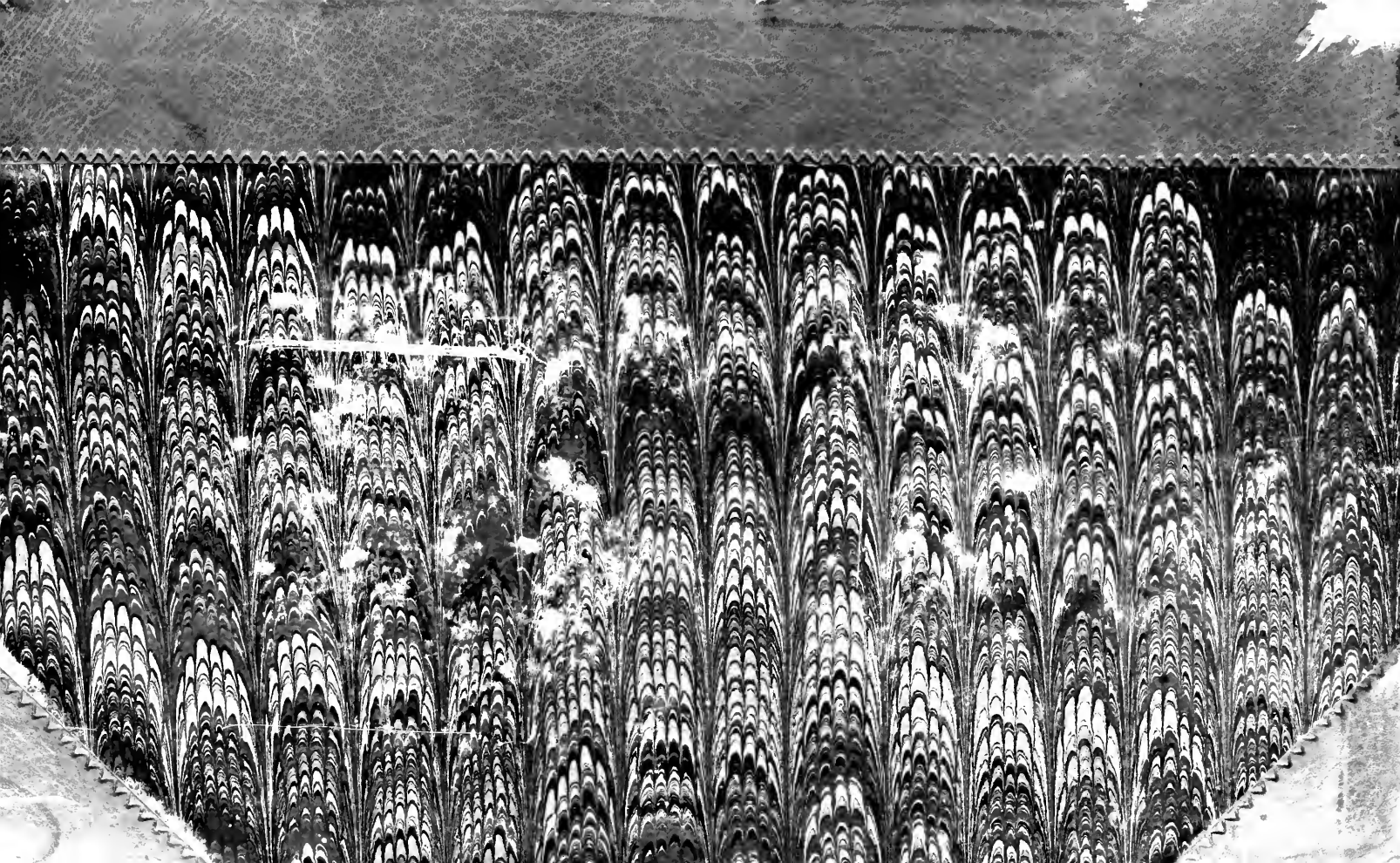

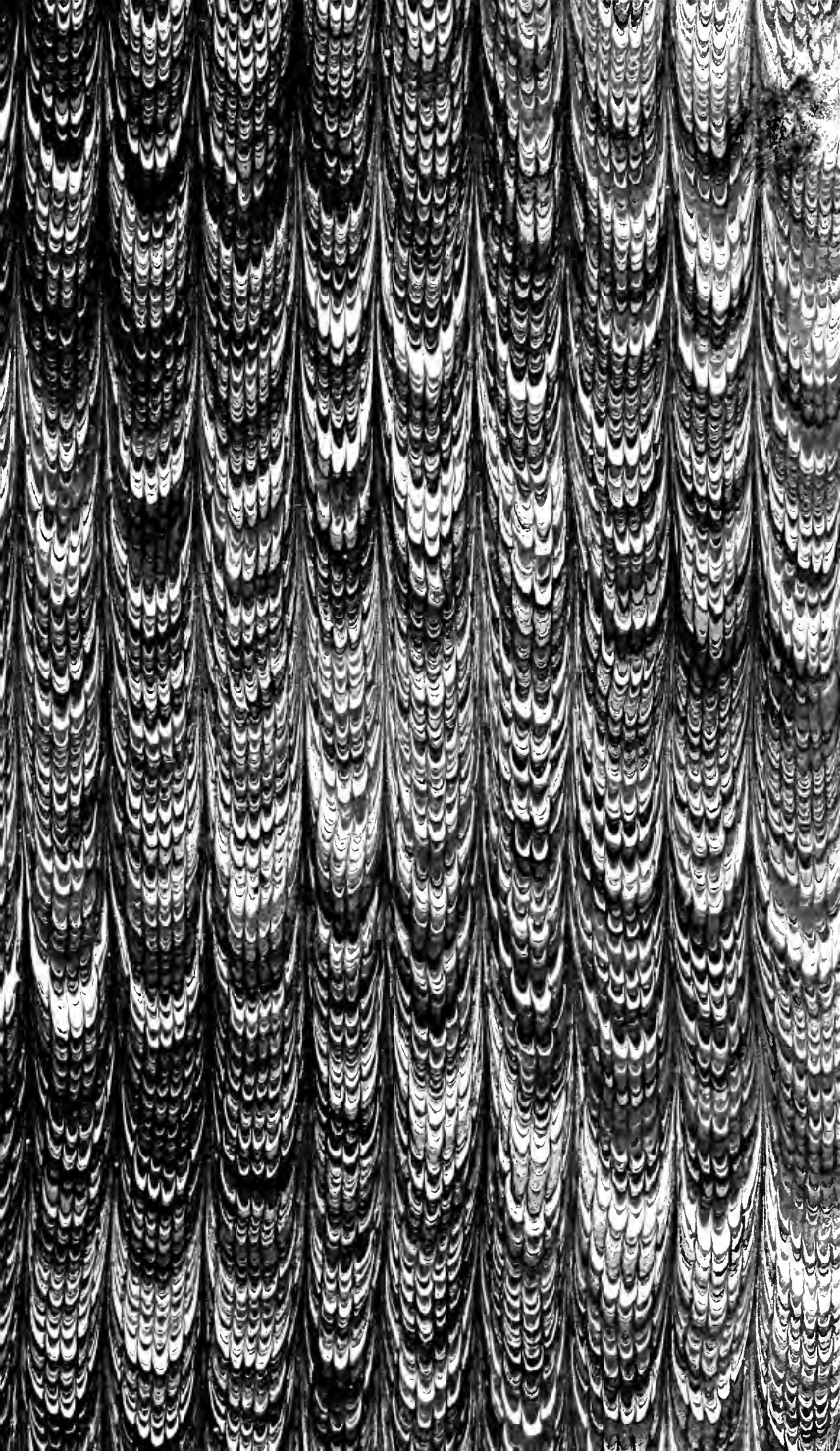

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Enquiries after Truth.

VOL. I.

DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

BY JOSEPHUS TELA.

Ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid veri non audeat.—CICERO.

He who knows nothing, doubts of nothing; scepticism and curiosity are the great springs of knowledge: but ignorance, on the contrary, is found to go hand in hand with credulity. ITAL. PROV.

A good book never comes out too late.—FATHER PAUL'S LETTERS, 67.

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1818.

THE

LIFE AND MORALS

OF

CONFUCIUS,

A

Chinese Philosopher,

WHO FLOURISHED ABOVE FIVE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST.

BEING ONE OF THE

CHOICEST PIECES OF LEARNING AND MORALITY REMAINING OF THAT NATION.

Reprinted from the Edition of 1691. *and*

EDITED BY JOSEPHUS TELA.

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1818.

PREFACE.

The work here published, in which, as an epitome, are contained all the Morals of Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, is very small, if we regard the number of pages which compose it: but it is doubtless very great, if consideration be had to the importance of the things therein contained.

We may say, that the Morals of this philosopher are infinitely sublime; but, at the same time, pure, sensible, and drawn from the purest fountains of natural reason. Certainly, a reason destitute of the lights of divine revelation has never appeared with so much illumination and power. And, as there is not any duty omitted by Confucius, so there are not any besides those here mentioned. He greatly extends his Morals, but not farther than is necessary; his judgment ever telling him how far he must go, and where he must stop.

He has a very considerable advantage, not only over a great number of Pagan writers, that have treated of things of this nature, but likewise over several Christian authors, who abound with so many

false or over-subtle thoughts; who almost everywhere surpass the bounds of their duty, and who give themselves up to their own fancy or ill-humour; who almost always digress from that just mean, where virtue ought to be placed; who, by their false portraitures, render it impossible to our practice, and who, consequently, make few virtuous men.

We can aver that, in this abridgment, we shall see master-pieces of the moral essays. Every thing herein is solid; because that right reason, that inward verity, which are implanted in the soul of all men, and which our philosopher incessantly consulted without prejudice, guided all his words. Thus the rules which he prescribes, and the duties to which he exhorts, are such, that there is no person who does not immediately give his approbation thereunto. There is nothing of falsity in his reasonings, nothing extreme; none of those frightful subtleties which are observed in the moral treatises of most modern metaphysicians,*—that is to say, in discourses where simplicity, clearness, and perspicuity, ought to prevail throughout, and make themselves sensible to minds of the lowest rank.

We shall, perhaps, find this maxim a little relaxed, where Confucius saith "that there are certain persons whom it is lawful to hate." Nevertheless, if the thing be closely considered, we shall find the thought to be just and reasonable. Virtue, indeed, commands us to do good to all men, as Confucius states it; but

* Voyez le Traité de Morale, de l'auteur de la Recherché de la Vérité.

it requires not that we should effectually have friendship for all sorts of persons. There are some so odious that it is absolutely impossible to love them; for, after all, we can only love good: we naturally have an aversion for what appears extremely wicked and defective. All that charity obliges us to do on this account is, to show kindness to a person, when it is in our power, as if we loved him, notwithstanding the vices, malice, and great defects which may be discovered in him.

Seeing that opportunity offers, we shall take notice that the duty of loving our enemies, which Jesus Christ so much recommends in his Gospel, is generally too much stretched. This duty is very difficult to perform in its just extent, without our rendering it yet harder; or, rather, impossible to practise, and capable of casting us into despair, and of making us fall into an entire relaxation. The generality of those who explain this duty, speak as if we were obliged to retain in our hearts a tender amity for all our enemies, how wicked and abominable soever they be. Yet this is not precisely that which the Son of God requires at our hands, because he demands not things absolutely impossible. His aim is to excite us to behave ourselves towards our enemies, whoever they be, as we do to them that we love. Indeed, the Scripture does, in several places, by "to love," signify "to do good," almost in the same manner as we do to those for whom we have a great affection. If this were a fit occasion, we might verify this with several passages. We shall satisfy ourselves with only alleging the example of God himself, which our Saviour

proposes for our imitation: for, after having said, Matth. v. 44, 45, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you;" (for these are all as so many synonimous terms,) he adds, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust." Now, it is certain that God loves not the wicked and unjust, although he may do them good: he has had an extreme aversion for a Caligula, for a Nero, and other such like monsters, although he has caused his sun to shine, and sent his rain upon them. But he has dealt with them as if he loved them; and it is after this manner, also, that we ought to deport ourselves towards our enemies. It is not that we are not bound sincerely to endeavour, as much as in us lies, to retain in our hearts some sentiments of friendship for them; but there are certain persons so lewd, so profligate, and so abominable, for whom it is impossible to have these sentiments. And it is upon this account that charity is yet greater, more generous, and praiseworthy, when, notwithstanding that aversion which we cannot hinder ourselves from bearing to certain persons, we cease not to do them good upon occasion, with the prospect of yielding obedience unto God.

As for the rest, by what we have hitherto said, it may be judged how exceedingly the public is beholden to the R. F. Incorcetta and Couplet, who have translated, out of Chinese into Latin, the three books

of Confucius, from which we have extracted this piece of morality, which is now divulged. We have selected the most important things, and have omitted several, which, although good in themselves, and particularly agreeable to the genius of the persons for whom they have been said and written, would have seemed, perhaps, too common and inconsiderable to Europeans. And, forasmuch as in the work of the R. F. Incorcetta and Couplet, a discourse is made concerning the origin of the Chinese nation, and of the most ancient books which this nation enjoys, and which were extant several ages before that of Confucius, we have, therefore, translated what on this account is most necessary to be known.

It is here requisite, for the reader's satisfaction, to declare, that the Chinese, from the beginning of their origin to the times of Confucius, have not been idolators; that they have had neither false gods nor images; that they have paid adoration only to the Creator of the universe, whom they have always called Xam-ti, and to whom their third emperor, named Hoam-ti, erected a temple, which was probably the first that was built to God. The name of Xam-ti, which they attribute to God, signifies sovereign master, or emperor. It is observable that there have been a great many of the Chinese emperors that have very frequently assumed the surname of Ti, which imports master, emperor, or that of Vam, which signifies king; that there was one prince of the fourth race, who was called Xi Hoam Ti, the great, or august, emperor; but there is not found any that has dared to assume the title of Xam,—that is to say, sovereign,

and that they have always respectfully left it to the absolute judge of the universe.

It is true that, in China, sacrifices have ever been offered to divers tutelary angels: but, in the times which preceded Confucius, it was in respect of honouring them infinitely less than Xam-ti, the sovereign lord of the world.

The Chinese serve God with extraordinary pomp and magnificence, but, at the same time, with a very modest and very humble behaviour; and say, that all this external worship is in nowise agreeable to the Divinity, if the soul be not inwardly adorned with piety and virtue. They highly honour their fathers and mothers, and persons advanced in age. The women are very virtuous; and, in their habits and all their fashions, great modesty is observed. The men and women, nobles and peasants, kings and subjects, greatly esteem sobriety, frugality, moderation, justice, and virtue.

The religion and piety of the Chinese continued almost in this state unto the time of the philosopher Li Lao Kiun, who was contemporary with Confucius, and who first declared there were several gods. Confucius put a stop to the torrent of superstition and idolatry which began to overflow. But, in fine, when Fohi's idol was brought from the Indies,—that is to say, sixty-five years after Jesus Christ, this torrent so strongly overflowed, that it made an irruption, the sad effects of which are still seen.

It were to be wished that there had, from time to time, been raised more of these Confuciuses: things would not be in the posture in which they are at China.

This great man instructed, as well by his manners and example, as by his precepts: and his precepts are so just, so necessary, and proposed with so much gravity, and at the same time with so much meekness and ingenuity, that they must needs easily insinuate themselves into our hearts, and produce great effects therein. Read only this little Treatise, which is sufficient to give you a very great and plenary satisfaction.

THE LIFE OF CONFUCIUS.

Confucius, or Kong-fu-tse, the most distinguished and venerated of the Chinese philosophers, and a descendant from the imperial family of the dynasty of Shang, was born in the kingdom of Lu, now the province of Shangtong, about 550 years before the Christian era. According to this date, which is supported by the best authorities, he must have been contemporary with Pythagoras and Solon, and some time earlier than Socrates. While he was yet very young, he afforded indications of extraordinary abilities, which were cultivated with uncommon application under the direction of able instructors. Almost as soon as he had arrived at the years of manhood, he had made astonishing proficiency in all the learning of his time, and was particularly conversant in the ancient canonical and ecclesiastical books attributed to the legislators Yao and Chun, which the Chinese call, by way of eminence, The Five Volumes, and consider to be the course of all their science and morality. His natural temper was excellent, and his conduct irreproachable and exemplary. He was particularly praised for his humanity, humility, sincerity, temperance, disinterestedness,

and contempt of riches. The reputation which Confucius acquired by his accomplishments and virtues occasioned his being appointed to different places of eminence in the magistracy of his country; which he filled with honour to himself, and signal benefit to the kingdom. The public situations in which he officiated enabled him to form an accurate judgment of the state of morals among his countrymen, which had become deplorable, corrupt, and vicious; and induced him to form the scheme of a general reformation in morals, manners, and policy. This scheme he endeavoured to carry into execution by preaching up a strict and pure morality, and using all the influence of his authority, and of his virtues, in recommending it.

Such success attended his efforts for some time, that he deservedly became an object of public reverence and gratitude, and was raised to a place of the highest trust in the kingdom of Lu. In this situation his counsels and advice produced the happiest effects, by the introduction of order, justice, concord, and decorum, throughout the whole kingdom, and rendering it the subject of admiration, and unfortunately also of envy, in the dominions of the neighbouring princes. According to general representation, the king of Tsi, dreading that the king of Lu would become too powerful if he continued to be directed by the wisdom and good policy of Confucius, devised the expedient of sending to him and his nobles a present of beautiful young girls, who had from their infancy been trained up in every captivating accomplishment; of which the consequence was, an entire

abandonment of the business of the state, and an universal effeminacy and dissoluteness of manners. To whatever cause it was owing, a sad degeneracy appears to have taken place in the court and kingdom of Lu; which determined Confucius, after repeatedly ineffectual struggles against it, to quit his employment, and to retire to some other kingdom, where his endeavours to promote reformation might prove more successful. After traversing different kingdoms, in which the confused state of public affairs, and the predominancy of the worst vices, afforded him little hopes of success in his grand scheme, and exposed him also to many inconveniences and much personal danger, he devoted himself to the business of more private instruction in philosophy and morality. His fame and his virtues soon procured him a great number of disciples, who continued firmly attached to his person and doctrine; of whom he sent six hundred into different parts of the empire, for the purpose of enlightening and reforming the people. Seventy-two of his disciples were distinguished from the rest, and are celebrated in the Chinese annals, on account of the superiority of their attainments; and ten of these above the others, for their complete knowledge of the principles and doctrines of their master. They were divided by him into four classes. The more immediate province of the first class was the study of the moral virtues; of the second, that of the arts of reasoning and eloquence; of the third, that of the rules of good government, and the duties of the magistracy; and the appropriate business of the fourth was what we may call public preaching, or the

delivery of correct and polished popular discourses on moral subjects. But, great and unwearied as were the exertions of this philosopher for promoting the reformation of his countrymen, the task was too mighty to be accomplished by his powers; which sensibly affected his mind as he advanced in life. During his last sickness, he acknowledged to his disciples, that his heart was overpowered with grief on beholding the disorders which prevailed in the empire; and he mournfully exclaimed, "Immense mountain!" (alluding to that edifice of perfection which he had been endeavouring to rear,) "how art thou fallen! The grand machine is demolished, and the wise and the virtuous are no more." And he afterwards added, "*The kings and princes will not follow my maxims:* I am no longer useful on earth: it is, therefore, time that I should quit it."

These words were followed by a lethargy, from which he never recovered. He died in the 73d year of his age, in his native kingdom, whither he had returned, accompanied by his disciples. After his death, he was lamented by the whole empire; in which innumerable edifices have been raised to his honour, with such inscriptions as the following:—*To the Great Master;—To the Chief Doctor;—To the Saint;—To the Wise King of Literature;—To the Instructor of Emperors and Kings.* And so high is the respect paid to his memory, in the present day, that his descendants enjoy by inheritance the honourable title and office of mandarins, and are allowed the privilege, in common with the princes of the blood, of exemption from the payment of all taxes to

the emperor. And, moreover, it is requisite, before any person can be admitted to the title of doctor, that a present shall have been made by him to a mandarin of the race of our philosopher.

The works which Confucius composed for the use of his disciples, and the preservation of his philosophy, are looked upon by the Chinese as of the first authority, next to the ancient classical books. So great was the author's modesty, however, that it led him to disclaim all pretensions in them to originality, and to declare himself indebted, for the information and wisdom which they convey, to the Five Volumes. These works are:—1. *Tay-hio*, i. e. The Grand Science, or School of Adults; designed principally for the instruction of princes and magistrates, and enforcing the duties of self-government, and of perseverance in the chief good, or an uniform obedience to the laws of right reason. 2. *The Chong-yong*, or The Immutable Medium; the practice of which, in the exercise of the passions, is illustrated by examples, and shewn to be the true method of arriving at perfection in virtue. 3. *Lung-yu*, or Moral and Pithy Discourses; containing a view of the actions, sentiments, and maxims, of Confucius and his disciples. 4. *Meng-toe*, or The Book of Mencius; so called from a disciple of Confucius, who is supposed to have completed it from his master's writings. The preceding articles are considered as entitled to the highest estimation, next to The Five Volumes: to which are to be added, 5. *The Hyau-king*, which treats of the reverence due from children to parents; and, 6. *The Syan-byo*, or The School or

Science of Children; consisting of sentences and examples taken from ancient and modern authors.

The religious principles of Confucius, when fully considered, appear to amount to pure and rational theism. He has been accused, by some illiberal critics on the writings of the missionaries of China, of having maintained, and covertly propagated, atheistical notions. But such a conclusion can only have been unwarrantably deduced from some dark expressions in his writings, which seem to conceal the idea of *materiality* with that of Deity. It is totally irreconcileable with his language, that the Tyen, or Deity, is the most pure and perfect essence, principle, and foundation of all things,—that he is independent and almighty, and watches over the government of the universe, so that no event can happen but by his will and power,—that he is possessed of such infinite knowledge, that our most secret thoughts are not hidden from him,—that he is holy without PARTIALITY, and of such boundless goodness and justice, that he cannot possibly let virtue go unrewarded, or vice unpunished. With regard to his sentiments respecting the human soul, and a state of future rewards and punishments, no precise and determinate ideas can be derived from any of the accounts which the missionaries have transmitted to us. His morality is rational and excellent, and often sublime. It may, without disadvantage, challenge a comparison with that of any of the Grecian or Roman sages, and is inferior to none, either ancient or modern.

It may not be improper to add, that, although the

Chinese profess the greatest veneration for the person and writings of Confucius, few of them, excepting the literati, take him for their guide in religious matters. Their predominant system comprehends a mixture of the ancient Pagan idolatry, and of the fables and superstitions of Indian mythology, constituting the worship of Fo, or Foe; which was introduced into China within the first century of the Christian era.—See Moreri. Anc. Univers. Hist. vol. 20; Mod. Univers. Hist. vol. 7.; and Aikin's General Biography, vol. 3.

THE

MORALS OF CONFUCIUS,

A CHINESE PHILOSOPHER.

PART I.

OF THE ANTIQUITY AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHINESE.

Although, in this little work, our design is only to relate what is most remarkable in the books of Confucius, yet we are obliged to speak of some books which had appeared in China before this philosopher. But, as this cannot be done without going a little backward, we will discourse one word concerning the origin and antiquity of the Chinese.

The Chinese chronologists do almost all agree that Fohi, who began to reign 2952 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, was the founder of this monarchy. The Chinese, who have interpreted these annals, make no difficulty to avow, that whatever is written concerning China before the reign of this emperor is fabulous and suspicious; and one of their most renowned historians, named Taisucum, frankly confesses that he is ignorant of what passed before the reign of Xinum, the successor of Fohi. There are

only certain annals, which the Chinese call the Great Annals, wherein the thing is otherwise read. The author of this prodigious chronology, which contains almost an hundred and fifty volumes, reports, that, after the creation of the world, there were three emperors,—the one of heaven, the other of the earth, and the third of men; that the progeny of this last succeeded one another for the space of above forty-nine thousand years; after which, thirty-five imperial families reigned successively for several ages, and without interruption. This author likewise adds, that he justifies not what he says; and at last agrees, that it is more certain to begin with Fohi, and herein to follow the most famous and best reputed historians.

It is not that in Fohi's life they have not inserted an infinite number of fables, which might cause us to question whether this emperor ever was: for, besides that in the Great Annals, it is read, that Fohi's mother, accidentally stepping into a place where a giant had passed, she was suddenly encompassed with a rainbow, and that it was at this very moment that she perceived herself with child of the founder of the Chinese monarchy; where it is also related, that this founder had the head of a man, and body of a serpent. It is true that, these fables being very gross, the generality of the Chinese deride them. They report, that the ground of this ridiculous tradition was the colour of Fohi's body, which was marked with several spots; or, rather, that it was an hieroglyphic, whereby they intended to represent this prince as a man of extraordinary prudence. But, although we had not this consideration and prospect,

the genealogy of this king is so exact, so circumstantial, and so well prosecuted, in the chronological tables of the Chinese, that it is not possible to imagine it only a fancy: so that there is certainly as little reason to deny, or even to question, that Fohi ever was, as to maintain that Saturn, Jupiter, Hercules, and Romulus, are only names under pretence, and that the poets and gravest historians have intermixed the history of their birth with a thousand impertinent fables.

Nevertheless, these very annals, which contain so many fables upon the account of Fohi's birth, say nothing of his predecessors, and speak very imperfectly concerning his country; which makes us suspect that he was not born in China, and that he came thither from some other place. They only intimate that he was born in a province called Kensi; where he, indeed, must necessarily arrive, supposing that he came from some other part into China: for, after the confusion of tongues, and dispersion of the people, he must come from Mesopotamia, or from the territory of Sennaar, to land at Kensi, and afterwards arrive in the heart of the country, viz.—in the province of Honan, where it is written that he kept his court.

Although we cannot exactly know at what time Fohi laid the first foundations of his empire, yet it is very probable that it was not long after the deluge: for, indeed, if we vigorously follow the computations of the Chinese, and the chronology of the Septuagint, it was not till about two hundred years after, in a time when Noah was yet living; so that we may readily believe that he is descended from this patriarch

by Sem, who, according to the sentiment of the whole world, had Asia for his inheritance. And that which more confirms us in our opinion is, that, in the Chinese language, Sem, which signifies to engender and produce, imports also life and sacrifice. Indeed, it is from Noah's children that all men since the deluge are descended, and have received life, and have learned to offer sacrifice unto God. Whereunto it might be added, that Fohi is by the Chinese called Paohi, which signifies also a victim, because that he was the first of Sem's posterity that introduced the service of God, and the use of sacrifices, among them.

But, if we refuse to adhere to the computations before-mentioned, let us retrench, with their leave, the first six emperors, whose history cannot in every thing be true, and let us begin to compute only from the seventh, viz.—from the Emperor Yao. For, from this emperor's reign, so many persons have, by cycles, computed and written whatever has passed in this kingdom, and have done it with so much exactness, and such a general uniformity, that we can no more doubt of the truth of their calculation, than that of the Greek Olympiads. For we shall also find, according to that computation, that the origin of the Chinese nation was not long after the flood; for, from the time of Yao to the year of this age (1688), it is four thousand forty and eight years.

This being so, it must necessarily follow that the first inhabitants of China had likewise the true knowledge of God, and of the creation of the world; for the idea of the true God, and the remembrance of

the world's creation, continued, in the minds of men, a long time after the deluge, and even of those that were most corrupted,—as the posterity of Cham, for example. Indeed, besides that, in the annals of the Chinese, a discourse is there made concerning the creation of the world, although after a different method from Moses's history; yet it was not possible that these ideas of the true God, which the creation of the world, and after that the deluge, had deeply engraven in their hearts, could be so suddenly effaced in such a manner as that they should fall into idolatry, and follow after other gods than Him who had created them. But, the more thoroughly to convince us of what we have been discoursing, it is needful only to consider the doctrine, sentiments, and manners of the ancient Chinese, the books of their philosophers, and especially those of Confucius. Certainly we shall throughout observe the most excellent morality that ever was taught,—a morality which might be said to proceed from the school of Jesus Christ.

The books which the ancient Chinese have written are exceedingly numerous, but the chief are those which are called *Ukim*,—that is to say, The Five Volumes; and those entitled *Su Xu*,—that is to say, The Four Books. *(See the Life of Confucius.)*

The first and chiefest of these five volumes is called *Xu Kin*. It is not necessary very amply to discourse on the antiquity of this work: it is sufficient to say that, in perusing it, we find the author to have written a long time before Moses. At first, there is seen the history of three great kings, viz.—Yao, Xun, and Yu; the last of which was the first and chief of the

family Hia, the most considerable of all the imperial families: and the two others have been famous law-givers, and, as it were, the Solons of China. Therein is afterwards found the most important constitutions that were made during the reign of the second family, or imperial house, called Xam and Vu, especially by Chimtam, who was the founder thereof, and who arrived at the empire 1776 years before the coming of Jesus Christ. In fine, a discourse is there made of the third family; wherein is chiefly related what was said or done most remarkable under the government of the first five princes, and of the twelfth. There is represented the history of Vuvam, who was the chief of this third family, and the lucubrations and instructions of the illustrious Cheucum, the brother of this emperor, who was a prince highly esteemed both for his virtue and extraordinary prudence. This whole volume, not to multiply words, is only an historical relation and collection of moral maxims, of harangues spoken by princes, of sentences uttered by the mouths of kings and particular persons, and of precepts and counsel given to princes; wherein so much prudence, policy, wisdom, and religion, are set forth, that they might be given to all Christian princes.

The second volume, which is properly a recital of the customs and ordinances of almost twelve kings, is entitled *Xi Kim.* It is a collection of odes, and several other little poems of this nature; for music being greatly esteemed and much used in China, and whatever is published in this volume having respect only to the purity of manners and the practice of

virtue, those that wrote it composed it in verse, to the end that, every one being enabled to sing the things therein contained, they might be in every one's mouth. Virtue is there magnified and extolled to the highest degree; and there are so many things expressed, after a method so grave and wise, that it is impossible not to admire them. It is very true that therein are contained things very ridiculous,—extravagant hyperboles in favour of certain princes, and murmurings and repinings against God and heaven: but the most judicious interpreters are of opinion, that all this is suspicious; that those to whom they are attributed are not the authors; that they are not to be credited, as being since added. Indeed, the other ancient odes, they say, contain nothing ridiculous, extravagant, or criminal; as appears by these words of Confucius, "The whole doctrine of the three hundred poems is reduced to these few words —*Su Vu Sie;* which import that we ought not to think any thing that is wicked or impure."

The third volume is called *Ye Kim.* In this volume, which is the most ancient, if it may be called a volume, nothing but obscurity and darkness are observed. Fohi had no sooner founded his empire than he gave instructions to the Chinese; but, the use of characters and writing being unknown, this prince, who could not teach them all with his voice, and who was moreover employed in the advancement of his growing monarchy, after a long and serious consideration, thought at last upon making a table, composed of some little lines, which it is not necessary to describe. The Chinese being as yet dull and rustic,

it is probable that this prince laboured in vain; and if it be true that he accomplished his design by the clear and easy explications which he himself gave for the understanding of these lines, it happened, at least insensibly, that this table became useless: for it is certain that, after his death, no use could be made thereof. Two thousand years, from the foundation of the monarchy, were now nearly elapsed, no one being able in any way to decipher this mysterious table, when at last an Œdipus was seen to appear: he was a prince named Venvam. This prince endeavoured to penetrate the sense of these lines by a great number of others, which he disposed after different ways: they were new enigmas. His son (viz. Cheucum) attempted the same thing; but had not the good fortune to succeed better. In brief, five hundred years after appeared Confucius, who endeavoured to untie this Gordian knot. He explained, according to his understanding, the little lines of the founder, with the interpretations that had been made before him, and refers all to the nature of beings and elements,—to the manners and discipline of men. It is true that Confucius, being arrived at a more advanced age, acknowledged his mistake, and designed to make new commentaries on this enigmatical work; but death hindered him from fulfilling his resolution.

