou groanest,

\* Henry was not unlearned, nor indifferent to the costlier externals of a gentleman, but in manners and language he was hardly on a level with our ostlers of the present day. He was fond of bearbaitings and other such amusements in the midst of the rabble, and would wrestle with Francis I. His reign is one continued proof, flaring and wearisome as a Lapland summer-day, that even the English form of government, under a sensual king with money at his disposal, may serve only to legitimize injustice. The Constitution was still insisted on, in all its original strength and purity, by those who had abolished many of its fundamental laws, and had placed the remainder at the discretion of the king. It never has had a more zealous advocate than Empson. This true patriot of legitimacy requested on his trial, that, "if he and Dudley were punished, it might not be divulged to other nations, lest they should infer that the final dissolution of the English government was approaching."

On the government and king, only one opinion now subsists: but perhaps there are some who, from malignity or scanty knowledge, doubt the innocence of Anne Boleyn. In fact she was too innocent for her station. The frank and unsuspecting gaiety of her temper, the restless playfulness of high spirits, which we often saw formerly in the families of country gentlemen, first captivated the affections and afterwards raised the jealousy of Henry. There is no instance in any public trial (not even where the defendant was acquitted) of accusations so improbable and ill-supported. Those who entertain no doubt whatever of her purity, acknowledge her indiscretion: but if indiscretion is far removed from all indecency, from all injury to others, why censure it? What



wench: art in labour? Faith! among the mistakes of the night, I am ready to think almost that thou hast been drinking, and that I have not.

ANNE.

God preserve your Highness: grant me your forgiveness for one slight offence: my eyes were heavy; I fell asleep while I was reading; I did not know of your presence at first, and when I did I could not speak. I strove for utterance; I wanted no respect for my liege and husband.

HENRY.

My pretty warm nestling, thou wilt then lie! thou wert reading and aloud too, with thy saintly cup of water by thee, and...what! thou art still girlishly fond of those dried cherries!

ANNE.

I had no other fruit to offer your Highness the first time I saw you, and you were then pleased to invent for me some reason why they should be

they call indiscretion in an unfortunate queen they would call affability in a fortunate one. Lightness of spirits, which had made all about her happy the whole course of her life, made her so the last day of it. Nothing I have written or could write on her, is so affecting as the few words she spoke to the constable of the tower, "*laughing heartily.*" She was beheaded on the nineteenth of May, and Henry on the morrow married Jane Seymour.

acceptable. I did not dry these: may I present them, such as they are? we shall have fresh next month.

HENRY.

Thou art always driving away from the discourse. One moment it suits thee to know me, another not.

ANNE.

Remember, it is hardly three months since I miscarried\*; I am still weak and liable to swoons.

HENRY.

Thou hast however thy bridal cheeks, with lustre upon them when there is none elsewhere, and obstinate lips, resisting all impression: but, now thou talkest about miscarrying, who is the father of that boy?

ANNE.

Yours and mine... he who has taken him to his

\* Anne Boleyn miscarried of a son January the twenty-ninth, 1536: the king concluded from this event that his marriage was disagreeable to God. He had abundance of conclusions for believing that his last marriage was disagreeable to God, whenever he wanted a fresh one, and was ready in due time to give up this too with the same resignation; but he never had any *conclusions* of doing a thing disagreeable to God when a divorce or decapitation was in question. Cruelty, which, if not the only sin, is certainly the greatest, has been overlooked as one altogether by the zealots of religion.

own home, before (like me) he could struggle or cry for it.

HENRY.

Pagan, or worse, to talk so! He did not come into the world alive: there was no baptism.

ANNE.

I thought only of our loss: my senses are still confounded. I did not give him my milk, and yet I loved him tenderly; for I often fancied, had he lived, how contented and joyful he would have made you and England.

HENRY.

No subterfuges and escapes... I warrant, thou canst not say, whether at my enterance, thou wert waking or wandering.

ANNE.

Faintness and drowsiness came upon me suddenly.

HENRY.

Well, since thou really and truly sleepest, what didst dream of?

ANNE.

I begin to doubt whether I did indeed sleep.

HENRY.

Ha! false one... never two sentences of truth together... but come, what didst think about, asleep or awake?

ANNE.

I thought that God had pardoned me my offences, and had received me unto him.

HENRY.

And nothing more?

ANNE.

That all my prayers had been heard, and that all my wishes were accomplishing: the angels alone can enjoy more beatitude than this.

HENRY.

Vexatious little devil! she says nothing now about me, merely from perverseness... Hast thou never thought about me, nor about thy falsehood and adultery?

ANNE.

If I had committed any kind of falsehood, in regard to you or not, I should never have rested until I had thrown myself at your feet and obtained your pardon: but if ever I had been guilty of that other crime, I know not whether I should have dared to implore it, even of God's mercy.

HENRY.

Thou hast heretofore cast some soft glances upon Smeaton; hast thou not?

ANNE.

He taught me to play on the virginals, as you

know, when I was little, and thereby to please your Highness.

HENRY.

And Brereton and Norris, what have they taught thee?

ANNE.

They are your servants, and trusty ones.

HENRY.

Has not Weston told thee plainly that he loved thee?

ANNE.

Yes; and...

HENRY.

What didst thou?

ANNE.

I defied him.

HENRY.

Is that all?

ANNE.

I could have done no more if he had told me that he hated me. Then indeed I should have incurred more justly the reproaches of your Highness: I should have smiled.

HENRY.

We have proofs abundant: they shall one and all confront thee...aye, clap thy hands and kiss my sleeve, harlot!

ANNE.

O that so great a favour is vouchsafed me! my honour is secure; my husband will be happy again; he will see my innocence.

HENRY.

Give me now an account of the monies thou hast received from me, within these nine months: I want them not back: they are letters of gold in record of thy guilt. Thou hast had no fewer than fifteen thousand pounds within that period, without even thy asking; what hast done with it, wanton?

ANNE.

I have regularly placed it out to interest.

HENRY.

Where? I demand of thee.

ANNE.

Among the needy and ailing. My lord archbishop has the account of it, sealed by him weekly\*: I also had a copy myself: those who took away

\* The duke of Norfolk obtained an order that the archbishop of Canterbury should retire to his palace of Lambeth on the queen's trial. Burnet says that she had distributed, in the last nine months of her life, between fourteen and fifteen thousand pounds among the poor; a sum equal in value to nearly ten times the amount at present. It tends to prove how little she could have reserved for vanities or for favorites.

my papers may easily find it, for there are few others, and all the rest lie open.

HENRY.

Think on my munificence to thee; recollect who made thee...dost sigh for what thou hast lost?

ANNE.

I do indeed.

HENRY.

I never thought thee ambitious; but thy vices creep out one by one.

ANNE.

I do not regret that I have been a queen and am now no longer so, nor that my innocence is called in question by those who never knew me: but I lament that the good people, who loved me so cordially, hate and curse me; that those who pointed me out to their daughters for imitation, check them when they speak about me; and that he whom next to God I have served with most devotion, is my accuser. O my lord, my husband, and king! the judgements of God are righteous: on this surely we all must think alike.

HENRY.

And what then? speak out...again I command thee, speak plainly...thy tongue was not so torpid but this moment.

ANNE.

If any doubt remains upon your royal mind of your equity in this business; should it haply seem possible to you that passion or prejudice, in yourself or another, may have warped so strong an understanding, do but supplicate the Almighty to strengthen and enlighten it, and he will hear you.

HENRY.

What! thou wouldst fain change thy quarters, aye?

ANNE.

My spirit is detached and ready, and I shall change them shortly, whatever your Highness may determine.

HENRY.

Yet thou appearest hale and resolute, and (they tell me) smirkest and smilest to them all.

ANNE.

The withered leaf catches the sun sometimes, little as it can profit by it; and I have heard stories of the breeze, that sets in when daylight is about to close, and how constant it is, and how refreshing. My heart indeed is now sustained strangely: it became the more sensibly so from that time forward, when power and grandeur and all things terrestrial were sunk from sight. Every act of kindness from those about me gives me satisfac-



tion and pleasure, such as I did not feel formerly. I was worse before God chastened me; yet I was never an ingrate. What pains have I taken to find out the village-girls, who placed their posies in my chamber ere I arose in the morning! how gladly would I have recompensed the forester who lit up a brake on my birthnight, which else had warmed him half the winter! But these are times past: I was not queen of England.

HENRY.

Nor adulterous, nor heretical.

ANNE.

God be praised!

HENRY.

Learned saint, thou knowest nothing of the lighter, but perhaps canst inform me about the graver of them.

ANNE.

Which may it be, my liege?

HENRY.

Which may it be, pestilence! I marvel that the walls of this tower do not crack around us at such impiety.

ANNE.

I would be instructed by the wisest of theologians; such is your Highness.

HENRY.

Are the sins of the body, foul as they are, comparable to those of the soul?

ANNE.

When they are united they must be worst.

HENRY.

Go on, go on: thou pushest thy own breast against the sword: God has deprived thee of thy reason for thy punishment. I must hear more; proceed, I charge thee.

ANNE.

An aptitude to believe one thing rather than another from ignorance or weakness, or from the more persuasive manner of the teacher, or from his purity of life, or from the strong impression of a particular text at a particular time, and various things besides, may influence and decide our opinion; and the hand of the Almighty, let us hope, will fall gently on human fallibility.

HENRY.

Opinion in matters of faith! rare wisdom! rare religion! Troth! Anne, thou hast well sobered me: I came rather warmly and lovingly; but those light ringlets, by the holy rood, shall not shade this shoulder much longer. Nay, do not start; I tapp it for the last time, my sweetest.

If the Church permitted it, thou shouldst set forth on the long journey with the eucharist between thy teeth, however loth.

ANNE.

Love your Elizabeth, my honoured Lord, and God bless you! She will soon forget to call me; do not chide her; think how young she is\*.

Could I, could I kiss her, but once again! it would comfort my heart... or break it.

\* Elizabeth was not quite three years old at her mother's death, being born the seventh of September, 1533.

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It does not appear that the Defender of the Faith brought his wife to the scaffold for the good of her soul, nor that she was pregnant at the time, which would have added much to the merit of the action, as there is the probability that the child would have been heretical. Caspar Scioppius, who flourished in the same century, says, in his *Classicum belli sacri*, that the children of heretics should not be pardoned, lest, if they grow up, they be implicated in the wickedness of their parents, and perish eternally.

Literature and Religion seem to have been contending one hundred years unintermittingly, which of them should be most efficient in banishing all humanity and all civility from the world, the very things which it was their business to propagate and preserve, and without which they not only are useless but pernicious. Scioppius stood as bottle-holder to both in all their most desperate attacks. He, who

was so munificent to children, in little faggots, little swords, and little halters, gave also a *christmas-box* to our king James I. *Alexipharmacum regium felli draconum et veneno aspidum, sub Philippi Mornæi de Plessis nuperâ papalûs historiâ abdito, appositum, et serenissimo Domino, Jacobo Magnæ Britannæ regi, strenæ Januariæ loco, muneri missum.* From the inexhaustible stores of his generosity, he made another such present to this monarch. *Collyrium Regium, Britannæ regi, graviter ex oculis laboranti, muneri missum.*

Sir Henry Wootton, who found him in Madrid, to requite him for his *christmas-box* and box of salve, ordered him to be whipped without a metaphor; on which Lavanda says, *Quid Hispane calleat Scioppius haud scio; si quid tamen istius linguæ in ipso fuit, tunc opinor exseruit maxime quando in Hispaniâ Anglice vapulavit.*

The remedies of Henry were more infallible, and his gifts more royal.

# CONVERSATION XVI.

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LORD CHESTERFIELD

AND

LORD CHATHAM

# LORD CHESTERFIELD

AND

# LORD CHATHAM.

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CHESTERFIELD.

IT is true, my lord, we have not always been of the same opinion, or, to use a better, truer, and more significant expression, of the same *side* in politics, yet I never heard a sentence from your Lordship which I did not listen to with deep attention. I understand that you have written some pieces of admonition and advice to a young relative: they are mentioned as being truly excellent: I wish I could have profited by them when I was composing mine on a similar occasion.

CHATHAM.

My lord, you certainly would not have done it, even supposing they contained, which I am far from believing, any topics that could have escaped your penetrating view of manners and morals; for your Lordship and I set out diversely from the

very threshold. Let us then rather hope that what we both have written, with an equally good intention, may produce its due effect; which indeed, I am afraid, may be almost as doubtful, if we consider how ineffectual were the cares and exhortations, and even the daily example and high renown, of the most zealous and prudent men, on the life and conduct of their children and disciples. Let us however hope the best rather than fear the worst, and believe that there never was a right thing done or a wise one spoken in vain, although the fruit of them may not spring up in the place designated or at the time expected.

CHESTERFIELD.

Pray, if I am not taking too great a freedom, give me the outline of your plan.

CHATHAM.

Willingly, my lord: but since a greater man than either of us has laid down a more comprehensive one, containing all I could bring forward, would it not be preferable to consult it? I differ in nothing from Locke, unless it be that I would recommend the lighter as well as the graver part of the ancient classics, and the constant practise of imitating them in early youth. This is no change in the system, and no larger an addition than a woodbine to a sacred grove.

CHESTERFIELD.

I do not admire Mr. Locke.

CHATHAM.

Nor I: he is too simply grand for admiration: I contemplate and revere him. Equally deep and clear, he is both philosophically and grammatically the most elegant of English writers.

CHESTERFIELD.

If I expressed by any motion of limb or feature my surprise at this remark, your Lordship I hope will pardon me a slight and involuntary transgression of my own precept. I must entreat you, before we move a step further in our inquiry, to inform me whether I am really to consider him, in style, the most elegant of our prose authors.

CHATHAM.

Your Lordship is capable of forming an opinion on this point certainly no less correct than mine.

CHESTERFIELD.

Pray assist me.

CHATHAM.

Education and grammar are surely the two dryest of all subjects on which a conversation can turn: yet, if the ground is not promiscuously sown, if what ought to be clear is not covered, if what ought to be covered is not bare, and above all if the plants are choice ones, we may spend a



few moments on it not unpleasantly. It appears then to me, that elegance in prose composition is mainly this: a just admission of topics and of words; neither too many nor too few of either; enough of sweetness in the sound to induce us to enter and sit still; enough of illustration and reflection to change the posture of our minds when they would tire, and enough of sound matter in the complex to repay us for our attendance. I could perhaps be more logical in my definition, and more concise; but am I at all erroneous?

CHESTERFIELD.

I see not that you are.

CHATHAM.

My ear is well satisfied with Locke: I find nothing idle or redundant in him.