To the fourth volume Confucius has given the title of *Chun Cieu;* words which signify the spring and autumn. He composed it in his old age. He discourses, like an historian, of the expeditions of divers princes; of their virtues and vices; of the fatigues they underwent, with the recompenses they received.

Confucius designed to this fourth volume the title of Spring and Autumn, which is an emblematical title, because that states flourish when their princes are endowed with virtue and wisdom; which is represented by the Spring: and that, on the contrary, they fall like the leaves, and are utterly destroyed, when their princes are dispirited or are wicked; which is represented by the Autumn.

The fifth volume, entitled *Li Ki*, or Memoirs of Rites and Duties, is composed of two books, the matter of which is extracted by Confucius out of several other books, and of various monuments of antiquity. But, about three hundred years after, all the copies of the work being burnt, by the command of a cruel emperor, called Xihoam-ti, and this loss being impossible to be repaired any other way than by consulting the most aged persons that might have preserved any ideas thereof, it is not to be questioned that the work is at present exceedingly defective, even as the interpreters themselves acknowledge. There are, indeed, several things herein wanting, and a great many others added, which never were in Confucius's copies. However, in this whole volume, such as it is, he treats of the rites, as well sacred as profane; of all sorts of duties, such as were practised in the time of the three families of the princes Hia, Xam, and Cheu; but especially of him who reigned in Confucius's time. These duties are those of parents to their children; those of children to their parents; the duties of husband and wife; those of friends; those which respect hospitality; and those which are necessary to be performed at home, or

at feasts. He there discourses likewise of the vessels of the sacrifices; of the victims that were to be offered up to heaven; of the temples to be chosen for that end; of the respect we ought to have for the dead; and of their obsequies, or funeral rites. In a word, he therein treats of the liberal arts,—especially of music, of the military art, of the way of lancing a javelin, and guiding a chariot. Behold, in brief, what The Five Volumes contain.

The Four Books, the three first of which are Confucius's books, (whereof we design to speak,) comprehend the whole philosophy of the Chinese; at least, whatever this philosophy has most curious and considerable. They explain, and more clearly illustrate, what is written in the Five Volumes: and, although the authority of the Five Volumes be infinitely greater, by reason of their antiquity, than that of the Four Volumes, yet the Four Volumes exceed the others for the advantage that may be received therefrom. Indeed, besides that the Chinese thence derive their principal oracles, and what they believe to be eternal verities, the literati (who are philosophers that follow Confucius's doctrine, and who have in their own hands all the employments of the nation,) cannot arrive at the degree of philosophers, and consequently be mandarins or magistrates, without a great knowledge of these Four Books. They are, in truth, under an obligation to know one of the Five Volumes, whichsoever they please to choose, according to their fancy and inclination: but, as for the Four Books, they are indispensably obliged to know them all four by heart, and thoroughly to understand

them. The principal reasons of which are as follows: —the first is, that Confucius, and Mencius, who wrote the Fourth Book, have collected what is best and most exquisite in the works of the ancients. The second is, that they have added several good things to the discoveries and thoughts of their ancestors. The third, that Confucius and Mencius propose their doctrine after a clearer and politer method than was formerly done. In fine, it is because that Confucius and Mencius have, in the Four Books, avoided the dull and harsh style of the ancients; and, by a smooth style, although without pride and arrogancy, have added ornaments to the naked simplicity of the golden age.

We have nothing to say concerning the Fourth Book, because that this work of Mencius has not as yet appeared in Europe; and we have already published the merit of Confucius, in the brief sketch we have given of his life.

A

COLLECTION

OUT OF

CONFUCIUS'S WORKS.

PART II. BOOK I.

THE First Book of Confucius was published by one of his most famous disciples, named Cemçu; and this learned disciple wrote very excellent commentaries thereon. This book is, as it were, the gate through which it is necessary to pass to arrive at the most sublime wisdom, and the most perfect virtue. The philosopher here treats of three considerable things.

1. Of what we ought to do to cultivate our minds, and regulate our manners.

2. Of the method by which it is necessary to instruct and guide others.

3. Of the care that every one ought to have to tend to the sovereign good, to adhere thereunto, and, as I may say, to repose himself therein.

Because the author chiefly designed to address his instructions to the princes and magistrates that might be called to the regality: this book is entitled *Ta Hio*, or The Great Science.

"The great secret," says Confucius, "to acquire true knowledge,—the knowledge, consequently, worthy of princes and the most illustrious personages,—is, to cultivate and polish the reason, which is a present that we have received from heaven. Our concupiscence has disordered it, and intermixed several impurities therewith. Take away, therefore, and remove from it these impurities, to the end that it may re-assume its former lustre, and enjoy its utmost perfection. This is a sovereign good. But this is not sufficient. It is moreover requisite, that a prince, by his exhortations, and by his own example, make of his people, as it were, a new people. In fine, after being, by great pains, arrived at this sovereign perfection, at this chief good, you must not relax: it is here that perseverance is absolutely necessary. Whereas, men do not generally pursue the methods which lead to the possession of the sovereign good, and to a constant and eternal possession," Confucius has thought it highly important to give some instructions therein.

He says, "That, after we know the end to which we must attain, it is necessary to determine, and incessantly to make towards this end, by walking in the ways which lead thereunto; by daily confirming in our mind the resolution fixed on for the attaining of it; and by establishing it so well, that nothing may in the least shake it.

"When you shall have thus fixed your mind in this great design, give up yourself," adds he, "to meditation: reason upon all things within yourself; endeavour to have some clear ideas thereof; consider

distinctly what presenteth itself to you; pass, without prejudice, solid judgments thereon; examine every thing, and weigh every thing with care. After examination and reasonings of this nature, you may easily arrive at the end where you must fix,—at the end where you ought resolutely to stand,—viz. at a perfect conformity of all your actions with what reason suggests.

"As to the means which a prince ought to use to purify and polish his reason, to the end that, it being thus disposed, he may govern his states, and redress and beautify the reason of his people, the philosopher proposes after what manner the ancient kings governed themselves.

"That they might at last govern their empire wisely, they endeavoured," saith he, "prudently to sway a particular kingdom, and to excite its members to improve their reason, and to act like creatures endowed with understanding. To produce this reformation in this particular kingdom, they laboured to regulate their family, to the end that it might serve as a model to all the subjects of this kingdom. To reform their family, they took an extraordinary care to polish their own person, and so well to compose their words and actions, that they might neither say nor do any thing that might ever so little offend complaisance, and which was not edifying; to the end that they themselves might be a pattern and example continually exposed to the eyes of their domestics and all their courtiers. To obtain this exterior perfection, they strove to rectify their mind by governing and subduing their passions; because that the

passions, for the most part, remove the mind from its natural rectitude, abase and incline it to all sorts of vice. To rectify their mind, to rule and subdue their passions, they so acted, that their will was always bent to good, and never turned towards evil. In fine, thus to dispose their will, they studied to illuminate their understanding, and so well to enlighten it, that, if it were possible, they might be ignorant of nothing: for, to will, desire, love, and hate, it is necessary *to know.* This is the philosophy of right reason."

This is what Confucius proposed to the princes, to instruct them how to rectify and polish, first their own reason, and afterwards the reason and persons of all their subjects. But, to make the greater impression, after having gradually descended from the wise conduct of the whole empire, to the perfection of the understanding, he re-ascends, by the same degrees, from their illuminated understandings to the happy state of the whole empire. "If," saith he, "the understanding of a prince be well enlightened, his Will cannot but incline to good: his Will inclining only to good, his soul will be entirely rectified; there will not be any passion that can make him abandon his rectitude: the soul being thus rectified, he will be composed in his exterior; nothing will be observed in his person that can offend complaisance. His person being thus perfected, his family, forming itself according to this model, will be reformed and amended. His family being arrived at this perfection, it will serve as an example to all the subjects of the particular kingdom; and the members of the

particular kingdom to all those that compose the body of the empire. Thus, the whole empire will be well governed; order and justice will reign there; we shall there enjoy a profound peace; it will be an happy and flourishing empire. Confucius afterwards certifies, that these admonitions do not less regard the subjects than the princes; and, after having addressed himself to kings, he tells them, that they ought particularly to apply themselves rightly to govern their family, to take care thereof, and reform: "for," he adds, "it is impossible that he who knows not how to govern and reform his own family can rightly govern and reform a people."

Behold what is most important in Confucius's doctrine, contained in the first book, and which is the text, as I may say, whereon his commentator Cemçu hath taken pains.

This famous disciple, to explain and enlarge his master's instructions, alleges authorities and examples, which he draws from three very ancient books, highly esteemed by the Chinese.

The first book he mentions, which is of a later date than the rest, is entitled *Camcao*, and makes up a part of the chronicles of the empire of Cheu. This book was composed by a prince called Vuvam, the son of King Venvam. Vuvam does therein highly extol his father: but his principal design, in magnifying the virtues and admirable qualities of this prince, is to form, according to this model, one of his brothers, whom he would perfect in virtue: and it is observable that he ordinarily tells him, that their father had the art of being virtuous;—"Venvam,"

said he to him, "had the art of polishing his reason and his person."

The Second book from whence Cemçu cites his authorities and examples, is called *Tar-Kia.* This book, which is much more ancient than the first, was written by a famous emperor of Xam, named Y-Yin. It is therein read, that this Y-Yin, seeing Tar-Kia, the grandson of the emperor Chim-Tam, degenerate from the virtue of his illustrious ancestors, and carry himself after a manner wholly different from their example, commanded him to live three years in a garden, where was his grandfather's tomb: that this made so great an impression upon his spirit, that he changed his course; and that the same Y-Yin, who had done him so kind an office, having afterwards advanced him to the empire, Tar-Kia governed it a long time in great prosperity. "King Tam," said Y-Yin to Tar-Kia, "King Tam always had his mind disposed to cultivate that precious reason which has been given us from Heaven."

In fine, the Third book, which is more ancient than the two former, is called *Ti-Tien*; and, upon the occasion of King Yao, it is there read, that this prince could cultivate this sublime virtue, this great and sublime gift which he had received from Heaven,—viz. natural reason.

It is evident that Confucius's disciple, by these authorities, designed to shew, or rather supposes, that the whole world believes that we have all received from heaven those lights which most men suffer to become extinct by their negligence, a reason which most men voluntarily slight, and suffer to

become corrupt: and, seeing that there were princes who have perfected these lights, who have bettered and improved their reason, we ought to imitate them, and that we, as well as they by their endeavours, may attain to such a perfection.

We must not here forget a remarkable thing which Cemçu relates, touching a basin wherein King Tam used to bathe and wash himself. He says, that these excellent words were there engraved—"Wash thyself; renew thyself continually; renew thyself every day; renew thyself from day to day:" and that it was to intimate to the king, that, if a prince who governs others has contracted vices and impurities, he ought to labour to cleanse himself therefrom, and to reduce his heart into its first state of purity. As for the rest, it has been an ancient custom among the Chinese to engrave or paint on their domestic vessels some moral sentences, and strong exhortations to virtue: so that, when they bathed themselves, or took their repasts, they had these sentences and exhortations continually before their eyes. This ancient custom is still preserved. "There is only this difference," says he who publishes Confucius's works, "that, whereas heretofore the characters were engraven or painted on the inside of the vessel, in the middle of the interior face, at present the Chinese most frequently engrave or paint them on the outside; satisfying themselves, in this age, with the outward appearance of virtue."

After Cemçu had spoken of the two first parts of his master's doctrine,—the one of which respects what a prince should do for his own perfection, and

the other what he is obliged to do for the perfection and prosperity of others,—he proceeds to the third and last part; wherein he discourses of the last end that every one ought to propose as the sovereign good, and at which he ought to fix. We must remember that, by the last end and sovereign good, Confucius understands, as we have already observed, an entire conformity of our actions with right reason.

After this, he alleges the example of that Venvam already spoken of: and certainly this prince's conduct was so wise and regular, that we cannot, without admiration, understand how, by the lights of nature alone, he could have such ideas as he had, and could arrive at so sublime a virtue as that to which he attained. It will not be unpleasing to see something of it here.

"Venvam," saith the commentator, "acknowledged, that the love which princes bear to their subjects cannot but greatly contribute rightly to govern and make them happy: and, upon this consideration, he made this love his principal business, which he incessantly endeavoured to perfect. Behold the method he took:—Because that the principal virtue of a subject is to honour and respect his king, Venvam, being as yet a subject, set himself to render this honour and respect; and took so great a pleasure in these sorts of obligations, that he always fulfilled them with great fidelity. As the first and most important virtue of children to their parents is obedience, Venvam, in the relation of a son, adhered to this obedience, and incessantly acquitted himself of this duty with an extraordinary piety. The principal

virtue of a father," adds Confucius's disciple, "is a tender love for his children: thus Venvam, like a father, closely adhered to this love, whereof he continually gave very signal proofs; not by a weak and criminal indulgence, but by the continual cares he took to reform and instruct them. In fine, fidelity is a virtue absolutely necessary to those that live in society: thus Venvam, in speaking and acting with the subjects of this kingdom, kept closely to this duty, and so strongly adhered to it, that he never promised any thing which he effected not with an unspeakable promptitude and exactness.

"This prince," says Cemçu, "was born of very virtuous parents, who had taken great care of his education,—especially his mother Taicin, who had been a pattern of virtue: but he himself had so well improved his education, that he rendered himself accomplished, and acquitted himself with so much reputation, and such a general esteem, even amongst foreign nations, that forty-four kingdoms voluntarily submitted to his empire. Nevertheless," adds he, "this great honour, wherewith he was environed, was never capable of dazzling him: he was endowed with an inexpressible and unparalleled modesty and humility. He very severely accused himself of not being virtuous enough; for one day, when he was sick, the earth being shook with prodigious earthquakes, he sought the cause of his calamity, and of the wrath of Heaven, only in his own sins; although he was of a consummate virtue."

That which most appeared in Venvam's actions was an extraordinary charity; a proof whereof we

will here allege. In the annals of China it is recorded, that this prince, having found in the field the bones of a man to whom the honours of burying were refused, immediately commanded them to be interred; and some of the by-standers saying that the master of the deceased was unknown, and that for this reason he might not concern himself, it being founded, perhaps, on some custom of the country, —"What!" replies the king, "he that holds the reins of the empire, is not he master of it? He that reigns, is not he the master of the kingdom? I am, therefore, the lord and master of the dead: wherefore, then, should I refuse them these last offices of piety?" But this is not all: he had no sooner uttered these words, but, unstripping himself of his royal vestment, he commanded it to be used, instead of a winding-sheet, to wrap up the bones, and bury them according to the manners and custom of the country; which his courtiers observing with admiration, they thus cried out, "If the piety of our prince is so great towards dry bones, how great will it not be towards men that enjoy life?" They made some other reflections of this nature.

Venvam's charity had properly for its object all sorts of persons, but particularly ancient persons, widows, orphans, and the poor; whom he protected and nourished as if they had been his own children. It is believed that these charitable actions were the principal cause of the re-establishment of a pious custom of the first emperors, and of a law which is still observed throughout China. This law enacts, "that in every city, even in the least, an hundred

poor aged persons shall be maintained at the public charge.

But Venvam, not satisfied with having given in his life-time instructions and examples of virtue, when he felt himself near death, not sufficiently relying on the force of his preceding instructions and examples, and knowing that the last words of dying persons make a great impression, he likewise gave his son Vuvam these three admonitions:—

1. "When you see any virtuous action done, be not slack to practise it.

2. "When the opportunity of doing a reasonable thing shall offer, make use of it without hesitating.

3. "Cease not thy endeavours to extirpate and suppress vice.

"These three admonitions which I give you, my son," adds he, "comprehend whatever may produce an exact probity and excellent conduct."

Behold, doubtless, an example which shews that, in this king's life-time, the Chinese had very rational sentiments, and that virtue, as I may say, was their passion; for, in a word, the people generally conform themselves to the sentiments and manners of their kings—

Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis.

There is nothing which gives a greater idea of the virtue of the ancient Chinese than what they have written and practised in respect to their law-suits. They teach, that actions ought not to be commenced; that frauds, severities, and enmities, which are the general attendants and consequences of law-suits,

are unbecoming men; that the whole world ought to live in unity and concord; and that to this end it behoved every one to use his utmost endeavours, either to prevent law-suits from arising, or to stifle them in their birth, by reconciling the parties, or inspiring them with the love of peace: that is to say, "by engaging them to renew and improve their reasons." These are Cemçu's own words.

But that which is most remarkable on this subject is, the extraordinary precautions which the judges took before any cause was brought before their tribunals. They, with the utmost vigilance and attention, examined the outside of the plaintiff, or him who began the suit; to the end that, by this means, they might know whether this man was thereunto excited by good motives; whether he believed his cause good, or whether he acted sincerely: and for this purpose there were five rules. By the first rule, they examined the placing of his words and manner of speaking: and this was called *Cutim;* that is to say, the observation of the words. By the second, they considered the air of his countenance and the motion of his lips: and this was called *Setim;* that is to say, the observation of the face. By the third, they observed his manner of breathing when he proposed his cause: this rule was called *Kitim;* that is to say, the observation of the respiration. By the fourth, they remarked whether his reply was not quick; whether he gave not intricate, ill-grounded, uncertain answers; or whether he spake of any other thing than that in question; or whether his words were not ambiguous: and this was called *Ulhtim;* that is to say,

the observation of the answers. Lastly, by the fifth, the judges were carefully to weigh the considerations and respect; to see whether there were no trouble, digression, and confusion; if there appeared not any sign of a lie and fraud: and this last rule was called *Motim;* that is to say, the observation of the eyes.

It was by these exterior marks that this ancient Areopagite discovered the most hidden thoughts of the heart, dispensed an exact justice, diverted a great many persons from law-suits and frauds, and inspired in them the love of equity and of concord. But at present these rules are unknown in China,—at least, wholly neglected.

To return to Confucius's doctrine, illustrated with the commentaries of Cemçu.—This disciple set a high value upon a maxim which he had frequently heard his master repeat, and which himself also very strongly inculcated. It was this:—"Always behave thyself with the same precaution and discretion as you would do if you were observed by ten eyes, and pointed at by so many hands."

To render virtue yet more commendable, and more easily to inspire its sentiments, the same disciple demonstrates, that whatever is honest and advantageous is amiable; and we are obliged to love virtue, because it includes both these qualities. That, moreover, virtue is an ornament which embellishes, as I may say, the whole person of him who possesses it,—his interior and exterior; that to the mind it communicates inexpressible beauties and perfections; that, as to the body, it there produces very sensitive delights; that it affords a certain physiognomy,

certain transports, certain ways, which infinitely please; and, as it is the property of virtue to becalm the heart, and keep peace there, so this inward tranquillity and secret joy produce a certain serenity in the countenance, a certain joy, and air of goodness, kindness, and reason, which attract the heart and esteem of the whole world. After which he concludes, that the principal business of man is to rectify his mind, and so well to rule his heart, that his passions might always be calm; and, if it happen that they be excited, he ought to be moved no farther than is necessary: in a word, that he may regulate them according to right reason. For, as for instance, adds he, if we suffer ourselves to be transported with excessive anger,—that is to say, if we fall into a rage without any cause, or more than we ought when we have reason,—we may thence conclude that our mind has not the rectitude it ought to have. If we contemn and mortally hate a person, by reason of certain defects which we observe in him, and render not justice to his good and excellent qualities, if endowed therewith; if we permit ourselves to be troubled by a too great fear; if we abandon ourselves to an immoderate joy, or to an excessive sorrow; it cannot be said that our mind is in the state wherein it ought to be, that it has its rectitude and uprightness.

Cemçu carries this moral a great way further, and gives it a perfection which, in my opinion, could never be expected from those who have not been honoured with divine revelation. He says, that it is not only necessary to observe moderation in general, as oft as our passions are stirred, but that also in respect

of those which are the most lawful, innocent, and laudable, we ought not blindly to yield up ourselves to them, and always follow their motions: it is necessary to consult reason. As for example,—parents are obliged to love one another: nevertheless, as their amity may be too weak, so it may be also too strong; and, as to the one and the other respect, there is doubtless an irregularity. It is just for a child to love his father; but if a father has any considerable defect, if he has committed any great fault, it is the duty of a son to acquaint him with it, and tell him what may be for his good; always keeping a due respect, from which he ought not to depart. Likewise, if a son be fallen into any sin, it is the duty of a father to reprove him, and give him his advice thereon. But, if their love be blind,—if their love be a mere passion,—if it be flesh and blood which make them thus act,—this affection is an irregular affection. Why? Because it digresseth from the rule of right reason.

We should injure the reader were we to omit speaking of the Emperor Yao, whose eulogy is recorded in the work that affords the matter of ours. No man has ever more exactly practised all these duties, which have been proposed by Confucius's disciple, than he. It may be said, if his portraiture be not flattered, that he had a disposition made for virtue. He had a tender, but magnanimous and well-disposed heart. He loved those whom he was obliged to love, but it was without the least weakness. He, in a word, regulated his love, and all his passions, according to right reason.

This prince arrived at the empire 2357 years before Jesus Christ: he reigned a hundred years; but he ruled with so much prudence, wisdom, and so many demonstrations of clemency and kindness to his subjects, that they were the happiest people of the earth.

Yao had all the excellent qualities desirable in a prince: his riches made him not proud; his extraction, which was so noble and illustrious, puffed him not up with arrogancy. He was virtuous, sincere, and kind, without affectation. His palace, table, apparel, and furniture, discovered the greatest moderation that ever was seen. He delighted in music; but it was a grave, modest, and pious music: he detested nothing so much as songs, wherein modesty and civility were blemished. It was not a capricious humour that made him dislike these sorts of songs, —it was the desire he had of rendering himself in all things pleasing unto Heaven. It was not avarice that produced in him that moderation which he observed at his table, in apparel, furniture, and every thing else: it was only the love he bore to those who were in want; for he only designed to relieve them. It was also his great piety, and that ardent charity wherewith he burned, which made him frequently utter these admirable words:—"The famine of my people is my own famine: my people's sin is my own sin."

In the seventy-second year of his reign, he elected, as a colleague, Xun, who with him governed the empire twenty-eight years: but what is most remarkable, and deserves the praise and applause of all ages,

is, that, although he had a son, he declared that he appointed, for his successor, Xun, in whom he had seen a great deal of virtue, an exact probity, and judicious conduct. And, it being told him that his son complained of his excluding him from the succession to the empire, he made this answer, which alone may be the subject of an excellent panegyric, and render his memory immortal :—" I had rather my only son should be wicked, and all my people good, than if my son alone was good, and all my people wicked."

Confucius's chief aim, as we have declared, being to propose his doctrine to kings, and persuade them to it, because he thought that, if he could inspire them with the sentiments of virtue, their subjects would become virtuous after their example,—Cemçu, explaining this doctrine, expatiates largely on the duty of kings.

He principally applies himself to three things :—

1. To shew that it is very important that kings behave themselves well in their court and family, because that their ways and actions are certainly imitated.

2. To persuade them of the necessity there is in general of acquiring the habit of virtue, and of performing the duties thereof in all places and upon all accounts.

3. To engage them not to impoverish the people, but to do all for their good and ease.

As to the first article, he makes use of several cogitations, which the Book of Odes affords him. But behold, in two words, the most considerable part of

his discourse:—"If," saith he, "a king, as a father, testify love to his children; if, as a son, he be obedient to his father; if, in quality of the eldest son, he be courteous to his younger brethren, and live peaceably with them; if, as the youngest, he have a respect and esteem for the eldest; if he kindly use those that are in his service; if he be charitable, especially to widows and orphans: if, I say, a king exactly acquit himself of all this, his people will imitate him, and every one will be seen to practise virtue throughout his kingdom. Parents will tenderly love their children, and give them a good education. Children will honour their parents, and render them due obedience. The elder will shew kindness to their younger brother, and the younger will have a respect and esteem for their elder, or for other persons for whom good manners require that they should have respect; as, for example, for persons advanced in age. In fine, those that have estates will maintain some widows, orphans, and some sick persons: for there is nothing that makes a greater impression on the minds of people than the examples of their kings.

As to the second article, where Cemçu exhorts, in general, to the practice of virtue, he alleges for a principle this maxim, to which Christ himself seems to refer all his morality:—"Do to another what you would they should do unto you; and do not unto another what you would not should be done unto you."*

"Amongst those in the midst of whom you live," says the disciple of Confucius, "there are some above

* Vide 24th Maxim of Confucius.

you, others inferior to you, and others that are your equals: there are some that preceded you, others that are to be your successors: you have them on your right hand, and on your left. Consider that all these men have the same passions with yourself, and that what you desire they should do, or not do, unto you, they desire that you should do, or not do, unto them. What you, therefore, hate in your superiors, what you blame in them, be sure not to practise towards your inferiors: and what you hate and blame in your inferiors, practise not to your superiors. What displeases you in your predecessors, eschew to give an example to those that shall come after. And as, in case that you should happen to give them such an example, you would desire they should not follow it, so you should not follow the bad examples of those who have preceded you. In fine, what you blame in those who are on your right hand, practise not to those who are on your left; and what you reprehend in those on your left hand, be sure not to practise it to those that are on your right. Behold," concludes Cemçu, "after what manner we ought to measure and regulate all our actions! And if a prince thus exerciseth himself, it will happen that all his subjects will be of one heart and one mind, and that he will rather be called their father than their lord and master. This will be the means by which to draw down the blessings and favours of Heaven, not to fear any thing, and to lead a quiet and peaceable life: for, in fine, virtue is the basis and foundation of an empire, and the source from whence flows whatever may render it flourishing. It was upon this conside-

ration that an ambassador of the kingdom of Cu returned this excellent answer to a nobleman of the kingdom of Cin, who asked him whether, in his master's kingdom, there were great riches and precious gems?—"Nothing is esteemed precious, in the kingdom of Cu, but virtue." A king of Ci returned almost the same answer. This prince treating of an alliance with the king of Guei, and the king of Guei demanding of him, if, in his kingdom, there were precious gems?—he answered, "That there were none." "How!" replied this king, all in amazement, "Is it possible that, though my kingdom be less than yours, yet there is found a carbuncle, whose brightness is so great than it can enlighten space enough for twelve palanquins; and that in your kingdom, which is larger than mine, there are none of these precious gems?"—"I have four ministers," rejoins the king of Ci, "who with great prudence govern the provinces I have committed to them: behold my precious gems,—they can enlighten a thousand stadia."

Nor were the men only of China famous for their esteem of virtue: there were women who considered it as a jewel of infinite value, and preferable to all treasures. An illustrious queen, named Kiam, who reigned two hundred years before Confucius, reclaimed her husband from sensuality and debauchery, by an action which deserves to be immortalised. Seeing that this prince continually resorted to the pastimes of debauchery, and abandoned himself to all sorts of pleasure, she one day plucked her pendants from her ears, and laid aside all her jewels, and in this condition went to the king, and spake to him

these words, with a sensible emotion,—" Sir, is it possible that luxury and debauchery are so very pleasing to you? You contemn virtue; but I esteem it infinitely more than the most precious metals." She afterwards enlarged upon this subject, and the action and discourse of this princess touched him so strongly that he renounced his extravagancies, and gave himself up entirely to virtue, and the care of his kingdom, which he governed thirteen years with great applause.

In fine, as the last article, Cemçu represents to kings that they ought not to oppress their people, either by impositions or otherwise: that, to avoid being forced thereto, it is necessary to choose wise, faithful, and virtuous ministers; and, consequently, not to admit into the management of affairs those that are unworthy, and who, by their cruelties, ambition, and avarice, can only bring a vast prejudice to the state. He shews them that they ought to lessen, as much as possible, the number of their ministers, and of all those who live at the public expense; to endeavour to excite all to work; and so to order it that those who manage and disburse the treasure, may do it with all the moderation imaginable. " Princes," adds he, " ought never to seek private interest: they ought only to look after the interests of their people. To be loved and faithfully served, they ought to convince their subjects, by their conduct, that they design only to make them happy; which they will never do, if they heartily follow their particular interests,—if they oppress and impoverish them.

A

COLLECTION

OUT OF

CONFUCIUS'S WORKS.

BOOK II.

THIS second book of Confucius was published by his grandson Cusu. It treats of divers things, but especially of that excellent mediocrity, which must be constantly observed in all things, between the too much and too little. Thus this book is entitled *Chumyum;* that is to say, The Perpetual Mean,—a mean constantly observed.

Confucius teaches, at first, that all men ought to love this happy mediocrity, which they ought to search after with an extreme care. He says, that the perfect man always keeps a just mean, whatever he undertakes: but that the wicked always swerves therefrom; that he does too much, or not enough. When the right reason sent from Heaven, adds he, has once shewn a wise man the mean he ought to keep, he afterwards conforms all his actions thereunto, at all times, as well in adversity as prosperity: he continually watches over himself, over his thoughts,

over the most secret motions of his heart, always to square himself according to this just mean, which he will never lose sight of: but the wicked, not being restrained either by fear, modesty, or the love of virtue, are always carried into extremes by their extravagant passions.

This philosopher cannot sufficiently admire this happy mediocrity: he looks on it as the most sublime thing in the world,—as a thing most worthy the love and employment of the highest minds, as the sole path of virtue. He complains that there have always been so few persons who have kept it: he diligently enquires after the cause thereof. He says, that, as for the wise men of the age, they slight and contemn it, because they imagine it below their great designs, below their ambitious projects: and that, as for dull persons, they very hardly attain it, either because they understand it not, or because the difficulty in attaining it astonishes and discourages them: and all this, adds Confucius, happens for want of examination; for, if we diligently examined what is good in itself, we should find that all extremes are prejudicial, and that the mean alone is always good and gainful.

He herein particularly alleges the example of Xun the emperor: he cries out, "How great was the prudence of the Emperor Xun! He was not satisfied, in the administration of state affairs, with his single examination, with his own particular judgment and prudence,—he likewise consulted the meanest of his subjects. He asked advice upon the least things; and he made it a duty and delight to

weigh the answers that were given him, how common soever they appeared. When any thing was proposed to him, which, after a strict examination, he was convinced was repugnant to right reason, he acquiesced not, but with an open heart represented what was amiss in the counsel that was given him. By this means he made his subjects place confidence in him, and accustom themselves freely to give him admonitions from time to time. As for good and judicious counsels, he followed, magnified, and extolled them; and thereby every one was encouraged joyfully to declare his opinion. But if, amongst the counsels which were given him, he found that some plainly contradicted others, he attentively considered them; and, after having examined them, he always took a mean, especially when it concerned the public interests.

Confucius here deplores the false prudence of the men of his time. It had, indeed, very much degenerated from the prudence of the ancient kings. "There is not," saith he, "any person at present who does not declare that I have prudence, that I know what is necessary to be done, and what is not. But, because that now profit and particular advantage are the only objects delighted in, it happens that we do not think on the evils which may thence ensue, on the perils to which this gain and profit expose us; and that the precipice is not perceived by us. There are some who perfectly understand the nature and value of mediocrity, who choose it for their rule, and square their actions by it; but who, afterwards, suffering themselves to be overcome by sloth, have not

the power to persist in doing good. To what end, in this sort of persons, do the knowledge and resolutions they have formed, tend? Alas! it was not thus with my disciple Hori: he had an exquisite discerning faculty; he remarked all the differences that occurred in things; he always chose a mean, and never forsook it.

"As for the rest," adds Confucius, "it is not a very easy thing to acquire that medium which I so much commend. Alas! there is nothing so difficult: it is an affair which requires great pains and industry. You will find men capable of governing happily the kingdoms of the earth; you will see some who have magnanimity enough to refuse the most considerable dignities and advantages; there will be some also who will have courage enough to walk on naked swords: but you will find few capable of keeping a just mean,—to arrive at which, art, labour, courage, and virtue, are required."

It was upon account of this moral that one of his disciples, who was of a warlike and ambitious temper, asked him, wherein valour consisted, and what it was necessary to do to obtain the name of valiant? "Have you heard," says Confucius, "of the valour of those in the South, or those that dwell in the North, or rather of the valour of my disciples, who apply themselves to the study of wisdom? To act mildly in the education of children and disciples,—to be indulgent to them,—patiently to bear their disobediences and defects,—is that wherein the valour of the southern people consists. By this valour they conquer their violent temper, and subject their passions,

which are generally violent, to right reason. To lie down courageously in the camp,—to repose quietly in the midst of a terrible army,—to see a thousand deaths before one's eyes, without daunting,—not to be disquieted, but make a pleasure of this sort of life: behold what I call the valour of the Northern men! But as generally there is a great deal of rashness in all this, and that oftentimes men do not regulate themselves according to that mean which every one ought to seek after, it is not this sort of valour which I require of my disciples. Behold what their character ought to be.

"A perfect man (for, in short, the perfect man only can have true valour,) ought always to be busied in conquering himself. He must suit himself to the manners and tempers of others: but he ought always to be master of his own heart and actions; he must not suffer himself to be corrupted by the conversation or the examples of loose and effeminate persons; he must never obey, till he has first examined what is commanded him; he must never imitate others without judgment. In the midst of so many mad and blind persons, who go at random, he must walk aright, and not incline to any party: this is the true valour. Moreover, if this very person be called to the magistracy, in a kingdom where virtue is considered, and he change not his morals, how great soever the honours be to which he is advanced; if he there preserve all the good habits which he had when only a private man; if he permit not himself to be led away with pride and vanity,—this man is truly valiant! Ah! how great is this valour! But if, on the

contrary, he be in a kingdom where virtue and laws are contemned, and that, in the confusion and disorder which there prevail, he himself be depressed with poverty,—afflicted,—reduced even to the loss of life; but yet, in the midst of so many miseries, he remain constant, preserve all the innocency of his manners, and never change his opinion;—ah! how great and illustrious is this valour! Instead, therefore, of the valour of the Southern or Northern countries, I require and expect from you, my dear disciples, a valour of the nature above-mentioned."

Behold! something which Confucius speaks, which is not less remarkable. "There are some men," saith he, "who surpass the bounds of mediocrity, by affecting to have extraordinary virtues. They covet always to have something marvellous in their actions, to the end that posterity may praise and extol them. Certainly, as for myself, I shall never be enamoured with these glittering actions, where vanity and self-love have ever a greater share than virtue. I would only know and practise what is necessary to know and practise every where.

"There are four rules, according to which the perfect man ought to square himself.

"1. He himself ought to practise, in respect of his father, what he requires from his son.

"2. In the service of his prince, he is obliged to shew the same fidelity which he demands of those that are under him.

"3. He must act, in respect of his eldest brother, after the same manner that he would that his younger brother should act towards him.

"4. And lastly, he ought to behave himself towards his friends as he desires that his friends should carry themselves to him. The perfect man continually acquits himself of these duties, how common soever they may appear. If he happen to perceive that he has done amiss in any thing, he is not at rest till he has repaired his fault: if he find that he has omitted any considerable duty, there is not any violence which he does not to himself, perfectly to accomplish it. He is moderate and reserved in his discourses; he speaks with circumspection: if to him occur a great affluence of words, he presumes not to expose it, he restrains himself. In a word, he is so rigorous a censurer of himself, that he is not at rest when his words correspond not to his actions, and his actions to his words. "Now the way," cries he, "by which a man arrives at this perfection, is a solid and constant virtue."

To this, his master's doctrine, Cusu here adds a moral worthy of their meditation who have a desire to perfect themselves. "The perfect man," says this worthy disciple of so great a philosopher, "the perfect man governs himself according to his present state, and covets nothing beyond it. If he find himself in the midst of riches, he acts like a rich man, but addicts not himself to unlawful pleasures: he avoids luxury, detests pride, offends nobody. If he be in a poor and contemptible state, he acts as a poor and mean man ought to act; but he does nothing unworthy of a grave and worthy man. If he be remote from his own country, he behaves himself as a stranger ought to do; but he is always like himself.

If he be in affliction and adversity, he does not insolently affront his destiny, but has courage and resolution: nothing can shake his constancy. If he be advanced to the dignities of state, he keeps his rank, but never treats his inferiors with severity: and if he see himself below others, he is humble; he never departs from the respect he owes to his superiors, but he never purchases their favour with flattery. He uses his utmost endeavours to perfect himself, and exacts nothing of others with severity: it is upon this account that he expresses no discontent or anger to any person. If he lift up his eyes toward Heaven, it is not to complain because it has not sent him prosperity, nor to murmur because it afflicts him: if he look down towards the ground, it is not to reproach men, and attribute the cause of his miseries and necessities unto them: it is to testify his humility; that is to say, that he is always contented with his condition, that he desires nothing beyond it, and that, with submission and an even spirit, he expects whatever Heaven shall ordain concerning him. Thus he rejoiceth in a certain tranquillity, which may well be compared to the top of those mountains which are higher than the region where the thunder and tempests are formed.

In the sequel of this book, he discourses of the profound respect which the ancient Chinese, and especially the kings and emperors, had for their parents, and of the exact obedience which they paid them. "If a king," said they, "honour and obey his father and mother, certainly he will endeavour to excite his subjects to follow his example: for, briefly, a

man who loves virtue desires that all others should likewise esteem it, especially if it be his interest that they should be virtuous." Now, it is of great importance to a king that his subjects love and practise virtue: indeed, how can he hope to be obeyed by his subjects, if he himself refuse to obey those that gave him life. After all, if a prince desire to bring his subjects to be obedient to their parents, he must shew kindness toward them, and treat them with that tenderness which fathers have for their children; for we willingly imitate those whom we love, and those by whom we think we are beloved. But if this prince, by his conduct, excite his subjects to give obedience to their parents, and afterwards obey him as their common father, most certainly they will obey Heaven, from whence come crowns and empires,—Heaven, which is the sovereign father of all. And what will be the effect of this obedience? It will happen that Heaven will diffuse its blessings on those who shall thus well acquit themselves. It will abundantly recompense so admirable a virtue; it will make peace and concord reign every where: so that the king and his subjects will seem as one single family, where the subjects obeying the king as their father, and the king loving his subjects as his children, will all lead, as in a single—but rich, magnificent, regular, and convenient—house, the happiest and most peaceable life imaginable.

To return to Confucius.—As he knew that the examples of kings made a great impression on men's minds, so he proposes that of the Emperor Xun, in respect of the obedience which children owe to their

parents. "Oh! how great has the obedience of this emperor been!" cries Confucius. "Thus," continues he, "if he have obtained from Heaven the imperial crown, it is the recompense of this virtue. It is this virtue which procured him so many revenues, those immense riches, and vast kingdoms, which are only limited by the ocean. It is this virtue that has rendered his name so famous throughout the world. In fine, I doubt not but that long and peaceable life which he enjoyed ought to be considered as a recompense of his virtue." To hear this philosopher speak, would it not be said that he had read the Decalogue, and understood the promise which God has there made to those who honour their father and mother. But if, by what Confucius declares, it appear that the Decalogue was not unknown to him, it will rather seem that he knew the maxims of the Gospel, when we shall see what he teaches concerning charity, which, he says, it is necessary to have for all men.

"That love," saith he, "which it is requisite for all men to have, is not a stranger to man,—it is man himself; or, if you will, it is a natural property of man, which dictates to him that he ought generally to love all men. Nevertheless, above all men, to love his father and mother is his main and principal duty: from the practice of which he afterwards proceeds, as by degrees, to the practice of that universal love, whose object is all mankind. It is from this universal love that distributive justice comes,—that justice which makes us render to every one his due, and more especially to cherish and honour wise and up-

right men, and advance them to the dignities and offices of state." That difference which is between the love we have for our parents and what we have for others, between the love we bear to virtuous and learned men and that which we bear to those who have not so much virtue or ability;—that difference, I say, is, as it were, a harmony, a symmetry of duties, which the reason of Heaven has protected, and in which nothing must be changed.

For the conduct of life, Confucius proposes five rules, which he calls universal.

The first regards the justice that ought to be practised between a king and his subjects.

The second respects the love that ought to be between a father and his children.

The third recommends conjugal fidelity to husbands and wives.

The fourth concerns the subordination that ought to appear between elder and younger brothers.

The fifth obliges friends to live in concord, in great unity, and mutual kindness.

"Behold," adds he, "the five general rules, which every one ought to observe!" behold, as it were, the five public roads, by which men ought to pass! But, after all, we cannot observe these rules, if there be wanting these three virtues:—prudence, which makes us discern good from evil; universal love, which makes us love all men; and that resolution which makes us constantly persevere in the adherence to good, and aversion for evil. But lest some fearful persons, not well versed in morality, should imagine that it is impossible for them to acquire these three

virtues, he affirms, that there is no person incapable of acquiring them; that the impotence of man is voluntary. "How dull soever a man is, should he," says he, "be without any experience; yet, if he desire to learn, and grow not weary in the study of virtue, he is not very far from prudence. If a man, although full of self-love, endeavour to perform good actions, behold him already very near that universal love which engages him to do good to all. In fine, if a man feel a secret shame when he hears impure and unchaste discourses, if he cannot forbear blushing thereat, he is not far from that resolution of spirit which makes him constantly seek after good, and have an aversion for evil."

After the Chinese philosopher has treated of these five universal rules, he proposes nine particular ones for kings; because he considers their conduct as a public source of happiness or misery. These nine rules are:—

1. A king ought incessantly to labour to adorn his person with all sorts of virtues.

2. He ought to honour and cherish the wise and virtuous.

3. He ought to respect and love those that gave him birth.

4. He ought to honour and esteem those ministers who distinguish themselves by their ability, and those who exercise the principal offices of the magistracy.

5. He ought to accommodate himself, as much as it is possible, to the sentiments and minds of other ministers; and, as for those who have less considerable employments, he ought to consider them as his members.

6. He ought to love his people, even the meanest, as his own children, and to share in the various subjects of joy or sorrow which they may have.

7. He ought to use his utmost to bring into his kingdom several able artificers in all sorts of arts, for the advantage and convenience of his subjects.

8. He ought kindly and courteously to receive strangers and travellers, and fully to protect them.

9. Lastly, he ought tenderly to love the princes and great men of his empire, and so heartily to study their interests, that they may love him, and be ever faithful to him.

Rightly to understand the Morals of Confucius, it is here necessary to speak one word concerning the distinction which he makes between the saint and the wise. To the one and the other he attributes certain things in common; but to the saint he gives some qualities and advantages, which he says that the wise has not. He says, that reason and innocence have been equally communicated to the wise and to the saint, and likewise to all other men; but that the saint has never in the least declined from right reason, and has constantly preserved his integrity: whereas, the wise has not always preserved it, having not always followed the light of reason, because of several obstacles he has met with in the practice of virtue; and especially by reason of his passions, to which he is a slave. Hence, it is necessary that he does his utmost, and use great pains and endeavours to put his heart in a good posture, and govern himself according to the light of right reason and the rules of virtue.

Cusu, reasoning thereon, the better to illustrate his master's doctrine, compares those who have lost their first integrity, and desire to regain it, to those withered and almost dead trees, which, notwithstanding, have in the trunk and roots a certain juice, a certain principle of life, that makes them cast forth shoots. "If," said he, "we take care of these trees, —if we cultivate them, water them, and prune off the dead branches,—it will happen that these trees will re-assume their former state. After the same manner, although a person has lost his first integrity and innocence, he needs only excite the good that remains, use pains and industry, and he will infallibly arrive at the highest virtue. "This last state," saith Cusu, "this state of the wise, is called *Giantao;* that is to say, The Road and the Reason of Man; or, rather, the way which leads to the origin of the first perfection. And the state of the saint is called *Tientao*; that is to say, The Reason of Heaven; or the first rule which Heaven has equally distributed to all men, and which the saints have always observed, without turning either on the right hand or on the left."

As rules do in brief contain the principal duties, and that we may easily retain them, Confucius gives five to those who desire to choose and adhere to the good.

1. It is necessary, after an exact and extensive manner, to know the causes, properties, and differences of all things.

2. Because that, amongst the things which are known, there may be some which are not perfectly known, it is necessary carefully to examine them, to

weigh them minutely, and in every circumstance, and thereon to consult wise, intelligent, and experienced men.

3. Although it seems that we clearly apprehend certain things, yet, because it is easy to transgress, through precipitancy, in the too much or too little, it is necessary to meditate afterwards, in particular, on the things we believe we know, and to weigh every thing by the weight of reason, with all the attentiveness of spirit, and with the utmost exactness, whereof we are capable.

4. It is necessary to endeavour not to apprehend things after a confused manner: it is requisite to have some clear ideas thereof, so that we may truly discern the good from the bad, the true from the false.

5. Lastly, after that we shall have observed all these things, we must reduce to action,—sincerely and constantly perform and execute, to the utmost of our power, the good resolutions which we have taken.

We cannot better conclude this book than with these excellent words of Cusu:—"Take heed," saith he, "how you act when you are alone. Although you should be retired into the most solitary and most private place of your house, you ought to do nothing whereof you would be ashamed if you were in company or in public. Have you a desire," continues he, "that I should shew you after what manner he who has acquired some perfection governs himself? Why, he keeps a continual watch upon himself; he undertakes nothing, begins nothing, pronounces no word, on which he has not meditated. Before he raises

any motion in his heart, he carefully observes himself; he reflects on every thing, he examines every thing, he is in a continual vigilance. Before he speaks, he is satisfied that what he is about to utter is true and rational; and he thinks that he cannot reap a more pleasant fruit from his vigilance and examination, than to accustom himself circumspectly and wisely to govern himself, in the things which are neither seen nor known by any."

A

COLLECTION

OUT OF

CONFUCIUS'S WORKS.

BOOK III.

CONFUCIUS's Third Book is quite of another character from the two former, both as to the method and expressions; but, in the ground, it contains the same morality. It is a contexture of several sentences, pronounced at divers times, and at several places, by Confucius and his disciples: therefore, it is entitled *Lun Yu;* that is to say, discourses of several persons who reason and philosophise together.

In the first place, there is represented a disciple of this famous philosopher, who declares that he did not spend a day wherein he rendered not an account to himself of these three things:—

1. Whether he had not undertaken some affair for another, and whether he managed and followed it with the same eagerness and fidelity as if it had been his own concern.

2. If, when he has been with his friends, he has discoursed to them sincerely; if he has not satisfied

himself with shewing them some slight appearance of kindness and esteem.

3. Whether he has meditated on his master's doctrine; and whether, after having meditated on it, he has used his utmost endeavours to reduce it to practice.

Afterwards appears Confucius giving lessons to his disciples. He tells them, that the wise ought to be so occupied with his virtue, that, when he is in his house, he ought not to seek his conveniency and delight; that, when he undertakes any affair, he ought to be diligent and exact, prudent and considerate in his words; and that, though he have all these qualities, yet he ought to be the person in whom he ought least to confide,—he whom he ought least to please: that, in a word, the wise man, always distrusting himself, ought always to consult those whose virtue and wisdom are known to him, and regulate his conduct and actions according to their counsels and examples.

"What think you of a poor man," says one of his disciples to him, "who, being able to extenuate and diminish his poverty through flattery, refuses to accept this offer, and courageously maintains that none but cowards and low-spirited men do flatter? What think you of a rich man, who, notwithstanding his riches, is not proud?"—"I say," replies Confucius, "that they are both praise-worthy; but that they are not to be considered as if they were arrived at the highest degree of virtue. He that is poor ought to be cheerful and content in the midst of his indigence: behold, wherein the virtue of the poor man consists.

And he that is rich ought to do good to all: he that is of a poor and abject spirit does good only to certain persons: certain passions, certain particular friendships, cause him to act; his friendship is interested; he disperses his wealth only with a prospect of reaping more than he sows; he seeks only his own interest: but the love of the perfect man is an universal love,—a love whose object is all mankind."

"A soldier of the kingdom of Ci," said they unto him, "lost his buckler; and, having a long time sought after it in vain, he at last comforts himself, upon the loss he had sustained, with this reflection: —A soldier has lost his buckler, but a soldier of our camp has found it; he will use it."—"It had been much better spoken," replies Confucius, "if he had said, A man has lost his buckler, but a man will find it;" thereby intimating, that we ought to have an affection for all the men of the world.

Confucius had a tender spirit, as may be judged by what we have said; but it was great and sublime. The ancient Chinese taught, that there were two gods which presided in their houses,—the one called Noao, and the other Cao. The first was respected as the tutelar god of the whole family, and the last was only the god of the fire-hearth. Nevertheless, although the last of these genii was very much inferior to the first, yet to him were rendered greater honours than to him that had all the domestic affairs under his protection: and there was a proverb which implied, that it was better to seek the protection of Cao than of Noao. As this preference had something very singular, and seemed, in some measure, even to

encounter those which were promoted to grandeur in princes' courts, Confucius being in the kingdom of Guez, and meeting one day with a prefect who had great authority in this kingdom, this minister, puffed up with the greatness of his fortune, supposing that the philosopher designed to procure some favour from the king, demanded of him, by way of merriment, the meaning of this proverb, so frequently in every one's mouth—It is better to seek the protection of Cao than of Noao? Confucius, who presently perceived that the prefect gave him to understand, by this question, that he ought to address himself to him, if he would obtain his request from the king his master; and who at the same instant made this reflection, that, to gain the good-will of a prince's favourite, it is necessary to offer incense even to his defects, and to force one's-self to compliances unworthy of a philosopher,—plainly told him, that he differed wholly from the maxims of the age; that he would not address himself to him with any address he wanted, to shew him that he ought to do it; and at the same time to inform him, that, though he should answer his question according to his desire, he could reap no benefit thereby, he told him, "that he who had sinned against Heaven should address himself only to Heaven: for," he adds, "to whom can he address himself to obtain the pardon of his crime, seeing there is not any deity above Heaven."

Confucius recommends nothing so much to his disciples as clemency and courtesy; always grounded upon this maxim, that we ought to love all men: and, to make them better to apprehend the truth of what

he said, he produced an instance of two illustrious princes in the kingdom of Chuco, who were distinguished for this very thing. "These princes," saith he, "were so mild and courteous, that they easily forgot the most heinous injuries and horrible crimes, when the offenders shewed any sign of repentance. They beheld these criminals, though worthy of the severest punishments, as if they had been innocent: they not only forgot their faults, but, by their carriage, made even those that had committed them, in some measure, to forget them, and lose one part of the disgrace which remains after great lapses, and which can only discourage in the way of virtue.

One of this philosopher's great designs being to form princes to virtue, and to teach the art of reigning happily, he made no difficulty of addressing himself directly to them, and of giving them counsel. "A prince," said he, one day, to a king of Lu, called Timcum, "a prince ought to be moderate; he ought not to contemn any of his subjects; he ought to recompense those that deserve it. There are some subjects whom he ought to treat with mildness, and others with severity: there are some on whose fidelity he ought to rely; but there are some also whom he cannot sufficiently distrust."

Confucius would have princes desire nothing which other men wish for, although they are sometimes good things, which it seems they might desire without offence: he would have them to trample, as I may say, upon whatever may make the felicity of mortals upon earth; and especially to look upon riches, children, and life itself, as transient advantages,

and which consequently cannot make the felicity of a prince. "The Emperor Yao," says this philosopher, "governed himself by these maxims, and, under the conduct of so good a guide, he arrived at a perfection which few mortals can attain; for it may be said that he saw nothing above him but Heaven, to which he was entirely conformable. This incomparable prince," adds he, "from time to time visited the provinces of his empire; and, as he was the delight of his people, being met one day by a troop of his subjects, who, after having called him their emperor and father, and after having testified their exceeding joy at the sight of so great a prince, cried out with a loud voice, to join their wishes with their acclamations, "Let Heaven heap riches upon thee! Let it grant thee a numerous family! And let it not snatch thee from thy people, till thou art satisfied with thy days!"—"No," replies the emperor, "send up other petitions to Heaven: great riches produce great cares and great inquietudes; a numerous progeny produces great fears; and a long life is generally a series of misfortunes."—"There are found," cries Confucius, after this, "few emperors like to Yao."

That which generally occasions trouble to kings,—that which, in some measure, redoubles the weight of the burden annexed to their crown,—is either the few subjects over whom they reign, or the little wealth which they possess: for, in short, all kings are not great; all kings have not vast dominions and excessive riches. But Confucius is of opinion that a king is too ingenious to torment himself, when these reflections are capable of causing the least trouble in

him. He says, that a king has subjects enough when his subjects are contented; and that his kingdom is rich enough when peace and concord flourish there. "Peace and concord," saith this philosopher, "are the mothers of plenty."

In fine, Confucius, in speaking of the duties of princes, teaches that it is so necessary for a prince to be virtuous, that, when he is otherwise, a subject is obliged, by the laws of Heaven, voluntarily to banish himself, and to seek another country.

He sometimes complains of the disorders of princes, but the great subject of his complaints is the extravagancies of private men. He bewails the morals of his age: he says, that he sees almost nobody who distinguishes himself, either by piety or some extraordinary quality; that every one is corrupted, that every one is depraved, and that it is chiefly amongst the magistrates and courtiers that virtue is neglected. It is true that Confucius seems to extend things beyond reason. Indeed, it was not much for this philosopher, when, in a prince's court, he found but ten or twelve persons of an extraordinary wisdom, to cry out, *O tempora, O mores!* Under Vuvam's reign, there were ten men of a consummate virtue and sufficiency, on whom this emperor might repose all the affairs of the empire: yet Confucius exclaims against so small a number, saying, that great endowments, virtue, and the qualities of the mind, are things very rare in his age. He had made the same complaints in respect of the emperor of Zun, the first of the family of Cheu, although this prince had then five prefects, of whose merit some judgment may be

formed by the history of one of these ministers, whose name was Yu.

This wise minister had rendered his memory immortal amongst the Chinese, not only because it was he who invented the secret of stopping or diverting the waters which overflowed the whole kingdom, and which made it almost uninhabitable, but because that, being an emperor, he always lived like a philosopher. He was of an illustrious family, for he could name some emperors of his ancestors; but if, by the decadency of his house, he was fallen from the pretensions he might have to the empire, his wisdom and virtue acquired him what fortune had refused to the nobility of his extraction. The Emperor Zun so thoroughly understood his desert, that he associated him to the empire; and seventeen years after he declared him his lawful successor, even to the exclusion of his own son. Yu refused this honour; but, as he vainly denied it, and that his generosity might not suffer in the pressing solicitations which were made to him on all hands, he withdrew from the court, and went to seek a retreat in a cell: but, not being able so well to conceal himself as to remain undiscovered in the rocks of his solitude, he was forcibly advanced to the throne of his ancestors. No throne was ever more easy of access than this prince's,—no prince was ever more affable. It is reported that he one day left his dinner ten times, to peruse petitions which were presented to him, or to hear the complaints of the distressed; and that he ordinarily quitted his bath, when audience was demanded of him. He reigned ten years with so much success, with so

much tranquillity, and in such great abundance of things, that of this age it may be truly said, it was a golden age. Yu was an hundred years old when he died; and he died as he had lived: for, preferring the interest of the empire before that of his family, he would not let his son succeed him, but gave the crown to one of his subjects, whose virtue was known unto him. A prince, doubtless, is happy when he can sometimes discharge, on such a minister, the cares which press upon himself; and Zun only could be so, seeing that he at one time had five, all worthy of being seated on the throne. But this number was not great enough for Confucius, and it is this which made him grieve.

Confucius says, that a prince ought never to accept the crown to the prejudice of his father, how unworthy soever his father might be of it; that it is one of the greatest crimes of which a prince can be guilty: and this occasioned him to relate two little histories, which admirably suit his subject.

"Limcum," says this philosopher, "a king of Guei, was twice married. As chastity is not always the portion of princesses, the queen had unlawful familiarities with one of the nobles of her court; and, this not being so privately managed but one of Limcum's sons by his first wife came to the knowledge of it, this young prince, jealous of his father's honour, so highly resented it, that he designed to kill the queen, which he concealed not. The cunning and guilty princess, who saw herself detected, and who had a great influence over her ancient spouse, alleged such plausible reasons to make him believe her innocency, that this poor prince, shutting his eyes against the

truth, banished his son; but, as children are not culpable for their father's crimes, he kept Che with him: he was the son of this disgraced prince. Limcum died soon after. The people recalled the prince whom the queen's debaucheries had banished; and he went to receive the crown, but his vicious son opposed him, alleging that his father was a parricide: he raised armies against him, and was proclaimed king by the people.

"The sons of a king of Cucho," continues he, "followed not this way: behold a memorable example. This king, whose history we shall relate in two words, had three sons: and, as fathers have sometimes more tenderness for their youngest children than for the rest, he had so much for the last which Heaven had given him, that some days before his death he appointed him for his successor, to the exclusion of his other brothers. This procedure was so much the more extraordinary, as it was contrary to the laws of the land. The people thought, after the king's death, that they might endeavour, without any crime, to advance the eldest of the royal family on the throne. This was executed as the people had projected it; and this action was generally approved. There was none but the new king who, remembering his father's dying words, refused to consent. This generous prince took the crown that was presented him, put it on his younger brother's head, and nobly declared that he renounced it, and thought himself unworthy of it, seeing that he had been excluded by his father's will, and that his father could not retract what he had done. The brother, touched with such an heroic action, conjured him the same moment not

to oppose the inclination of all the people, who desired him to reign over them. He alleged that it was he alone who was the lawful successor to the crown, which he contemned; that their father could not violate the laws of the state; that this prince was overtaken by a too great fondness; and that, in a word, it in some measure belonged to the people to redress the laws of their kings, when they were not just. But nothing could persuade him to act contrary to his father's will. Between these two princes there was a laudable contest: neither of them would accept of the crown; and they, seeing that this contest would continue a long time, withdrew from the court, and were vanquished and victorious together. They went to end their days in the repose of solitude, and left the kingdom to their brother. These princes," adds he, "sought after virtue; but they sought it not in vain, for they found it."

He frequently relates short histories of this nature, wherein an heroic generosity is every where seen to discover itself. The women amongst the people, and even great princesses, are therein observed rather to choose death, and that with their own hands, than be exposed to the violences of their ravishers. The magistrates are there seen to quit the greatest employments, to avoid the disorders of the court; philosophers censure kings upon their throne; and princes make no difficulty to die to appease the anger of Heaven, and procure peace to their people.*

After this, Confucius shews how the dead ought to

* We find no such examples of heroic virtue in the present age. —EDITOR.

be buried; and, as this was performed in his time with a great deal of magnificence, so, in funeral pomps, he blames whatever seems like ostentation, and reproves it after a severe manner. Indeed, one of his disciples being dead, and this disciple being buried with the usual magnificence, he cried out, when he knew it, "When my disciple was alive, he respected me as his father, and I looked upon him as my son: but can I now behold him as my son, since he has been buried like other men?"

He prohibits the bewailing the dead with excess; and if, constrained by his own grief, he shed tears for this very disciple, he confessed he forgot himself: that, in truth, great griefs have no bounds, but that the wise man ought not to be overcome with grief; that it is a weakness, it is a crime in him.

He gives great praises to some of his disciples, who, in the midst of the greatest poverty, were content with their condition, and accounted as great riches the natural virtues which they had received from Heaven.

He declaims against pride, self-love, indiscretion, and against the ridiculous vanity of those that affect to be masters every where; against those self-conceited men, who momentarily cite their own actions, and against great talkers: and, drawing afterwards the portraiture of the wise man, in opposition to what he has discoursed, he says, that humility, modesty, gravity, and neighbourly affection, are virtues which he cannot one moment neglect, without departing from his character.

He says, that a good man never afflicts himself,

and fears nothing; that he contemns injuries, credits not reproaches, and refuses even to hear bad reports.

He maintains that punishments are too common;* that, if the magistrates were good men, the wicked would conform their life to theirs; and that, if princes would only advance to dignities persons distinguished by their honesty and exemplary life, every one would apply himself unto virtue, because, that grandeur being that which all men naturally desire, every one willing to possess it would endeavour to render himself worthy the public approbation.

He would have us avoid idleness; to be serious, and not precipitate in our answers; and that, setting ourselves above every thing, we should never be troubled, either because we are contemned, or not known in the world.

He compares hypocrites to those professed villains, who, the better to conceal their designs from the eyes of men, appear wise and modest in the day-time, and who, by the favour of the night, rob houses, and commit the most infamous crimes.

He says, that those who make their belly their god never do any thing worthy of their rank as men; that they are rather brutes than rational creatures: and, returning to the conduct of the great ones, he very well remarks, that their crimes are always greater than the crimes of other men. "Zam, the last emperor of the family of Cheu," says Confucius on this occasion, "had a very irregular conduct. But, how irregular soever his conduct was, the disorders of this

* What would he have thought on this subject, if he had lived in England at the present period.—EDITOR.

emperor were only the disorders of his age. Nevertheless, when any debauched, criminal, or infamous action is mentioned, they say—It is the crime of Zam. The reason of which is this, Zam was wicked and an emperor."

Confucius relates an infinite number of other things of this nature, which concern the conduct of all sorts of men: but most of the things which he says, or which his disciples do say, are sentences and maxims, as we have already declared; the most considerable of which are these that follow.

MAXIMS.

I.

Endeavour to imitate the wise, and never discourage thyself, how laborious soever it may be: if thou canst arrive at thine end, the pleasure thou wilt enjoy will recompense all thy pains.

II.

When thou labourest for others, do it with the same zeal as if it were for thyself.

III.

Virtue which is not supported with gravity gains no reputation amongst men.

IV.

Always remember that thou art a man, that human nature is frail, and that thou mayst easily fall; and thou shalt never fall. But if, happening to forget

what thou art, thou chancest to fall, be not discouraged: remember that thou mayst rise again; that it is in thy power to break the bands which join thee to thine offence, and to subdue the obstacles which hinder thee from walking in the paths of virtue.

V.

Take heed that thy promises be just, for, having once promised, it is not lawful to retract: we ought always to keep our promise.

VI.

When thou dost homage to any one, see that thy submissions be proportioned to the homage thou owest him: there are stupidity and pride in doing too little; but, in overacting it, there are abjection and hypocrisy.

VII.

Eat not for the pleasure thou mayst find therein: eat to increase thy strength; eat to preserve the life which thou hast received from Heaven.

VIII.

Labour to purify thy thoughts: if thy thoughts are not ill, neither will thy actions be so.

IX.

The wise man has an infinity of pleasures; for virtue has its delights in the midst of the severities that attend it.

X.

He that in his studies wholly applies himself to labour and exercise, and neglects meditation, loses his time: and he that only applies himself to meditation, and neglects labour and exercise, does only wander and lose himself. The first can never know

any thing exactly; his knowledge will be always intermixed with doubts and obscurities: and the last will only pursue shadows; his knowledge will never be certain, it will never be solid. Labour, but slight not meditation: meditate, but slight not labour.

XI.

A prince ought to punish vice, lest he seem to maintain it: but yet he ought to keep his people in their duty rather by the effects of clemency and good example than by menaces and punishments.