CHESTERFIELD.

But, in the opinion of you graver men, would not some of his principles lead too far?

CHATHAM.

The danger is that few will be led by them far enough: most who begin with him stop short, and, pretending to find pebbles in their shoes, throw themselves down upon the ground and complain of their guide.

CHESTERFIELD.

What then can be the reason why Plato, so

much less intelligible, is so much more quoted and applauded?

CHATHAM.

The difficulties we never trie are no difficulties to us. Those who are upon the summit of a mountain know in some measure its altitude, by comparing it with all objects around; but those who stand at the bottom and never mounted it, can compare it with few only, and with those imperfectly: so fares it with Plato and his readers on one side, and with Plato and his talkers on the other. Until a short time ago I could have conversed more fluently about him than I can at present: I had read all the titles to his dialogues and several scraps of commentary; these I have now forgotten, and am indebted to long attacks of the gout for what I have acquired instead.

CHESTERFIELD.

A very severe school-master! I hope he allows a long vacation.

CHATHAM.

Severe he is indeed, and although he sets no example of regularity, he exacts few observances and teaches many things. Without him I should have had less patience, less learning, less reflection, less leisure; in short, less of every thing but of sleep.

## CHESTERFIELD.

Plato, I see from the Latin version, lies open on the table: the paragraphs marked with pencil, I presume, are fine passages.

## CHATHAM.

I have noted those only which appeared reprehensible, and chiefly where he is disingenuous and malicious.

## CHESTERFIELD.

They indeed ought to be the most remarkable of all in the works of a philosopher. If the malice is against those who are thought greater or as great, it goes towards the demonstration that they are so: if on the contrary the objects of it are inferior to himself, he cannot take them up without raising them: unworthy of notice, they are greatly more unworthy of passion. Surely no philosopher would turn to an opposite conclusion from that which in the commencement he had designed to prove; as here he must do.

## CHATHAM.

He avoids all open hostility to Democritus and Xenophon and Aristoteles, but I fancy I have detected him in more than one dark passage, with a dagger in his hand and a bitter sneer on his countenance. I know not whether it has been observed before that these words are aimed at the

latter, the citizen of another state and the commentator of other laws.

Οὐδ' ἐπιθυμία σε ἄλλης πόλεως οὐδ' ἄλλων νόμων ἔλασεν εἰδέναι, ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς σοι ἱκανοὶ ἦμεν καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα πόλις.

The compliment is more injurious to Socrates, for whom it was intended, than the insinuation to Aristoteles. But the prime object of his hatred, open here and undissembled, is Prodicus, author of the beautiful allegory in which Pleasure and Virtue offer themselves to the choice of Hercules. In one place he mentions him with Polus and many others: the least difficult and least ingenious of malignant expressions, where great genius is the subject of calumny and invective. One hardly could imagine that he had the assurance and effrontery to call Epicharmus the chief of comic writers, before a people who that very day perhaps had been at a comedy of Aristophanes. The talent of Epicharmus lay in puns and ribaldry, and Hiero punished him for immodest conversation.

#### CHESTERFIELD.

I have read somewhere that, when Plato was young, it was predicted of him, from his satirical vein, that he would become in time a substitute for Archilochus.

CHATHAM.

Athenæus, I think, has recorded it. I do not find so much wit as I expected; and, to speak plainly, his wit is the most tiresome and dull part of him: for who can endure a long series of conversations full of questions to entrap a sophist? Why not lead us to the trap at once by some unexpected turn? There is more ingenuity and more gracefulness in a single paper of the *Spectator*, than in six or eight of these dialogues, in all which, excepting the *Phædo*, I was disappointed.

CHESTERFIELD.

The language is said to be very masterly and sonorous.

CHATHAM.

Αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχει, καὶ οὐδέποτε οὐδαμῶς ἀλλοίωσιν οὐδέμιαν ἐνδέχεται. *Phædo*.

CHESTERFIELD.

Come, come, my lord; do not attempt to persuade me, that an old woman's charm to cure a corn or remove a wart, or a gypsey-girl's to catch a sixpence, is Plato's Greek.

CHATHAM.

Look yourself.

CHESTERFIELD.

I have forgotten the characters pretty nearly:

faith! they appear to me, from what I can pick up, to correspond with the sounds you gave them. Jupiter, it is said by the ancients, would have spoken no other language than that of Plato: if ever Jupiter uttered such sounds as these, it could be only when he was crossing the Hellespont.

CHATHAM.

What do you think of this jingle? *Πρῶτον εὐλαβηθῶμέν τι πάθος μὴ παθῶμεν.*

CHESTERFIELD.

I really thought that his language was accurate and harmonious to the last degree.

CHATHAM.

Generally it is so: his language is the best of him. We moderns are still children in our tongues, at least we English. For my own part, I always spoke in parliament what I considered the most effectual to persuade my hearers, without a care or a thought touching the structure of my sentences: but knowing that the ancient orators and writers laid the first foundation of their glory upon syllables, I was surprised to find no fewer than nine short ones together in this ambitious and eloquent author... *ἄνδρας ἀποδοδουμακίους*. Phædo. The accents, which were guides to them, although unwritten, may have taken off somewhat from this peculiarity, and may have been a sort of support

to the feebleness of the sound. No modern language can admitt the concourse of so many such; and the Latin was so inadequate to the supply of them, that it produced, I believe, but one gal-  
liambic in the times of its strength and fertility, which poena required them in greater numbers, and closer together than any other, but did not receive nine conjointly.

## CHESTERFIELD.

Cicero was himself a trifer in cadences, and whoever thinks much about them will become so, if indeed the very thought when it enters is not trifling.

## CHATHAM.

I am not sure that it is; for an orderly and sweet sentence, by gaining our ear, conciliates our affections; and the voice of a beggar has often more effect upon us than his distress. Your mention of Cicero on this occasion, reminds me of his *O fortunatam natam me consule Romam*. Playful as he was in his vanity, I do not believe the verse is his: but Plato wrote *ἀλλὰ κατ' αὐτοῦς αὐ τοὺς δεῖν οὐς ἔβραζ τὰῖρα, &c.* As for wit, what think you of this? *I am ready, O Socrates, to give myself up to the strangers, to flea me worse than they flea me now, if the fleaing ends not in a hide, as that of Mar-syas did, but in virtue.* Or what think you of a

project to make a doll and dedicate it to Memory? The stuff that follows is worse still. Towards the end of the volume, in the *Gorgias*, Polus says to Socrates, *Do not you see Archelaus, son of Perdiccas, reigning over the Macedonians?* to which Socrates replies, *If I do not see him, I hear of him.*

In the beginning of the same dialogue, Gorgias, at the request of Socrates to be brief, assents to his propositions, twice, by using the monosyllable: whereupon Socrates says, *I admire your replies, Gorgias: they are as short as they can be.* If the same monosyllable had been the answer to several questions in succession, and if those questions had been complicated and intricate, then, and then only, the remark had been wellplaced.

You remember, my Lord, the derivations made by Swift, of *Agamemnon*, and other names of heroes. These are hardly more absurd and ridiculous than almost all made by Plato, and attributed with great complacency to Socrates, of the same and similar, and are much less literal. It is incredible how erroneous were the most learned, both among the Greeks and Romans, on the origin of words.

## CHESTERFIELD.

I have heard it reported that our own lexico-



graphers are subject to the same animadversion: but I can judge more adequately of bad reasoning or bad wit.

## CHATHAM.

A very little of the latter tires and nauseates; but in the former there is generally something to exercise the ingenuity. I have seen persons who could employ a moment or two unreluctantly in straightening a crooked nail: with about the same labour and interest I would hammer upon an inexact thought. Here is one, which I wonder that Cicero, in mentioning the dialogue, has failed to remark. Our philosopher divides rhetoric into the true and the false; as if any part of a definition or description were to be founded on the defects of what is defined or described. Rhetoric may be turned to good or bad purposes; but this is no proof or indication that it must be divided into good and bad: the use of a thing is not the thing itself; how then is the abuse?

The wit of Plato's dialogues is altogether of a single kind, and of that which in a continuance is the least welcome; for irony is akin to cavil; and cavil, as the best wit either is goodnatured or wears the appearance of goodnature, is nearly its antipode. Plato has neither the grace of Xenophon nor the gravity of Cicero, who tempers it

admirably with urbanity and facetiousness. The characteristic of my author is, the dexterity and ease with which he supports and shifts an argument, and exhibits it in all its phases. Nevertheless, a series of interrogations, long as he draws them out for this purpose, would weary me in one dialogue; he continues them in twenty, with people of the same description, on the same subjects.

## CHESTERFIELD.

It is rather an idle thing, for an old gentleman in a purple robe, to be sticking pins in every chair on which a sophist is likely to sit down; and rather a tiresome and cheerless one, to follow and stand by him, day after day, in the cold, laying gins for tom-tits.

## CHATHAM.

In general, I own, he did so: but both he and Aristoteles turned occasionally their irony (of which indeed the latter had little) where irony is best employed; against false piety, against that which would be the substitute and not the support of morality.

The Greek language, more courteous than the Roman or the French or ours, and resembling in this property the Italian, in addressing a person, had ready, among other terms, *ὦ θαυμάσιε* and *ὦ Βέλτιστε*. Socrates meets an orderly good man, who, from

respect to the laws, is going to accuse his own father of a capital crime, as he imagines it to be; and, doubting if he understood him, asks *ὁ πατήρ, ὡς βέλτιστε*; Aristoteles, in the eighth book of his Ethics, gravely says that children ought to see no indecent statue or picture, unless it represent some God committing the obscenity.

In regard to their philosophy, and indeed to that of the ancients in general, there was little of sound and salutary which they did not derive from Democritus or from Pythagoras; from the former Aristoteles drew most, from the latter Plato. Cicero says improperly of Socrates, what is repeated every day in schools and colleges, that he first drew down Philosophy into private houses: Pythagoras had done so, more systematically and more extensively. Upon his tenets and his discipline were founded many institutions of the earlier and quieter converts to christianity.

CHESTERFIELD.

There is, I remember, a very dangerous doctrine attributed to this Democritus whom you mentioned before him; he said that governments should have two supporters, rewards and punishments. Now twelve hangmen, and even twelve judges, may be paid: but Mansfield, I suspect, would committ any man to Bridewell or the pil-

lory, who had broached a declaration so seditious, as that people of ordinary business, unhired for it, should be paid for doing their duty. National debts, he would inform the jury, are not to be aggravated by such idle and superfluous expediture, encreased at any man's option.

## CHATHAM.

I know not what my lord Mansfield, a worse enemy to our constitution than even that degraded and despicable prince for whose service he was educated, may think or dictate on the subject, but among all the books I ever read in which rewards and punishments are mentioned, I never found one where the words come in any other order than this; rewards first, then punishments: a plain evidence and proof to my humble understanding, that in the same succession they present themselves to the unperverted mind. We mention them not only in regard to our polity, but in contemplation of a better state hereafter; and there too they occur to us as upon earth.

## CHESTERFIELD.

In the pleadings of Mansfield, in his charges, in his decisions, in his addresses to parliament, I have heard nothing so strikingly true as these observations of your Lordship, and I wish I had heard nothing so novel.

## CHATHAM.

I, in the name of our country, unite with you, my lord, in this wish. Let us trace again the more innocent wanderings of a greater man, I know not whether less prejudiced, but certainly less profligate and corrupt.

Socrates in the *Gorgias* is represented as saying, that he believes the soul and body both to exist in another state, although separately; the body just as it was in life, with all its infirmities, wounds, and distortions. This would be great injustice; for hence a long life, rendered so by frugality and temperance, would acquire, in part of its recompense, the imbecility of age, with deafness, blindness, and whatever else is most afflictive and oppressive in that condition. The soul carries upon its back the marks of floggings and bruises and scars, contracted by perjuries on earth, and by the delivery *in* court of unjust sentences; such I believe, in this place, the meaning of *ἀδικίας*, and not merely any common acts of injustice. The utility of such exposures in another life, he says, arises from example to others. But in what manner can they profit by this example? from what wickedness can they be deterred by these scenes of terror? Ideas as idly fanciful, as childishly silly, as his description of the infernal rivers, which

he derived from the poets, and which, without line or level, he led over places just as unfruitful afterwards as before. Returning to this strange body of his, it cannot be supposed an inert substance: the words *after death* mean *after this life upon earth*. If he would say that it were inert, he must suppose it to be motionless: when did it become so? Strange that it should have motion to reach Tartarus and should then lose it. If so, of what use could it be? He does not say it, nor mean it, I imagine.

CHESTERFIELD.

On some occasions, it appears, he leaves off meaning very abruptly.

CHATHAM.

It is not wonderful or strange that Aristoteles should ridicule his vagaries. Nothing can be more puerile and contemptible than the ideas he attributes to Socrates on future punishments: among the rest, that the damned appeal by name to those whom they have slain or wronged, and are dragged backwards and forwards from Tartarus to Cocytus and Periphlegethon, until the murdered or injured consent to pardon them. So the crime is punished, not according to its heinousness, but according to the kindness or severity of those who suffered by it. Now the greater crime is com-

mitted in having slain or injured the generous and kind man; the greater punishment is inflicted for injuring or slaying the ungenerous and unkind.

He was fond of puns too, and the worst and commonest, those on names. Ἦρεσαν οὖν μοι καὶ ἐν τῷ μύθῳ ὁ Πρῶμηθεὺς μᾶλλον τοῦ Ἐπιμηθέως, ᾧ χρώμενος ἐγὼ καὶ προμηθεύμενος, &c. and below ἀλλὰ Καλλιὰ τῷ καλιῷ, &c.

The worst is, that he attributes the silliest of sophistry and the basest of malignity to Socrates. A wise and virtuous man may have the misfortune to be at variance with a single great author among his contemporaries; but neither a virtuous nor a wise one can be drawn into hostilities against all the best: he to whom this happens must be imprudent or weak or wicked. Impudence may prompt some to tell you, that, with prodigious manliness and self-devotion, they hazard to cut their feet and break their shins by stemming the current, but that the perilous state of literature calls aloud on them, and that they encounter it equally for the public good, and the correction of the weak writer: but the public good, in my opinion, is ill promoted by telling men that all their other teachers are worth nothing, and that to be contented is to be dull, to be pleased is to be foolish; nor have I remarked or heard of any instance where morals have been improved by scurrility,

diffidence calmed, encouraged, sustained, and led forth, by violence, or genius exalted by contempt. I am sorry that this very great man should have partaken the infirmities of the very least in their worst propensities. This principally has induced me to shew you, that, within the few pages you see between my fingers, he has committed as grave faults in style and sentiment, not only as Prodicus, but (I will believe) as Polus. We hear from the unprejudiced, that Prodicus, like our master Locke, was exact in his definitions; we know that he arrived at the perfection of style; and our gratitude is due to him for one of the most beautiful works delivered to us from antiquity.