XII.

Never slacken fidelity to thy prince; conceal nothing from him which it is his interest to know; and think nothing difficult when it tends to obey him.

XIII.

When we cannot apply any remedy to an evil, it is in vain to seek it. If, by thine advices and remonstrances, thou couldst undo what is already done, thy silence would be criminal: but there is nothing colder than advice, by which it is impossible to profit.

XIV.

Poverty and human miseries are evils in themselves, but the wicked only resent them. It is a burden under which they groan, and which makes them at last to sink: they even distaste the best fortune. It is the wise man only who is always pleased: virtue renders his spirit quiet; nothing troubles him, nothing disquiets him, because he practises not virtue for a reward: the practice of virtue is the sole recompense he expects.

XV.

It is only the good man who can make a right choice, who can either love or hate with reason, or as need requires.

XVI.

He who applies himself to virtue, and strongly addicts himself thereunto, never commits any thing unbecoming a man, nor contrary to right reason.

XVII.

Riches and honours are good; the desire of possessing them is natural to all men: but, if these good things agree not with virtue, the wise man ought to contemn, and generously to renounce them. On the contrary, poverty and ignominy are evils; man naturally avoids them: if these evils attack the wise man, it is lawful for him to rid himself from them, but it is not lawful to do it by a crime.

XVIII.

I never as yet saw a man who was happy in his virtue, or afflicted with his defects and weaknesses; but I am not surprised, because I would have him who delights in virtue to find so many charms therein, that for it he should contemn the pleasures of the world; and, on the contrary, that he who hates vice should find it so hideous, that he should use all endeavours to keep himself from falling therein.

XIX.

It is not credible that he, who uses his utmost endeavours to acquire virtue, should not obtain it at last, although he should labour but one single day. I never yet saw a man that wanted strength for this purpose.

XX.

He who in the morning hath heard the voice of virtue, may die at night. This man will not repent of living, and death will not be any pain unto him.

XXI.

He who seeks pride in his habits, and loves not frugality, is not disposed for the study of wisdom: thou oughtst not even to hold correspondence with him.

XXII.

Afflict not thyself because that thou art not promoted to grandeur and public dignities: rather grieve that thou art not, perhaps, adorned with those virtues that might render thee worthy of being advanced.

XXIII.

The good man employs himself only with virtue, the wicked only with his riches. The first continually thinks upon the good and interest of the state; but the last has other cares, he only thinks on what concerns himself.

XXIV.

Do unto another what you would he should do unto you; and do not unto another what you would not should be done unto you. Thou only needst this law alone, it is the foundation and principle of all the rest.*

XXV.

The wise man has no sooner cast his eyes upon a good man, than he endeavours to imitate his virtue: but the same wise man has no sooner fixed his sight

* See Matt. vii. 12. Luke vi. 31.

upon a man given up to his vices, than, mistrusting himself, he interrogates himself, in a trembling manner, if he be not like that man.

XXVI.

A child is obliged to serve and obey his father. Parents have their failures: a child is obliged to acquaint them therewith, but he ought to do it with moderation and prudence; and if, whatever precautions he takes, he always meet with opposition, he ought to rest awhile, but never desist. Counsels given to parents do frequently draw punishments and severities upon the child; but on this account he ought to suffer, not to murmur.

XXVII.

The wise man never hastens, either in his studies or his words; he is sometimes, as it were, mute: but, when it concerns him to act, and practise virtue, he, as I may say, precipitates all.

XXVIII.

The truly wise man speaks little, he is little eloquent. I do not see that eloquence can be of very great use to him.

XXIX.

A long experience is required to know the heart of man. I imagined, when I was young, that all men were sincere; that they always practised what they said; in a word, that their mouth always agreed with their heart: but now that I behold things with another eye, I am convinced that I was mistaken. At present, I hear what men say, but I never rely thereon. I will examine whether their words are agreeable to their actions.

XXX.

In the kingdom of Ci, there was formerly a prefect who slew his king. Another prefect of the same kingdom, beholding with horror the crime of this parricide, quitted his dignity, forsook his wealth, and retired into another kingdom. This wise minister was not so happy as to find at first what he sought after: in this new kingdom he only found wicked ministers, little devoted to their master's interest. "This," saith he, "shall not be the place of mine abode; I will elsewhere seek a retreat." But, always meeting with men like to that perfidious minister, who by his crime had forced him to abandon his country, dignity, and all his estate, he went through the whole earth. If thou demandst my thoughts concerning such a man, I cannot refuse telling you that he deserves great praise, and that he had a very remarkable virtue. This is the judgment that every rational man ought to make thereof; but, as we are not the searchers of hearts, and as it is properly in the heart that true virtue resides, I know not whether his virtue was a true virtue: we ought not always to judge of men by their outward actions.

XXXI.

I know a man, who passes for sincere in the people's mind, who was asked for something that he had not. Thou imaginest, perhaps, that he ingenuously confessed that it was not in his power to grant what was asked of him. He ought to do it, if his sincerity had answered the report it had amongst the people; but behold how he took it: he went directly to a neighbour's house; he borrowed of him what was requested

of himself, and afterwards gave it him. I cannot convince myself that this man can be sincere.

XXXII.

Refuse not what is given thee by thy prince, what riches soever thou possessest. Give thy superfluities to the poor.

XXXIII.

The defects of parents ought not to be imputed to their children. Because that a father shall, by his crimes, render himself unworthy of being promoted to honour, the son ought not to be excluded, if he do not render himself unworthy. Because that, if a son shall be of an obscure birth, his birth ought not to be his crime; he ought to be called to great employments, as well as the sons of the nobles, if he has the qualifications necessary. Our fathers heretofore sacrificed victims only of a certain colour, and pitched upon these colours according to the will of those that sat upon the throne. Under the reign of one of our emperors, the red colour was in vogue. Think you that the deities, to which our fathers sacrificed under this emperor's reign, would reject a red bull, because it came from a cow of another colour?

XXXIV.

Prefer poverty and banishment to the most eminent offices of state, when it is a wicked man that offers them, and would constrain thee to accept them.

XXXV.

The way that leads to virtue is long, but it is thy duty to finish this long race. Allege not for thy excuse, that thou hast not strength enough, that difficulties discourage thee, and that thou shalt be at last

forced to stop in the midst of thy course. Thou knowst nothing, begin to run: it is a sign thou hast not as yet begun; thou shouldst not use this language.

XXXVI.

It is not enough to know virtue, it is necessary to love it; but it is not sufficient to love it, it is necessary to possess it.

XXXVII.

He that persecutes a good man, makes war against Heaven. Heaven created virtue, and protects it: he that persecutes it, persecutes Heaven.

XXXVIII.

A magistrate ought to honour his father and mother; he ought never to faulter in this just duty; his example ought to instruct the people. He ought not to contemn old persons, nor persons of merit: the people may imitate him.*

XXXIX.

A child ought to be under a continual apprehension of doing something that may displease his father: this fear ought always to possess him. In a word, he ought to act, in whatever he undertakes, with so much precaution, that he may never offend him, or afflict him.

XL.

Greatness of spirit, power, and perseverance, ought to be the portion of the wise: the burden wherewith he is loaded is weighty; his course is long.

* See Matt. xix. 19.

XLI.

The wise man never acts without counsel. He sometimes consults, in the most important affairs, even the least intelligent persons,—men that have the least spirit, and the least experience. When counsels are good, we ought not to consider from whence they come.

XLII.

Eschew vanity and pride. Although thou hadst all the prudence and ability of the ancients, if thou hast not humility, thou hast nothing; thou art even the man of the world that deserves to be contemned.*

XLIII.

Learn what thou knowst already, as if thou hadst never learned it: things are never so well known but that we may forget them.

XLIV.

Do nothing that is unhandsome, although thou shouldst have art enough to make thine action approved: thou mayst easily deceive the eyes of man, but thou canst never deceive Heaven,—its eyes are too penetrative and clear.

XLV.

Never contract friendship with a man that is not better than thyself.

XLVI.

The wise man blushes at his faults, but is not ashamed to amend them.

XLVII.

He that lives without envy and covetousness may aspire at every thing.

* See Luke xiv. 8. St. John, xiii. 14.

XLVIII.

Wouldst thou learn to die well?—learn first to live well.

XLIX.

A minister of state ought never to serve his prince in his extravagances and injustice. He ought rather to renounce his office than tarnish it by base and criminal actions.

L.

Innocence ceases to be a virtue: most of the great ones are fallen therefrom. But, if thou demandst what must be done to recover this virtue, I answer, that it is necessary to conquer thyself. If all mortals could, in one day, gain over themselves this happy victory, the whole universe would, from this very day, re-assume a new form: we should all be perfect, we should all be innocent. It is true, the victory is difficult, but it is not impossible; for, in short, to conquer thyself is only to do what is agreeable to reason. Turn away thine eyes, stop thine ears, put a bridle upon thy tongue, and rather remain in an eternal inaction than employ thine eyes in beholding sights where reason is stifled, than give attention thereunto, or to discourse thereon. Behold, how thou mayst overcome! The victory depends on thyself alone.

LI.

Desire not the death of thine enemy: thou wouldst desire it in vain; his life is in the hands of Heaven.*

LII.

It is easy to obey the wise; he commands nothing

* See Matt. v. 43 and 44.

impossible, but is hard to divert him therefrom: that which oftentimes rejoices others makes him to sigh, and forces torrents of tears from his eyes.

LIII.

Acknowledge thy benefits by the return of other benefits, but never revenge injuries.*

LIV.

In what part of the world soever thou art forced to spend thy life, correspond with the wisest, associate with the best men.

LV.

To sin, and not to repent, is properly to sin.

LVI.

It is good to fast sometimes, to give thy mind to meditation, and to the study of virtue. The wise man is taken up with other cares than with the continual cares of his nourishment. The best cultivated earth frustrates the hopes of the labourer when the seasons are irregular: all the rules of husbandry could not secure him from death in the time of a hard famine; but virtue is never fruitless.

LVII.

The wise man must learn to know the heart of man, to the end that, taking every one according to his own inclination, he may not labour in vain, when he shall discourse to him of virtue. All men ought not to be instructed after the same way. There are divers paths that lead to virtue; the wise man ought not to be ignorant of them.

* See also Matt. v. 44. Luke vi. 27, 28.

LVIII.

Combat night and day against thy vices; and if, by thy cares and vigilance, thou gainest the victory over thyself, courageously attack the vices of others; but attack them not before this be done: there is nothing more ridiculous than to complain of others' defects, when we have the very same.*

LIX.

The good man sins sometimes; weakness is natural to him: but he ought to watch so diligently over himself that he may never fall twice into the same crime.

LX.

We have three friends that are useful to us,—a sincere friend, a faithful friend, a friend that hears every thing, that examines what is told him, and that speaks little: but we have three also whose friendship is pernicious,—a hypocrite, a flatterer, and a great talker.

LXI.

He that applies himself to virtue has three enemies to contend with, which he must subdue,—incontinence, when he is as yet in the vigour of his age, and the blood boils in his veins; contests and disputes, when he is arrived at a mature age; and covetousness, when he is old.

LXII.

There are three things which the wise man ought to reverence,—the laws of Heaven, great men, and the words of good men.

* See Matt. vii. 4, 5. Luke, vi. 37, 41, 42.

LXIII.

We may have an aversion for an enemy, without desiring revenge: the motions of nature are not always criminal.*

LXIV.

Distrust a flatterer, a man affected in his discourses, and who every where boasts of his eloquence: this is not the character of true virtue.

LXV.

Silence is absolutely necessary to the wise man. Great discourses, elaborate discourses, pieces of eloquence, ought to be a language unknown to him: his actions ought to be his language. As for me, I would never speak more. Heaven speaks; but what language does it use to preach to men?—That there is a sovereign principle, from whence all things depend; a sovereign principle, which makes them to act and to move. Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time, it agitates nature, it makes it produce: this silence is eloquent.

LXVI.

The wise man ought to hate several sorts of men: he ought to hate those that divulge the defects of others, and take delight in discoursing therein: he ought to hate those who, being adorned only with very mean qualities, and who being moreover of a low birth, do revile and temerariously murmur against those that are promoted to dignities of state: he ought to hate a valiant man, when his valour is not accompanied with civility, or prudence: he ought

* See Matt. v. 44. Luke vi. 27.

to hate those sort of men who are puffed up with self-love; who are always conceited of their own merit, and admirers of their own perfections, do assault all, deride all, and never consult reason: he ought to hate those who, having very small illuminations, do presume to censure what others do: he ought to hate proud men. In a word, he ought to hate those who make it a custom to spy out others' defects, to publish them.*

LXVII.

It is very difficult to associate with the populace: these sort of men grow familiar and insolent when we have too much correspondence with them; and, because they imagine they are slighted when they are ever so little neglected, we draw their aversion upon us.

LXVIII.

He who is arrived at the fortieth year of his age, and who has hitherto been a slave to some criminal habit, is not in a condition to subdue it. I hold this malady incurable; he will persevere in his crime until death.

LXIX.

Afflict not thyself at the death of a brother: death and life are in the power of Heaven, to which the wise man is bound to submit. Moreover, all the men of the earth are thy brethren: why then shouldst thou weep for one, at a time when so many others remain alive?

* Luke vi. 41, 42.

LXX.

The natural light is only a perpetual conformity of our soul with the laws of Heaven: men never can lose this light. It is true that the heart of man, being inconstant and wavering, it is sometimes covered over with so many clouds, that it seems wholly extinguished. The wise man experiences it himself; for he may fall into small errors, and commit light offences: yet the wise man cannot be virtuous while he is in this state; it would be a contradiction to say it.

LXXI.

It is very difficult, when poor, not to hate poverty: but it is possible to be rich without being proud.

LXXII.

The men of the first ages applied themselves to learning and knowledge only for themselves; that is to say, to become virtuous: this was all the praise they expected from their labours and lucubrations. But men at present do only seek praise; they study only out of vanity, and to pass for learned in the esteem of men.

LXXIII.

The wise man seeks the cause of his defects in himself: but the fool, avoiding himself, seeks it in all others besides himself.

LXXIV.

The wise man ought to have a severe gravity, but it ought not to be fierce and untractable. He ought to love society, but to avoid great assemblies.

LXXV.

The love or hatred of people ought not to be the

rule of thy love or hatred; examine whether they have reason.

LXXVI.

Contract friendship with a man whose heart is upright and sincere; with a man who loves to learn, and who can teach thee something in his turn. Other men are unworthy of thy friendship.

LXXVII.

He who has faults, and strives not to amend them, ought at least to do his endeavour to conceal them. The wise man's defects are like the eclipses of the sun,—they come to every one's knowledge: the wise man ought, upon this account, to endeavour to cover himself with a cloud. I say the same thing of princes.

LXXVIII.

Readily abandon thy country when virtue is there depressed and vice encouraged. But, if thou designest not to renounce the maxims of the age in thy retreat and exile, remain in thy miserable country: for what reason shouldst thou leave it?

LXXIX.

When thy country's safety is concerned, stand not to consult, but expose thyself.

LXXX.

Heaven shortens not the life of man; it is man who does it by his own crimes. Thou mayst avoid the calamities that come from Heaven; but thou canst never escape those which thou drawst upon thyself by thy crimes.

THE END.

THE

LIFE AND MORALS

OF

EPICURUS;

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK,

BY JOHN DIGBY, Esq.

WITH COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS FROM SEVERAL AUTHORS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

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AND ALSO,

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TO THE

Right Honorable the LORD SCUDAMORE.

My Lord,

The Author I take the liberty to put under your protection was so great a man, that I have reason to hope your Lordship (who is so good a judge in things of this nature) will not take it ill, that I do him the honour to prefix your name to his Book.

It is true, he is objected against by some, for placing the sovereign good of life in pleasure; which, being maliciously interpreted, afforded an opportunity to his enemies to calumniate him, and, out of envy and pique, suggest to the world that he patronised voluptuousness and all kind of excess. But he vindicates himself sufficiently from that imputation and scandal, by interpreting what

he means by Pleasure; and gives us plainly to understand, that, by the word Pleasure, he means nothing else than the satisfaction that arises from a peaceable and quiet conscience, that has no remorse nor uneasiness from ill actions; to which happy state if health of body was joined, he thought nothing was wanting to a consummate felicity: and, to convince the world of the excellence of his notions, he reduced them into practice, and lived after so exemplary a manner, that there was not the least room left to censure him on that score; some of the worst of his enemies having thought it necessary, for their own honour's sake, to do him justice in their writings. He possessed a sublime wit, a profound judgment, and was a great master of temperance, sobriety, continence, fortitude, and all other virtues; no patron of impiety, gluttony, drunkenness, luxury, or intemperance, as the common people generally conceive him to have been.

The opinions asserted by him in this treatise concerning Ethics, which have so much in-

censed the world against him, are these two: —1. That the souls of men are mortal, and incapable of either happiness or misery after death. 2. That man is not obliged to honour, revere, and worship God, in respect of his beneficence, or out of the hope of any good, or fear of evil at his hands; but merely in respect of the transcendent excellencies of his nature, immortality, and beatitude.

Epicurus is not the only man amongst the ancients that is to be accused for entertaining and divulging those opinions of the nature and condition of the soul after death, it being well known, that most of the Grecian and other philosophers did the same, either implicitly or immediately, and in direct terms. Such were Averrhoes, Dicæarchus, Aristoxenus, Andræas, Asclepiades, Galen, Democritus, Zeno, Socrates, and many other great, good, and wise, men.

I have annexed to the Morals of Epicurus, the Advice of Isocrates to Demonicus, which I have faithfully translated from the Greek. I added it here on two accounts;—first, because the subject of both authors is moral,

and so they have a reciprocal analogy one to the other; secondly, because I had a mind to give my country a taste of that famous man's works. I shall therefore rely upon my two philosophers to convince your lordship of the veneration and respect with which I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient

And most humble Servant,

JOHN DIGBY.

PREFACE.

It is not in the nature of slander and calumny to respect any body; nay, it is so outrageous sometimes as to cast its venom even on the very throne; it insinuates itself amongst the most virtuous societies, and frequently attacks and oppresses the most innocent; the Deity itself has not been free from its aspersions; and, as most commonly, its success depends on certain circumstances, and the subtle method it uses to fasten itself on its object: that of the Stoics against Epicurus was of this character.

The affected exterior of these philosophers, their pretended zeal for virtue, the fastuous austerity of their precepts, and the magnificent expressions with which they cloaked their impostures, procured them at first some success. It is, (says Demosthenes,) the peculiar property of calumny, to scatter her poison for some time, but at last truth triumphs over her artifices, and she is destroyed by her own weakness.

The scandalous falsehood of that with which our philosopher was attacked, was at length discovered, and this great man was beloved by all the learned of his time; his country honoured him with statues; his

opinion gained ground by his writings, insomuch that Pliny reports, it was thought an honour to have his picture in the halls; nay, he was so far admired, that persons of distinction would have it about them; and on the twentieth of the moon they celebrated a festival in honour of his images.

He laid open to the eyes of the world, the beauty of his interior, by the rules he prescribed for a good life; he despised the malicious fictions of the invidious, not thinking them worth confuting. Could there be occasion for any other apology, than a life without reproach, and a virtue without the least affectation?

He has found amongst his professed enemies some witnesses of the integrity of his morals. Seneca has written honourably of him; and, if the authority of that famous Stoic be of any weight, the most considerable men of that sect did not believe what the vulgar imagined to his disadvantage. His words are remarkable: I must own (without having the least complaisance for the common people) that Epicurus taught nothing but what was conformable to equity and reason: nay, I dare assert, that, if his precepts are duly examined, there will be nothing found therein, but what is of the last austerity. He displays all his eloquence to evince that this illustrious Greek is not so remote (as is imagined,) from the opinion of the Stoics, and that they have but one and the same scope and end, differing only in method.

Cicero, notwithstanding his objections to this philosopher, shews always a great esteem for him; and St. Austin, whose piety and virtue cannot be sus-

pected, is not hurried away with that furious zeal that possesses the minds of some persons, who make no scruple to condemn Epicurus, without giving themselves the trouble to examine his morals.

This learned doctor, after a serious reflection on all the philosophers, declares, to the immortal honour of Epicurus, that he should prefer him to all those that antiquity can boast of, if he had believed, that in the other world there were rewards and punishments.

This philosopher had no knowledge of the true religion: Paganism, that was professed throughout his country, and almost all over the known world, seems to apologize in some measure for this ignorance; but it cannot be imputed as a crime to me, if I venture to maintain, that he led a moral life. It would be abusing the public faith, insulting antiquity, injuring the living, and lying to posterity, to represent a man, as a voluptuous profligate wretch, whose life was without the least blemish, who shewed us the charms and beauties of virtue, and the effectual means to shun vice; who, in fine, instructed us how to make reason triumph over the irregularity of our passions, and required they should be suppressed by a serious reflection on their dismal and melancholy consequences.

I must confess he gives a false idea of the Deity; and, whatever colour he may put on what he has said, it must be allowed to be injurious. But Cicero observes very well, that his error proceeded from the fear he had of incurring the displeasure of the Athenians. He asserted something eternal besides the Deity, and consequently his opinion therein must be

very erroneous, since it is the property of an eternal and immortal Being to admit no sharer in that prerogative; and the moment he assigns to the atom, the attribute of eternity, he makes a partition of what is inseparably God's, who neither admits of addition or diminution.

The Pagan philosophers never had a right knowledge of this august and incomprehensible Being.

Aristotle gives a very noble idea of him, when he represents him as absolutely necessary to nature for its conduct and support, as the pilot is to the ship, the master of music to the choir, the general to his army, and as the law is to the state; and yet he injures him at the same time, since he will have the world to be eternal. Is not that properly allowing two Divinities, and by consequence destroying them?

Does not Plato pretend that the sun, the moon, and planets, are God's? and, as great a loose as the Stoics give to their lofty expressions concerning the Author of this vast immensity, yet they make him subject to destiny. How ridiculous is it, to imagine the adorable Omnipotent, to be subject to the decrees of fate; and prove that there is a God only to have the temerity to prefer to him the chimerical work of their sage.

It is no wonder Epicurus, who was a Pagan, should be without light, being surrounded on all sides with palpable darkness. That there is a God, is an incontestible truth. But who can pretend to know that truth perfectly besides the Christian? It is he alone that is convinced of whatever those philosophers

doubted or were ignorant of: Faith is his master, she lights him in the dark, and makes him understand how meritorious it is to submit reason to her; she forces him to deliver himself up entirely to her conduct, and gives him that serenity of mind which philosophy gives, at best, but faint hopes of; she may be said to be a spiritual looking-glass that represents mysterious objects, according as they are considered; if we bring the necessary humility, all is immediately laid open to us:—there is no perplexity or difficulty; we immediately partake of the felicity of the angels; but, if we are inconsiderate enough to go beyond what she represents to us, we are suddenly dazzled,—our pride blinds us, and all our knowledge only serves to deceive us.

Poor distressed reason! Canst thou be so weak as to think the Deity the work of a syllogism? Canst thou ever hope to fathom what is, and ever will be, incomprehensible? To desire to be convinced by any human means of the grandeur of his infinite Majesty, were to resemble that deceived, though great, mathematician, who required no more than to be removed any where out of our globe, to fix it in any other situation. It is, (says St. Gregory Nazianzen,) flattering ourselves with what we can never attain to; like the unhappy Tantalus of the poets, who, though near the water, could not quench his thirst, parched up at the same time with a continual drought. It were carrying the mysterious science of numbers even beyond the impracticable calculation of the grains of sand in the seas; it were, in fine, undertaking, on the wings of the wind, to dispute with the eagle the swift-

ness of flight. Nature, that would not yet exist had it not been for the goodness and omnipotence of Him who neither had beginning nor can have an end, declares in our hearts the existence of this adorable Being.

It is also objected that Epicurus believed the mortality of the soul: to which we may answer, that, not having (as we have) faith for his guide, he held that opinion as being a consequence of his system; and, as he had established body and vacuity for principles, and the efficient causes of nature, he was necessitated to maintain that the soul was not spiritual, and so by consequence subject to a dissolution. Tertullian himself believed it corporeal: but the reason St. Austin gives for it is, that he would have it so thought, that its existence might not be doubted of: but it matters not what our philosopher may have said on this subject,—faith tells us what we ought to believe; and, Anselmus says, it is a malignant temerity to dare to oppose what she teaches, because it is above our comprehension. It is altogether absurd to determine the impossibility of a thing, because its existence is not sensible. It is much better, (says he,) to own, with humility, the imperfection of our knowledge, and that there are many things beyond our penetration. The soul, most certainly, is not a collection of subtle bodies, its essence is admirable and immortal; but, in Seneca's opinion, man partakes too much of the mortal, to be able to attain to the knowledge of things that are not conformable to his nature.

He did not believe neither that the world was made

of nothing; and that must be confessed to be the general opinion of most natural philosophers. But what system of philosophy is there, that the Christian does not submit to the yoke of faith? he glories in putting a stop to the flight of his genius, where he reflects that St. Paul the Apostle informs him, that he ought to despise the tradition of men, and the principles they establish, when they interfere with the commands of God.

Epicurus maintained, likewise, that the universe was not governed by any intellectual being; and that what passed for regular motions, as the seasons, the course of the stars, and many other things, were only a consequence of the first frame. Now, this must be confessed to be so gross an error, that reason does not think it worth the confuting. It is impossible chance should be so constantly happy in its effects, as to produce so many wonders; and we need but cast our eye upon the vast extent of things; and we shall discover by undeniable proofs, that nothing moves but by the concurrence of him, who stood in need of nothing but his own will to produce all nature. Can there be any thing so ridiculous, (says St. Austin,) as to take from Providence the guidance of the universe, since we plainly see, she discovers herself in the smallest things?

The errors of Epicurus in physical matters are no obstacle to the integrity of his morals. He has prescribed rules for the felicity of life, that are full of severity and wisdom; he sets prudence at the head of all the virtues, and prefers it even to philosophy itself.

In fine, St. Jerome has restored the reputation of

our philosopher. Is it not a thing worthy our admiration, (says this father of the church,) that Epicurus, who is looked upon as the patron of voluptuousness, inculcates nothing else in his writings than that, to live agreeably, we stand in need but of herbs, fruits, and simple nourishment? and that the being too nice in our food, creates more pain than pleasure? that bread and water are sufficient for the body; and that high feeding is not necessary for its preservation? It is through a vicious inclination that we abandon ourselves to excess: eating and drinking are intended to allay hunger and quench thirst, and not to flatter our intemperance. They who indulge feasting, have generally in view unwarrantable pleasures; whereas, they who live soberly, do not find in themselves that unruly proneness to vice; moreover, wisdom (which is gained only by labour) is not acquirable in that voluptuous kind of life. Nature is content with little; a plain diet appeases hunger, and ordinary cloathing protects us from the rigour of the weather. One would almost think that this holy doctor had taken this passage entirely from Porphyrius, where he speaks of abstaining from flesh. He there relates Epicurus' sentiments and precepts concerning frugality and sobriety, which he assures us were in his time strictly observed by the followers of this famous Greek.

Genustus Pletho, a great Platonic, who lived about two hundred years since, says, that Epicurus looked upon the serenity of mind as what constituted the felicity of life; and John Gerson, taking notice of the different opinions of the ancient philosophers con-

cerning this same sovereign good, says, "that some have placed it either in pleasure or tranquillity of mind, as Epicurus did, whom Seneca mentions with so much respect in his Epistles: for, as for the other Epicurus, Aristippus, Sardanapalus, and Mahomet, who believed that the happiness of life consisted in the pleasures of the body,—they are unworthy the name of philosophers." This famous chancellor of the university of Paris thought there had been two Epicuruses, although there was but one; but his mistake proceeded from this,—that he could not imagine that he whom the Stoics spoke of, and who had been so misrepresented by several others, could be the same that Seneca speaks of with so much esteem.

But a modern author has set Epicurus' doctrine in its true light; he has done justice to his virtue, by the fine apology he has written in his justification; but what I look upon to be most to the honour of this great man, is the approbation of him, who has nicely examined his moral. This learned successor of Gerson, who joined piety to learning, judgment to penetration, and elegance of expression to the solidity of the subjects he handles, has, in a few words, made the eulogium of our philosopher. He does justice to the virtue of the Pagans, and at the same time shews the excellency of that of Christianity; and, if he praises the one, it is to make that shine more gloriously which we learn in the school of religion.

THE

LIFE

OF

EPICURUS.

WRITTEN BY MONSIEUR DU ROUDEL.

EPICURUS was born at a little town called Gargettum, belonging to the Athenian territory, in the third year of the hundred and ninth olympiad, or 342 B.C. He was carried in his infancy to Samos by his father and mother, Neocles and Cherestrate. Their family, which descended from Phileus, one of the sons of the famous Ajax, being of the number of those the Athenian council caused to be transported to Samos, in order to establish a colony there, the better to curb the Samians, who were at that time suspected to have ill designs against that republic.

It was here Epicurus (who constantly went with his mother to the temple of Juno) learnt that inexpressible piety by the Greeks, called ὁσιότητα ἄλεκτον, and that profound veneration for the gods, which since made the most considerable part of his virtue.

This magnificent temple, the decency and pomp of the ceremonies, the melodious hymns, and the vast concourse of people that resorted thither from all parts, together with the dread that the awful presence of the goddess caused, made without doubt an impression on the heart of Epicurus, as yet young and tender, and inspired him with that extraordinary devotion, that made him and his mother repair to deserted and enchanted houses, to drive out by their prayers the evil spirits that haunted them.

He began at the age of fourteen to have an inclination for philosophy; and, as a grammarian was expounding a verse out of Hesiodus, concerning the origin of the chaos, Epicurus asked him, what the chaos was?—whence it had its beginning, and what hands could dispose it into that order?—what it was in itself? Nothing but confusion, the grammarian answered him; that the philosophers must resolve him, as to those points.—Why, then, (says Epicurus,) I will repair to them, and they shall explain to me this chaos, since they are skilled in natural causes, which thou art ignorant of.

He first frequented Pamphilus the Platonic, afterwards Nausiphanes the Pythagorean, and at last he applied himself to the writings of Anaxagoras, Democritus, and Archilas, the master of Socrates.

He found in all of them something that pleased him; but, not being satisfied with any of them particularly, he imagined it was but making a judicious choice of their most reasonable sentiments, to compose a perfect system. Accordingly, he did so. The work took him up eighteen years to finish; which done,

he opened a school at Mytilene, and afterwards at Lampsacum.

At first, he professed himself only a disciple of Democritus; but his curiosity, or some domestic affair, causing him to go to Athens, during the archonship* of Anaxicrates, he there conversed with all the philosophers; after which he made himself the head of a party.

That which moved him to do this, was the perplexity he found Democritus in; who, believing the operations of nature to be necessary, was there hard put to it to save free-will. For, although it be true, that things act only according to their causes and that these causes are capable of being causes only by reason of others that preceded them; nevertheless it is certain, there are some, that act of themselves, and are themselves the principles of their motions.

For example,—it is true, that this year's fruits were produced by trees, that these trees were themselves produced by others, and so upward for ages past; it is true, these trees necessarily produce their fruits, all the conditions requisite concurring; whereas, I, that write the Life of Epicurus, might choose whether I would write it or not, notwithstanding I have a pen, ink, and paper, by me; and that I have read the ancients, and the Life of Epicurus by the famous Ganssendy. He therefore thought it necessary to admit of certain atoms, for the cause of the motion of declination ἐγκλίσεως, without which there would be no liberty left to man; that is to say, all his actions

* The archon was the chief magistrate in Athens.

would depend on necessity and inevitable fatality; from whence it would follow, that they could not reasonably be blamed nor praised, and so could not be innocently punished, either by the authority of justice or religion.

He had another reason to quit Democritus' opinion; which was, because this philosopher did not sufficiently explain the beginning and end of the several worlds; and that they who read his works, could conceive no other opinion than that these worlds appeared and disappeared at the same time.

As this opinion made them uneasy, with reference to the comets, which were by several of Democritus' disciples, as well as those of Pythagoras and Orpheus, taken to be so many distinct worlds, which they saw plainly disappear; Epicurus invented as many whirls as there were worlds, in which each of them might suffer a dissolution, and reassume afresh, being without any detriment to the universe in general.

My design is not to relate here all Epicurus' notions; what I have already said, is only to show the necessity he was under to leave Democritus' sentiments. It is true, he forsakes him on other scores not altogether so plausible; but that was because he was persuaded, that we ought not to be too bold in mixing mathematical speculations with natural philosophy; and that we ought rather to be determined by our senses and experience, than all the reasonings of men.

It was what made him abandon this great naturalist; for, as nobody has ever been in those regions, as Lucian observes, he very reasonably conceived that

it was easy to make a mistake concerning many things, without risking the danger of being esteemed either ignorant or rash.

In truth, is it not a pity, to behold the astronomers, even of our own learned and clear-sighted age, contesting about the bigness of the sun? Copernicus makes it one hundred and sixty-two times bigger than the earth; Tycho, one hundred and thirty-nine; Lanspergius, four hundred and thirty-four; and Kepler, three thousand four hundred and sixty-nine: and this, as they all think, without erring a little; and, what is still more pleasant, they all pretend to prove their opinion by mathematical demonstration.

Epicurus was then in the right to say, that possibly these things might be,—nobody knowing the truth thereof, nor indeed any thing certain about them. But he is still more cunning than all these philosophers, for he expressed, in two words, all that they laboured to make out with so much ostentation and strife. According to him, the sun was very large in itself, and very little with respect to us, by reason of its remoteness.

It was after this manner that he left Democritus' opinion concerning the earth. This imagined it to be flat like a bason, and the other to be flat after the manner of a quoit, but somewhat inclining towards the South Pole, and very mountainous towards that of the North. It was beyond all doubt to recover all the particles of fire that resulted and flew off at their fall into the Spanish seas, and which, rebounding, reappeared again at a great distance, behind those mountains, towards the east, according to the report

of all the mariners of those times; or rather it was to avoid all the turnings and shiftings of the philosophers, that he seemed to back the relation of those sailors; for, as to himself, he was well enough satisfied with his own: it may be so.

Be it as it will, he did not blindly follow the dictates of any-body in physical matters: and, looking upon all the questions of this science as trifling things, and the work of the mind of man, and only with relation to natural happiness, he would have us consider it, simply, as a proper occupation for us, and as a means to free us from the hopes and fears that torment us. It was a pleasure to hear him, as he was well versed in the opinions of the philosophers, and had a great and noble mind, a fine turn, and happy expression; and that all this was displayed in one of the most delightful gardens of the world, amidst a thousand flowers, that perfumed his auditory: his hearers were in a manner enchanted in so pleasant a place; and it was impossible to leave it without being Epicurus' friend, and believing what he said.

However, it was without abusing his mind, that he triumphed in these assemblies. There never was any man less dogmatical than he; it was always,—it seems to me,—it may be so,—it is probable. There was no haughty imperious air in this man; he never spoke any thing in a magisterial way; and his actions were always accompanied with gentleness and moderation. This extraordinary behaviour was very engaging; all Athens rung of it, insomuch that crowds of people resorted to him with pleasure; and in a few days Epi-

curus had more disciples than any other philosopher of his time.

This displeased those philosophers, but particularly the Stoics; and, because Diotimus was the most proper person for so bold an undertaking, he was pitched upon to write against Epicurus: a great many of his satirical letters were scattered all over Greece; nothing was to be heard in all the porches of Athens but infamous reports concerning Epicurus: one while, that he had had to do with Leontium, or Themiste; another time, he had passed the night either in drinking or gaming, or roving up and down the streets; in fine, this day they charged him with one crime, the next with another. To all which, Epicurus remained silent; he considered that our reputation does not absolutely depend on ourselves; and, therefore, if we injuriously suffer in it, through the malice of others, it ought not to disturb us: the testimony of a good conscience is worth a thousand witnesses; and he thought he was happy enough, that he had nothing to reproach himself with; and, as calumny sooner or later wears off, he judged he had nothing to do but to continue his virtuous practices, to undeceive the world. The finest revenge, in his opinion, was to slight the injuries he was loaded with through envy, and leave it to posterity (who would not be biassed by the factions of his time) to do his memory justice, and discover the malignity of his enemies.

As to Diotimus, he was so far from being angry with him, that he rather pitied him, and left him to his destiny, that had only given him folly for his portion. He would frequently say, that his writings were more

diverting to him than any of Aristophanes' comedies, and that he should be unwilling to cease being the subject of his fooleries.

When the Stoics perceived that nothing was able to shake his constancy, and that spite could not disturb him in his duty, they bethought themselves of crying down his doctrine as much as lay in their power. Immediately Epicurus was represented an impious profligate wretch, that deserved to be cast headlong from a precipice, as one who taught his disciples nothing but a criminal voluptuousness and idleness.

This is saying much in a few words; for, making him pass for impious, was raising against him the whole priesthood of the world; and, branding him with voluptuousness, was alarming all the fathers and mothers of Greece and Italy, as against a general corruptor of youth: and the malicious interpretation they put upon his precept of living privately and retired, was no less than arming against him all the magistrates, as against a man who prejudiced youth against the taking any part of the government upon them.

These cruel accusations being capable of doing Epicurus a great deal of harm, he thought it adviseable to show the injustice of them; for which purpose he published his works: his Hegesianax, or Treatise on Holiness and Piety,—and his Charidemus, or concerning the Nature of the Gods,—were esteemed by Cicero (who had perused them) to be so perfect in their kinds, that the pontiffs Coruncanus and Scævola could not have written better; and, without all doubt, it was a mortification to him, that some of his friends

were not the authors of these excellent works. As there are only some fragments left of these books among the works of the ancients, I shall take notice of what I have learnt from them concerning them.

It is most certain, that Epicurus professed the belief of a Plurality of Gods: he was daily in the temples; he frequently offered sacrifices, and was very conversant with the priests. In that quarter of the town which he inhabited, (which was the Old Town,) there was a Venus, done by Alcamenus, which, by I know not what accident, was not so much in vogue as it deserved: he by his devotion and piety set it in esteem; and, in a little time, made it as famous as the Venus Urania of Phidias.

I shall not take notice of his founding a chapel at Samos, in the temple of Juno; nor of the particular veneration he paid to Apollo Epicurius; but I must not omit, (as an indisputable token of his piety,) that, being hated and envied at Athens by the generality of philosophers, he had not escaped being banished from the town, as Aristotle was; or swallowing the bitter potion, like Socrates, if his enemies could have had sufficient hold of him on the score of religion.

Another invincible proof of his piety is, that none of the Gentiles ever adored the gods with the same purity and sincerity he did. Most commonly their prayers were selfish; they either implored the blessing of some additional good, or the avoiding some impending evil; nay, some of them were so irreverent in their petitions, that the more modest and religious were for having the gods prayed to after a public manner, and with an audible voice, to avoid the in-

famy of those who should beg impertinencies. But, as for Epicurus, he approached the gods neither through avariciousness nor fear; it was always with a filial duty, and out of an awful respect to their power and majesty, and with a regard to the excellency of their nature. *Deum Colebat*, (says Seneca,) *nulla spe, nullo pretio inductus, sed propter majestatem ejus eximiam, suprenamque, naturam.* It was to thank them for some particular discovery that day, for some new attainments, for being given to understand that his friends were in good health, or on the score of the public welfare and peace, &c.; but most commonly it was to thank them that he had a trusty and true friend,—that he was prepared for calamities and crosses.

He was a very assiduous frequenter of the temples; insomuch that Diocles (who had a contrary opinion of him), perceiving him there, could not forbear breaking into this exclamation: What a solemnity is here! What a noble spectacle do I behold! Epicurus in a temple! all my suspicions vanish, piety resumes its place, and Jupiter never appears so great as when Epicurus is on his knees.

I must, at the same time, own, that he contributed a little to his calumnies, by his notions concerning Providence. He believed the gods led a peaceable, quiet, undisturbed, life, (in their intramundane spaces;) in the full fruition of a profound security; and, every way enjoying a perfect ease, had no other employment than the contemplation of themselves and their blissful state; and, thus wrapt up in their own happiness, and filled with their proper excellency, they would not

concern themselves with the government of the world, but left it entirely to take its chance.

But Epicurus thought thus only with reference to the revolution of the seasons, generations, and corruptions, and other physical matters. He imagined the world was vigorous and strong enough to support and maintain itself in the state it was in. He believed that every thing had its peculiar functions, and that after so perfect and easy a manner, that the birds, for example, could fly up and down in the air, and the fish swim to and fro in the water; and each in their respective element seek their proper food, &c. without any necessity of a Divine Providence to guide and direct these motions. But, as for what related to the morals, he thought the gods made that their care, as it appears by these divine words:—It is a very hard and difficult thing for him, who by his actions violates and injures human society, to pass his days quietly and easily; for, if it was possible for him to deceive the gods, (which it is not even in thought,) and although he might impose upon men, yet he must needs know that this cannot last always. A surprise, a dream, a fit of sickness, shall untie a man's tongue, and make him discover the sins he has so industriously concealed. In fine, he that transgresses and commits a crime is never at quiet, but always restless and uneasy, and in perpetual expectation of the punishment he has deserved.

Lucretius expresses this thought very well; so does Petronius and Lucian. Every body knows they were all three Epicureans. Lucretius has it thus,

Nec facile est placidam, & pacatam degere vitam,
Qui violat factis, communia fœdera pacis;
Et si fallit enim divum genus, humanumque;
Perpetuo tamen id fore clam, diffidere debet;
Quippe ubi se multi, per somnia sæpe loquentes,
Aut morbo delirantes, procreare feruntur;
Et celata diu in medium peccata dedisse.

Thus Englished, by Mr. Creech:—

Nor can those men expect to live at ease
Who violate the common bonds of peace;
Tho' now they lie conceal'd from men and God,
They still must fear 'twill sometimes come abroad;
Since some diseas'd, and some by night, betray
The wicked actions they have done by day,
Tho' hid in night; scarce hell so deep as they.

Petronius. *Malé est extra legem viventibus; quidquid,*
Meruere semper expectant.

The vicious never pass their time but ill,
Always expecting what will follow still.

How odd soever this opinion may appear, it has, notwithstanding, been received by some of our predecessors. A famous author has pretended, that God's providence concerned itself with nothing but what related either to morality or divinity. As for the respective members of the universe, he thinks they may be considered as a great and magnificent piece of clock-work, that God had framed for many ages, and which of itself would last for the intended time without being out of order, by reason of the skilfulness of the Workman, and the goodness of the work.

As to his opinion concerning pleasure, there is

hardly such an instance of injustice being done to any man, his works have been falsified, corrupted, and misconstrued; and, although, from time to time, one or other has justified Epicurus, the Stoics, who were always the most prevalent with the people by their hypocrisy, always found some means or other to frustrate those vindications.

Epicurus' notion, in reference to pleasure, was this: he believed that, to be happy, as far as our mortal condition, and the frailty of our nature, would permit, we should enjoy a perfect tranquillity of mind, and an indolency as to the body. For, as we are constantly exposed to the revolution of the seasons, to the intemperance of the air, to business, and the fatigues of life, &c. it is a great thing not to be distempered, without aspiring to a perfect health. It was thus he expressed himself, to show the difference betwixt his opinion and that of the Cyreneans.

The Cyreneans placed the sovereign good, or pleasure, in motion; Epicurus, in rest and quiet; the Cyreneans, in the body; Epicurus, chiefly in the soul; the Cyreneans, in the present, past, and future: the Cyreneans esteemed the pains of the body to be insupportable; whereas Epicurus looked upon those of the mind alone to be capable of tormenting us, at all times and in all places.

Now, if we rightly consider after what manner Epicurus lived, there is not the least ground to think him a man of pleasure and diversion: most commonly he lived upon bread and water; and, when he had a mind to indulge himself a little more than ordinary, he required no more than a little Cytharean cheese,

and a quarter of a pint of wine. He had contracted such an habitual temperance, that less than a penny a-day defrayed his expenses: and, although several of his followers imitated him very zealously, yet none came up so near to his sobriety as Metrodorus, who, notwithstanding, spent a penny a day. One of his enemies speaks thus of him: It is with pleasure I make mention of Epicurus, that they who resort to his habitation, as to a paradise of pleasure, may know, that, in what part soever they come, there they must live and behave themselves soberly and modestly. If they repair to his delightful garden, and propose to themselves there all sorts of pleasure, by reason of these words, that are written over the gate—Passenger, it is here thou wilt find good entertainment; it is here that pleasure is esteemed the sovereign good; the master is always ready to receive thee courteously; but take notice of one thing,—thou must expect only a piece of cake, and thy fill of water. Here hunger is not provoked, but satisfied; thirst is not excited, but quenched; and that with what costs little or nothing. Is this all? Yes, and this is the pleasure that Epicurus was charmed with: but let us hear what he says himself:—Thanks be to blessed Nature for having so contrived it, that those things that are really necessary are easy procurable; whereas, those that are not necessary are hard to be found. Wilt thou support life? have bread and water. Wilt thou fare nicely? be hungry; for it would be in vain to ransack the market for scarce and costly dishes, either of flesh or fish; and, whatsoever luxury and a nice palate might propose, it shall be so far from satisfying, that it shall

rather provoke an appetite; whereas, at the same time, a small matter shall suffice, if you only regard your present want. Is it not plain, that nature has no other drift than to appease hunger and thirst? It does not require an expensive food in any kind, but only what is sufficient. As for myself, a slice of cake and a draught of spring-water make me vie with Jupiter himself, with his nectar and ambrosia, and not in the least envy him. For these twenty years past, less than a penny a-day has kept me. Nay, sometimes, I have even lessened that, and do not allow myself what I could dispense with, in order to find out whether any thing be wanting to my pleasure. I have from thence observed, that a small matter was sufficient for nature, that would easily accustom itself to it. In fine, if it be the character of the gods to want nothing, it is the character of a wise man to want very little.

This made him say of Pithocles, who had lately inherited large possessions, and yet thirsted after others. If you have a mind to make Pithocles rich, you must not add to his wealth, but confine and lessen his wishes. This made him say again to those who dreaded poverty: If you will live according to nature, you need never fear being poor; and, if you must live according to opinion, you will never be rich; for nature requires but little, whereas the greatest affluence is not enough for opinion.

But, if Epicurus was temperate, he was not less chaste; Chrysippus, as much his enemy as he was, yet bore him this testimony: It is true, he said, it was through insensibility, and that certainly he was impotent.

I cannot tell whether what he said was from inspection, or whether the stone which had tormented Epicurus almost during the whole course of his life, had not afforded him leisure to be amorous. But this is most certain, that no man had ever a meaner opinion of love than he: Love, said he, never benefitted any one; nay, it is much if it did no harm. In his opinion, it was a sort of fever, destructive to the body; in fine, a short epilepsy. He looked upon it as a shortener of the days of the most vigorous; and judged that the gout, the weakness of the eyes, the trembling of the nerves, were all caused by the commerce with women; and that they who desired to live in health, or at least be free from infirmity and pain, ought to practise this precept, that he had frequently in his mouth,—to eat moderately, use much exercise, and to have nothing to do with women.

Now, although he allowed his Wise-man to marry upon certain considerations, yet he always was against the illegal use of women. There was nothing he had more in abomination than those common prostitutes, who may be properly styled, the sinks of luxury and lasciviousness, and who may be said to be carried away with the torrent of their passion. There are (notwithstanding the depredation of time,) sufficient testimonials in his writings of his aversion to such practices, and the severity with which he forbade all his followers entertaining any commerce with persons of that character; but, above all, the living after the manner of the Cynics. All which sufficiently shews his chastity and modesty.

But, what could be the cause of any one's suspecting

Epicurus of incontinency? I suppose here it lies: Theano had assisted publicly at the lectures of Pythagoras at Samos, and Lasthenia of Mantinea, and Axiothea of Phliasa, had heard Plato, from whence Themista, who was a woman of sense, and had a mind to have more, thought she might without reflection go to Epicurus' garden: no notice was taken of it at first; but, as soon as Metrodorus, Epicurus's disciple and familiar friend, had taken the beautiful Leontium for his concubine, then Diotimus, Possidonius, and Sosion, began to inveigh against these women, and load Epicurus with calumnies, and blackened his reputation as much as lay in their power, giving a full loose to their inveterate malice against him.

But the case is plain, Epicurus had suffered Metrodorus to take Leontium for a concubine, because his constitution was such, that he could not live without a woman; both the Athenian laws, and civil laws allowing that sort of conversation with women; and it seems very hard that these three zealous Stoics should wink at Aristotle's having Herpyllis; and yet, on such small grounds, lash out so vehemently against Epicurus, since he was guilty of no more than barely tolerating, in his friend, what he did not approve of in himself.

There were not wanting persons to vindicate Epicurus even in his life-time, as Diocles, Hermacus, &c. Nay, some of his enemies were so just as to do it, and, among the rest, Arcesilas; who, being asked why several came over from the other philosophers to Epicurus, when at the same time none of Epicurus' sect were observed to go over to any other? he answered,

that it was for this reason, that it was an easy thing to make an eunuch of a man, but it was impossible to make a man of an eunuch. St. Gregory Nazianzen says thus of him,

> Ipsam voluptatem putavit præmium,
> Epicurus extare omnibus laboribus,
> Mortaliumque; huc tendere bona omnia;
> Ac ne ob voluptatem improbam
> Quis crederet, moderatus et castus fuit.
> Dum vixit, ille, dogma moribus probans.

But, let us consider Epicurus' precept—λάθε βιώσας, live obscurely; and examine whether it be so pernicious as it is represented.

It is most certain that this maxim is none of Epicurus' but his brother's, Neocles, who took a particular delight in a private obscure way of living. It is true, Epicurus advises not to meddle with the government of the republic, unless moved thereto by some pressing cause: but then we must reflect he was forming his Wise-man, whose chief employment was to be that of contemplation; for, as to those who are naturally ambitious and covetous of glory and honour, it is none of their business to live concealed; on the contrary, he advises them to betake themselves to an active life, by some function or office in the government, because they would lose their time in a contemplative life; for which reason, Epicurus would have every man examine himself by studying his inclinations, and then follow that course of life that is most agreeable to them. The good of every person consists in what he delights in.

Do not we find there have been Epicureans both

of the sword and gown? Have there not been many of them in the senate, and in the army? Not to mention Vellejus, Torquatus, and Trebatius; was there not a Pomponius Atticus, that wise and virtuous Roman, whom Cicero esteemed beyond all his other friends, and who seemed to be sent into the world only to do it good, and to teach it how to live? It is but reading his life by Cornelius Nepos, to have a perfect idea of an honest and virtuous man; and of the manner in which the true followers of Epicurus led their lives. Do not we find in the same Rome, Thorius, Memmius, L. Varus, and several other men of the sword; and, in fine, that C. Cassius, who had infallibly defeated Augustus, had it not been for that unlucky Stoic, Brutus, who would needs command the right wing, at the Philippic action?

From all which, it is plain that Epicurus' doctrine contained nothing prejudicial to the commonwealth; and it is as plain that he did not deserve to be censured for the precept of living privately.

However, I shall say, in the behalf of Neocles, that, when he first proposed it, he had no other view than the welfare of the private people of Athens; and, those who, like himself, had a mind to lead a retired and quiet life: for, in short, it is neither inscriptions, nor statues, nor triumphal arches; nay, not even the triumphs themselves, that are capable of making a man happy. Besides, how many are there who have really deserved them, and yet have not had them? And, on the other side, how many have had those distinguishing marks of honour, and yet have not deserved them? What pains, what tricks, what

meannesses, have not been used with these people to obtain them? The man who has had three hundred statues erected to him, has been unhappy enough to see them all thrown down before his death. A small matter puts you in the people's favour, and as small a matter puts you out. If you are more virtuous and better qualified than the rest of the republic, you are presently doomed to banishment. If you get clear of that, you are accused straight of some other crime. It is therefore, says he, much better to lead an obscure and private life, from whence, as from a place of safety, we may behold the dangers that others run, without being concerned therein,—what mischief they incur, by their mistake in what constitutes happiness, through their chimerical notions.

But it is a man's business to live to himself, and possess himself; since he is most certain that he must die for himself.

Uni vive tibi, nam moriere tibi.

But, to return to Epicurus,—he was not only a man of counsel and merit, but also a trusty friend, and an excellent citizen. When Demetrius besieged Athens, and most of the town were starved to that degree that a father and son fought for a dead rat,—he was so bountiful as to support all his family and disciples; it is true, the expense was not great, for he distributed to each person so many beans each day: however, this was more than he was obliged to do; and he thereby gave them to understand how moderately he would have them live at all times.

This made him beloved generally throughout all

Greece, and particularly by his followers, who, in Pliny's time, were wont to meet every twentieth day of the month, in order to celebrate the commemoration of this great man.

There was not one of them that had not his picture by him, or else engraved on some piece or other, or in a ring. There were very few among them but had some of his works by heart; nay, there was a sort of emulation amongst them who should know most. One of them, named Scyron, could recite a great part of them, though Epicurus had written vastly. It is said, he wrote three hundred volumes, and, what is very particular, without quoting any author. However, it is not to be wondered at, that his disciples should vie one with another in the learning of them by heart. There could be nothing more polite, nothing more natural, nor more judicious; in fine, they were of a consummate perfection in their respective kinds. One may form a judgment of them by the three small epitomes that are yet extant. Cicero says, they sold mightily in his time, and were held in great esteem.

I took notice of his being a good citizen, which must be allowed by every one, since he would never abandon his country; although, by reason of the frequent changes and revolutions that happened in it, Athens suffered very much; so that several persons of distinction and merit removed themselves to other towns. He endured without complaining the insatiable avarice of Demetrius Phalereus, and patiently bore with all Lachares' cruelties, and the pride of King Demetrius. He constantly offered up his pray-

ers for the prosperity of the republic, and the restoration of the ancient government; yet he acquiesced in the present times, and the governors appointed to it by Providence. When these magistrates were vexatious and cruel, he armed himself with patience and fortitude; when their behaviour was such as it ought to be, it caused in him both gratitude and love. In fine, he was resolved to die where his forefathers had lived and died; and accordingly he did, at the age of threescore and twelve years, of a retention of urine, having been furiously tormented with the stone.

It is impossible to die with greater constancy, or, rather, joy. He had the satisfaction to have lived, and to finish his course, according to his mind, leaving his school in a flourishing condition; and, being himself in the greatest esteem both in Greece and Italy, in which countries he had a great many statues erected to him. He had served his country and his friends, and reflected with pleasure on the state of rest he was going to, in which he was to be freed from those constant combats he had had with ignorance and superstition. Then, running over in his mind what had been most remarkable in his life, and the reflections posterity would make thereon, he had the satisfaction, on one side, to find nothing but what was praise-worthy in the past, and nothing but would be glorious to him for the future. He, therefore, cheerfully embraced death, as what would certainly suppress envy, and render him immortal.

Epicurus was not mistaken in his account, for his doctrine was taught after his death with more zeal than during his life.

It had schools in most of the eminent towns of the Roman empire: and, notwithstanding, upon the ruin of the empire, it underwent the same fate that attended all the other philosophies, viz. ill usage; nevertheless, it has ever had professors, either public or private,—and, since the learned and virtuous Gassendus has expounded it, it is now more in esteem than ever.

THE

MORALS OF EPICURUS;

WITH

COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK, BY JOHN DIGBY, ESQ.

INTRODUCTION.

We shall often have occasion to make mention of the wise man in this treatise, and, as the term is variously accounted for by the philosophers, it is requisite we should explain the notion and idea they had of it.

The wise man, then, is he who adheres to virtue, and does nothing but by the direction of prudence, and consequently never acts any thing but what is praise-worthy and fit to be admired: it is the most perfect pattern of the actions of our life; but the philosophers have represented him in a different manner, according to the particular genius of their respective sects.

Aristotle* will have him to be a man that has penetrated into every thing within the compass of our knowledge; that has discovered what was unknown

* Meta.

to other men; who is immovably fixed, as to his opinion, from the certainty thereof; who knows best how to teach the truth of his speculations; and who, in fine, prefers the knowledge of himself, of regulating his life and governing his passions, to that which has only in view the utility and benefit of others.

The mind of the wise man (says Isocrates) ought to be in that serene, quiet, and calm, state, that nothing should be able to ruffle or disturb; he must reconcile himself to the times, be just in his actions, and honest in his conversation; he must bear with the vexatious humors of those he frequents, must subjugate his passions; not be dejected in adversity, nor be in the least puffed up when fortune smiles. He ought to possess all these qualifications so perfectly as to reduce them into practice; without which, he is unworthy the title of a wise man.

This extraordinary man (according to Cicero*) is, he who knows how to keep his mind in a just moderation, and such an unshakeable firmness, as shall cause a profound tranquillity; who never gives way to melancholy or fear; who prescribes bounds to his desires, and who beholds all that happens to mankind, whether vexatious or delightful, with so indifferent an eye as to be neither too much disturbed or pleased thereat. What can be supposed to appear extraordinary to him, who has so frequently meditated on the vast immensity of the universe, and that of eternity? Can he meet with one thing in his studies, or in the short space of time he lives, that can surprise him,

* Lib. iv. Susc. quæst.

whose mind is so continually applied, that he foresees, expects, and receives without astonishment, whatever befalls him? to whom nothing is ever new, and who passes over his life without fright or disquiet, in any place the fickle wantonness of fortune shall appoint him.

Horace* (after having told us, that the wise man ought to be easy in mind, even at the approach of death) represents him a man unalterable in his resolutions,—determined never to follow the depraved sentiments of the vulgar, and above being scared by the threats of the great; and so much master of himself, that, if the universe was to undergo its last dissolution, he would, without fear, behold himself involved in its ruins.

"The truly wise man (says Petrarcha†) never boasts of what he knows, because it is diametrically opposite to virtue, which he ought strictly to adhere to; for, he must be wise indeed, and not be satisfied with the reputation and character of being so, but really be so. He must reflect on the vast extent of nature, must examine himself strictly, and behold with grief the many excellencies which are wanting to an absolute and consummate perfection in his attainments, with reference to his mind and morals.

"It is not enough (continues the said author) to speak with applause on all the sciences; it is much more excellent to recollect ourselves, and banish all fear, to be more exact in our conduct, and to endeavour to attain an interior wisdom; because, that dis-

* Lib. iii. Ode 3. † Dial. ii.

sipates at once the false opinions which had seized our mind, and disperses that insolent temerity that prompts us on to the undertaking of things full of inevitable danger, and makes us wish never to be necessitated to give an experiment of our wisdom, lest our weakness should be discovered, and our vanity appear ridiculous."

Lipsius* defines the wise man thus: "He is a man (says he) who runs a full career in the fruitful plains of virtue, who gives himself a full scope in knowledge, who informs himself of the true spring from whence fear proceeds, and fortifies himself against all the assaults of the passions.

"Did you ever hear (continues he) the haughty motto of some kings of this age" without fear or hope? It is the true character of this mighty man; and, he who can establish himself in this happy state, is above all crowned heads: he is in a perfect freedom, fortune can have no hold of him, his constitution can never sway his reason; he is subject to God alone.

The Stoics (who are no less vain than the Pharisees among the Jews) have been extravagant in the description of their Wise-man: the qualifications they have bestowed upon him have even drained their imaginations; the state they place him in was the work of their pride and vanity, and his attributes are so many witnesses of their folly.

This man, who had his existence only in their brains, is presumptuous enough to dispute excellency even with the Deity itself. He would persuade

* De Cons. lib. i. 63.

people, that, in the vilest slavery, he is the only man that bears the sceptre; that he alone rules the commonwealth; that he is the only orator, poet, good citizen, and true friend: he dares to maintain, that, notwithstanding all the deformities of body, he is the only beautiful person; that, in the greatest distress, he is the only rich man; and, though extracted from the dregs of the people, he is the only noble born.

He knew all that the rest of mankind was ignorant of; was incapable of lying, fixed in his opinion, out of the insult of the passions, and without the least dread of torments; in short, always of an even temper, and ever infallible.

Nevertheless, as these philosophers reflected that the natural disposition of man caused in him such motions as, if very violent and strong, were styled passions, and were hard to overcome; and that these sallies, proceeding from temper and constitution, were inseparable from life; they bethought themselves, by certain fallacious reasonings, to assign to their Wiseman, though a partaker of all the signs of human frailty, such a habit of virtue as should distinguish him from all the rest of mankind.

They were so bold as to maintain, that, notwithstanding, whoever was addicted to the pleasures of love, to luxury, debauchery, and anger, were guilty: yet the wise Stoic, although passionately amorous, in the highest transports of anger, and amidst the greatest merriments and feasting, was still innocent, without being subject to the tyranny of the passions. Can there be any thing more ridiculous than this way of reasoning? Was there ever a sect where good

sense presided less? It has, notwithstanding, afforded great men; but, if it gained a reputation among the Greeks and Romans by its formal exterior, it was because those nations were well enough pleased with the superficial part, provided it kept the people attentive to the outward appearance of a false virtue, and at the same time left to succeeding ages the admiration of a miracle that had never been.

Seneca,* who is always boasting of the excellency of his Wise-man, does not scruple to own that all the labour that way has been mispent; and that it is without any prospect of success that we seek after this extraordinary man, he deserving only to be esteemed so who is least vicious.

For, to come to the point, Cato, whom he seems to look upon as a perfect pattern in that kind, falls short of this wonderful character; for truth, that discovers in us the weakness of our composition, triumphs there in spite of all his haughty expressions. "Since the affairs of human kind," says this masterpiece of wisdom, "are totally despaired of, let us secure Cato. This great man," continues Seneca, "stabbed himself mortally; and, his chirurgeons having dressed his wounds, he found his strength decay by the great loss of blood, yet remained still so incensed against Cæsar, that, as if enraged against himself, he laid violent hands upon his wounds, and forced his soul to take its flight, in contempt of all his power."

Would not any body imagine, when Seneca speaks

* De Tr. vid. c. 7.

after this manner, that all was lost by the death of Cato, and that he was to have no less a tomb than the ruins of the universe?

Let us examine this eulogium. This Roman certainly was not such as the Stoics represent their Wiseman. What signified it to the rest of mankind whether Cæsar or Pompey remained master of the world? The separate interest of some particular persons were only concerned in those great commotions; and, if Cato's party had conquered, his vanity might have led him to believe that all nations were going to enjoy a profound tranquillity; and that soul that hurried itself out of this world to shun subjection, would, in all likelihood, have been reconciled to life if it might have ruled. If he faced death without fear, it was because the dread he had of being a spectator of Cæsar's triumph seemed to him to have something in it more terrible than death itself; and that the hatred and envy he bore to this illustrious conqueror presented to the mind of this haughty Stoic something frightful, even in Cæsar's known and experienced clemency.

Can there be any thing more extravagant than Seneca's saying that Cato, having supported and upheld the universe for a long time, he could not survive its ruin? When at the same time America, vastly more large than the Roman empire, did not so much as know the Romans by name; and China dreaded nothing from the attempt of their arms. "But man," says Petrarcha, "is apt to rate himself above his condition; and, as all his wisdom is but folly before God, it is no strange thing it should be accompanied with vanity."