CHESTERFIELD.

Your Lordship has shewn me that a divine man, even with a swarm of bees from nose to chin, may cry loud and labour hard, and lay his quarter-staff about him in all directions, and still be a very indifferent buffoon.

CHATHAM.

Buffoonery is hardly the thing wherein a man of genius would be ambitious to excell; but, of all failures, to fail in a witticism is the worst; and the mishap is the more calamitous, in a drawn-out, detailed, and written one.



## CHESTERFIELD.

Plato falls over his own sword; not by hanging it negligently or loosely, but by stepping with it awkwardly; and the derision he incurs is proportionate to the gravity of his gait. Half the pleasure in the world arises from malignity, and little of the other half is free from its encroachments. Those who enjoyed his smartness and versatility of attack, laugh as heartily at him as with him, demonstrate that a great man upon the ground is lower than a little man upon his legs, and conclude that the light of imagination leads only to gulphs and precipices.

## CHATHAM.

We however, with greater wisdom and higher satisfaction, may survey him calmly and reverentially, as one of lofty, massy, comprehensive mind, whose failings myriads have partaken, whose excellences few; and we may consider him as an example, the more remarkable and striking to those we would instruct, for that very inequality and asperity of character, which many would exaggerate, and some conceal. Let us however rather trust Locke and Bacon; let us believe the one to be a wiser man, and the other both a wiser and better. I declare to you, I should have the

courage to say the same thing, if they were living, and expelled from court and Christchurch.

CHESTERFIELD.

We think more advantageously of artificial dignities while the bearers are living, more advantageously of real when they are dead.

CHATHAM.

The tomb is the pedestal of greatness. I make a distinction between God's great and the king's great.

CHESTERFIELD.

Very rightly. *Non bene convenient nec in una sede morantur.* So much the worse for both parties. Compliments are in their place only where there is full as much of weakness as of merit, so that when I express my admiration to your lordship, all idea of compliment must vanish. Permitt me then to say that I have always been much gratified at this among your other great qualities, that, possessing more wit than perhaps any man living, you have the moderation to use it rarely, and more often in friendship than in enmity.

CHATHAM.

Profligate men and pernicious follies may fairly and reasonably be exposed; light peculiarities may also be exhibited; but only in such a manner that he who gave the prototype would willingly take

the copy. But in general he who pursues another race of writers, is little better than a foxhunter who rides twenty miles from home for the sport : what can he do with his game when he has caught it? As he is only the servant of the dogs, so the satirist is only a caterer to the ferocious or false appetites of the most indiscriminating and brutal minds. Does he pretend that no exercise else is good for him? he confesses then an unsoundness in a vital part.

## CHESTERFIELD.

Reflections such as these induced me long ago to prefer the wit of Addison and La Fontaine to all other: it is more harmless, more gay, and more insinuating.

## CHATHAM.

Our own language contains in it a greater quantity and a greater variety of wit and humour, than all the rest of all ages and countries, closing only Cervantes, the Homer of irony, and not only of sharper and better-tempered wit than he who lies before me, but even of an imagination more vivid and poetical, a sounder too and shrewder philosopher. It must be conceded that we moderns are but slovens in composition, or ignorant for the most part of its regulations and laws; but we may insist that there have been amongst us those,

to whom, in all the higher magistratures of intellect, the gravest of them would have risen up, and whom they would have placed with proper deference at their side.

## CHESTERFIELD.

I am happy, my lord, and grateful to you, that the conversation has taken a different turn from what I had expected. I came to receive some information from you on what might be profitable in the education of the young, and you have given me some which could be greatly so in that of the old. My system, I know, cannot be quite according to your sentiments, but as no man living hath a nobler air or a more dignified demeanour than your Lordship, I shall be flattered by hearing that what I have written on politeness meets in some degree your approbation.

## CHATHAM.

I believe you are right, my lord. What is superficial in politeness, what we see oftenest, and what people generally admire most, must be laid upon a cold breast or will not stand: but whatever is most graceful in it can be produced only by the movements of the heart.

## CHESTERFIELD.

I believe these movements are to be imitated, and as easily as those of the feet; and that all

good actors must beware of being moved too much from within. My lord, I do not enquire of you whether that huge quarto is the bible, for I see the letters on the back.

CHATHAM.

I did not imagine your Lordship was so religious: I am heartily glad to witness your veneration for a book, which, to say nothing of its holiness or authority, contains more specimens of genius and of taste than any other volume in existence.

CHESTERFIELD.

I kissed it from no such motive: I kissed it preparatorily to swearing on it, as your Lordship's power and credit is from this time forward at my mercy, that I never will divulge, so help me God! the knowledge I possess of your reading Greek and philosophy.

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Lord Chatham left two sons: one inherited his pension, the other his power, neither of them his virtues, his manners, or his abilities; yet each fancied that he had the better part of the inheritance.

**CONVERSATION XVII.**

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**ARISTOTELES**

**AND**

**CALLISTHENES.**

ARISTOTELES  
AND  
CALLISTHENES.

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ARISTOTELES.

I REJOICE, O Callisthenes, at your return; and the more as I see you in the dress of your country, while others, who appear to me of the lowest rank, by their language and their physiognomy, are arrayed in the Persian robe, and mix the essence of rose with pitch.

CALLISTHENES.

I thank the Gods, O Aristoteles, that I embrace you again; that my dress is a Greek one and an old one; that the conquests of Alexander have cost me no shame, and have encumbered me with no treasures.

ARISTOTELES.

Jupiter! what then are all those tapestries, for

I will not call them dresses, which the slaves are carrying after you, in attendance (as they say) on your orders?

CALLISTHENES.

They are presents from Alexander to Xenocrates; by which he punishes, as he declared to the Macedonians, both me and you: and I am well convinced that the punishment will not terminate here, but that he, at once so irascible and so vindictive, will soon exercise his new dignity of godship, by breaking our heads, or, in the wisdom of his providence, by removing them an arm's length from our bodies.

ARISTOTELES.

On this subject we must talk again. He has really punished me by his splendid gifts to Xenocrates, for he obliges me also to send him the best tunic I have; and you know that in my wardrobe I am, as appears to many, unphilosophically splendid. There are indeed no pearls in this tunic, but golden threads pursue the most intricate and most elegant design, the texture is the finest of Miletus, the wool is the softest of Tarentum, and the purple is Hermionic. He will sell Alexander's dresses, and wear mine; the consequence of which will be imprisonment or scourges.



## CALLISTHENES.

A provident God forsooth in his benefits, our Alexander!

## ARISTOTELES.

Much to be pitied if ever he returns to his senses! Justly do we call barbarians the wretched nations that are governed by kings; and amongst them all the most deeply plunged in barbarism is the ruler. Let us take any favorable specimen; Cyrus for instance, or Cambyses, or this Alexander: for however much you and I may despise him, seeing him often and nearly, he will perhaps leave behind him as celebrated a name as they. He is very little amidst philosophers, but very great amidst monarchs. Is he not undoing with all his might, what every wise man, and indeed every man in the order of things, is most solicitous to do? namely, does he not abolish all kindly and affectionate intercourse? does he not draw a line of distinction (which of all follies and absurdities is the wildest and most pernicious) between fidelity and truth? In the hour of distress and misery the eye of every mortal turns to friendship: in the hour of gladness and conviviality what is our want? 'tis friendship. When the heart overflows with gratitude, or with any other sweet and sacred sentiment, what is the word to which

it would give utterance? *my friend*. Having thus displaced the right feeling, he finds it necessary to substitute at least a strong one. The warmth, which should have been diffused from generosity and mildness, must come from the spiceman, the vintner, and the milliner: he must be perfumed, he must be drunk, he must toss about shawl and tiara. One would imagine that his first passion, his ambition, had an object: yet, before he was a God, he prayed that no one afterwards might pass the boundaries of his expedition, and he destroyed at Abdera, and in other places, the pillars erected as memorials by the Argonauts and by Sesostri<sup>s</sup>\*.

Perhaps you were present, when Alexander ran

\* On the Argonautic expedition I had introduced a few remarks which interrupted the main current of the dialogue. The Greeks were fond of attributing to themselves all the great actions of remote antiquity: thus they feigned that Isis, *the daughter of Inachus*, taught the Egyptians laws and letters, &c. &c. I doubt whether the monuments and actions attributed to the Argonauts were not really those of Sesostri<sup>s</sup> or Osiris or some other eastern conqueror; and even whether *the tale of Troy divine* be not, in part at least, translated. Many principal names, evidently not Grecian, and the mention of a language spoken by the Gods, in which the rivers and other earthly things are called differently from what they are called among men, are the foundations of my belief. The Hindoos, the Egyptians, and probably the Phrygians, (a very priestly nation) had their learned language quite distinct from the vulgar.

around the tomb of Achilles in honour of his memory: if Achilles were now living, or any hero like him, Alexander would swear his perdition. Neither his affection for virtue nor his enmity to vice is pure or rational. Observation has taught me that we do not hate those who are worse than ourselves because they are worse, but because we are liable to injury from them, and because (as almost always is the case) they are preferred to us; while those who are better we hate purely for being so. After their decease, if we remitt our hatred, it is because then they are more like virtue in the abstract than virtuous men, and are fairly out of our way.

As for the wisdom of Alexander, I do not expect from a Macedonian the prudence of an Epaminondas or a Phocion; but educated by such a father as Philip, and having with him in his army so many veteran captains, it excited no small ridicule in Athens, when it was ascertained that he and Darius, then equally eager for combat, missed each other's army in Cilicia.

CALLISTHENES.

He has done great things, but with great means: the generals you mention overcame more difficulties with less, and never were censured for any failure from deficiency of foresight.

## ARISTOTELES.

There is as much difference between Epaminondas and Alexander as between the Nile and a winter torrent: in the latter there is more impetuosity, foam, and fury; more astonishment from spectators; but it is followed by devastation and barrenness: in the former there is an equable, a steady, and perennial course, swelling from its ordinary state only for the benefit of mankind, and subsiding only when that has been secured.

I have not mentioned Phocion so often as I ought to have done; but now, Callisthenes, I will acknowledge that I consider him as the greatest man upon earth. He foresaw long ago what has befallen our country; and while others were proving to you that your wife, if a good woman, should be at the disposal of your next neighbour, and that if you love your children you should procure them as many fathers as you can, Phocion was practising all the domestic and all the social duties.

## CALLISTHENES.

I have often thought that his style resembles yours...are you angry?

## ARISTOTELES.

I will not dissemble to you that mine was formed upon his. Polieuctus, by no means a friend to

him, preferred it openly to that of Demosthenes, for its brevity, its comprehensiveness, and its perspicuity. There is somewhat more of pomp and solemnity in Demosthenes, and perhaps of harmony, but in Phocion there is all the acuteness of Pericles, all the wit of Aristophanes. He conquered with few soldiers, and he convinced with few words... I know not what better description I could give you either of a great captain or great orator. Now imagine for a moment the mischief which the system of Plato; just alluded to, would produce. First that women should be common. We hear that amongst the Etrurians they were so, and perhaps they are so still; but of what illustrious action do we read, ever performed by that ancient people? Thousands of years have elapsed without a single instance on record, of courage or generosity. With us one word, altered only in its termination, signifies both *father* and *country*: can he who is ignorant of the one be solicitous about the other? Never was there a true patriot who was not also, if a father, a kind one: never was there a good citizen who was not also an obedient and reverential son. Strange, to be ambitious of pleasing the multitude, and indifferent to the delight we may afford to those most near

to us, our parents and our children! Ambition is indeed the most inconsiderate of passions, none of which are considerate; for the ambitious man, by the weakest inconsistency, proud as he may be of his faculties and impatient as he may be to display them, prefers the opinion of the ignorant to his own. He would be what others can make him, and not what he could make himself without them. Nothing in fact is consistent and unambiguous but virtue.

Plato would make wives common, to abolish selfishness! the very mischief which above all others it would directly and immediately bring forth. There is no selfishness where there is a wife and family: the house is lighted up by the mutual charities: every thing atchieved for them is a victory, every thing endured for them is a triumph. How many vices are suppressed, that there may be no bad example! how many exertions made, to recommend and inculcate a good one! Selfishness then is thrown out of the question. He would perhaps make men braver by his exercises in the common field of affections. Now bravery is of two kinds; the courage of instinct and the courage of reason: animals have more of the former, men more of the latter; for I would

not assert, what many do, that animals have no reason, as I would not that men have no instinct. Whatever creature can be taught, must be taught by the operation of reason upon reason, small as may be the quantity called forth, or employed in calling it, and of however coarse matter may be the means. Instinct has no operation but upon the wants and desires. Those who entertain a contrary opinion, are unaware how inconsequently they speak, when they employ such expressions as these, "*We are taught by instinct.*" Courage, so necessary to the preservation of states, is not weakened by domestic ties, but is braced by them. Much is gained both on the side of reason and on the side of instinct. All creatures protect their young while they know it to be theirs, and neglect it when the traces of that memory are erased. Man cannot so soon lose the memory of it, because his recollective faculties are more comprehensive and more tenacious, and because, while in the brute creation the parental love, which in most animals is only on the female side, lessens after the earlier days, his increases as the organs of the new creature are developed. There is a desire of property in the wisest and best men, which Nature seems to have implanted as conservative of her works, and which also is necessary to encourage and keep

alive the arts. Phidias and our friend Apelles would never have existed as the Apelles and Phidias they appear, if property (I am ashamed of the solecism which Plato now forces on me) were common. A part of his scheme indeed may be accomplished in select and small communities, holden together by some religious bond, as we find among the disciples of Pythagoras: but this incomparable man never taught his followers that prostitution is a virtue, much less that it is the summit of perfection. They revered him, and most deservedly, as a father . . . as what father? not such as Plato would fashion, but as a parent who had gained authority over his children, by his assiduous vigilance, his tender and peculiar care, in separating them, as far as possible, from whatever is noxious, in an intercourse with mankind.

To complete the system of selfishness, idleness, and licentiousness, the republican triad of Plato, nothing was wanting but to throw all property where he had thrown the wives and children. Who then should curb the rapacious? who should moderate the violent? The weaker could not work, the stronger would not. Food and raiment would fail; and we should be reduced to something worse than a state of nature; into a state of nature we can never be cast back, any more than



we can become children again. Civilization suddenly retrograde, generates at once the crimes and vices, not only of all its stages, but of the state anterior to it, without a single one of its advantages, if it indeed have any. Plato would make for ever all the citizens what we punish with death a single one for being once. He was a man of hasty fancy and slow reflection; more different from Socrates than the most violent of his adversaries. If he had said that in certain cases, a portion of landed property should be divided amongst the citizens, he had spoken sagely and equitably. After a long war, when a state is oppressed by debt, and when many, who have borne arms for their country, have also consumed their patrimony in its service, these, if they are fathers of families, should receive allotments from the estates of others who are not so, and who either were too young for warfare, or were occupied in less dangerous and more lucrative pursuits. It is also conducive to the public good, that no person should possess more than a certain and definite extent of land, to be limited by the population and produce: else the freedom of vote or the honesty of election must be extinguished, and the least active members of the community will occupy those places which require

the most activity. This is peculiarly needful in mercantile states, like ours, that every one may enjoy the prospect of becoming a landholder, and that the money accruing from the sale of what is curtailed on the larger properties, may again fall into commerce. A state may eventually be reduced to such distresses by war, even after victories, that it shall be expedient to deprive the rich of whatever they possess, beyond that which is requisite for the decent and frugal sustenance of a family. This extremity it is difficult to foresee; nor do I think it is arrived at, until the industrious and well-educated, in years of plenty, are unable by their best exertions to nourish and instruct their children . . . a speculative case, which it cannot be dangerous or mischievous to state; for certainly when it occurs, the sufferers will appeal to the laws and forces of Nature, and not to the schools of rhetoric or philosophy. No situation can be imagined more painful or more abominable than this: while many, and indeed most, are more so, than that to which the wealthier would be reduced in amending it; since they would lose no comforts, no conveniences, no graceful and unencumbering ornaments of life, and very few luxuries, all which would be abundantly compensated to the

generality of them, by smoothening their mutual pretensions, and by extinguishing the restless spirit of their rivalry.

## CALLISTHENES.

The visions of Plato have led to Reason : I marvel less that he should have been so extravagant, than that he should have scattered on that volume so little of what we admire in his shorter Dialogues.

## ARISTOTELES.

I respect his genius, which however has not accompanied all his steps in this discussion; nor indeed do I censure in him what has been condemned by Xenophon; who wonders that he should attribute to Socrates long dissertations on the soul, and other abstruse doctrines, when that singularly acute reasoner discoursed with his followers on topics only of plain utility. For it is requisite that important things should be attributed to important men; and a sentiment would derive but small importance from the authority of Crito or Phædo. A much greater fault is attributable to Xenophon himself, who has not even preserved the coarse features of nations and of ages in his *Cyropædia*.

A small circle of wise men should mark the

rise of mind, as the Egyptian priests marked the rise of their river, and should leave it chronicled in their temples. Cyrus should not discourse like Solon.

CALLISTHENES.

You must also then blame Herodotus.

ARISTOTELES.

If I blame Herodotus, whom can I commend? He reminds me of Homer by his facility and his variety, and by the suavity and fulness of his language. His view of history was, nevertheless, like that of the Asiatics, who write to instruct and please. Now truly there is little that could instruct, and less that could please us, in the actions and speeches of barbarians, from among whom the kings alone come forth visibly. Delightful tales and apposite speeches are the best things you could devise; and many of these undoubtedly were current in the East, and were collected by Herodotus; some, it is probable, were invented by him. It is of no importance to the world, whether the greater part of historical facts, in such countries, be true or false; but they may be rendered of the highest, by the manner in which a writer of genius shall represent them. If history were altogether true, it would be not only un-

dignified but unsightly: great orators would often be merely the mouthpieces of prostitutes, and great captains would be hardly more than the gladiators of buffoons. The prime movers of those actions which appall and shake the world, are generally the vilest things in it; and the historian, if he discovers them, must conceal them or hold them back.

## CALLISTHENES.

Pray tell me whether, since I left Athens, your literary men are busy.

## ARISTOTELES.

More than ever . . . as the tettinx chirps loudest in time of drought. Amongst them we have some excellent writers, and such as under Minerva will keep out the Persian tongue from the Piræus. Others are preferred to lucrative offices, are made ambassadors and salt-surveyors, and whatever else is most desirable to common minds, for proving the necessity of more effectual (such is always the preamble) and less changeful laws, such as those of the Medes and Indians. Several of these orators, whose grandfathers were in a condition little better than servile, have had our fortunes and lives at their disposal, and are now declaiming on the advantages of what they call *regular govern-*

*ment.* You would suppose they mean that perfect order which exists when citizens rule themselves, and when every family is to the republic what every individual is to the family; a system of mutual zeal and mutual forbearance. No such thing: they mean a government with themselves at the head, and such as may ensure to them impunity for their treasons and peculations. One of them a short time ago was to consult with Metanyctius, a leading man among the Thracians, in what manner, and by what instalments, a sum of money, advanced to the latter by our republic, should be repaid. Metanyctius burst into a loud fit of laughter on reading the first words of the decree. *Dine with me,* said he, *and we will conclude the business when we are alone.* The dinner was magnificent; which in all such business is the best economy: few contractors or financiers can afford to give a plain one. *Your republic,* said Metanyctius, *is no longer able to enforce its claim; and we are as little likely to want your assistance in future, as you would be inclined to afford it. A seventh of the amount is at my disposal: you shall possess it. I shall enjoy about the same emolument for my fidelity to my worthy masters. The return of*

*peace is so desirable, and regular government so divine a blessing, added to which, your countrymen are become of late so indifferent to inquiry into what the factions would call abuses, that, I pledge my experience, you will return amidst their acclamations and embraces.*

Our negotiator became one of the wealthiest men in the world, although wealth is now accumulated in some families to such an amount, as our ancestors, even in the age of Cræsus or of Midas, would have deemed incredible. For wars drive up riches in heaps, as winds drive up snows, making and concealing many abysses.

Metanyctius was the more provident and the more prosperous of the two. I know not in what king's interest he was, but probably the Persian's; be this as it may, it was resolved for the sake of good *understanding* (another new expression) and good neighbourhood, to abolish the name of republic throughout the world. This appeared an easy matter. Our negotiator rejoiced in the promise exacted from him, to employ all his address in bringing about a thing so desirable: for *republic* sounded in his ears like *retribution*. It was then demanded that all laws should be abolished, and

that kings should govern at their sole discretion. This was better still, but more difficult to accomplish. He promised it however; and a large body of barbarian troops was raised in readiness to invade our territory, when the decree of Alexander reached the city, ordering that all the states both of Greece and Asia should retain their pristine laws. The conqueror had also found letters and accounts, which his loquacity would not allow him to keep secret; and our negotiator, whose opinion (a very common one) was, that exposure alone is ignominy, at last

\* \* \* \* \*

CALLISTHENES.

Tell me, Aristoteles, for the question much interests me, are you happy in the midst of Macedonians, Illyrians, and other strange creatures, at which we wonder when we see their bodies and habiliments so like ours?

ARISTOTELES.

Dark reflections do occasionally come, as it were by stealth, upon my mind, but philosophy has power to dispell them. I care not whether the dog that defends my house and family be of the Laconian breed or the Molossian: if he steals my



bread or bites the hand that offers it, I strangle him or cut his throat, or engage a more dexterous man to do it, the moment I catch him sleeping.

CALLISTHENES.

The times are unfavorable to knowledge.

ARISTOTELES.

Knowledge and wisdom are different : we may know many new things without an encrease of wisdom ; but it would be a contradiction to say that we can know any thing new without an encrease of knowledge. The knowledge that is to be acquired by communication, is intercepted or impeded by tyranny. I have lost an ibis or perhaps an hippopotamos by losing the favour of Alexander ; he has lost an Aristoteles. He may deprive me of life ; but in doing so, he must deprive himself of all that he has ever been contending for... of glory : and even a more reasonable man than he, will acknowledge that there is as much difference between life and glory, as there is between an ash-flake from the brow of Etna, and the untamable and eternal fires within its center. I may lose disciples : he may put me out of fashion ; a tailor's lad can do as much. He may forbid the reading of my works ; less than a tailor's lad can do that : idleness can do it, night can do it, sleep can do it,

a sunbeam rather too hot, a few hailstones, a few drops of rain, a call to dinner. By his wealth and power he might have afforded me opportunities of improving some branches of science, which I alone have cultivated with assiduity and success. Fools may make wise men wiser more easily than wise men can make them so. At all events, Callisthenes, I have prepared for myself a monument, from which perhaps some atoms may be detached by time, but which will retain its magnificence and the traces of its symmetry, when the substance and site of Alexander's shall be forgotten. Who knows but that the very ant-hill wheron I stand, may preserve its figure and contexture, when the sepulchre of this Macedonian shall be the solitary shed of some robber, or the manger of mules and camels! If I live I will leave behind me the history of our times, from the accession of Philip to the decease of Alexander .. for our comet must disappear soon; the moral order of the world requires it. How happy and glorious was Greece at the commencement of the period! how pestilential was the folly of those rulers, who rendered, by a series of idle irritations and untimely attacks, a patient for Anticyra, the arbiter of the universe!

I will now return with you to Plato, whose plan of government, by the indulgence of the gods, has lain hitherto on their knees.

## CALLISTHENES.

I was unwilling to interrupt you, otherwise I should have remarked the bad consequences of excluding the poets from his commonwealth; not because they are in general the most useful members of it, but because we should punish a song more severely than a larceny. There are verses in Euripides such as every man utters who has the tooth-ache: and all expressions of ardent love have the modulation and emphasis of poetry. What a spheristerion is opened here to the exercise of informers! we should create more of these than we should drive out of poets. Judges would often be puzzled in deciding a criminal suit; for, before they could lay down the nature of the crime, they must ascertain what are the qualities and quantities of a dithyrambic. Now, Aristoteles, I suspect that even you cannot do this: for I observe in Pindar a vast variety of commutable feet, sonorous, it is true, in their cadences, but irregular and unrestricted. You avoid, as all good writers do carefully, whatever is dactylic, for the dactyl is the bindweed of prose, but I know not what other author has trimmed it with such frugal

and attentive husbandry\*. One alone, in writing or conversation, would subject a man to violent suspicion of bad citizenship; and he who should employ it twice in a page or an oration, would be deemed so dangerous and desperate a malefactor, that it might be requisite to dig a pitfall or to lay an iron trap for him, or to noose him in his bed.

\* The remark I attribute to Callisthenes on the freedom of Aristoteles from pieces of verse in his sentences is applicable to Plato, and surprisingly so, if we consider how florid and decorated is his language. Among the Romans T. Livius is the most abundant in them. Among the Greeks there is a curious instance in the prefatory words of Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

Φύσεως δὴ νόμος ἅπασι κοινός, ὃν οὐδεὶς καταλύσει χρόνος,  
ἀρχεῖν ἀεὶ τῶν ἡττόνων τοὺς κρείττους.

All these words appear to have been taken from some tragedy: the last constitute a perfect iambic; and the preceding, with hardly a touch, assume the same appearance: the diction too is quite poetical: ἅπασι κοινός...καταλύσει, &c.

\* Ἄπασι κοινός ἐστὶ τῆς φύσεως νόμος,

\* Ὀν...οὐδεὶς...καταλύσει χρόνος,

\* Ἀρχεῖν ἀεὶ τῶν ἡττόνων τοὺς κρείττους.

The original must be very ancient: in the Gorgias of Plato is the same idea in nearly the same words; and as Plato was a great *spheterizer* (for borrowing and stealing, in speaking of philosophers, are indecorous terms), I rather think he took it from the poet than the poet from him.—*Δηλοῖ δὲ ταῦτα πολ-  
λαχοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζωοῖς, καὶ τῶν ἀν-  
θρώπων ἐν ὄλαις ταῖς πόλεσι καὶ γένεσιν, ὅτι οὕτω τὸ δίκαιον  
κέκριται, τὸν κρείττω τοῦ ἡττονος ἀρχεῖν καὶ πλεον ἔχειν.*  
This law has not only been violated but reversed.

Throughout all your works there is certainly no sentence that has not an iambic in it; now our grammarians tell us that one is enough to make a verse, as one theft is enough to make a thief: an informer then has only to place it last in his bill of indictment, and not Minos himself could absolve you.

ARISTOTELES.

They will not easily take me for a poet.

CALLISTHENES.

Nor Plato for any thing else: he would be like a bee caught in his own honey.

ARISTOTELES.

I must remark to you, Callisthenes, that among the writers of luxuriant and florid prose, however rich and fanciful, there never was one who wrote good poetry. Imagination seems to start back when they would lead her into a narrower walk, and to forsake them at the first prelude of the lyre.

Plato has written much poetry, of which a few epigrams alone are remembered. He burned his iambics, but not until he found that they were thoroughly dry and withered. If ever a good poet should excell in prose, we, who know how distinct are the qualities, and how great must be the comprehension and the vigour that unites

them, shall contemplate him as an object of wonder, and almost of worship. This is remarkable in Plato: he is the only florid writer who is animated. He will always be ardently admired by those who have attained a considerable share of learning and little of precision; from the persuasion that they understand him, and that others do not; for men universally are ungrateful towards him who instructs them, unless in the hours or in the intervals of instruction he present a sweet cake to their self-love.

CALLISTHENES.

I never saw two men so different as you and he.

ARISTOTELES.

Yet many of those very sentiments in which we appear most at variance, can be drawn together until they meet. I had represented excessive wealth as the contingency most dangerous to a republic: he took the opposite side, and asserted that poverty is more so\*. Now wherever there is excessive wealth, there is also in the train of it excessive poverty; as where the sun is brightest the shade is deepest. Many republics have stood for

\* It is evident that Aristoteles wrote his *Politica* after Plato, for he alludes to a false opinion of Plato's in the proemium: but many of the opinions must have been promulgated by both, long before the publication of their works.

ages, while no citizen of them was very rich, and while on the contrary most were very poor; but none hath stood so long, after that many, or indeed a few, have grown inordinately rich. Wealth causes poverty, then irritates it, then corrupts it; so that throughout its whole progress and action it is dangerous to the state. Plato defends his thesis with his usual ingenuity; for if there is nowhere a worse philosopher, there is hardly anywhere a better writer. He says, and truly, that the poor become wild and terrible animals, when they no longer can gain their bread by their trades and occupations; and that, laden to excess with taxes, they learn a lesson from Necessity which they never would have taken up without her. Upon this all philosophers, all men of common sense indeed, must think alike. Usually, if not always, the poor are quiet, while there is amongst them no apprehension of becoming poorer, that is, while the government is not oppressive and unjust: but the rich are often the most satisfied while the government is the most unjust and oppressive. In all civil dissensions we find the wealthy lead forth the idle and dissolute poor against the honest and industrious; and generally with success, because the numbers are

greater in calamitous times; because this party has ready at hand the means of equipment; because the young and active, never prone to reflection, are influenced more by the hope of a speedy fortune than by the calculation of a slower; and because there are few so firm and independent as not to rest willingly on patronage, or as not to prefer that of the most potent.