Pride, which had its birth even in heaven itself, had so possessed this great man's mind, that he seems to be elated without any caution; and his end bears a proportion to his temerity: for the truly wise man ought to be endued with humility, and not presume too much on his own knowledge; always submitting it to reason, and ever preserving for the great Being of all beings that religious fear and veneration which are the beginning of true wisdom.

But, as we have run over the several opinions of philosophers concerning the Wise-man, let us peruse what Epicurus and his followers have left us on that head.

MAXIM I.

The wise man may be injured sometimes through hatred, envy, or contempt, without disturbing the calm and tranquillity of his mind; because in all those trials he is supported by the strength of reason.

REFLECTION.

The highest degree of wisdom is to possess an undisturbed and peaceable mind, which is certainly the effect of reflection on ourselves, and a sufficient knowledge in nature: the one eradicates our passions; and the other, having dissipated the fears that disquiet us, perfects and consummates our happiness. When we are once thus prepared, what can in the least molest or be uneasy to us? For the truly wise man beholds, as it were from a fortress, all the spite and

malice of men, and looks upon it as the effect of their temper and constitution, or ill-nature; and is pleased to find himself above their power by the force of his reason, and the virtuous habit he has contracted. "He is invulnerable," says Seneca: "not that he is secure from outrageous usage, but by reason they cannot alter his mind."

Thus we find Thraseus, whose virtue was his crime, not in the least alarmed at Nero's anger. Phocion was drawn in a cart through the high street of Athens to the amphitheatre, there to receive sentence of death, without the least shock to his inward tranquillity; and Themistocles, not being able to persuade Euribiades, the Athenian general, to give battle to Xerxes, the king of Persia; and that general, being provoked by his reiterated intreaties not to let slip so favourable an opportunity of conquering, having lifted his cane at him, this famous Grecian serenely bid him strike: so he did,—but to comply with his request. "Man's patience," says Solomon, "is a testimonial of his wisdom:" it is glorious to be so indifferent to ill usage as not to be the least moved thereat.

MAXIM II.

The acquisition of wisdom is so solid a good in itself, that it can never be lost.

REFLECTION.

It is a maxim the Stoics have carried so far, that their pride, or rather their folly, could not strain it

higher. Seneca chose rather to maintain that there were certain honourable vices, than to acknowledge that Cato, who was his idol, had degenerated from the character of a wise man when he became a hard drinker.*

It had been more for his purpose to have asserted the infallibility of his Wise-man, with the reasons he uses in one of his Epistles. "It is," says this philosopher, "an inward sentiment that works so powerfully in us, as to make us naturally adhere to virtue, and fly from vice; and we ought to apply ourselves, with the utmost diligence and labour, to root out those evil inclinations which are in us, by reason that the acquisition of good ones is a lasting and permanent good: for that virtue which wisdom inspires can never be faulty. It is easy," continues he, "to support the truth by the reflection we may make, that the passions that tyrannise most over us are not born with us; and so, being introduced as strangers, they may be banished to make room for more excellent habits, which reason fixes in us as in their centre."

As long as Alexander followed the precepts of Aristotle, all that he did was worthy admiration; the beauty of his sentiments is discoverable in the letter he writes to Darius: "It is needless for you," says he, "to make acknowledgments to me; for I did not use Sizigambis, and the other princesses, after the generous manner as I did, to gain thanks or praise; and much less through any doubts or suspicion I had of the events of war, or out of any desire I had to

* Epi. 50.

make a peace: my moderation was the effect of true honour, and a specimen of the greatness of my soul, which is the chief spring in all my actions." But the minute he stifles these commendable inclinations, and that he is deaf to the counsels of wisdom, he ceases to be that conqueror who had been admired by his enemy; for, his magnanimity and pride having overcome his moderation, he compels the Ammonian oracle to acknowledge him for the son of Jupiter. And, as Epicurus very well observes, the vain opinions of the mind are so dangerous, that it was necessary this great monarch should be desperately wounded to oblige him to own he was not the son of a god.

Was not Parmenio's answer worthy observation, and ought it not to have made him sensible of his error? "I congratulate you, prince," says he, "that your birth has been owned by the oracle; but I cannot help pitying those who are to live under the subjection of a king who is more than man."

His vanity was offended at this liberty, and afforded him some satisfaction in the death of the most faithful of his friends. His debauchery made him forget that he owed his life to Clytus, and made him kill him unworthily for telling him the truth. It carried him so far, that he wreaked his revenge on Darius's palace, and caused those illustrious monuments of the Persian kings to be burned, after he had given testimonials that he had clemency enough to have pardoned his enemy. To be short,—after he had resigned himself up to the violence of his constitution and temper, he became so immoderate in mirth,

and so dejected in grief, that he would have courted death to be rid of his pain, though he had so often insulted it in the field, and had recourse to astrologers to make him easy in his mind in reference to his end.

This was an effect of human weakness; distrust intermixed itself whenever he would come to a resolution. All ages have afforded us examples of this truth; and, after the fall of the great and wise Solomon, who is that presumptuous mortal that dare flatter himself so far as to think he is endowed with that constancy of mind that no accident whatever can work upon, when all men must allow it to be a supernatural gift?

Nevertheless, this maxim of Epicurus is admirable. Can any thing create in us a stronger desire to possess a good, than the thought that it is of perpetual duration? And if it should happen that, after having attained to this high pitch of perfection, of which this famous Grecian speaks, and that, through frailty, one should fall from the exact practice thereof, the very fall itself would have this advantage with it, by a due repentance, as to make us more sensible of our weakness, and excite us to something still more perfect.

MAXIM III.

The wise man profanes the excellency of his profession when he abandons truth, and entertains any thing that borders upon the fable; for, as philosophy

is nothing else than a due enquiry after truth, fiction proves an obstacle to the success we ought to be blest with from the knowledge of it.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus here gives a noble idea of his sentiments: he requires that his wise man should be entirely devoted to Truth, and that with all the reason imaginable; since she may properly be said to be the most agreeable nourishment of the mind, and, according to Plato, the most essential delight thereof, and which he ever ought to have in view.

It is by her means that we reduce our speculations into practice, and that we learn to live undisturbedly in the greatest confusion of the world: in fine, it is she that, by the knowledge she gives us of things, banishes our passions and all our fears. Since knowledge is then so useful, is not Epicurus mightily in the right when he requires that fiction should no ways intermingle with it, by reason it obstructs and hinders the true discovery thereof. A lie, however ingenious it may be supposed, ought never to come out of the mouth of a philosopher, who, in Plato's opinion, can never approve of such chimerical notions.

MAXIM IV.

The wise man is not to be formed out of all dispositions and constitutions; nay, every nation does not afford this extraordinary man.

REFLECTION I.

It is most certain that many things are requisite to the forming a wise man:—he must have received from nature the necessary dispositions for this state, which seems to raise him somewhat above his condition; and these dispositions are so different, that they are rarely found in the same person.

His moderation, his docility, and his vivacity, ought to have shewn themselves from his infancy; he ought naturally to have a clear conception. Is it probable that the knowledge of any thing can charm us very much, if the discovery of it be so very intricate and laborious?

These qualifications would yet be useless, if he were not modest and easy in his conversation, if he were not steady in his sentiments, and were not endowed with a happy memory: without this absolutely necessary faculty, how great soever his inclination might be for learning, he would still remain ignorant. It is an excellent temper which must give the finishing stroke to these different things: a morose and vexatious one foments evil inclinations; and can any thing keep us at a greater distance from truth, which is the chief aim of the philosopher, than the irregularity of his mind and morals? These reasonings, which we have taken from Plato, sufficiently demonstrate the first part of this maxim: let us make some reflections on the second.

temples built in his honour; which the Tartars, who have usurped that vast empire, have preserved to this day. And Epicurus, who was of the first rank, would have attained the same perfection he arrived to, by means of his natural disposition, in what country or climate soever he had been born.

REFLECTION III.

If I might be permitted, without being thought presumptuous, to add something to the maxim of this illustrious Greek, I should think that, besides the temper of body and climate, the knowledge of the age he lives in might justly be esteemed requisite towards the formation of a wise man.

The sages of the philosophers have performed such actions heretofore as have been the admiration of mankind, and which in our days would be censured as acts of temerity, if not mere follies.

Suppose the Stoic's Wise-man should now (being cloathed only with rags and tatters, and almost a skeleton with hunger and famine,) declare in our public places, that he alone abounds in wealth, that he is the only beautiful person, and that it is his proper right to command and govern,—would he not be a laughing-stock to the whole world? He would be so far from being looked upon as one of the ancient's wise men, that he would be reckoned no better than an arrant fool.

MAXIM V.

The Wise-man takes care to preserve the inexplicable blessing of an undisturbed and quiet mind, even amidst the groans and complaints that excess of pain extorts from him.

REFLECTION.

Wisdom is nothing else but the knowledge of things; and this knowledge is the effect of speculation and reflection: but our penetration would still be useless, if we had not found out the art of reducing our meditations into practice; insomuch, that the wise man, having discovered the secrets of nature, and having strained his mind so far as to pry into the minutest and most abstruse things, he at last found out the cause of all the misfortunes of mankind, sought for a remedy thereunto, and concluded it consisted in the steadiness of his mind. So that, his resolution being unshakeable, by the help of his reason, he makes indolency the sum of all the pleasures of life, slighting his vexations, and keeping always entire that tranquillity of mind which constitutes his happiness. By these means, he is ever armed against the most cruel accidents that can befall him, so as never to be surprised; and, if excess of torment and pain extort any outward expressions from him, his mind, being always prepared, is insensible to the attack. This made Anaxarchus, when the executioners were pounding him in a mortar, bid them take courage, for they were demolishing the prison of his soul.

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Epicurus's Wise-man is not insensible to tortures and pains; but he endures them without weakness. It is, then, an unjust charge from Cicero, Seneca, and several others, in their writings, that our philosopher should boast that, being shut into Phalaris's bull, he would cry out, in the utmost heat of the fire, "It does not affect me—I feel nothing but pleasure." But, as they were famous Stoics, and had an inward esteem for Epicurus, which they did not dare to discover, they laboured all they could to make it appear that these two sects proposed the same end, though they argued differently as to the compassing thereof.

What likelihood is there that Epicurus, who maintained that the senses could not be deceived, should insinuate that one of his own should represent that to him as pleasurable which in reality was full of pain and torture? Nay, would it not have been ridiculous, in the midst of groans and lamentations, to affect to uphold that he felt nothing but pleasure; and so give the lie to what he had himself established as absolutely infallible?

He always taught, that pain was pain, and that the Wise-man could not oppose its effects; and that it was enough if he underwent with patience those torments which, without this effort, would have disturbed the tranquillity of his mind.

When he said of Phalaris's bull, It does not affect nor concern me,—it was as much as to say, that he had found out a way, by the strength of his reason, to overcome what causes despair in the greatest part of mankind; and that that indifferency was the peculiar prerogative of the Wise-man.

This is sufficient to shew that he could never be guilty of saying, he found pleasure in the raging pains of fire; for, in the epistle he wrote a few hours before his death, he sincerely owns the cruel torments he endured; and yet, at the same time, declares that day, in which his distemper seemed to summon all its strength, in order to his dissolution, to be the happiest as well as last of his life. He finds a secret satisfaction in the reflection he makes on his many excellent discoveries, and is delighted with the memory of them: these thoughts put him above the power of pain, which he knew would soon have an end with his life, and so afforded him a double felicity.

MAXIM VI.

The Wise-man alone is qualified for a perfect friendship: for the presence of his friends does not augment it, and their absence does not in the least impair it; he knows how to preserve it even after their death.

REFLECTION.

There is nothing more generally used than the terms of—friend and friendship. We have wonderful examples transmitted to us from former ages of the prodigious effects thereof; but it is a long time since these excellent rarities vanished; and one may say at present, that friendship is a mere vision, an imaginary notion, that is destroyed by the first distaste. It is for that reason that our philosopher main-

tains, that none but the Wise-man can duly acquit himself of the duties of friendship, by reason that the same things that compose the philosopher form the perfect friend.

Friends ought to have an equal moderation and docility: it is the main support of the commerce of the mind; it is a charming as well as necessary means for a reciprocal communication of their thoughts; and it is what makes them receive with pleasure the counsel they give each other.

A friend ought to know how to distinguish those things which are really valuable and good, and those that are not; and be endowed with the necessary dispositions that cause this amicable sympathy, which is called Friendship. His conversation ought to be easy, his behaviour without pride; he must not be fickle in his sentiments; and his memory should be perfect, that no obligations may slip out, which are the very bond of friendship; but, above all, sincerity must be the basis of all these qualifications.

This allowed, the maxim of our philosopher has nothing in it that is presumptuous; for nothing but the sage can be capable of the true sentiments of friendship. He is always exact in what he promises; he does not stand in need of the presence of his friend to remind him of his duty: absence can make no impression upon him to forget it; he preserves the idea of it even after death, and his friend that ceases to be, lives still in his memory.

Our times afford nothing but formal and exterior friends, that govern their friendship according to their interest or convenience: as they dissemble when

they promise, so they make no difficulty to falsify their word.

What a fatal corruption is this!—I do not require, at the same time, that any body should imitate Cato, whose love was so excessive for Hortensius, that, perceiving him to be in love with his wife, he gave her to him in marriage, to satisfy his passion.

Neither do we propose for imitation the example of Philades and Orestes, that would die for one another. This heroic abdication of ourselves is out of season; but I would have us, at the same time that we cannot put in practice these things that seem impossible, not to neglect our duty in those that have nothing in them extraordinary, and, at least, come up to the council of Demetrius Phalereus. "We ought," says this philosopher, "to visit our friends in prosperity when they desire it; but, when fortune frowns upon them, and that they are in adversity, we ought to run to their assistance without being called.

MAXIM VII.

The Wise-man ought to avoid being familiar with any woman, whose conversation is prohibited by the laws.

REFLECTION.

As the law is the soul of the state, and that prudence is the guide of all the thoughts and actions of the wise, Epicurus requires that his conduct should make it appear that he has that due respect for the

laws that prudence dictates; and, as he has before given us the character of a perfect friend, here he pretends to shew that the laws of a state ought always to have, for their final end, the happiness of the people, and that this happiness entirely depends on their living in unity and friendship.

Can any thing disturb it more than adultery? It is seeking a good not belonging to us; it is offering violence to civil society; it is affronting honour, in whose defence men often sacrifice their lives. Nothing can come near this crime; it is of so cruel a nature as to make us take pleasure in the misfortune of our neighbour: but our religion, whose aim is to make us perfect, not only prohibits adultery, but forbids also the having to do with any woman, except in marriage: out of that holy state, all commerce with them is criminal; nay, the very desire of it is offensive to God, and makes us lose his favour.

MAXIM VIII.

The Wise-man ought to chastise and punish his servants; but with this consideration, nevertheless, as to have a regard to those who, by their care, diligence, and good-nature, deserve to be distinguished from the rest.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus allows his sage the liberty of punishing his domestics, because he chastises them without anger, and without disturbing, in the least, the state

of his tranquillity: he looks upon it as a thing, not only useful, but likewise just and necessary.

These domestics were slaves: reason as well as policy required they should be punished; by which means, not only further excesses were prevented, but good habits also contracted, and too great a licence curbed, which by impunity might have been detrimental to the public.

But it is easy to observe a distinguishing mark of good-nature in our philosopher: for he expresses a compassion for that slave he will have punished; and, considering him a man as well as himself, notwithstanding his unhappiness, which he ascribed to the unaccountableness of fortune, he orders a mitigation of the miseries of his unhappy state by a reasonable indulgence, and that some regard be had to him on the score of his morals and mind.

It is plain his precepts were not mere ideas, but likewise practice; since, by his will, he freed Mus, only because he had applied himself to philosophy.

To speak the truth, can any thing be imagined more inhuman than a master, whose fury and caprice render him the tyrant of those that serve him? Seneca inveighs against the haughty niceties of those of his age, who disdained to eat or talk with their slaves; which he counselled the wise and sensible part of mankind to do, because (says this philosopher) these wretches took so much pleasure and satisfaction in these tokens of bounty and good-nature, as to recompense the liberty they had to speak with the courage they shewed in holding their tongues in the

midst of torments, and choosing rather to die than to reveal any thing to the prejudice of their masters.

It was good usage that inspired Catenius Philotinus with so generous and noble a love for his master, as to make him prefer death to all the riches he had left him by his testament. Most men run risks to gain wealth, yet Catenius despised it so far as to prefer to it the memory he left to posterity of the love he had for his master.

This noble disposition was so powerfully strong in him, that he flung himself into the flaming pile that was consuming the corpse of his master, who had given him his liberty.

MAXIM IX.

The Wise-man must never yield to the charms of love: it never came from heaven; its pleasures have nothing valuable in them; and, if one is unfortunate enough to be overcome by it, he ought to count it a happiness if he comes off without mischief.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus, having placed the felicity of life in the calm, peaceable, and quiet state of the mind, forbids his Wise-man to admit of the least impression from this passion; for, in reality, it is a wonderful obstacle to the labour and pains he must take to arrive at this blessed tranquillity,—love delighting in idleness, from

whence it had its birth; labour and pains being diametrically opposite to its effeminacy.

How unreasonable were those philosophers that endeavoured to persuade the world, that love had its origin from heaven, since it proceeds from nothing else than the sympathetic dispositions of temper and constitution, awakened and stirred up by the presence of the respective objects.

Reflect on the pleasure it affords, and the uneasiness it causes, and you will find it to be a mere Proteus, that is always changing its form.

If it flatters and pleases you, alas! it is but for a few transitory moments, and that the better to establish its usurpation. It has hardly seduced you by its first allurements, when on the sudden it changes the satisfaction you received into the most cruel torments, and plagues you with its most racking and rigid pains. For these reasons, our philosopher asserts, that this passion is in no wise beneficial; but, on the contrary, very pernicious, since it knows no moderation. To be excessive, is its character, because it expects to find some relief; but, as Lucretius well observes, it is all in vain, by reason it is insatiable.

It is reported, that Selemnus had so strong a passion for the nymph Argyra, that he died thereof, and that Venus, out of pity, changed him into a fountain that had this quality, viz.—to wash out of the hearts of them that bathed therein the most minute remains of passion that was uneasy to them. If this be true, says Pausanias, this water was more precious than gold; and, in my opinion, it might deservedly be preferred to philosophy itself, whose counsels very often have no

effect in love. Is it possible that the Stoics, after having maintained, by their patron Seneca, that the wisdom of Cato had received no blemish from the excess of wine, and assured us that their sage might love without derogating from the severity of his profession, could anywise prejudice Epicurus with posterity? Shall these false professors of virtue persuade us, that a man can be wise amidst the transports of love, which is the destructive rock of quiet, resolution, and happiness?

Where is wisdom, when a man is overcome with the dismal vapours of jealousy, by the transports of a slighted love, and by the gnawing reflections on infidelity? Where is, in fine, wisdom, when a man employs his greatest cunning and art only to augment his torment; when he sacrifices his reason and good sense to the caprice of a loose extravagant woman; for which proceeding, at the same time as he imagines himself to be a wise Stoic, the rest of the world concludes him to be the greatest of fools?

MAXIM X.

The Wise-man ought not to be too solicitous for his burial.

REFLECTION.

The superfluous care that is taken, during a man's life, for his funeral, proceeds only from the pride of self-love,—it looks as if he proposed to live after death, when he expresses so much concern about the place

that shall be the repository of his dead carcase. He flatters himself with thoughts of immortality, by these exterior marks; and, instead of making it his business to get a good reputation, he entertains his imagination with the magnificence of the titles that are to compose his epitaph.

This is a foolish presumption that the sage ought not to be tainted with. When death has once made a dissolution of the parts that compose us, there is so little room required to contain them, that it is even ridiculous to be solicitous about it.

The earth, from whence we came, is always ready to receive us; and, though the matter that contains our small remains be ever so precious, yet corruption takes care to restore us to our common mother; and, time, which preys even upon nature itself, will, at length, consume our tomb, though it were of adamant or brass.

This made Socrates, being asked, before he died, how he would be buried?—answer, Conformably to the sentiments of Epicurus. This great philosopher having filled all Greece with his wisdom, and whose memory was never likely to be forgotten, contented himself with that immortality, and left it to the choice of his friends to bury him, as they should find most easy and commodious to themselves.

Diogenes ordered, that his body should not be put into the ground; and, when his friends thereupon asked him, if he would be a prey to the fowls and wild beasts?—he answered, smiling, No! therefore put a stick near me, that I may drive them away.

The Parthians were used to expose their dead till

the birds and beasts had left nothing but their bones, which they then committed to the grave. Aristides was so undisturbed at his death, that he did not leave wherewithal to bury him: and, indeed, it was more to his honour, to have that duty discharged at the public expense. His valour, his justice, and wisdom, (which made Plato say, he was the only man that deserved to be admired,) were an everlasting monument to him. The memory of Artemisia's husband was more celebrated by the love that princess bore to him, than by the magnificent mausoleum she erected to it.

There have been, nevertheless, some people that expressed more concern for their sepulture, than for life itself. The Spartans, the eve of the day of battle, were used to fasten to their right arm certain marks, on which were engraved their own name, and that of their fathers: to the end, that, if they had the ill fate to be all slain, and that their bodies should be so disfigured as not to be distinguishable, they might, notwithstanding, by means of that inscription, be restored to the tombs of their ancestors. It is recorded among the other cruelties that Philip of Macedon practised towards the Thebans, after the victory he obtained against Greece, that he took a price from the parents, for the privilege of burying their relations.

MAXIM XI.

The Wise-man shall not study eloquence in the exposition of his discoveries.

REFLECTION.

Philosophy is an enquiry after truth; all its speculations tend to this happy discovery, and the mind must be continually in action to attain it. The great secret is, how to husband time, whose irrevocable course sufficiently shows how precious its moments are: may it not then properly be said to be lost, what is mispent in the invention of expressions, that at best only flatter the ear, and do not satisfy the mind.

It is unworthy of the Wise-man, to be over-studious in the knowledge of words, and to affect to be nice in the turn of his periods when he is teaching truth; it is making it almost doubtful, and even profaning its simplicity; it is making a criminal medley of things real, and those that have their existence but in the imagination. The philosopher, therefore, must not imitate the ways of the orator, whose profession, according to Plato, is to persuade whatever he pleases, by the means of his expressions, that have no solidity in them,—and to charm (as one may say) his auditory in favour of the fable; it is an art that glories in deceiving, and that has not for aim the matter, but the manner, and form, of the discourse.

On the contrary, the Wise-man advances nothing but what is conformable to his speculations; he has no other view than to instruct; and he submits his words to the strength of his thoughts. Epicurus will have it, that the figures of rhetoric are altogether useless in the explication of the precepts of wisdom, which he requires should be taught without affecta-

tion; and that it is better to lengthen one's discourse than to make use of apostrophes, antitheses, and the other address the art of speaking teaches; for, the discourse can never be too long, when it is concerning the nature of things, which it explains in proper, intelligible, and natural terms.

MAXIM XII.

The Wise-man shall not marry, nor trouble himself with the thoughts of receiving, as it were, a fresh being, in his children; not but there are accidents in life that may oblige him to this engagement, and make him wish for posterity.

REFLECTION.

Plato, in his republic, ordains, all women should be in common. One would think from thence, that he was prejudiced as to the constancy and fidelity of the sex, as well as the difficulty there is to stem the torrent of their passions; insomuch, that judging this to be above the power of a single man, he thought of effecting it by pluralities.

He played here the politician,—it was striking at the root of many evils, and taking away the racking torments that honour causes, when it is injured by their misbehaviour.

Epicurus, without entering on the detail of these plagues, which have something very formidable in

them, will, if possible, have his Wise-man absolutely avoid the danger, by shunning the engagement.

To speak the truth,—a wife, children, and the carking cares of these things, disturb our tranquillity, and only carry us into a sea of trouble. Not but that matrimony is in itself a good thing, nay, excellent; since it is ordained both by religion and the laws, and procures the duration of civil society; but the consequences thereof alter very much the sweetness of its condition. This made one of the ancients say, "that the two happiest days of that state were the first, and that of our death, that freed us from it."

Our philosopher, who governs himself by prudence, is not so rigid but that he admits of some exceptions to this severe law. He allows, therefore, of marriage, where necessity or utility seems to make it advisable, —which indulgence is authorised by justice: for, though this state carries with it something very frightful and forbidding, there are certain junctures that really oblige us to embrace it: and, although we are sensible we act against the counsels of a rigid and strict wisdom, yet we, in a manner, free ourselves from censure, when the uneasiness that usually accompanies this indissoluble bond is sweetened with a plentiful fortune. But, on the other side, a marriage contracted without these weighty considerations, runs a great risk of being unhappy and vexatious.

History, which furnishes us with many examples of its fatal consequences, affords us some instances, and those illustrious ones, too, in its favour. Caritho had so tender and passionate a love for her husband,

Jovinian, the emperor, that the beholding his triumph proved the innocent cause of her death: this princess being overjoyed that her husband was returned victorious over his enemies.

The History of Germany makes mention of a town where there was as many heroines as women. Weinsberg having been besieged and taken by Conradus III. all was to be sacrificed to the fury of the conquerors, the women only excepted, who were permitted to go off; and, having obtained leave to carry what they would along with them, love, that is otherwise effeminate and weak, furnished them with so much strength, that they took their husbands upon their shoulders, and their children in their hands; which unexpected sight so disarmed the emperor's anger, that the men were no longer looked upon as criminals by him, because their wives had proved so virtuous.

MAXIM XIII.

The Wise-man ought never to drink to excess; neither must he spend the nights in revelling and feasting.

REFLECTION.

Though the Stoics were convinced, that the weakness of man was such as rendered it impossible for him to attain to that sublime path of perfection, to which they affected to raise their Wise-man,—yet have they used their utmost efforts to support this idol of their vanity.

They have endeavoured, by false arguments, to prove, that he was infallible, though addicted to all the failings to which the weakness of mankind could subject him: they have given us to understand, that this masterpiece of their pride might be involved in the pleasures of love and wine, without the least blemish to his wisdom.

Seneca reproves Zeno for endeavouring to vindicate his sage from the imputation of drunkenness, because he was intrusted with the greatest secrets; and that such a man, although surprised by the fumes of wine, could never be censured as a drunkard. It is in vain (says this philosopher) that you strive to prove that the Wise-man, in the midst of the transports of of wine, can still preserve an equality of mind; you might as well pretend, that, having taken poison, he should not be liable to death; and that, in the profoundest sleep, yet he was still awake. Can you disallow (says he) when you observe his tottering and stumbling walk, his stammering and imperfect speech, that he is overtaken with wine, nay, really drunk?

Is it possible that the impudence of the Stoics should remain so long undiscovered; and that they should have any success in the impostures and lies they published to the prejudice of Epicurus, whose virtue shone as bright in his actions as in his writings? Surely these false professors of wisdom, made account that posterity would be very credulous, when they delivered themselves with so little caution.

The same Seneca styles Zeno the head of an intrepid holy sect; and afterwards he reproves him for maintaining captiously, that drunkenness made no

alteration in wisdom: in that very different from Epicurus, who absolutely forbids all excess of wine. He has only permitted those entertainments of which he speaks in his Testament, where he takes notice that he used to have them in memory of his father and brothers, and ordains the same practice in favour of his own,—by reason they were so contrived that the mind was more nourished than the body. It is during these innocent agreeable freedoms, that the soul communicates itself in a special manner; they are as it were the bond of a wise conversation, wherein is discoursed, with all the mildness possible, concerning nature, whose most abstruse secrets are enquired into; our behaviour and manners are likewise considered. Here, according to Horace, they discussed the question of the sovereign good of life, whether riches could lead a man to that felicity, and whether virtue did not constitute that happy state.

MAXIM XIV.

He shall not take upon him the administration of the commonwealth.

REFLECTION.

He may be looked upon as exempt from all the tyranny of the passions, and to have a certain mark of a true tranquillity, that can behold dignity and honours without desiring them.

The ambitious seek after them, to sooth their vanity and pride; the vindictive, to satisfy their revenge;

the choleric, to exercise with impunity the fierceness of their temper; and they that are hurried away with blind love, that they may place upon the throne the object of their passion.

How charming it is to be so much master of one's-self, as to regard with an unconcerned eye these trifling honours! How delightful must it needs be to be free from the inquietudes and uneasiness that are inseparable companions of those that labour to set themselves above the rest! How ravishing to enjoy the interior pleasures of the wise, and to be to oneself one's own proper felicity!

This generous contempt of the honours that accompany the administration of governments, is, once more, a certain mark that one has overcome human weakness.

How full of prudence is this maxim; and how dangerous a rock does the governing a state prove to the Wise-man!—for he has then a double task, being taken up, not only with the study how to preserve the calm of his own mind, but also how to procure the quiet and ease of others. He shall put in practice all that the most consummate prudence and most refined policy can suggest; and yet, if fortune, who over-rules the event of things, shall oppose his glorious undertakings, he shall be judged faulty, and, as it were, accountable for her injustice.

Alcibiades was no sooner forsaken by this unaccountable goddess, than his fellow-citizens (not being able to ascribe to his ill conduct the ill success of the war) charged him with impiety, as if they could arm against him both religion and the gods. He was

forced to fly to escape their fury; but his adversity served only to make him more illustrious, for he performed so many fine actions, that the Athenians were forced to recall him. They went out to meet him; having with them the same gods, whose thunder they would before have drawn down upon him: they forgot the losses they had sustained in Sicily, as well as that of their fleet; and, having made him very magnificent presents, they changed their injuries into public applause, and their imprecations into prayers for his posterity.

As there was no medium in the happiness of this great captain, so Fortune knew none in her persecutions; and, if she raised him one while to the highest pitch of glory, it was in order to treat him afterwards with the greater inhumanity; for, he having afresh incurred the hatred of the Athenians, and appearing so formidable even in his disgrace, that they who pursued him, by order of those who had usurped the government, did not dare to attack him with open force, they set fire to the house where he lay, and so burnt him in his bed.

The Wise-man, therefore, ought never to hazard his tranquillity for the sake of honours, the elevation to which may ruffle and discompose it: it is buying that splendid outward appearance at too dear a rate. He ought much less to thirst after being prime-minister to any prince, that function being more dangerous than any other; for he has not only the prince, but the people, to censure his actions, and it is very difficult to keep up to an exact medium between those two extremes.

A blind obedience to the one shall often make him incur the hatred of the other: if he endeavour to gain the good-will of the people, envy immediately represents him to the prince as an ambitious person, who conceals his evil designs under the specious cover of the public good. But this maxim only opposes the ambition of the subject, without obstructing in the least the choice of the sovereign.

MAXIM XV.

He shall not live after the manner of the Cynics.

REFLECTION.

Although, according to our philosopher, Nature is the true guide we ought to follow in the pursuit of happiness, he requires nevertheless that she should go hand-in-hand with the laws, and that decency ought to be observed in civil society. This made him censure the behaviour of the Cynics, who made their impudence the chief characteristic to distinguish them from other men, making the happiness of life to consist in the imitation of what was filthy, even in the brutes.

It is very well known that Crates and Diogenes have made profession of beastly impudence, even in public places, in which they have not been ashamed to do those actions that ought to have no other witness than the night and darkness. To this pitch did they carry this false notion,—that nature ought to be the guide and rule of all their actions.

MAXIM XVI.

He shall not beg for a livelihood ; but, if necessitous, he may teach philosophy, to subsist by.

REFLECTION.