In writing on government we ought not only to search for what is best but for what is practicable. Plato has done neither, nor indeed has he searched at all, but instead of it, has thought it sufficient to stud a plain argument with an endless variety of bright and prominent topics. Now diversity of topics has not even the merit of invention in all cases; but he is the most inventive who finds most to say upon one subject, and renders all of it applicable and useful. Splendid things are the most easy to find and the most difficult to manage. If I order a bridle for my horse, and he of whom I order it brings me rich trappings in place of it, do I not justly deem it an importunate and silly answer to my remonstrances when he tells me that the trappings are more costly than the bridle?

Be assured, my Callisthenes, I speak not from



any disrespect to a writer so highly and so justly celebrated. I wish so extraordinary a man as he had been equally exempt from contemptuousness and malignity. We have conversed at other times on his conduct towards Xenophon, and indeed towards all the other more eminent disciples of Socrates. I had collected the documents on which I formed an exact account of all the most flourishing states, and of the manners, laws, and customs, by which they were so, being of opinion that no knowledge is so useful to a commonwealth as this. I had also, as you remember, drawn up certain rules for poetry, taking my examples from Homer principally, and from our great dramatists. Plato immediately forms a republic in the clouds, to overshadow all mine at once, and descends only to kick the poets through the streets. Homer, the chief object of my contemplation, is the chief object of his attack. I acknowledge that the lower and middle order of poets are in general the worst members of society; but the energies which exalt one to the higher, enable him not only to adorn but to protect his country. Plato says, the gods are degraded by Homer: yet Homer has omitted those light and ludicrous tales of them, which rather suit the manners of Plato than his. He

thought about the gods, I suspect, just as you and I do, and cared as little how Homer treated them; yet, with the prison of Socrates before his eyes, and his own Dialogues under them, he had the cruelty to cast forth this effusion against the mild Euripides. His souls and their occupancy of bodies are not to be spoken of with gravity, and, as I am inclined for the present to keep mine where it is, I will be silent on the subject.

CALLISTHENES.

I must inform you, my friend and teacher, that your Macedonian pupil is likely to interrupt your arrangements in that business. I am informed, and by those who are always credible in such assertions, that, without apologies, excuses, and prostrations, Aristoteles will follow the shades of Clitus and Parmenio. There is nothing of which Alexander is not jealous; no, not even eating and drinking. If any great work is to be destroyed, he must do it with his own hands. After he had burned down the palace of Cyrus, the glory of which he envied a strumpet, one Polemarchus thought of winning his favour by destroying the tomb: he wept for spite and hanged him. Those who are jealous of power, are so from a conscious-

ness of strength: those who are jealous of wisdom, are so from a consciousness of wanting it. Weakness has its fever...but you appear grave and thoughtful.

ARISTOTELES.

The barbarians no more interest me than a shoal of fishes.

CALLISTHENES.

I entertain the same opinion.

ARISTOTELES.

Of their rulers equally?

CALLISTHENES.

Yes, certainly; for amongst them there can be no other distinction than in titles and in dress. A Persian and a Macedonian, an Alexander and a Darius, if they oppress the liberties of Greece, are one.

ARISTOTELES.

Now, Callisthenes! if Socrates and Anytus were in the same chamber, if the wicked had mixed poison for the virtuous, the active in evil for the active in good, and some divinity had placed it in your power to present the cup to either, and, touching your head, should say, *This head also is devoted to the Eumenides if the choice be wrong*, what would you resolve?

CALLISTHENES.

To do that by command of the god which I would likewise have done without it.

ARISTOTELES.

Bearing in mind that a myriad of kings and conquerors is not worth the myriadth part of a wise and virtuous man, return, Callisthenes, to Babylon, and see that your duty be performed.

**CONVERSATION XVIII.**

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**MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO**

**AND**

**HIS BROTHER QUINCTUS.**

# MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

AND

## HIS BROTHER QUINCTUS.

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MARCUS.

THE last calamities of our country, my brother Quinctus, have again united us; and something like the tenderness of earlier days appears to have returned, in the silence of ambition and in the subsidence of hope. It has frequently occurred to me how different we all are, from the moment when the parental roof bursts asunder, as it were, and the inmates are scattered abroad, and build up here and there new families. Many, who before lived in amity and concord, are then in the condition of those who, on receiving the intelligence of some shipwreck on the shore, collect together busily for plunder, and quarrel on touching the first fragment.

## QUINCTUS.

We never disagreed on the division of any property, unless indeed the state and its honours may be considered as such; and although in regard to Cesar, our fortune drew us different ways latterly, you will remember my anxiety to procure you the consulate and the triumph. Our political views, Marcus, have always been similar, and generally the same. You indeed were somewhat more aristocratical and senatorial; and this prejudice has ruined both. As if the immortal Gods took a pleasure in confounding us by the difficulty of our choice, they placed the best men at the head of the worst cause. Decimus Brutus and Porcius Cato held up the train of Sylla; for the late civil wars were only a continuation of those which the old dictator seemed for a time to have extinguished, in blood and ruins. His faction was in authority when you first appeared at Rome: and although among your friends, and sometimes in public, you have spoken as a Roman should speak of C. Marius, a respect for Pompeius, the most insincere of men, made you silent on the merits of Sertorius; than whom there never was a better man in private life, a magistrate more upright, a general more vigilant, a citizen more

zealous for the prerogative of our republic. Caius Cesar, the later champion of the same party, overcame difficulties almost equally great, and, having acted upon a more splendid theatre, may perhaps appear at a distance a still greater character.

## MARCUS.

He will seem so to those only, who place temperance and prudence, fidelity and patriotism, aside from the component parts of greatness. Cesar, of all men, knew best when to trust fortune: Sertorius never trusted her at all, nor marched a step along a path he had not explored. The best of Romans slew the one, the worst the other: the death of Cesar was that which the wise and virtuous would most deprecate for themselves and their children; that of Sertorius what they would most desire. And since, Quinctus, we have seen the ruin of our country, and her enemies are intent on ours, let us be grateful that the last years of life have neither been useless nor inglorious, and that it is likely to close, not under the condemnation of such citizens as Cato and Brutus, but as Lepidus and Antonius. It is with more sorrow than asperity that I reflect on Caius Cesar. O! had his heart been unambitious as his style, had he been as prompt to succour his country as to enslave her, how great, how in-



comparably great, were he! Then perhaps at this hour, O Quinctus, and in this villa, we should have enjoyed his humorous and erudite discourse; for no man ever tempered so seasonably and so justly the materials of conversation. How graceful was he! how unguarded! His whole character was uncovered; as we represent the bodies of heroes and of gods. Him I shall see again; and, while he acknowledges my justice, I shall acknowledge all his virtues and contemplate them unclouded. I shall see again our father, and Mutius Scevola, and you, and our sons, and the ingenuous and faithful Tyro. He alone has power over my life, if any has, for to him I confide my writings. And our worthy M. Brutus will meet me, whom I will embrace among the first; for if I have not done him an injury I have caused him one. Had I never lived, or had I never excited his envy, he might perhaps have written as I have done; but, for the sake of avoiding me, he caught both cold and fever. Let us pardon him; let us love him; with a weakness that injured his eloquence, and with a softness of soul that sapped the constitution of our state, he is still no unworthy branch of that family, which will be remembered the longest among men.

O happy day, when I shall meet my equals,

and when my inferiors shall trouble me no more!

Man thinks it miserable to be cut off in the midst of his projects; he should rather think it miserable to have formed them: for the one is his own action, the other is not; the one was subject from the beginning to disappointments and vexations, the other ends them. And what truly is that period of life in which we are not in the midst of our projects? They spring up only the more rank and wild, year after year, from their extinction or from their change of form, as herbage from the corruption and dying down of herbage. I will not dissemble that I upheld the senatorial cause, for no other reason than that my dignity was to depend on it. Had the opposite party been triumphant, and the senate been abolished, I should never have had a Catilinarian conspiracy to quell, and few of my orations would have been delivered. Without a senate what Verres?...

QUINCTUS.

Do you believe that the Marian faction would have annulled our order?

MARCUS.

I believe that their safety would have required its ruin, and that their vengeance, not to say their

equity, would have accomplished it. The civil war was of the senate against the equestrian order and the people, and was maintained by the wealth of the patricians, accumulated in the time of Sylla, by the proscription of all whom violence made, or avarice called, its adversaries. It would have been necessary to confiscate the whole property of the order, and to banish its members from Italy. Any measures short of these would have been inadequate to compensate the people for their losses, nor would there have been a sufficient pledge for the maintenance of tranquility. The exclusion of three hundred families from their estates, which they had acquired in great part by rapine, and their expulsion from a country which they had inundated with blood, would have prevented that partition-treaty, whereby are placed in the hands of three men the properties and lives of all.

There should in no government be a contrariety of interests. Checks are useful; but it is better to stand in no need of them. Bolts and bars are good things; but would you establish a college of thieves and robbers to try how good they are? Misfortune has taught me many truths, which a few years ago I should have deemed suspicious and dangerous. The fall of Rome and of Carthage, the form of whose governments was almost

the same, has been occasioned by the divisions of the ambitious in their senates: for we conscript fathers call that ambition which the lower ranks call avarice: in fact the only difference is, that the one wears fine linen, the other coarse; one covets the government of Asia, the other a flask of vinegar. The people were indifferent which side prevailed, until their houses, in that country were reduced to ashes, in this were delivered to murderers and gamesters.

## QUINCTUS.

Painful is it to reflect, that the greatness of nearly all men originates from what has been taken by fraud or violence out of the common stock. The greatness of states, on the contrary, depends on the subdivision of property, chiefly of the landed, in very moderate portions; on the frugal pay of all functionaries, chiefly of those who possess a property; and on unity of interests and designs in all classes. Where provinces are allotted, not for the public service, but for the enrichment of private families, where consuls wish one thing and tribunes wish another, how can there be prosperity or safety? If Carthage, whose government (as you observe) much resembled ours, had allowed the same rights to all the inhabitants of Africa, had she been as zealous in civilizing as

in coercing them, she would have ruined our commonwealth and ruled the world. Rome found all the rest of Italy more cultivated than herself, but corrupted for the greater part by luxury, ignorant of military science, and more patient of slavery than of toil. She conquered; and in process of time infused into them somewhat of her spirit, and imparted to them somewhat of her institutions. Nothing was then wanting to her policy, but only to grant voluntarily what she might have foreseen they would unite to enforce, and to have constituted a social body in Italy. This would have rendered her invincible. Ambition would not permit our senators to divide with others the wealth and aggrandisement arising from authority: and hence our worst citizens are become our rulers. The same error was committed by Sertorius, but from purer principles. He created a senate in Spain, but admitted no Spaniard. The practise of disinterestedness, the force of virtue, in despite of so grievous an affront, united to him the bravest and most honorable of nations. If he had granted to them what was theirs by nature, and again due to them for benefits, he would have had nothing else to regret, than that they had so often broken our legions, and covered our commanders with shame.

## MARCUS.

The moral like the physical body has not always the same wants in the same degree. We put off or on a greater or less quantity of cloathes, according to the season; and it is to the season that we must accommodate ourselves in government, wherin there are only a few leading principles which are never to be disturbed. I now perceive that the laws of society in one thing resemble the laws of perspective: they require that what is below should rise gradually, and that what is above should descend in the same proportion, but not that they should touch. Still less do they inform us, what is echoed in our ears by new masters from camp and schoolroom, that the wisest and best should depend on the weakest and worst; or that, when individuals, however ignorant of moral discipline and impatient of self-restraint, are deemed adequate to the management of their affairs at twenty years, a state should never be so; that boys should come out of pupilage, that men should return to it; that people in their actions and abilities so contemptible as the triumvirate, should become by their own appointment our tutors and guardians, and shake their scourges over Marcus Brutus, Marcus Varro, Marcus Tullius. The Romans are hastening back, I see, to the

government of absolute kings, whether by that name or another is immaterial, which no virtuous and dignified man, no philosopher of whatever sect, has recommended, approved, or tolerated, and than which no moralist, no fabulist, no visionary, no poet, satirical or comic, no Fescennine jester, no dwarf or eunuch (the most privileged of privileged classes), no runner at the side of a triumphal car, in the utmost extravagance of his licentiousness, has imagined any thing more absurd, more indecorous, or more insulting. What else indeed is the reason why a nation is called barbarous by the Greeks and us? This alone stamps the character upon it, standing for whatever is monstrous, for whatever is debased.

What a shocking sight should we consider an old father of a family, led in chains along the public street, with boys and prostitutes shouting after him! and should we not retire from it quickly and anxiously? A sight greatly more shocking now presents itself: an ancient nation is reduced to slavery, by those who vowed, before the people and before the altars, to defend her. And is it hard for us, O Quinctus, to turn away our eyes from this abomination? or is it necessary for a Gaul or an Illyrian to command us that we close them on it?

I am your host, my brother, and must recall you to pleasanter ideas. How beautiful is this Formian coast! how airy this villa! Ah whither have I called back your reflections! it is the last of ours perhaps we may ever see. Do you remember the races of our children along the sands, and their consternation when Tyro cried "*the Læstrygons! the Læstrygons!*" He little thought he prophesied in his mirth, and all that poetry has feigned of these monsters should in so few years be accomplished. The other evening, an hour or two before sunset, I sailed quietly along the coast, for there was little wind, and the stillness on shore made my heart faint within me. I remembered how short a time ago I had conversed with Cato in the walks around the villa of Lucullus, whose son, such was the modesty of the youth, followed rather than accompanied us. There is something of softness, not unallied to sorrow, in these mild winter days and their humid sunshine. I know not, Quinctus, by what train or connection of ideas they lead me rather to the past than to the future; unless it be that, when the fibres of our bodies are relaxed, as they must be in such weather, the spirits fall back easily upon reflection, and are slowly incited to expectation. The memory of those great men, who con-



solidated our republic by their wisdom, exalted it by their valour, protected and defended it by their constancy, stands not alone nor idly: they draw us after them, they place us with them. O Quintus! I wish I could impart to you my firm persuasion, that after death we shall enter into their society: and what matters if the place of our reunion be not the capitol or the forum, be not Elysian meadows or Atlantic islands? Locality has nothing to do with mind once free. Carry this thought perpetually with you, and death, whether you believe it terminates our whole existence or otherwise, will lose, I will not say its terrors, for the brave and wise have none, but its anxieties and inquietudes.

QUINCTUS.

Brother, when I see that many dogmas in religion have been invented to keep the intellect in subjection, I may fairly doubt the rest.

MARCUS.

Yes, if any emolument be derived from them to colleges of priests. But surely he deserves the dignity and the worship of a god, who first instructed men that by their own volition they might enjoy eternal happiness; that the road to it is most easy and most beautiful, such as any one would take by preference, even if nothing

desirable were at the end of it. Neither to give nor take offence, are surely the two things most delightful in human life: and it is by these two things that eternal happiness may be attained. We shall enjoy a future state accordingly as we have employed our intellect and our affections. Perfect bliss can be expected by few; but still fewer will be so miserable as they have been here.

QUINCTUS.

A belief to the contrary, if we admitt a future life, would place the gods beneath us in their best properties, justice and beneficence.

MARCUS.

Belief in a future life is the appetite of reason; and I see not why we should not gratify it as unreluctantly as the baser. Religion does not call upon us to believe all the fables of the vulgar, but on the contrary to correct them.

QUINCTUS.

Otherwise, overrun as we are in Rome by foreners of all nations, and ready to receive, as we have been, the buffooneries of Syrian and Egyptian priests, our citizens may within a few years become not only the dupes, but the tributaries, of these impostors. The Syrian may scourge us until we join him in his lamentation of Adonis;

and the Egyptian may tell us that it is unholy to eat a chicken, and holy to eat an egg; while a sly rogue of Judæa whispers in our ear, “*That is superstition: you go to heaven if you pay me a tenth of your harvests.*” This, I have heard Cn. Pompeius relate, is done in Judæa.

MARCUS.

Yes, but the tenth paid all the expenses both of civil government and religious; for the magistracy was (if such an expression can be repeated with seriousness) *theocratical*. In time of peace a decimation of property would be intolerable; but the Jews have been always at war, natives of a sterile country and neighbours of a fertile one, acute, meditative, melancholy, morose. I know not whether we ourselves have performed such actions as they have, or whether any nation has fought with such resolution and pertinacity. We laugh at their worship; they abominate ours: in this I think we are the wiser; for surely on speculative points it is better to laugh than to abominate. But whence have you brought your eggs and chickens? I have heard our Varro tell many stories about the Egyptian ordinances, but I do not remember this.

QUINCTUS.

Indeed the distinction seems a little too absurd

even for the worshippers of cats and crocodiles. Perhaps I may have wronged them : the nation I may indeed have forgotten, but I am certain of the fact. I place it in the archives of superstition ; you may deposit it in its right cell. Some eastern nations are so totally subjected to the priesthood, that a member of it is requisite at birth, at death, and, by Thalassius ! at marriage itself : he can even inflict pains and penalties, he can oblige you to tell him all the secrets of the heart, he can call your wife to him, your daughter to him, your blooming and innocent son ; he can absolve from sin ; he can exclude from pardon.

MARCUS.

Now, Quinctus, egg and chicken, cat and crocodile, disappear and vanish : you repeat impossibilities : mankind, in its lowest degradation, has never been depressed so low. The savage would strangle the impostor that attempted it, the civilized man would scourge him and hiss him from society. Come, come, brother ! we may expect such a state of things whenever we find united the genius of the Cimmerian and the courage of the Troglodyte. Religions wear out, cover them with gold or case them with iron, as you will. Jupiter is now less powerful in Crete than when he was in his cradle there, and spreads

fewer terrors at Dodona than a shepherd's cur: Proconsuls have removed from Greece, from Asia, from Sicily, the most celebrated statues; and it is doubted at last whether those deities are in heaven whom a cart and a yoke of oxen have carried away on earth. When the civil wars are over, and the minds of men become indolent and inactive, as is always the case after great excitement, it is not improbable that some novelties may be attempted in religion: but, as my prophecies in the course of all the late events have been accomplished, so you may believe me when I prognosticate that our religion, although it should be disfigured and deteriorated, will continue in many of its features, in many of its pomps and ceremonies, the same. Sibylline books will never be wanting, while fear and curiosity are inherent in the composition of man. And there is something consolatory in this idea: for whatever be your philosophy, you must acknowledge that it is pleasant to think, although you know not wherefor, that, when we go away, things visible, as things also intellectual, will remain in great measure as we left them. A slight displeasure would be felt by us, if we were certain that after our death our houses would be taken down, though not only no longer inhabited by us, but probably not destined

to remain in the possession of our children; and that even these vineyards, fields, and gardens, were about to assume another aspect.

## QUINCTUS.

The sea and the barren rocks will remain for ever as they are: whatever is lovely changes. Misrule and slavery may convert our fertile plains into pestilential marshes; and whoever shall exclaim against the authors and causes of such devastation, may be proscribed, slain, or exiled. Enlightened and virtuous men, painfulest of thoughts! may condemn him: for a love of security accompanies a love of study, and that by degrees is adulation which was acquiescence. Cruel men have always at their elbow the supporters of arbitrary power; and although the cruel are seldom solicitous in what manner they may be represented to posterity, yet, if any one amongst them be rather more so than is customary, some projector will whisper in his ear an advice like this. "Oppress, fine, imprison, and torture, those who (you have reason to suspect) are or may be philosophers or historians: so that, if they mention you at all, they will mention you with indignation and abhorrence. Your object is attained: few will implicitly believe them; almost all will acknowledge that their faith should be suspected, as there are

proofs that they wrote in irritation. This is better than if they spoke of you slightly, or cursorily, or evasively. By employing a hangman extraordinary, you purchase in perpetuity the title of a clement prince."

MARCUS.

Quinctus, you make me smile, by bringing to my recollection that, among the marauders of Pindenissus, was a fellow called by the Romans *Fœdirupa*, from a certain resemblance no less to his name than to his character. He commanded in a desert and sandy district, which his father and grandfather had enlarged by violence; for all the family had been robbers and assassins. Several schools had once been established in those parts, remote from luxury and seduction, and several good and learned men taught in them, having fled from Mithridates. *Fœdirupa* assumed on a sudden the air and demeanour of a patriot, and hired one *Gentius* to compose his rhapsodies on the love of our country, with liberty to promise what he pleased. *Gentius* put two hundred pieces of silver on his mule, rode to the schools, exhibited his money, and promised the same gratuity to every scholar who would arm and march forth against the enemy. The teachers breathed a free and pure spirit, and, although they well knew the

knavery of Gentius, seconded him in his mission. Gentius, as was ordered, wrote down the names of those who repeated the most frequently that of country, and the least so that of Fœdirupa. Even rogues are restless for celebrity. The scholars performed great services against the enemy: on their return they were disarmed; the promises of Fœdirupa were disavowed; the teachers were thrown into prison, accused of violating the ancient laws, of perverting the moral and religious principles, and finally of abusing the simplicity of youth, by illusory and empty promises. Gentius drew up against them the bills of indictment, and offered to take care of their libraries and cellars while they remained in prison. Fœdirupa cast them all into dungeons; but, drawing a line of distinction much finer than the most subtile of them had ever done, *I will not kill them*, said he; *I will only frighten them to death*. He became at last rather less cruel...and starved them. Only one was sentenced to lose his head: Gentius comforted him upon the scaffold, by reminding him how much worse he would have fared under Mithridates, who would not only have commanded his head to be cut off, but also to be carried on a pike, and by assuring him that, instead of such wanton barbarity, he himself would carry it to



the widow and her children, within an hour after their conference at farthest. The last words moved him little; he hardly heard them: his heart and his brain throbbled in agony at the sound of children, of widow. He threw his head back; tears rolled over his temples, and dripped from his grey hair. *Ah my dear friend, said Gentius, have I unwittingly touched a tender part? be manful; dry your eyes; the children are yours no longer; why be concerned for what you can never see again? My good old friend,* added he, *how many kind letters to me has this ring of yours sealed formerly!* then, lifting up the hand, he drew it slowly off, overcome by an excess of grief, through which it fell into his bosom, and to moderate which he was forced to run away, looking as he fled through the corner of his eye at the executioner, who seemed to grudge his escape. The rogue was stoned to death by those he had betrayed, not long before my arrival in the province; and an arrow from an unseen hand did justice on Fœdirupa.

I return amidst these home scenes.

On the promontory of Misenus is yet standing the mansion of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi; and, whether from reverence of her virtues and exalted name, or that the Gods preserve it as a

monument of womanhood, its exterior is unchanged. Here she resided many years, and never would be induced to revisit Rome after the murder of her younger son. She cultivated a variety of flowers, and naturalized several plants, and brought together trees from vale and mountain, trees unproductive of fruit, but affording her, in their superintendence and management, a tranquil and expectant pleasure. We read that the Babylonians and Persians were formerly much addicted to similar places of recreation. I have no knowledge in these matters\*; and the first time I went thither, I asked many questions of the gardener's boy, a child about nine years old. He thought me still more ignorant than I was, and said, among other such remarks, *I do not know what they call this plant at Rome, or whether they have it there; but it is among the commonest here, beautiful as it is, and we call it cytisus.*

*Thank you, child!* said I smiling; and, pointing towards two cypresses, *pray, what do you call those high and gloomy trees, at the extremity of the avenue, just above the precipice?*

\* Cicero in a letter to his brother says, *Item de hortis quod me admones, nec fui unquam valde cupidus, et nunc domus suppeditat mihi hortorum amcenitatem.* Ad Q. Fratr. l. 3. ep. 4.

*Others like them, replied he, are called cy-  
presses ; but these, I know not why, have always  
been called Tiberius and Caius.*

QUINCTUS.

Of all studies the most delightful and the most useful is biography. The seeds of great events lie near the surface; historians delve too deep for them. No history was ever true: but lives I have read which, if they were not so, had the appearance, the interest, and the utility of truth.

MARCUS.

I have collected facts about Cornelia, worth recording; and I would commemorate them the rather, as, while the Greeks have had amongst them no few women of abilities, we can hardly mention two.

QUINCTUS.

Yet ours have advantages which theirs had not. Did Cornelia die unrepining and contented?

MARCUS.

She was firmly convinced to the last, that an agrarian law would have been both just and beneficial; and was consoled that her illustrious sons had discharged at once the debt of nature and of patriotism. Glory is a light that shines from us on others, and not from others on us. She was

assured that future ages would render justice to the memory of her children; but she thought they had already received the highest approbation when they had received their own. If anything still was wanting, their mother gave it.

Your remark on the preeminence of biography over history is just; and yet how far below the truth is even the best written representation of those upon whose minds the Gods or the Muses vouchsafe to descend! How much greater would the greatest man appear, if any one about him could perceive those innumerable filaments of thought, which break as they arise from the brain, and the slenderest of which is worth all the wisdom of many, at whose discretion lies the felicity of nations! This in itself is impossible; but there are fewer who consider and contemplate what comes in sight, as it were, and disappears again (such is the conversation of the wise), than who calculate those stars that are now coming forth above us: scarcely one in several millions can apportion, to what is exalted in mind, its magnitude, place, and distance. We must be contented to be judged by that which people can discern and handle: that which they can have amongst them most at leisure, is most likely to be well examined and duly estimated. Whence I am led to believe

that my writings, and those principally which instruct men in their rights and duties, will obtain me a solidier and more extensive reputation than I could have acquired in public life, by busier and harder and more anxious labours. Public men appear to me to live in that delusion, which, Socrates in the *Phædo* would persuade us, is common to all our species. *We live in holes, says he, and fancy that we are living in the highest parts of the earth.* What he says physically, I would say morally: judge whether my observation is not at least as reasonable as his hypothesis; and indeed, to speak ingenuously, whether I have not converted what is physically false and absurd into what is morally true and important.

## QUINCTUS.

True, beyond a question, and important as those whom it concerns will let it be. They who stand in high stations, wish for higher; but they who have occupied the highest of all, often think with regret of some more pleasant one which they have left below. Servius Tullius, a prudent man, dedicated to Fortune what we call the narrow temple, with a statue in proportion, expressing, no doubt, his idea, that Fortune in the condition of mediocrity is more reasonably than in any other the object of our vows. He could have given her

as magnificent a name and as magnificent a residence as any she possesses; you know she has many of both: but he wished perhaps to try whether for once she would be as favorable to wisdom as to enterprise\*.

MARCUS.

If life allows us time for the experiment, let us also try it†.

I have performed one action, I have composed some few things, which posterity, I would fain

\* Plutarch, in his *Problems*, offers several reasons, all different from this.

† That Cicero in his later days began to think a private life preferable to a public, and that his philosophical no less than his political opinions were unstable, is shewn in few places so evidently and remarkably, as in the eighth book of his epistles.

“Nam omnem nostram de republicâ curam, cogitationem de dicendâ in senatu sententiâ, &c., abjecimus, et in Epicuri nos, adversarii nostri, castra, conjecimus.”

Demosthenes in his later days entertained the same opinion. He said that, if there were two roads, the one leading to government, the other to death, a prudent man would choose the latter.

The most wonderful thing in human nature is the variance of knowledge and will, where no passion is the stimulant; whence that system of life is often chosen and persevered in, which a man is well convinced is neither the best for him nor the easiest. Every action must have its motive; but weak motives are sufficient for weak minds; and whenever we see one which we believed a stronger moved habitually by what appears inadequate, we may be certain that there is, to bring a metaphor from the forest, more top than root.

believe, will not suffer to be quite forgotten. Fame, they tell you, is air; but without air, there is no life for any; without fame, there is none for the best. And yet, who knows whether all our labours and vigils may not at last be involved in oblivion! What treasures of learning must have perished, which existed long before the time of Homer! For it is utterly out of the nature of things, that the first attempt in any art or science should be the most perfect: such is the Iliad. I look upon it as the sole fragment of a lost world. Grieved indeed I should be to think, as you have heard me say before, that an enemy might possess our city five thousand years hence; yet when I consider that soldiers of all nations are in the armies of the triumvirate, and that all are more zealous for her ruin than our citizens are for her defence, this event is not unlikely the very next. The worst of barbarism is that which arises, not from the absence of laws, but from their corruption. So long as virtue stands merely on the same level with vice, nothing is amiss; few governments in their easy decrepitude care for more; but when rectitude is dangerous and depravity secure, then eloquence and courage, the natural pride and safeguard of states, become the strongest and most active instruments in their overthrow.

## QUINCTUS.

I see the servants have lighted the lamps in the house earlier than usual, hoping, I suppose, we shall retire to rest in good time, that tomorrow they may prepare the festivities for your birthday. Within how few minutes has the night closed in upon us! nothing is left discernible of the promontories, or the long irregular breakers under them: we have before us only a faint glimmering from the shells in our path, and from the blossoms of the arbutus.