Poverty, according to Horace, renders us ridiculous ; and, although Epicurus requires that his Sage, or Wise-man, should be above the affronts of men, yet he cautiously forbids him to give occasion for any contempt of his profession.

Wisdom, though it ought to be satisfied with its peculiar and proper advantages, should not be exposed to the indignities of a necessitous want. His prohibition is by so much the more reasonable, that he always maintained that man stood in need but of a small matter for his subsistence, and that, therefore, the Wise-man ought never to be reduced to that extremity which may reasonably be counted the greatest of evils.

In fine, if cruel fortune should deal so rigorously with him as to make him want necessaries, and by that means endeavour to disturb the tranquillity of his mind, he must then summons the whole strength of his virtuous habits ; and, that he may triumph over his unworthy fate, he must have recourse to the teaching philosophy to supply his wants, that he may receive from her wherewith to support life, as well as to compose and calm his mind.

MAXIM XVII.

If he should, by an accident or misfortune, become blind, that affliction ought not to make life tedious to him, or impair his happiness.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus, who pretends that his Wise-man shall never depart from the precepts of wisdom; that his reflections have placed him above all misfortunes, insomuch, that, if the universe were to swallow him in its ruins, he would share the calamity without any disturbance to his mind; will not have it to be in the power of any thing to make him lose the severity of his profession: so that, if he were deprived of his sight, he ought to bear it as a natural accident; and, having lost the benefit of the eyes of his body, apply himself more studiously to speculation by the eyes of his mind.

He will have his Sage happy in all circumstances, even in the very worst; that his mind be quiet and undisturbed amidst the horrors of shipwreck; in fine, that he be intrepid, and that the constant reflection he shall make on himself be the source and spring of his indolency.

Thus, we see, the fortitude of Callisthenes was admired by all men. When Alexander would cause himself to be adored, after the Persian manner, this philosopher was the only man who dared to oppose it, and remonstrate to that prince, that that action, though approved of and practised by those he had overcome,

was unworthy him and his victorious army. Alexander was so transported with rage hereat, that nothing but the inexpressible tortures of this captain and philosopher could appease him: he therefore caused his ears, nose, and lips to be cut off, and, having disfigured all his limbs, ordered him to be shut into a cage with a dog, and in that deplorable condition caused him to be carried up and down, as a melancholy spectacle of his impotent passion and fury.

This wise Macedonian did not express any more uneasiness in this dismal state than when in his profound speculations and greatest favour with his prince: he appeared as magnanimous as when he fought for this ungrateful king; and, to finish happily his unspotted life, he made a school of the place of his torment, and to the last gasp, in a manner, instructed Lysimachus in the precepts of virtue and wisdom. He had no thought of putting an end to his tortures: he pleased himself, on the contrary, with the trial of his constancy, that would have continued longer the subject of admiration, had not his generous disciple, being astonished at his heroic steadiness and resolution, put an end to his pain by poison, which he gave him as an acknowledgment for his instructions.

The Wise-man must be immoveable to all the accidents of life, and be satisfied and contented in that state and condition that provokes despair in vulgar souls; and, so far from freeing himself by death, which would argue the loss of his tranquillity, and that he gave way to human weakness, that he must preserve his life, enjoy that felicity which he has ac-

quired, and make use of the loss of his eyes to give the greater liberty to his mind.

MAXIM XVIII.

The Wise-man may be sad on certain occasions.

REFLECTION.

This maxim is an undeniable proof of Epicurus' sincerity: he permits his Sage to afford something to grief and sadness. Seneca, though a Stoic, blames that hard-heartedness that would have us insensible and incapable of any tender affection: "It is nothing," says he, "but the want of a trial that makes these haughty indifferents: should Fortune but make them sensible of her strokes by the loss of something very dear and valuable to them, she would force from them a confession of this truth."

The wise man, by this sadness, shall no ways swerve from his happy state, if he does but take care to observe an exact medium in his complaints.

MAXIM XIX.

The Wise-man may be accused, and brought to judgment.

REFLECTION.

The wisest of men is not sheltered from injustice and envy. He may be calumniated, it is true; but it

shall not work upon him, because he knows his own probity and virtue; and malice, whose current he cannot stem, is not capable of discomposing his tranquillity: so that, though he be brought before a judge, and that he be cast by the interest and contrivance of his enemies, his innocence shall still be a sufficient buckler and protection to him, every way impenetrable to his adversaries; and his steadiness of mind shall make him look with contempt on all the tricks and artifices that have been used to oppress him.

Socrates, whose wisdom was approved and applauded by the oracle, was condemned, it is true; but time shewed the injustice of his sentence: his judges were punished, and the plague itself seemed to revenge his quarrel; his country erected statues to him afterwards, and adored his memory.

"The body," says Sophocles, "may perish; but virtue is above the power of death, for she knows no other bounds than immortality."

MAXIM XX.

He may write books that may immortalise his name, but he shall not meddle with panegyrics.

REFLECTION I.

The attainments of the wise would be of little use, if they did not transmit them to posterity, which could not be a competent judge of their merit, if they had not taken care to convey to it the never-perishable fruits of their labour.

Our philosopher (to whom, in the opinion of Lucretius, we are more obliged for the remedies he has taught us against the accidental misfortunes of our life, than we are to Ceres and Bacchus for teaching us the art of producing wine and corn,) will have us hand down to posterity our acquisitions and improvements.

It is by the monuments of illustrious men, who have distinguished themselves by the strength of their mind, that the learned have been excited to follow their example, and improve their first discoveries.

It is therefore that Epicurus counsels his Sage to meditate in his closet, and there to run over the vast extent of immensity; and, as the irrecoverable swiftness of time ought to make every moment thereof precious to us, he confines him to the pursuit of things that are solid, and forbids him having any thing to do with those subjects where the expression seems to be more regarded than the substance.

A philosopher ought not to seek to eternise his memory by an artful and well-composed speech: he should not, according to Seneca, employ much time in the curious study of words: his business is to reform our manners; he must write for the information of the mind, without amusing himself with what may flatter the ear.

REFLECTION II.

It is certain that a panegyric is a curious work, when it has no other aim than to do justice to virtue and truth; which, though they are of such a nature as to receive no advantage from the splendour and

brightness of words, and that they find their greatest praise in their respective actions; yet it cannot be denied that, so applied, it is a most excellent thing. But, for the most part, we praise that we may be praised ourselves, or rewarded: we set out exterior virtues, under which shall lurk greater vices, insomuch that many times the very essence or soul of a panegyric shall be nothing but flattery and untruth.

What credit can we give to him that sells the beauty of his expressions, and brightens and sets off, by a fine turn of period, actions in themselves blameworthy, racking his mind only to shew the servile character thereof?

Eloquence is a dangerous thing: if it be sincere, it creates enemies; for, as it magnifies and augments the illustrious subject, so it swells and enlarges the vicious one.

If the Roman orator had been less eloquent in inveighing against the vices of Anthony, he had not, in all likelihood, stirred up his revenge so far as to be no otherwise appeased than with his head.

The art of speaking always carries things to excess. In the Emperor Tiberius' time, she lent her finest strokes to applaud all the actions of that prince, who at the same time laughed at his panegyrists. Under Nero, it was made use of to recommend to the gods the happy time of Poppea; and afterwards to make the apotheosis of the daughter she had by that unworthy emperor.

History, in fine, relates, that Hegesias the philosopher was so powerfully persuasive an orator on the

unhappiness and misfortunes of life, that most of those that heard him laid violent hands on themselves: it was for that reason that Ptolemy commanded him never to speak on that head.

MAXIM XXI.

The Wise-man must have a due care of his family, and foresee what may happen, without avarice or too eager a pursuit after riches.

REFLECTION.

Prudence, in Epicurus' opinion, has something in it superior to philosophy: it is this eminent virtue that guides and steers all other kinds of knowledge of our mind for the greater felicity of our life: wherefore he ordains, that she shall ever be the rule, and, as it were, the directrix of all the thoughts and actions of the wise man. He does not think it sufficient that he should have so discharged his duty for the time past, in reference to his family, that nothing can be reproached him on that score, unless he by a due foresight provides for the future: but he must not, in order to effect this, be avaricious, nor be too eagerly bent upon riches. He requires, he should know the rules that nature has prescribed for the right use thereof, and that he should covet them only to avoid a pinching necessity.

How different is this vice of avarice from all others! The luxurious man spares nothing to gratify his palate; the lover grudges no expence to

satisfy his passion: but the wretched miser does not so much as know how to make use of his wealth.

To be short, the avaricious man banishes all just proceeding, to follow his own odious inclination, which is merely to enrich himself; which practice is diametrically opposite to the dictates of true wisdom.

MAXIM XXII.

He shall be prepared against all the attacks of fortune.

REFLECTION.

Fortune is the bitterest enemy the Wise-man has; and, as the major part of mankind are her slaves, and worship her in her inconstancy, she disdains these, and levels her mischiefs at more noble objects.

She, knowing by experience what she can do, makes her temerarious enough to assault those heads that are grown grey in speculation; and she never despairs sinking, by the violence of her storms, even those that teach us the art of tranquillity.

It is, therefore, against her that the Wise-man ought to double his caution. If she smiles upon him, it is a snare which she prepares him, that he may imagine his own merit draws those presents from her, and that he may become blind with the vanity of self-love.

How dreadful is this false deity! Her greatest favours ought to be suspected; since they can transform a reasonable wise man into a proud haughty

fool; and that the fury of her attacks may wrest from the Sage himself that precious calm and quiet of mind, in which consist all the charms of his life.

He must, therefore, summon all the strength of his reflections, to defend himself against this professed enemy of his rest; he must receive her presents with indifferency, and arm himself much more against her caresses than her displeasure. She ought to be more suspected by him when she flatters, than frightful in the time of her anger. If she begin to rage, he must encounter her with all the resolution possible. Her most cruel events do not concern us; she can take nothing from us, but what depends on her: as for wisdom, as it is the fruit of our meditations, it is our own proper good, and no ways subject to the fickleness of her empire.

Socrates, who had submitted to his reason the natural disposition he had to intemperance,—who was looked upon as a perfect model of a virtuous life,—who had had the testimony of the oracle to witness his wisdom,—receives the injuries of fortune with the same unconcernedness as he received the encomiums that were given him. Whether he is teaching the rules of an exact morality,—whether he is answering his corrupt judges,—whether he is receiving sentence of death, or swallowing the poison, —he is still the same Socrates: that is to say, calm, quiet, undisturbed, intrepid; in a word, wise to the last.

Boetius, who had seen his family in the highest degree of honour, without being puffed up with his prosperity, foresaw its ruin with indifference, and

and suffered death without any more than a decent concern.

Cæsar beholds his murderers with their daggers in their hands, and yet at that instant the thoughts of death do not busy his mind, but the manner only how Cæsar ought to die: he therefore summoneth, in that juncture, all that wisdom had taught him against fortune. Prudence informs him, he cannot fly from what was inevitable; magnanimity makes him sensible, that great men have at any time lived long enough when Death calls them; and justice inspires him with a sort of concern for the ingratitude of him he had adopted for his son.

Nothing alarms the Wise-man: the sight of racks, (says Seneca,)—the loss of his estate,—the desolation of his family, and life itself, that is wrested from him in the utter destruction of his country,— are not capable of impairing this heroic virtue, which he owes to his meditations. He enjoys, in the opinion of this philosopher, an entire liberty, and is inviolable; his constancy cannot be shaken, and he is well prepared against all extraordinary emergencies, that they cannot in the least alter the state of his mind.

MAXIM XXIII.

He shall not seek the friendship of the peevish and morose man.

REFLECTION.

Friendship, when contracted with all the necessary circumstances, is one of the greatest consolations of life: we must not, then, suffer ourselves to be hurried away by any sudden inclination; but we must examine well the choice we are going to make; we must study the humour and manners of him with whom we intend to have this commerce; but, above all things, we must take care that he be not of the number of those melancholy hypochondriacs, whom nothing can please, who seem to have eyes only to look askew, who speak only to find fault, and who are, in fine, of so difficult and morose a temper that nobody can do any thing to their satisfaction.

If we have not these considerations, instead of a trusty friend, we shall be sure to find a censorious critic; and, instead of consolation in our misfortunes, we shall receive the severest reprimands. Nothing, in Seneca's opinion, can prove a greater comfort to the mind than a friendship accompanied with fidelity and mildness. Is it not a mighty blessing to meet with one whose happy dispositions and qualifications render him worthy of being, as it were, the depository of our greatest secrets, and who has so fine and noble a soul, that we fear his indiscretion less than our own? The sweetness of his conversation shall allay our grief; his advice shall serve us in the conduct of our affairs, and the very sight of him shall dispel our cares.

MAXIM XXIV.

If he endeavour to get a good reputation, it shall be chiefly in order to screen him from contempt.

REFLECTION.

Wisdom alone is what constitutes a happy and quiet life: she is the final end of our enquiries; she is the fruit of our watchings; in short, she is a certain refuge against the tyranny of our passions and fortune. After this glorious acquisition, nothing is capable of flattering the sage.

Whatever men generally behold with envy are to him indifferent objects: he pities those whom ambition, pride, and riches, have allured by the deceitful appearance of false goods; he is contented with the testimony of his conscience. The having established a good reputation adds nothing to the happiness of his state, which, in Epicurus' notion, is such as is neither capable of diminution or augmentation; and, as reputation contains nothing that can satisfy the Wise-man, he looks upon it as a thing merely requisite to shelter him from contempt.

MAXIM XXV.

The Wise-man shall reap more benefit, and take more satisfaction in the public shews, than other men.

REFLECTION.

It is most certain that the satisfaction of the Wiseman chiefly proceeds from the condition or state of his mind. If he assist at the public diversions, does he not there taste all that a serious reflection has most excellent in it? He there observes the different characters of the spectators; he can discover by their looks the effect of the passion that moves them, and, amidst the confusion that reigns in those places (which is still greater in the interior of them that form those tumultuous assemblies), he has the pleasure to find himself the only person undisturbed, and in a state of tranquillity.

To speak the truth, most of the great men that have delighted in these public spectacles, have generally proposed to themselves other pleasures. If Pompey built a magnificent amphitheatre, it was in order to embellish Rome, and flatter his vanity with the thought of leaving to posterity that sumptuous monument of his grandeur, and to behold, as it were, at one view, all the slaves of his interest and power.

MAXIM XXVI.

Vices are unequal, and have their distinguishing differences.

REFLECTION.

This maxim is directly opposite to the paradox of the Stoics, who, as they maintained that all virtues

were equal, so neither did they allow of any difference in crimes.

The sentiment of our philosopher is infinitely more conformable to good sense and religion. How can any man pretend to assert, that he that is guilty of parricide is not more criminal than he who has committed a simple theft; and, as Horace very well observes, ridiculing the Stoics,—Shall he that has stole a cabbage be counted equally guilty with him that has riffled the temples?

MAXIM XXVII.

Health, in the opinion of some, is a precious thing; others rank it among the indifferent.

REFLECTION I.

The first part of this maxim is one of the principal decisions of Epicurus, who pronounced health to be the second happiness of life. In reality, this happy disposition of the body, supported by the tranquillity of mind, which is the main and chief felicity of man, affords him a perfect enjoyment of all his faculties; he speculates, he acts, and, without interrupting the course of his thoughts, he reduces into practice all that his sublime genius can discover.

It is a difficult matter for the mind to apply itself to meditation with the same vigour and success, if the body be afflicted with any distemper. It is enough if it can effect in us such a disposition as shall enable us to bear with patience the evil we lie under,

and that it endeavours not to be infected by the disorder of our body.

Health, therefore, may justly be esteemed a precious and valuable thing. The greatest part of the reasonable world have always looked upon it as such; and several eminent men have bestowed eulogiums on it. St. Austin (as I have observed in my Preface to the Traduction of Lucretius) says, that most of the wise men endeavoured to possess themselves of this inestimable treasure.

The main secret, to be successful herein, is to shun all excesses that can anywise alter the good habit of our body; which may be said to consist in the so regulating our drinking, eating, and our exercise, that no evil effect can arise therefrom. In fine, we must imitate our philosopher, who, with only bread and water, thought himself the happiest of men.

REFLECTION II.

The latter part of this maxim is advanced in opposition to the Stoics, who, the better to support their disguised tenets, imagined that, after having asserted that their Wise-man was of so extraordinary a character, that, though he were gorged with wine, he could not be drunk; nor in love, though a mere slave to that passion; they might so bewitch the minds of men, as to persuade them that health ought to be esteemed an indifferent thing, because sickness, a good habit of body, and all the other qualities proper to it, as well as those that were not, neither constituted the happiness nor the felicity of man.

MAXIM XXVIII.

Nature does not endow us with a consummate magnanimity: that is acquirable only by the strength of reason.

REFLECTION.

Magnanimity, according to a learned Greek, is nothing else than the faculty of the mind, which we exercise with a great deal of vigour, and by means whereof we persevere with fervour in a certain habit that we have formed in ourselves, and which we take care to preserve inviolable.

Prudence, in the opinion of Epicurus, is, as it were, the soul of magnanimity: a man may have strength and courage, and yet be only rash and foolhardy. Alexander, having scaled the wall of a town, chose rather to fling himself in the midst of his enemies than retire. This action, which, by reason of its success, has been cried up by many, would nevertheless have been universally blamed, had Fortune forsook but a moment the darling she had taken so much pleasure to raise to the highest pitch of glory. This excess of valour would have been blame-worthy in the meanest captain; but it was altogether void of prudence in this prince, by whose death his army would have been in danger of being cut off, and all his conquests lost at once.

What Leonidas, king of Sparta, did, was not less bold: this prince, at the head of six hundred men, went and insulted five hundred thousand in their

very camp. But what he did was the effect of prudence, as well as bravery: the oracle had counselled him to sacrifice himself for the good and safety of his country, which was threatened with utter ruin, without this victim that the gods required. His men backed his undertaking with so surprising a valour, that, having scattered death wherever they came, he at last perished with them, being overpowered by the number of the enemy, that (Nature being tired) they could no longer continue the slaughter of.

So that, notwithstanding, Nature may be said to have given us the first principles of this heroic virtue, —yet she would still be unknown, had we not been taught, by reason and reflection,—and if prudence did not make it plain,—that her most glorious achievements depend entirely on the exactness of her conduct.

MAXIM XXIX.

Friendship ought to be contracted for the utility we expect therefrom: as we cultivate the earth, that we may reap the benefit of its fertility. This noble habit is fomented and upheld by the natural good offices of the parties, and the satisfaction they take in each other.

REFLECTION.

Some people have reproached Epicurus with the imperfection of his character of friendship, since it

was so selfish; but, as it was either malice or ignorance that gave birth to these reproaches, as well as the invectives of the Stoics,—and so many others who have loaded this great man and his followers with groundless charges, it has always been with little or no success.

The last part of this maxim justifies our philosopher, and explains his opinion: he will have friendship have in view the proper satisfaction of the party; because, all those who have been sensible of this noble transport have, by experience, found, that it reflects on him that is the object thereof: or, as an excellent Greek author has it, "True friends find in themselves, by the charms of their mutual union, all that can be hoped for most delightful in pleasure."

Admit, nevertheless, that what Seneca puts in Epicurus' mouth were true, and that he sought a friend,—that he might be assisted by him upon occasion; as in sickness, poverty, or the horror of a prison or dungeon. In all likelihood, this Stoic will not disagree, that, among the other virtues that our philosopher cherished and practised, prudence would hold the first place; and so, by consequence, he would be obliged to the exercise of justice; and, being just, he would find a necessity of rendering his friend the same good offices, since we shall see in the sequel of this work, that he will have us ready to undergo death itself for our friend, if occasion require it.

Does he not express himself clearly in this maxim, when he says, That the true bond of this union depends on the pleasure we taste therein, and the manner we communicate the sweetness of our disposition?

and that we must love our friend sincerely, if we expect a reciprocal tenderness from him; as one of his followers utters himself, in Seneca,—Will you have an innocent philter, (says he,)—love, and you shall be loved.

MAXIM XXX.

There are two sorts of felicities; the one is everyway complete and perfect, and as such belongs only to God, and it is always uniform, not being capable of increase or diminution: the other is of an inferior kind, such as man's, which ever partakes of the more or the less.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus, whose modesty is constantly in opposition to the pride of the Stoics, is perpetually in war with their vanity; he can by no means comprehend how the transitory and uncertain happiness of this life can be reasonably esteemed of the first kind, since that supreme felicity, according to Cicero, implies in itself a plenitude of all sorts of blessings, and is out of all possibility of being disturbed or interrupted. He cannot be satisfied with the chimera of their ideas; and, without blasphemously placing his sage (as they do) above the Deity, he freely acknowledges, that the calm and tranquillity of this life, consists in the being less ruffled and disquieted than the rest of mankind.

MAXIM XXXI.

The Wise-man may admit of statues being erected to him in public places; but, he shall not covet, nor be ambitious of those honours.

REFLECTION.

As Epicurus' sage cannot be disturbed by the malice, hatred, or envy, of man, so neither can he be touched with any vanity or pride from the advantages this maxim mentions; and, if he labours to preserve an unsullied reputation, it is only in order to avoid contempt; so that, without having the least inclination for those marks of honour,—such as statues, &c. —he shall acquiesce, at the same time, in the will of them who are disposed to give him those distinguishing tokens of veneration and esteem. Thus, we see, that, though he gives leave in his last will and testament to celebrate his birth-day, yet he is wholly negligent of that pride and vanity other philosophers have been infected with, viz.—tombs and monuments, to procure them respect from posterity.

MAXIM XXXII.

None but the Wise-man can speak with exactness concerning music or poetry.

REFLECTION I.

Plutarch says, That Epicurus advised those princes who were lovers of learning, not to suffer any other discourse in their merriments and feasts than those concerning war and military actions,—and rather to tolerate an insipid pleasantry, than to canvass questions relating to poetry and music. What faith can be given to this philosopher, who was a declared enemy of Epicurus,—or to any of the other malicious impugners of his sect, after he is found to charge him falsely with placing the supreme or sovereign good of life in the beastly pleasures of brutes; although, they very well knew, that he fixed his *summum bonum* in an undisturbed state of mind, and indolency of body?

It is, perhaps, on the authority of this passage, that Gassendus pretends, that Epicurus' Wise-man ought not to talk of music and poetry, but in an uncommon way, and not like the vulgar, (who seem to be delighted with these sciences;) and that, for this reason, the one corrupts the manners, and the other is of no utility.

There is no doubt to be made, but Epicurus had more honourable thoughts of these fine arts: the first has something in it worthy admiration; but it is very hard, according to Cassiodorus, to be a perfect master thereof. It is but reading the letter this learned man writes to Boetius, in the name of king Theodoricus, to be convinced of the necessity of music: It is she (says he) that causes the harmony of our

thoughts, the beauty of our discourse, and the exactness of our motions; when her agreeable sounds reach the ear, the mouth opens itself to sing, she moves the very soul by the cadence of her impulses, and informs the hearing; which makes her prove a laborious pleasure, by the constant application she requires.

When she is set out with her charms, she exercises an absolute power over our senses; she suppresses all our thoughts, to cause in us a pleasing attention; she cheers up a dangerous sadness, she softens the fierce temper, changes cruelty into mildness; she stirs up bravery in the timorous, and awakens the languishing indifferency; she banishes our commotions, brings to his duty him whom a criminal love had enslaved, and roots out of the mind that uneasy disposition that opposed itself to the acts of reason; she cancels hatred, and, by a happy method of curing, makes use of no other remedy to extirpate our passions than the softness of the pleasure she inspires.

David, by the ravishing melody of his harp, drove away the evil spirits that possessed Saul: and, so far is she from vitiating the inclinations, that Plato would have children learn, by the means of music, the different affections of the soul, that they might distinguish what appeared good, from that which seemed evil; and that, conforming their actions to the sounds that pleased their ear, they escaped ill habits, which were represented by those which displeased them; and thus, by this symphony, they might be allured to the path of virtue.

It is, therefore, very reasonable to think, that the

Wise-man alone is able to speak of music, in a manner suitable to the excellency of the art; all the ancient philosophers have spoken concerning it. St. Austin did not think it unworthy his pen to write about it; and Epicurus himself (as Diogenes Laertius reports) has left a treatise of it.

REFLECTION II.

The passage out of Plutarch, which we quoted in the preceding reflection, made Cœlius Rodiginus say, —and, since him, Gassendus, That Epicurus and his followers had little or no esteem for poetry, because it was so far from contributing in any wise to the mending of our manners, that, in their opinion, it was prejudicial to them.

This proceeded from their not rightly understanding our philosopher, and those of his sect who were of Plato's sentiment; who tells us, That this fine art is either useful or pernicious, according to the use that is made of it. It was the advice of this Wise-man to banish poets out of a state when they flatter the irregularity of the passions; when they promote vice by their lascivious and lewd writings, as Archilocus did, whose poems were stuffed with filthy expressions; and, at the same time, so satyrical, that he was the cause of Licambus strangling himself. But, when they give God the honour that is due to him, as Orpheus did; when they set down rules for the well-governing a state, and reforming our manners, as Homer has done; when they set out virtue with all its graces and charms, and that, by the force of their verse, they inspire a horror for vice, like Virgil and

Horace, and several others; that they comfort us in our misfortunes, after the example of Boetius; that they excite valour, as Tyrteus, who procured the Lacedemonians a victory by the power of his heroic muse; or, that they treat of nature, as Empedocles, Lucretius, and several other philosophers, have done, who have made use of this fine art in unfolding their profound knowledge: then, to discourage them, would be depriving mankind of the most powerful means of gaining an universal knowledge of things, and improving itself in the practice of the most excellent virtues.

In a word,—poetry is a noble fury, that partakes of nothing that is mortal; it ravishes and carries away the soul; it is an abstraction of the mind, that disengages it from matter, to take a glorious flight; it is a generous sally, that has its rules and measures; it is, in fine, a harmony that delights the ear, stirs up the imagination, and feeds the mind; it persuades with pleasure, teaches with success, and imprints in our memory, by its agreeable accents, the solidity of subjects.

MAXIM XXXIII.

He shall not read poetic fictions, neither shall he compose any.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus, here, is to be understood, of those works that are altogether the effect of the imagination, and

contain nothing in them that is solid. One may compare their matter to wind shut up in the clouds, and their expressions to the bright assemblage of the same clouds; that, at best, only gratify the eye, or else discharge a disagreeable noise when they break.

Our philosopher does not here mean those poems that explain the secrets of physic, or the utility of morals; he must then have blamed all those illustrious writers in ancient times—Orpheus, Museus, Hesiodus, Homer, Pythagoras, Empedocles, and many others, who had written in verse, not only treatises concerning nature, but also divinity: and, it is not likely, that Lucretius, who understood very well Epicurus' sentiments, should have written a poem contrary to the maxims of him whom he looked upon to be something more than man.

MAXIM XXXIV.

A man may be more or less wise.

REFLECTION.

This opinion agrees not only with Plato's, Aristotle's, and all the philosophers, but indeed with that of the whole world in general; and, as Epicurus has asserted in one of his Maxims, that there is a disparity in crimes, so here he gives us to understand, that there are different degrees of perfection.

The Stoics, who sought to distinguish themselves by the oddness of their dogmata, and their manner

of proving them, were of a contrary opinion: the stealing a flower passed among them for a crime as black as that of sacrilege; and the smallest virtues, among them, were thought to partake of something heroic. Wherefore, Plutarch jeers a Stoic after this agreeable manner: Shall we extol a man (says this philosopher) for having extended his finger stoutly; for having withstood the caresses of an old woman; for having endured manfully the stinging of a fly; in short, for having heard with patience, that three are not four? is it not (says he) ridiculous, to cry up these trifles for worthy actions?

If we make a parallel between him that suffers the stinging of a fly, and the hero; if we put upon the level, the preserving chastity in reference to an old woman, and the maintaining that virtue, when attacked by the powerful charms and allurements of a tempting beauty, one would think it were indifferent on what account we commended and praised the wise.

To speak the truth,—ought we not to reprove the Stoics, as Philemon did a certain person: Thou (says he) that livest among men, dost thou talk like a man? Is not the manner of reasoning of these proud, though ridiculous, philosophers altogether absurd? is there any equality to be found in the economy of Nature? The difference in constitutions and tempers sufficiently shows, that all things, depending thereon, must be likewise different;—wisdom cannot be the same in all: to acquire it, there must be inclination, judgment, and memory; and all these things being formed of parts, better or worse disposed. Is it

not plain, that what results from these so different constitutions, must also be different and unequal?

Epicurus has a due value for that sublime wisdom that is arrived to its utmost perfection; but, as he asserts that happiness ought to be the final end of all the actions of man's life, and that *that* felicity absolutely does consist in the tranquillity of his mind, and a healthful state of body; it is not so material, whether one be wiser than another, provided this last finds, in the character of his mind, and in the disposition of his body, wherewithal to render his life happy.

MAXIM XXXV.

The Wise-man shall obey his prince, when there shall be occasion.

REFLECTION.

A Pythagorean philosopher says, that the prince is obliged to do three things: to command well, distribute justice, and worship God: so that, on his strictly performing these three things, the subject is obliged to obey his commands, submit to his decrees, and imitate his piety; he is the representative of the Almighty, the soul and living law of his dominions; he punishes the guilty, rewards the virtuous; he governs all; and our lives, that he preserves and protects, depends on him.

The doctrine of this Pythagorean was not believed nor acknowledged in the independant states of Greece;

yet there can be no question that, where a prince does command well, his subjects will feel themselves bound to obey; where a prince does distribute justice without favour and partiality, his subjects will submit to his decrees; where a prince worships God earnestly and sincerely, his subjects will be religiously disposed,—because true devotion in a king is always a virtue. But, as to his being the representative of the Almighty, we must recollect that God gave the Hebrews, his chosen people, kings in his wrath; and those days of superstition have fled away in which it was believed that the chief of banditti, who in time became the chief of a nation under the title of king, was such *de jure divino.*

MAXIM XXXVI.

He shall rejoice with him who, having gone astray, shall return to the path of virtue.*

REFLECTION.

This maxim is quite contrary to the implacable hard-heartedness of the Stoic, who would not allow the smallest faults, nor entertain the least compassion or tenderness for his neighbour who had erred.

Epicurus, whose moral is altogether reasonable, enjoins this indulgence, so absolutely necessary for civil society, without which all would be in a strange

* Vide Luke, chap. xv. 11, of the Prodigal Son;—John, viii. 3, the Woman taken in Adultery.

confusion. The frailty of man is such as will not permit him to be infallible,—the weakness of his condition deprives him of that blessing.

Besides, how useful a thing is it to return to wisdom? Our philosopher, as Seneca reports, is of this opinion, by reason that this amendment and return seem to be the work of a due reflection, which prompts us to make an effort to overcome our vices; and that the knowledge of our guilt is the beginning of our conversion. This maxim is conformable to the Holy Scriptures, and the apostle requires we should have a mutual indulgence for each other's failings, and that we forgive each other freely.

MAXIM XXXVII.

He may keep a school, provided the vulgar sort be not admitted to it.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus allows the Wise-man to teach and instruct, with this restriction,—that he shall not promiscuously communicate his discoveries, but only to such as are worthy the knowledge of them. He thinks the common people have none of the qualities requisite for this satisfaction of the mind: their lenity, the unaccountableness of their temper, and their education, will not afford them the patience and apprehension that are necessary for learning; so that (as Horace says) they ought to be kept at a distance, and excluded.