## MARCUS.

The Circean hills, and the island of Parthenope, and even the white rocks of Anxur, are become undistinguishable. We leave our Cato and our Lucullus, we leave Cornelia and her children, the scenes of friendship and the recollections of greatness, for Lepidus and Octavius and Antonius; and who knows whether this birthday\*, between

\* It never came: Cicero was murdered on the nineteenth of January, the eve of his birthday, by the *holy allies* of that age; among whom however none broke his promise to the supporters of his power; none disowned the debts he had contracted to redeem himself from slavery; none sold rotten ships for sound; none employed the assassins of his father; none prostituted his daughter; none proclaimed that he had no occasion for liberal and learned men; none proscribed the party by which his life was saved and his authority esta-



which and us only one other day intervenes, may not be, as it certainly will be the least pleasurable, the last!

If life is a present, which any one, foreknowing its contents, would have willingly declined, does it not follow that any one would as willingly give it up, having well tried what they are? I speak of the wise and reasonable, the firm and virtuous, not of those who, like bad governors, are afraid of laying down the powers and privileges they have been proved unworthy of holding. Were it certain that, the longer we live, the wiser we become and the happier, then indeed a long life would be desirable; but since on the contrary our mental strength decays, and our enjoyments of every kind not only sink and cease, but diseases and sorrows come in place of them, if any wish is wise, it is surely the wish that we should go away, unshaken by years, undepressed by griefs, and undespoiled of our better faculties. Life and death appear more certainly ours than whatsoever else: and yet hardly can that be called so, which comes without our knowledge and goes without it; or

blished; none called cowardice decent order, perfidy right reason, or cruelty true religion. Yet they were rather bad men in their day, at least the losers.

that which we cannot put aside if we would, and indeed can anticipate but little. The former there are few who can regulate in any way, none who can order what it shall receive or exclude. What value then should be placed upon it by the wise, when duty or necessity calls him away? or what reluctance should he feel on passing into a state, where at least he must be conscious of fewer checks and inabilities? Such, my brother, as the brave commander, when from the secret and dark passages of some fortress, wherein implacable enemies besieged him, having performed all his duties and exhausted all his munition, he issues at a distance into open day.

Every thing has its use; life to teach us the contempt of death, and death the contempt of life. Glory, which among all things between stands eminently the principal object, although it has been considered by some philosophers as mere vanity and deception, moves those great intellects which nothing else could have stirred, and places them where they can best and most advantageously serve the commonwealth. Occasion may have been wanting to some; I grant it: they may have remained their whole lifetime, like dials in the shade, always fit for use and always useless; but this must occur either in monarchical governments,

or where persons occupy the first stations who ought hardly to have been admitted to the secondary, and whom Jealousy has guided more frequently than Justice.

It is true there is much inequality, much inconsiderateness, in the distribution of fame. The principles, according to which honour ought to be conferred, are not only violated, but often inverted. Whoever wishes to be thought great among men, must do them some great mischief. The longer he continues in doing things of this sort, the more he will be admired. The features of Fortune are so like those of Genius as to be mistaken by almost all the world. We whose names and works are honorable to our country, and destined to survive her, are less esteemed than those who have accelerated her decay; yet even here the sense of injury rises from and is accompanied by a sense of merit, the tone of which is deeper and predominant.

When we have spoken of life, death, and glory, we have spoken of all important things, except friendship: for eloquence and philosophy, and other inferior attainments, are either means conducive to life and glory, or antidotes against the bitterness of death. We cannot conquer fate and necessity, but we can yield to them in such a

manner as to be greater than if we could. I have observed your impatience: you were about to appeal in favour of virtue: but virtue is included in friendship, as I have mentioned in my *Laelius*, nor have I ever separated it from philosophy or from glory. On friendship, in the present condition of our affairs, I would say little. Could I begin my existence again, and, what is equally impossible, could I see before me all I have seen, I would choose few acquaintances, fewer friendships, no familiarities. This rubbish, for such it generally is, collecting at the base of an elevated mind, lessens its highth and impairs its character. What requires to be sustained, if it is greater, falls; if it is smaller, is lost to view by the intervention of its supporters\*.

\* These are the ideas of a man deceived and betrayed by almost every one he trusted. But if Cicero had considered, as I have often done, that there never was an elevated soul or warm heart since the creation of the world, which has not been ungenerously and unjustly dealt with, and that ingratitude has usually been in a fair proportion to desert, his vanity if not his philosophy would have buoyed up and supported him. He himself is the most remarkably rich and redundant in such instances. To set Pompey aside, as a man ungrateful to all, he had spared Julius Cesar in his consulate, when, according to the suspicions of History, he was implicated in the conspiracy of Catiline. Clodius, Lepidus, and Antonius, had been admitted to his friendship and confidence: Octavius owed to him his popularity and estimation: Philologus, whom he had fed and

I contemplate with satisfaction the efforts I have made to serve my country: but the same eloquence, the merit of which not even the most barbarous of my adversaries can detract from me, would have enabled me to elucidate large fields of philosophy, hitherto untrodden by our countrymen, and in which the Greeks have wandered widely or worked unprofitably.

QUINCTUS.

Excuse my interruption. I heard a few days ago a pleasant thing reported of Asinius Pollio. He said at supper, your language is that of an Allobrox.

MARCUS.

After supper, I should rather think, and with Antonius. Asinius, urged by the strength of instinct, picks from amidst the freshest herbage the dead and dry thistle, and doses and dreams about it where he cannot find it... Acquired, it is true, I have a certain portion of my knowledge, and consequently of my language, from the Allobroxes: I cannot well point out the place; the walls of Romulus, the habitations of Janus and of

instructed, pointed out to his murderers the secret path he had taken to avoid them: and Popilius, their leader, had by his eloquence been saved from the punishment of one parricide that he might committ another.

Saturn, and the temple of Capitoline Jove, which the confessions I extorted from their ambassadors gave me in my consulate the means of saving, stand at too great a distance from this terrace.

QUINCTUS.

To leave behind us our children, if indeed they will be permitted to stay behind, is painful.

MARCUS.

Among all the contingencies of life, it is that for which we ought to be the best prepared, as the most regular and ordinary in the course of nature. We bequeathe to ours a field illuminated by our glory and enriched by our example: a noble patrimony, and beyond the jurisdiction of Prætor or proscriber. Nor indeed is our fall itself without its fruit to them: for violence is the cause why that is often called a calamity which is not so, and repairs in some measure its injuries by exciting to commiseration and tenderness. The pleasure a man receives from his children resembles that which with more propriety than any other we may attribute to the Divinity: for to suppose that his chief satisfaction and delight should arise from the contemplation of what he has done or can do, is to place him on a level with a runner or a wrestler. The formation of a world, or of a thousand worlds, is as easy to him as the formation

of an atom. Virtue and intellect are equally his production; but he subjects them in no slight degree to our volition. His benevolence is gratified at seeing us conquer our wills and rise superior to our infirmities; and at tracing day after day a nearer resemblance in our moral features to his. We can derive no pleasure but from exertion; he can derive none from it; since exertion, as we understand the word, is incompatible with omnipotence.

QUINCTUS.

Proceed my brother. In all temptations of mind and feeling, my spirits are equalized by your discourse; and that which you said with rather too much brevity of our children, soothes me greatly.

MARCUS.

I am persuaded of the truth in what I have spoken. And yet—ah Quinctus! there is a tear that Philosophy cannot dry, and a pang that will rise as we approach the Gods.

They, who have given us our affections, permit us surely the uses and the signs of them. Immoderate grief, like every thing else immoderate, is useless and pernicious; but if we did not tolerate, and endure it, if we did not prepare for it, meet it, commune with it, if we did not even cherish

it in its season, much of what is best in our faculties, much of our tenderness, much of our generosity, much of our patriotism, much also of our genius would be stifled and extinguished.

When I hear any one call upon another to be manly and to restrain his tears, if they flow from the social and the kind affections, I doubt the humanity and distrust the wisdom of the counseler. If he were humane, he would be more inclined to pity and to sympathize than to lecture and to reprove; and if he were wise, he would consider that tears are given us by nature as a remedy to affliction, although, like other remedies, they should come to our relief in private. Philosophy, we may be told, would prevent the tears by turning away the sources of them, and by raising up a rampart against pain and sorrow. I am of opinion that Philosophy, quite pure and totally abstracted from our appetites and passions; instead of serving us the better for being so, would do us little or no good at all. We may receive so much light as not to see, and so much philosophy as to be worse than foolish.

My eloquence, whatever (with Pollio's leave) it may be, would at least have sufficed me to explore these tracts of philosophy, which the Greeks, as I said, either have seldom coasted or have left un-



settled. Although I think I have done somewhat more than they have, I am often dissatisfied with the scantiness of my stores and the limits of my excursions. Every question has given me the subject of a new one; the last has always been better than the preceding, and, like Archimedes, whose tomb appears now before me as when I first discovered it at Syracuse, I could almost ask of my enemy time to solve my problem.

Quinctus! Quinctus! let us exult with joy: there is no enemy to be appeased or avoided. We are moving forwards, and without exertion, thither where we shall know all we wish to know, and how greatly more than, whether in Tusculum or in Formiæ, in Rome or in Athens, we could ever hope to learn!

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Some of the opinions attributed to Cicero in this dialogue, and particularly those on the agrarian law, are at variance with what he has expressed, not only in his orations, but also in his three books *De Officiis*, which he appears to have written under a strong fear that either this or something similar would deprive him of his possessions. Hence he speaks of the Gracchi with an asperity which no historian has countenanced, and of Agis, the most virtuous king on record, without a word of commendation or of pity. When however he perceived that in the midst of dangers his property was untouched, it must have occurred to so sagacious a reasoner,

that, if an agrarian law had been enacted, the first triumvirate could never have existed, and that he himself had remained, as he ought to have been, the leader of the commonwealth. It is to be lamented, but it is also to be pardoned in him, that with such feelings he should have mentioned Crassus as a man whom he did not hate, and should have spoken of Cesar thus: *Tanta in eo peccandi libido fuit, ut hoc ipsum eum delectaret, peccare.* Yet Cesar after the battle of Pharsalia did evil from necessity, good from choice; and then as little evil as was possible, and more good than was politic. Of Crassus, whom he *did not hate*, he says... *Qui videt domi tuæ pariter accusatorum atque judicum consociatos greges, qui nocentes et pecuniosos reos eodem te auctore corruptelam judicii molientes, qui tuas mercedum pactiones in patrociniis, in intercessionibus pecuniarum in coitionibus candidatorum, dimissionibus libertorum ad foenerandas diripiendasque provincias; qui expulsionibus vicinorum; qui latrocinia in agris; qui cum servis, cum libertis, cum clientibus societates; qui possessiones vacuas; qui proscriptiones locupletum; qui cædes municipiorum; qui illam Sullani temporis messem recordetur; qui testamenta subjecta, qui sublato tot homines, qui denique omnia venalia, delectum, decretum, alienam, suam sententiam, forum, domum, vocem, silentium.*

The description of such a state is sufficient to recommend its abolition. He illustrates it further. *Desitum est videri quidquam in socios iniquum, cum extitisset etiam in cives tanta crudelitas... Multa præterea commemorarem nefaria in socios, si hoc uno sol quidquam vidisset indignius... Optimatibus tuis nihil confido. Sed video nullam esse rempublicam, nullum senatum, nulla judicia, nullam in ullo nostrum dignitatem... Jure igitur plectimur: nisi enim multorum impunita scelera tulissemus, &c... Non igitur utilis illa L. Philippi Q. filii sententia, quas civitates L. Sulla pecuniâ acceptâ ex SC. liberavisset, ut hæc rursus vectigales essent, neque his pecuniam quam pro libertate dedissent redderemus: turpe imperio! piratarum enim melior fides quam senatus.* It follows then, à fortiori, that if pirates should be destroyed, the senate should.

Cicero never entertained long together the same opinion of Pompey: a little before the death of Clodius he writes thus. Pompeius, *nostri amores*, quod mihi summo dolori est, ipse se affixit. Soon after thus. Pompeius a me valde contendit de reditu in gratiam; sed adhuc nihil profecit, nec, si ullam partem libertatis tenebo, proficiet. He speaks of him to Atticus as follows. Non mihi satis idonei sunt auctores ii qui a te probantur; quod enim unquam in republicâ forte factum extitit? aut quis ab iis ullam rem laude dignam *desiderat*? nec mehercule laudandos existimo qui trans mare belli parandi causâ profecti sunt... Quis autem est tantâ quidem de re quin variè secum ipse disputet? Simul et elicere cupio sententiam tuam; si manet, ut firmior sim, si mutata est, ut tibi assentiar... The character and designs of Pompey and his *legitimates* are developed thus. Mirandum in modum Cneius noster Sullani regni similitudinem concupivit. Consilium est suffocare urbem et Italiam fame; deinde agros vastare, urere. Promitto tibi, si valebit, tegulam illum in Italiâ nullam relicturum. Mene igitur socio? contra mehercule meum iudicium, et contra omnium antiquorum auctoritatem... Quæ minæ municipiis! quæ nominatim viris bonis! quæ denique omnibus qui remansissent! quàm crebrò illud, *Sulla potuit, ego non potero*.

The conduct of the Gracchi was approved by the wisest and most honest of their contemporaries. Lælius, the friend of Scipio, desisted from his support of Tiberius, only when, as Plutarch says, he was compelled by the apprehension of *greater evil*. But surely a man so prudent as Lælius must have foreseen all the consequences, and have known the good or the evil of them, and would not have desisted when, the matter having been agitated, and the measure agreed on, every danger was over from taking it, and the only one that could arise was from its rejection, after that the hopes and expectations of the people had been stimulated and excited. Hence I am induced to believe that Scipio, in compliance with the wishes of the senate, persuaded his friend to desist from the undertaking. Cicero, in mentioning it, expresses himself in these words...

Duo sapientissimos et clarissimos fratres, Publium Crassum et Publium Scævolum, aiunt Tiberio Graccho *auctores legum* fuisse, alterum quidem, ut videmus, palam, alterum, ut suspicamur, obscurius. Acad. Quæst. iv. Mutianus Crassus, the brother of Publius, and Appius Claudius, were also his supporters. It is beyond all doubt that he was both politic and equitable in his plan of dividing among the poorer citizens, whose debts had been incurred by services rendered to their country, the lands retained by the rich, in violation of the Licinian law. He was called unjust towards the inhabitants of Latium and the allies, in proposing to deprive them of that which the Romans had given them, but instead of which, to indemnify themselves for the grant, they had imposed a tribute. Gracchus wished to allay the irritation of the people, and to render them inoffensive to the state, by giving them useful occupations in the cares and concerns of property. The Latins and allies would have been indemnified: for the tax imposed on them would have been removed, and the freedom of the city granted to them. The senate would perhaps have been somewhat less hostile to Gracchus, if he had not also proposed that the money left by Attalus to the Roman people should go to its destination. They were stimulated, if not by interest, by power, to invoke the assistance of Scipio against the popular party; and he was conducted home by them the day before his death; which appears rather to have been hastened by the fears and jealousy of the senate, than by the revenge of the opposition, none of whom at that time could have had access to him, his house being filled and surrounded by their enemies. The senate had reasons for suspicion of Scipio. They dreaded the dictatorial power which was about to be conferred on him, in order that he might settle the commonwealth: they were dissatisfied at the doubts he entertained of any guilt in Gracchus, of whom he declared his opinion that he was justly slain if he had attempted to possess the supreme power: which expression proves that he doubted, or rather that he disbelieved it, and is equivalent to the declaration that he did not deserve death for any other of his actions or intentions. They also

clearly saw that a man of his equity and firmness would not leave unpunished those who had instigated Popilius Lænas, Opimius, and Metellus to their cruelties against the partisans of Gracchus. Opimius alone had put to death by a *judicial process* no fewer than three thousand Roman citizens, whose only crime was that of demanding what had been left them by Attalus, and promised them by the legitimate rulers of the state.

Since the composition of my Dialogue, I have read the newly found treatise of Cicero, *De Re Publicâ*. It induces me to alter nothing of what I had written, but on the contrary, supplies me with a few more sentences of illustration from him, and subjects of remark. It is amusing to see with what eagerness a sentence that leans towards kingship is seized by the editor. He exclaims, *Notabile Ciceronis dictum de monarchiæ præstantiâ! quam in sententiam plerique seu veteres seu recentiores politici pedibus eunt*. The sentence is, Nam ipsum regale genus civitatis non modo non est reprehendendum, sed haud scio an reliquis *simplicibus* longe anteponendum, si ullum probarem simplex reipublicæ genus: sed ita quoad statum suum retinet; is est autem status, ut unius perpetuâ potestate et justitiâ, omnique sapientiâ, regatur salus et æquabilitas et otium civium. Certainly, if a king were perfectly just and perfectly wise, his government would be preferable to any other; but it is childish to speculate on any such occurrence, with the experience of ages before us, leading us to so different a conclusion. Scipio speaks of a republic with a king presiding over it; the editor talks of *monarchy*, as we understand the word. Scipio adds, *Desunt omnino ei populo multa qui sub rege est, in primis libertas, quæ non in eo est ut justo ulamur domino, sed ut nullo*. Can any thing be more temperate and rational than these expressions? the first of which designate only the utility of the *form*, and that conditionally, and the last give an excellent reason why even the form itself should not be admitted, proving the utility of the form to be incomparably less than what must be given up for it. In going on, he praises L. Brutus, vir

ingenio et virtute præstans, &c. primusque in hac civitate docuit in conservandâ civium libertate esse privatum neminem. This the editor calls *immanem injustamque sententiam!* Yet Cicero in his own person uses nearly the same words in an epistle of the younger Brutus. (Epist. x. ad Familiares.) Nullo publico consilio rempublicam liberâsti, quo etiam est illa res major et clarior. The same opinion is also given by him in the Tusculan Questions. Nunquam privatum esse sapientem, &c. (iv.) Scipio, in commending the advantages that, under conditions quite problematical, may attend the government of one chief magistrate, adds, *Sed tamen inclinatum et quasi primum ad perniciosissimum statum*: and afterwards, *Quis enim hunc hominem rite dixerit, qui sibi cum suis civibus, qui denique cum omni hominum genere nullam juris communionem, nullam humanitatis societatem velit?*

The education of kings leaves few either wise or honest. The better citizens receive the better education: they are mutual checks one upon another, while kings are mutual guards and fosterers of each other's tyranny. That in fact, whatever it be, is the best form of government, which the most effectually excludes the wicked and unwise, and the most readily admits the wise and virtuous: the two worst are ochlocracy and despotism, both for the same reason: in both there is *vis consilii expers*. Ochlocracy is the more tolerable as being the more transient; one always passes into the other, as its first step. Scipio argues weakly, and Cicero perhaps intends that he should do so, in saying, *Illud tamen non adsentior tibi, præstare regi optimates: si enim sapientia est quæ gubernat rem publicam, quid tandem interest hæc in uno-ve sit an in pluribus?* Here is a *petitio principii* which on no account can be granted. It is surely more probable that wisdom should reside among many, and those the best educated and of mature age, than with one only, and him the worst educated, often of age not mature, and more often bearing thick upon him throughout life the vices of youth and the inconsiderateness of childhood. If Cicero spoke sincerely, he was both foolish and flagitious in

praising those who slew Cesar; for never was there a man so capable of governing alone and well. I will not believe that he was led astray by Plato, who asserts in his fourth book that it is of little consequence whether a state be governed by many or one, if that one is obedient to the laws. Surely a king can more easily find those who will assist him in subverting them than simple citizens can, and is usually more inclined to do it, and is more easily persuaded that it is his interest. Aristoteles, as usual, speaks less idly: what is remarkable is, that his opinion squares perfectly with the Epicurean doctrine. Τέλος μὲν οὖν πῶλως τὸ εὖ ζῆν τοῦτο δ' ἔστι τὸ ζῆν εὐδαιμόνως καὶ καλῶς. Now this is impossible under men worse and less wise (as hath been the case nine hundred and thirty years in the thousand) than those who occupy the middle ranks in life, to say nothing of those who are uncontaminated by their example and undebased by their tyranny; such men as would exist if they did not. Governments, after all, must be constituted according to the habits and propensities of the governed, in which the moral springs from the physical. The Arab must always be free, the Frenchman never: in the Spaniard there still exists what might be expected from the union of Saracen and Goth; in the Englishman, from that of Norman and Saxon. The Greek retains, and displays magnificently, his ancient character: combinations of various kinds militate against the Roman. All traces of ancient institutions have been effaced for ages, excepting in religion. The Roman people was merely the people of one city; its physical peculiarities could not extend themselves, and were entirely lost in a succession of conquerors. But the voice of History refutes the conclusion which certain writers would draw from the celebrated treatise of Cicero, and teaches us that the republican form of government was best adapted to the nation, and that under it the Romans were virtuous and powerful, to a degree which they never attained under kings and emperors. Augustus lost his army in Germany, and commemorated by a trophy the capture of a few castles on the Alps: so greatly and so suddenly had fallen the glory of

Rome, although ruled by a sagacious prince, when the discretion of one was substituted for the counsels and interests and energies of many.

It has been the fashion, and not only of late years, but for ages, to represent the Roman form of government as aristocratical: this is erroneous: Cicero himself says, *nihil sacrosanctum esse potest, nisi quod plebs populusve jusserit*. The people chose all the great functionaries, excepting the interrex: he appointed the dictator, who is falsely thought to have possessed absolute power, even during the short period for which he was created. When Fabius Maximus would have punished Minutius, the tribunes interposed their authority. The senatorial formula, *Videant Consules ne quid detrimenti capiat Res Publica*, has misled many, and indeed misled even Cicero himself, who offended against the forms of law when he saved the commonwealth from Catilina. The supreme power was never legally in the consuls, but constantly in the tribunes of the people; so that Sigonius is wrong in his assertion, *Consules ab omnibus magistratibus concionem avocare potuisse, ab iis neminem*. Nothing is more common than the interference of the tribunes against the consuls. T. Livius (l. xlv.) relates that the effects of Tiberius Gracchus the elder, who had been consul and censor, were *consecrated* (which in arbitrary governments is called *confiscated*) because he had disobeyed an order of the tribune L. Flavius; a tribune committed to prison the consul Metellus; the censor Appius was punished in the same manner by the same tribunitian authority. Carbo, who had been thrice consul, was condemned to death by Pompey from the tribunitian chair. Drusus, as tribune, sent the consul Philippus to prison with a halter round his neck, *obtrita gula* (Florus, clv.). One Vectius was slain for not rising up before the tribune.

With all these facts (I must believe it) in his memory, Cicero still would consider the legitimate government of Rome as an aristocracy; for otherwise how could he himself be aristocratical, which he avows he was? He wrote his treatise *De Republica* ten years before his death, when the greater



and more costly part of his experience was wanting. In the dialogue he is represented as on the verge of a political world, of which he had been the mover and protector, while the elements of it announce to him that it is bursting under his feet.

He is hardly to be called inconsistent, who, guided by the experience of recent facts, turns at last to wiser sentiments, opposite as they may be to those he entertained the greater part of his life. If any one shall assert that I attribute to Cicero an inconsistency unwarranted by his writings, my answer is, that there is manifestly a much greater between the facts he states in these quotations, and the conclusions he appears by his line of policy to have drawn from them; and that, taking his own statement, I do no injustice to his discernment and ratiocination, in bringing home to him a new inference. Whatever be the defects and weaknesses of this memorable and truly glorious man, I disclose them with feelings far different from exultation: I mention them hesitatingly, reluctantly, and with awe; for in comparison with the meanest, the most negligent of his productions, how inelegant, rude, and barbarous is the most elaborate composition, the most applauded eloquence of our times!

*I have occasionally, but rarely, scattered a few verses amongst the Dialogues. The following, connected in subject with much, and in spirit with all that has gone before, may stand here as a voluntary to close the work.*

---

WE are what suns and winds and waters make us ;  
The mountains are our sponsors, and the rills  
Fashion and win their nursling with their smiles.  
But where the land is dim from tyranny,  
There tiny pleasures occupy the place  
Of glories and of duties ; as the feet  
Of fabled faeries when the sun goes down  
Trip o'er the grass where wrestlers strove by day.  
Then Justice, called the eternal one above,  
Is more inconstant than the buoyant form  
That bursts into existence from the froth  
Of ever-varying ocean : what is best  
Then becomes worst ; what loveliest, most de-  
formed.  
The heart is hardest in the softest climes,  
The passions flourish, the affections die.  
O thou vast tablet of these awful truths,

That fillest all the space between the seas,  
 Spreading from Venice's deserted courts  
 To the Tarentine and Hydruntine mole,  
 What lifts thee up? what shakes thee? tis the  
     breath

Of God! awake, ye nations! spring to life!  
 Let the last work of his righthand appear  
 Fresh with his image... Man.

    Thou recreant slave  
 That sittest afar off and helpst not,  
 O thou degenerate Albion! with what shame  
 Do I survey thee, pushing forth the sponge  
 At thy spear's length, in mockery at the thirst  
 Of holy Freedom in his agony,  
 And prompt and keen to pierce the wounded side!

Must Italy then wholly rot away  
 Amidst her slime, before she germinate  
 Into fresh vigour, into form again?  
 What thunder bursts upon mine ear! some isle  
 Hath surely risen from the gulphs profound,  
 Eager to suck the sunshine from the breast  
 Of beauteous Nature, and to catch the gale  
 From golden Hermus and Melæna's brow.  
 A greater thing than isle, than continent,  
 Than earth itself, than ocean circling earth,  
 Hath risen there; regenerate Man hath risen.

Generous old bard of Chios! not that Jove  
 Deprived thee in thy latter days of sight  
 Would I complain, but that no higher theme  
 Than a disdainful youth, a lawless King,  
 A pestilence, a pyre, awoke thy song,  
 When on the Chian coast, one javelin's throw  
 From where thy tombstone, where thy cradle stood,  
 Twice twenty self-devoted Greeks assailed  
 The naval host of Asia, at one blow  
 Scattered it into air...and Greece was free...  
 And ere these glories beamed, thy day had closed.

Let all that Elis ever saw give way,  
 All that Olympian Jove e'er smiled upon.  
 The Marathonian columns never told  
 A tale more glorious, never Salamis,  
 Nor, faithful in the centre of the false,  
 Plataea, nor Anthela, from whose mount  
 Benignant Ceres wards the blessed Laws,  
 And sees the Amphictyon dip his weary foot  
 In the warm streamlet of the strait below\*.

Goddess! although thy brow was never reared  
 Among the Powers, that guarded or assailed  
 Perfidious Ilion, parricidal Thebes,  
 Or other walls whose war-belt e'er inclosed

\* The Amphictyons met annually in the temple of Ceres near Anthela.

Man's congregated crimes and vengeful Pain,  
 Yet hast thou touched the extremes of grief and  
 joy...

Grief upon Enna's mead and Hell's ascent,  
 A solitary mother...joy beyond,  
 Far beyond, that thy woe, in this thy fane:  
 The tears were human, but the bliss divine.

I, in the land of strangers, and deprest  
 With sad and certain presage for my own,  
 Exult at hope's fresh dayspring, though afar,  
 There where my youth was not unexercised  
 By chiefs in willing war and faithful song:  
 Shades as they were, they were not empty shades,  
 Whose bodies haunt our world and blear our sun...  
 Obstruction worse than swamp and shapeless sands.  
 Peace, praise, eternal gladness, to the souls  
 That, rising from the seas into the heavens,  
 Have ransomed first their country with their blood!

O thou immortal Spartan! at whose name  
 The marble table sounds beneath my palms,  
 Leonidas! even thou wilt not disdain  
 To mingle names august as these with thine;  
 Nor thou, twin star of glory, thou whose rays  
 Streamed over Corinth on the double sea,  
 Achaian and Saronic; whom the sons  
 Of Syracuse, when Death removed thy light,

Wept more than slavery ever made them weep,  
 But shed (if gratitude is sweet) sweet tears...  
 For the hand that then poured ashes o'er their  
     heads  
 Was loosened from its desperate chain by thee.

What now can press mankind into one mass,  
 For Tyranny to tread the more secure?  
 From gold alone is drawn the guilty wire  
 That Adulation trills: she mocks the tone  
 Of Duty, Courage, Virtue, Piety,  
 And under her sits Hope! O how unlike  
 That graceful form in azure vest arrayed,  
 With brow serene, and eyes on heaven alone  
 In patience fixt, in fondness unobscured!  
 What monsters coil beneath the spreading tree  
 Of Despotism! what wastes extend around!  
 What poison floats upon the distant breeze!  
 But who are those that cull and deal its fruit?  
 Creatures that shun the light and fear the shade,  
 Bloated and fierce, Sleep's mien and Famine's  
     cry...  
 Rise up again, rise in thy dignity,  
 Dejected Man, and scare this brood away.

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