Pythagoras, and several other philosophers, had none but chosen scholars, whose dispositions gave reason to hope for success in their studies. Socrates, in Xenophon, is of the same sentiment. "He that observes," says he, "a man endowed with an excellent natural genius, shall labour to cultivate and improve it by the knowledge of arts and sciences: and I must own (says this wise Greek) that I feel an unspeakable pleasure when I impart to my friends the fruits of my meditations.

MAXIM XXXVIII.

He may read some of his writings to the people: but he shall not do this of his own motion, but because it is desired.

REFLECTION.

We ought not to admit to the mystery of the sciences, in Seneca's opinion, but only them that are capable of benefiting thereby. But Epicurus, though he does not approve of the common people for learning, yet, if it should happen that any of that sort should desire the Wise-man to read to them some of his works, he would have him comply with them, because it discovers a willingness to learn, and that a strong inclination may sometimes prove successful. But then he must choose such a subject as is suitable to the capacity of his auditory, and without entertaining

them with the secrets of nature, which requires a nobler genius: instruct them how to mend their lives, and reform their manners.

MAXIM XXXIX.

He shall be steady in his opinion, and not wavering and doubtful in every thing.

REFLECTION.

This maxim of Epicurus seems to be levelled at the Pyrrhonians, who doubted of every thing. Our philosopher will have it, that some things are so settled and determined, and so self-evident, that there is no room left to doubt concerning them; as, for instance, that vacuity is impalpable, that the atom is solid and eternal: but then he grants, there are others again that cannot be accounted for with the same certainty; as, for example, the bigness of the sun.

Is it possible to attain to wisdom in an endless uncertainty? If we doubt of all things, it is impossible to determine and settle in what consists the happiness of life; and, if that cannot be fixed, there can be no such thing as wisdom.

The Pyrrhonian does not know whether he is a wise man or a fool; whether he is learned or ignorant; though he lives on little, he dare not affirm that he is temperate. The Epicurean philosopher is more judicious: he assures us, without hesitation, that the subduing of our passions, and keeping them

under, causes tranquillity of mind; he enjoys with pleasure this calm and quiet state, which he experiences to be such; he addicts himself to virtue, that he may be happy, and pronounces, with certainty, that life cannot be happy without prudence, justice, and honesty.

MAXIM XL.

He shall enjoy the same tranquillity in his sleep as when awake.

REFLECTION.

Lucretius and Petronius inform us, that Epicurus laughed at dreams, looking upon them to have their cause in ourselves, and that they generally were such as were suitable to the disturbed or quiet state of our mind: and, as our philosopher required that his Wise-man should procure to himself a settled tranquillity from a constant habit of wisdom, he reasonably inferred that, that once attained, he would enjoy the same calm and quiet in his sleep as while awake.

Now, he that lives conformably to the dictates of reason and prudence,—he whose mind is filled with thoughts capable of satisfying it, and who may be said almost, during the suspension of his senses, to reflect on himself,—cannot be supposed to have in his imagination any other than useful and agreeable ideas. And, as all his speculations are in quest after truth, he partakes during his sleep of the plea-

sure it inspires; so that none of those things that alarm the wicked, or perplex the ignorant, disturb the quietness of his repose: he sleeps without fear, (as Solomon says,) and relishes his rest after a delicious manner.

The great secret to avoid being molested with these chimerical bugbears, which may sometimes triumph over our weakness, is, in Plato's opinion, not to sleep more than is necessary to enable the mind to pursue its studies. The time that passes in that state is a kind of death: hence, he that will live as a man ought who knows how to live, and who aspires to wisdom, ought to be careful not to sleep to excess, since it blunts the faculties of the soul.

MAXIM XLI.

If occasion require it, he shall suffer death for his friend.

REFLECTION.

Could Epicurus better conclude the qualities which were to form his Wise-man, than by this heroic disposition to suffer death, if necessary, to save his friend's life? Our philosopher will not allow us to shorten our days, how miserable soever we may be, because it is not in the power of affliction to disturb the quiet state we have procured ourselves by the study of wisdom.

We are above all accidents, because that wisdom

has bestowed all virtues on us, the harmony of which renders life pleasant and delightful to us; yet, though the Sage enjoys a profound inward peace, which is the greatest blessing life affords, Epicurus requires him to quit both the one and the other, to give his friend that undeniable proof of his affection.

It was this generous disposition that inspired two illustrious Romans to die for Caius Gracchus.—Friendship made them stop upon a bridge, and oppose the multitude of enemies that were pursuing that tribune: it animated them with so noble a courage, that the life of their friend was in safety as long as their strength enabled them to fight in his defence; and, if he lost it at last, it was because they lost theirs by a thousand wounds, which were as many testimonials of their fidelity to him.

I cannot here forbear blaming once more the malicious interpretation which the Stoics have given that maxim, wherein Epicurus will have us cultivate friendship as we do the earth, with relation to ourselves; though I have sufficiently answered it in the reflection I made thereon.

Does not Torquatos, one of Epicurus' followers, sufficiently declare, in Cicero, that our philosopher acknowledged it to be the finest present Wisdom could bestow on us?—that it was she that completed all our pleasures; and that he had not only given it great encomiums, but had constantly practised it as long as he lived?

He assures us, that she is the spring from whence we, as well as our friends, must expect all that is

delightful; and that it cannot be lasting, unless we love our friends as well as ourselves: and that their afflictions and uneasiness should affect us as much as our own; and their good fortune and happiness afford us as much pleasure and satisfaction as the blessings we actually enjoy ourselves.

A LETTER FROM EPICURUS TO MENECEUS.

YOUTH is no obstacle to the study of philosophy: we should not defer acquiring its knowledge; neither ought we to be ashamed to consecrate our later years to the labour of speculation. Man has no time limited for learning, and ought never to want strength to cure his mind of all the evils that afflict it.—So that he that excuses his neglect, by his having let slip the precious moments that would have guided him to this discovery, argues no better than he that will not labour to lay the storm of his passions, nor withdraw himself from the misfortunes of life, that he may live more quietly and happily, because he pretends that the time proper for this laborious work is either not yet come, or else is elapsed and irrecoverably lost. Youth, then, must get the start of the strength of their mind; and the aged must retrieve as much of it as they can, to addict themselves to philosophy. The one should use this effort, that, arriving insensibly to the term prescribed to his days,

he may persevere in the virtuous habit he has acquired: the other, that, laden as he is with years, he may know that his mind has all the resolution of youth, to place him above all the events of fortune, and to make him behold with intrepidity all that can alarm him in the speculation of futurity, to which he is so nigh.

REFLECTION I.

The study of philosophy, in the opinion of Porphyrius, should commence with the knowledge of ourselves. This fine discovery prepares and qualifies us to speculate with more ease on the universe, or comprehensive whole. The oracle required that we should study ourselves before we enter upon any other reflection. It is not only that we may become philosophers, but attain wisdom, (which is the only road to happiness, and that we may enjoy that blessed state,) that it is necessary we should know ourselves before we strive to penetrate into the secrets of philosophy.

This necessary application should be the drift and aim of all men; because philosophy is agreeable to all times, and proper for all ages. But it is a most benign influence that inclines youth thereto; it is the means of forming habits which nothing can root out; it is receiving indelible impressions; it is, in fine, according to Plato, labouring with a prospect of success, —for we are easily persuaded in our youth, and we may make a considerable progress. Nature is yet pliant in these beginnings; we may pull away what is rude and imperfect, and sow the seeds of those better

inclinations which produce the calm of the mind: study and labour sometimes work more miracles than this mistress of the universe.

We should, therefore, take care not to let slip such precious moments; and, although philosophy deters at first by its many difficulties, we must not be discouraged, but overcome them by the assiduity of our study and labour.

Cleanthes, who was famous for his skill at boxing, and whose mind was so gross and heavy that he valued nothing but the strength of his body, had no sooner heard Zeno the philosopher, than he thought of employing his time more profitably; and he conceived hopes that he might force his genius by dint of labour. His attempts proved successful; for he not only got the better of his rough nature, but of poverty too:—to effect this, he drew water in the night, that he might have wherewith to subsist in the day, and mind his studies. He was so deserving afterwards, that he was tutor to King Antigonus, and master to Crysippus the philosopher.

"Nothing," says Euripides, "is more shameful to a young man than to shun labour, when it is to be recompensed with so noble a reward as that of living without trouble or disturbance.

REFLECTION II.

It is never too late to begin to live, although we have spent our youth idly and unprofitably. It is a great matter to know one's faults, even in a declining age: it is then we have most need of the counsels of philosophy, to enable us to undergo the infirmities

which are inseparable from old age; and the proximity of death requires that we should fortify ourselves against its terrors.

"Can there be any thing so blame-worthy," says Seneca, "as a man that has no other testimonial of his having lived, than barely that of old age? The remembrance of his youth shall render his present state very uneasy to him: he shall reflect, with envy, on those pleasures he can no longer relish; his diseases make him impatient; he can now no longer walk, but is forced to creep along, almost after the manner of reptiles,—his body is so broken and decayed; his mind is in the same condition through ignorance,—insomuch, that, having become insupportable to himself, he disgusts every-body else."

Happy is he who, against so many mischiefs, seeks in his study for a remedy that alone can take away their bitterness;—who repents his neglecting discoveries so useful and necessary, and applies himself thereto in earnest, that he may be able to die with more constancy than he had lived.

It is of great importance to an old man to be a philosopher; for, as Macrobius observes, it is natural to that age to delight in being asked questions, and talking much; and, when men speak such things as are accompanied with prudence and wisdom, they cannot but be very useful,—because they, who have grown grey in speculation and practice, make deep impressions by their authority. They are, moreover, illustrious examples of constancy and intrepidity; the capriciousness of fortune cannot alarm them; in fine, nothing can move or disturb them.

"What do you pretend to do?" say Solon's friends to him:—"yield to the times; do not offer to oppose Pisistratus; it would be courting your ruin: what help and assistance have you to oppose his tyranny?" —"My old age;" answered that wise legislator. —Did not this answer contain an excellent moral? was it not as much as to say,—I have spent my life in the study of philosophy; it has afforded me tranquillity to my mind, infallible remedies against fear, and made death indifferent to me. It is true the tyrant may take away my life; and I am by nature on the brink of losing it.

TEXT.

Meditate then frequently, dear Meneceus, and omit nothing that can anywise contribute to your felicity. Happy is he who has settled himself in this blessed state of tranquillity: he has nothing left to wish or desire, since he is satisfied with what he possesses; and, if he has not yet raised himself to this high degree of excellency and perfection, he must use his utmost endeavours to attain it. Follow, then, the precepts I have so often given you; reduce them into practice; let them be the constant subjects of your reflections: for I am convinced you will find in them an exact rule for the guidance of your morals.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus valued the knowledge of things and the penetrating into nature, no otherwise than as they contributed to the conduct of our morals; and, if he

required one should be a good naturalist, it was in order to become a moral philosopher.

He will have us often reflect, what are the principles of things,—how they are formed,—and after what manner their resolution is wrought; to the end we may be informed of all those things that can anyways alarm us: it is on this depends the happiness or unhappiness of our life, because the ignorance of these things creates disorder and confusion in our mind.

The counsel of this philosopher is admirable; for we should frequently meditate,—but it ought not to be on what means we shall use to heap up vast riches, how we shall raise ourselves to dignities and honours, or gratify our hatred and revenge,—but how we shall correct the violence of our temper, amend our vicious inclinations, and submit to our reason the fury or weakness of our passions.

TEXT.

The foundation on which you ought to build all your maxims must be the thought of the immortality and happy state of the gods. This sentiment is conformable to the opinion that has spread itself amongst the generality of men; but then you must have a care that, when you define the Deity, you do not give him any attribute that shall profane the grandeur of his essence, by diminishing his eternity or supreme felicity. Let your mind soar as high as you please concerning this divine Being, provided that his immortality and beatitude receive no impair therefrom.

That there are gods, is a knowledge consecrated to posterity; but their existence is quite different from that which they find in the imaginations of men. He, then, is not to be counted a rash impious wretch who banishes that crowd of divinities to which the ignorant and simple people pay their homage; but rather he that will fasten on these divine beings the ridiculous sentiments of the vulgar. Whatever the greatest part of these weak minds advance concerning their knowledge herein, does not proceed from any previous notion that can be made use of for an invincible proof, but only from mere prejudice.

What likelihood is there that the Gods, according to the common opinion, should busy themselves about punishing the guilty and rewarding the good, who, constantly practising all the virtues that are peculiar to an excellent nature, will have those divinities resemble them, and imagine that whatever is not conformable to their mortal habits is very remote from the divine nature?

REFLECTION.

I have observed, in my remarks on the translation of the first book of Lucretius, and in those on the fifth, that Epicurus' weakness was such as to own a plurality of gods, though he was inwardly convinced of the contrary opinion: The death of Socrates, and the fear with which the Athenians inspired Epicurus, made him speak after this manner.

Cicero takes notice of this opinion:—"He has," says he, "utterly destroyed all the footsteps of religion, when he deprives the Deity of the power of

making mortals feel the effect of their goodness: he acknowledges his nature to be excellent, and at the same time refuses him the advantage of being beneficent and ready to assist us. Is not that stripping him of all that properly constitutes the nature of a Being infinitely good?

TEXT.

Accustom yourself to think that death is nothing in reference to us, since pain and pleasure depend upon the sense, and that she is nothing else but the privation of that same sense.

It is a fine discovery that can convince the mind that death does not any way concern us: it is a happy means to pass this mortal life in the greatest tranquillity, without troubling ourselves with the uncertainty of the future, and without flattering ourselves with the hopes of immortality.

In effect, to live can be no unhappiness to him who is once thoroughly persuaded that the time of his dissolution is attended with no evil. It is ridiculous to observe the fear we have of death: not that the sight of it, in the instant it strikes us, gives us any disturbance, but because that, during the uncertain expectation of its stroke, the mind gives itself over to sadness and melancholy. Is it possible that, at the presence of a thing not able to excite any trouble or disturbance in us, we should afflict and torment ourselves so excessively with the simple thought of its drawing nigh?

Death, once more, that seems to be the most formidable of all evils, is but a mere chimera, because

it is nothing at all while life remains; and, when it takes place, life ceases: so that it cannot be said to exercise any power over the living or the dead; those not being as yet sensible of its empire, and these, that no longer exist, are sheltered from its attacks.

REFLECTION.

"Those," says Plato, "that continually think of death are true philosophers; they are the only persons who do not fear it." If the character of a wholesome philosophy consist in application to the study of this last moment, it is the indispensable duty of a Christian.

To speak the truth,—this meditation is so absolutely necessary, that it is impossible to live well without the reflections it inspires: it is by the contemplation of death, we overcome the sentiments of hatred and revenge; that we lay aside the insatiable greediness of heaping up riches; that we stop the impetuous fury of an unjust anger; and that all the passions find a proper remedy to their respective excesses. It is a saying of one of the ancients, That we should always remind the vicious of this last hour, which finishes their course; for then man beholds his crimes with horror, he is tormented with the remorse they cause; it is then he wishes, even at the expence of what is most dear to him, that he had lived after so innocent a manner that he had no occasion for repentance: it is not the loss of the light we should fear, nor that of the pleasures which most flatter us; the very pain that we endure at the instant of the dissolution of so

many different parts that compose our whole, ought not to terrify us.

This frightful futurity ought to fill us with horror. The secret to expect death with firmness, is to lead a good and virtuous life: it is dreadful only by its consequences; and, when it is an absolute necessity to undergo its laws, we must not perplex ourselves with the manner how it executes them: let a fever, the gout, an apoplexy, torments, racks, or a public execution, make the separation of our soul and body, none of these misfortunes should startle or affright us; but we ought to tremble when we reflect on the future state where death fixes us.

TEXT.

Vulgar souls are apt to wish they could decline death, because they consider it as the greatest of evils: they are often tortured, too, by the unwillingness they find in themselves to forsake the pleasures it deprives them of, and by the thoughts they have of the eternal inaction it brings upon them. It is without reason they afflict themselves at their living no longer, since the loss of our life hinders us from being sensible that our ceasing to be implies in itself any thing of evil; and, as we do not choose our food by its quantity, but from its goodness, so the number of years does not make the happiness of our life, but it is the manner of passing it that causes all its pleasure.

REFLECTION.

Men of mean souls are apt to be afraid of death, and shun it cowardly: it was that which made Paulus Æmilius despise Perseus, king of Macedonia, who begged his life of this consul with an effeminate weakness, and without shewing the least token of what he had been. When the time drew near of his following, in Rome, the triumphal chariot of his conqueror, he sent to intreat to save him that shame: the Roman laughed at him, with justice; "It was in his power," says he, "not to come; nay, he is yet in possession of the favour he begs:"—intimating thereby, that a generous death was the only means to prevent the slavery that was preparing for him. But this cowardly king chose rather to live with infamy, and to die afterwards more cruelly, by the inhumanity of the soldiers who guarded him. It is believed that, out of a disgust they had taken to this unfortunate prince, they hindered him from sleeping, and so put an end to his life, which he had endeavoured to preserve by so many meannesses, altogether unworthy his character and birth.

TEXT.

How absurd it is to exhort a young man to live well; or to make an old one, who draws near his grave, sensible that he ought to face death with constancy and fortitude! Not but they are two excellent things in themselves, but, by reason that those speculations that make us find something charming in a

well-ordered life, lead us with intrepidity to that fatal hour.

REFLECTION.

Life is our guide to death, and death is a consequence of life: they are inseparable things, and ought to be the subject of our meditations.

Epicurus is in the right to find fault with him that admonishes a young man to have continually in his thoughts the reforming of his manners; and the other, advanced in years, to think of making a good end: as if youth was not subject to death, and that had no farther concern for the conduct of life.

Our philosopher will not permit us to separate the care of living well, from that of dying without fear. They are two employments so closely linked together, that the one is useless without the other: the reflecting on death makes us careful not to deviate from the practice of virtue; and the practice of virtue makes death have nothing in it that can terrify us.

TEXT.

It is still a greater folly to term non-existence a good, or to say that, the very moment we have seen the light, we ought to put an end to our life. If he that expresses himself after this manner is really convinced of what he says, why does he not immediately quit this life? If he has seriously reflected on the evils that attend it, it is in his power to leave it, to be no longer exposed to its inconvenience; and, if it be only for talk-sake, and by way of raillery, it is

personating the fool. Sporting with this subject is altogether ridiculous,—nay, profane.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus here argues finely. He is absolutely against those braggadocios who are perpetually exclaiming against life; that are everlasting censurers of whatever happens in it; and who are so very nice, that they find fault with the very works of Nature. They put on an outward shew of uneasiness at their continuing amongst mortals; they seem to envy those that are still in the vast abyss of Nature; and can find nothing to reconcile them to life, but being speedily freed from it, which blessing they expect with impatience. But, notwithstanding all this, they continue in it; for which our philosopher marks them for cowards or buffoons.

Nothing contains more horror than annihilation; neither can there be a greater unhappiness than the not being admitted to the contemplation of the beauty of the universe, and the knowledge of its supreme Author. When we are once born, we must be satisfied with the station divine Providence has allotted us. "The Wise-man," says a learned Greek, "ought never to abandon life, on any account whatever: if he quit it because Fortune persecutes him, he goes from his principles, which teach him there is no other evil in life than what is contrary to that virtue and honesty that are always guided by prudence; as, at the same time, there is no other good than what is virtuous and honest."

Life in itself is no evil; and Democritus assures

us, that it is full of sweetness, if the mind be easy and undisturbed: which is found by experience, if we fly from those perishable and uncertain pleasures, and devote ourselves entirely to the more solid and permanent that wisdom affords.

TEXT.

We should frequently reflect on the future with this circumstance,—that it does not altogether concern us, neither is it quite impossible but it may; to this end, that we may not perplex ourselves about the certainty or uncertainty of its happening.

REFLECTION.

Time is a compound of three, viz.—the past, the present, and the future. The time past either disquiets or delights us, according to the remembrance we have of it; and, in fine, has nothing in it that is formidable to us. The present, by the swiftness of its course, hardly permits us to be sensible of its existence; but the future, that makes us either hope or fear, because it is not yet at hand, disturbs the happiness of our life, when it is not strengthened and supported by the precepts of wisdom.

It is a strange weakness!—We ought to possess ourselves amidst the storms of this world, and habituate our mind to be quiet and composed, even in the greatest tumults: we should, in fine, expect the future with the same firmness as we faced that which is past, and actually undergo the present.

The sage ought to be prepared for whatever events may happen; and their oddness should not, any more

than their injustice, have any influence over the calm state of his mind.

TEXT.

Consider also, that things quite different in their nature are the objects of our wishes and desires,—some whereof are natural, others again are superfluous: some of those that are natural are absolutely necessary; the others, though desirable to nature, are such as we may dispense with the want of.

Those that are necessary are of two kinds; some constitute our happiness by the indolency of the body, the others support our life: as, for example, food and drink. If you contemplate these things without swerving from the truth, both the mind and the body will find the effect of what we ought to seek, and what we ought to decline: the one shall enjoy an undisturbed tranquillity, the other a perfect health, which make up the sum of a happy life.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus keeps close to the strictness of his moral: he is for our giving nature what is necessary for its preservation, but he forbids what is superfluous. A piece of Cyteredian cheese was the greatest dainty of which he allowed himself; that was all that made the extraordinary at the table of this great man, whom his enemies have accused of voluptuousness.

Bread and water are sufficient for the support of life, in the opinion of Menander. Pythagoras will have us make a kind of happiness of frugality; and Phocilides tells us, we ought to refrain from all kinds

of excess; that there is a certain medium to be kept; and that it is dangerous to make an abuse of what may flatter our senses.

TEXT.

Is it not true, that the grand aim of all our actions is to decline pain of body and uneasiness of mind; and, when we have attained to this blessed state, the mind is so freed from whatever could cause any commotion in it, that man believes he has arrived at the utmost period of felicity,—that nothing else can satisfy his mind, or contribute to his health.

The privation of pleasure creates pain, and the privation of pain causes pleasure: it is for this reason we style this same pleasure the beginning and end of a happy life, because it is the first good that Nature points out to us from the moment of our birth; it is through its means that we make choice of some things, and avoid others. In fine, all our actions terminate in it: it is, therefore, to it we are obliged for being able to distinguish all kinds of good.

REFLECTION.

"Pleasure," says Maximus of Tyre, "has no need of reason: it was before art, has the start of experience, and is not the effect of time. The proneness we have to its charms is excellent: it is created with us; and, Nature having bestowed it on the animal as the basis of its preservation, he is destroyed the moment he is deprived of this support of life. Learning, reason, and wit, which are so frequently extolled, are the effect of growth, time, and experience; but

pleasure needs not to be learned: it is the gift of Nature, which we cherish because it banishes pain; the one preserves us, the other destroys us. If this same pleasure were but a chimera, it would not be born with us; it would not have been the first thing bestowed on us to support life."

Pleasure is then the cause of all: it informs us what is necessary for us, or what is not; it is that which thrusts us into the horror of battles, that we may triumph, gain esteem, or be rewarded; it makes the sick swallow a bitter potion, that he may enjoy the benefit of a perfect health, and suffer his limbs to be cut off, that he may avoid death: in fine, it is pleasure that incites us to the study of wisdom, that we may have a perfect fruition of the satisfaction it bestows in the blessed calm of our mind.

TEXT.

Now, it is certain that, as this primitive good comes immediately from Nature, it does not incline us to all sorts of pleasure; for there are several which we decline, when we know that they are attended with far greater pains. There are likewise several grievances that we prefer to some pleasures, when we are convinced that, after having borne them for some considerable time, we shall be recompensed with more sensible satisfactions.

It is, therefore, indubitable that all kinds of pleasure, if they are agreeable to the sentiments Nature gives us, are something very excellent; and yet we ought not to indulge them all. And, notwithstanding all kinds of pain are naturally evil, we

must not for that decline them all; because we must make a sort of parallel between those things that please us, and those that displease us, and decide the matter as occasion shall require, and according to the utility that may arise therefrom; for sometimes we avoid the good as an evil, and make use of the evil as a good, because of their consequences.

REFLECTION.

Since that perfect pleasure Epicurus speaks of is nothing else than the peaceable state of the mind, and the absence of pain from the body, we must seek that which leads us to this happy condition; so that those pleasures which have any thing in them that is evil or guilty, ought to be looked upon as the dangerous rock of our peace,—pleasure chiefly consisting in the cessation of pain. All that we contrive, all that we with so much eagerness seek after, has no other scope: we must, therefore, for the same reason, sometimes endure pain, that we may afterwards enjoy the pleasure that follows it.

A man shall deprive himself, though with difficulty and uneasiness, of the agreeable sight of a mistress he doats on, because he wisely reflects that liberty is a far more precious thing than that alluring slavery in which he lived. Another shall suffer his arm to be cut off; but the pain thereof is followed with the pleasure of saving his life. Seneca sufficiently explains Epicurus' notion, when he makes him say, that all pleasures were to be declined that were followed at the heel by repentance; and that a moderate pain ought patiently to be borne with, to avoid a greater.

TEXT.

Frugality is a good that cannot be too highly prized. Not that it is necessary to practise it always with the same strictness; but the habit thereof is most excellent, and very useful,—that, in case it should fall out that we had not all things in the same plenty as before, we may be satisfied with little, and that that mediocrity may not seem strange to us: wherefore we should engrave deeply in our mind, that we enjoy a superabounding opulency when we have learned to be contented without profuseness.

Nature, for its subsistence, requires only things that are easily procured. Those that are rare and exquisite are needless; they, at best, but flatter our vanity and luxury. An ordinary food shall afford as much pleasure as the most sumptuous banquet; and bread and water are a charming meal, if they are at hand when we are hungry and thirsty.

We must, therefore, accustom ourselves to a plain and sober diet, without ransacking the markets for those nice and costly dainties. This frugal way of living shall preserve our health, and we shall find ourselves stronger thereby, and every-way better disposed for all the actions of life. If we chance to assist at a better entertainment, we shall relish it with greater pleasure; but what is chiefly to be valued is, that, by the means hereof, we shall not fear the vicissitudes of fortune; because, having habituated ourselves to take up with little, whatever plenty she may deprive us of, she only places us in a state we are already prepared for, and accustomed to, by the laudable habit we have contracted.

REFLECTION.

How worthy of our philosopher is this sentiment! and how true it is that Nature, for its preservation, requires none of those excesses with which we load it. They cannot constitute the felicity of man, since that consists in the calm of his mind, and the good disposition of his body.

Wisdom, that is the chief cause of this happiness, is nothing else than that medium which accompanies those things we seek after; it does not centre in the too little, any more than in the too much: he that trembles at the sight of danger is a coward, and he that rashly flings himself into it is fool-hardy. To want what is necessary is an evil, and to make profession of intemperance is a crime: we should, therefore, observe a certain moderation in all that we do; it is the means to be happy, and the only path that leads to wisdom. "A competent wealth," says the famous Lucretius, "is sufficient to make life happy:" and, in Solomon's opinion, it is inseparable from virtue; for which reason, he preferred it to those pernicious and dangerous riches, which are enjoyed with remorse and injustice.

In fine, as Epicurus says, hunger is the best sauce, and gives the best relish to what we eat. Artaxerxes, king of Persia, having lost all his baggage in a defeat, was forced to take up with dried figs and barley-bread, to allay his hunger: the pleasure he found therein was so great, that he broke out in this exclamation,—"Oh, ye gods! how delicious is this! I never was sensible of the same before."

TEXT.

By this it is clear, that, when we pretend that pleasure is the main drift of life, it must not be imagined that we thereby mean that sort of pleasure which is to be found in love, or in the luxury and excess of high feeding, as some ignorant people and the professed enemies of our sect would insinuate, who have endeavoured to impose upon us by the malicious construction they have given to our opinion.

This pleasure, that is the very centre of our happiness, consists in nothing else than having our mind free from disturbance, and our body free from pain. Drunkenness, excessive eating, the criminal conversation with women, the niceness in our liquors, and all that seasons good cheer, have nothing in them that can make life happy: there is nothing but frugality and tranquillity of mind that can establish this happy state. It is this calm that facilitates our distinguishing between those things which ought to be our choice, and those we ought to shun; and it is by the means thereof that we discard those notions that discompose this first mover of our life.

REFLECTION.

What a strange unaccountable thing is detraction! He that explains himself so clearly on the definition of true pleasure, and declares openly that those pleasures most men devote themselves to, do not so much as partake of the nature of true pleasure, which can never be perfect and sincere but when the mind is contented, and the body without pain, and that it

keeps strictly to the rules of virtue :—this very man, I say, whose memory ought to be sacred to posterity, was, through the malice of the Stoics, represented as the most execrable and worst of men.

These proud philosophers vented their malice against him after this outrageous manner, only moved with despair, into which his knowledge and probity had plunged them. They perceived all was sincere in his sentiments ; that he did not, like them, strain his wit to maintain and defend opinions contrary to the nature of good sense ; that his life was an eloquent example of his virtue, and of the excellency of his precepts ; and that the calm state of his soul was discoverable in his countenance. As they were sensible that the happiness they affected to be possessed of was no more than an outward appearance, and that they suffered inwardly to procure that composed exterior, they laboured all they could to disturb that which Epicurus really enjoyed. Now, as their attempt was altogether rash, so neither was it attended with success ; for he remained unhurt, notwithstanding all their spite :—the age he lived in saw their aversion to him, without ceasing to admire the strength of his mind ; and following ages have done justice to truth, which has in all places made the eulogium of his wisdom.

TEXT.

The principles of all these things are only to be found in prudence, which by consequence is an exquisite good ; and, truly, she deserves the pre-eminence over philosophy, because she is a rule to her,

to guide her in her enquiries; that she discounts the benefit and utility of being freed from ignorance, which is the chief cause of all our alarms; and because, likewise, she is the source of all the virtues that teach us life cannot be agreeable, if prudence, honesty, and justice, do not direct all its motions; and that, following always the track of these, our life slides away with that satisfaction which is inseparable from happiness; for her virtues are the property of a happy life, which can never be without their excellent practice.

REFLECTION.

"Prudence," says one of the ancients, "is a great divinity; in effect, she is the first mover of all illustrious actions: it is to the conduct of her counsels that man owes all the success of his undertakings; it is by her means the prince triumphs, the magistrate administers justice with applause, and the private man governs well his family." She teaches us the art of conforming our lives to the model of wisdom, which constitutes its happiness and pleasure; for, as our philosopher very well observes, there is no joy without prudence, and no prudence without pleasure.

TEXT.

This being supposed, where is the man that is preferable to him who thinks of the gods conformably to the grandeur of their being,—who beholds with intrepidity the insensible approaches of death,—who reasons with so much exactness concerning the end to which we naturally ought to tend, and on the

existence of the supreme good, whose acquisition he believes to be easy, and capable of satisfying us entirely,—who has engraved in his mind, that whatever grieves us will soon have an end, if it be violent; and, if it be a languishing distemper, it becomes habitual, and in some measure supportable; and who, in fine, can convince himself that Fate or Destiny has not, as some philosophers have believed, an absolute power over us; or that, at least, they have not an overruling sovereignty over things which depend, in part, on the capriciousness of fortune, and partly on our will, because that same necessity would be cruel, and without remedy; and that the inconstancy of fortune leaves some room still to hope for a better, even in the worst of circumstances?

Moreover, the liberty we have of acting as we please is incompatible with any force that shall tyrannise over us; for which reason we are always guilty when we do ill things, as we are worthy of praise when we suffer ourselves to be guided by the dictates of prudence.

REFLECTION.

Happy would be that man, without doubt, that could live up to the rules prescribed by our philosopher: it would be living among men something above man, not to fear this last dissolution any further than with respect to the consequences religion proposes; daily preparing ourselves for it, according to the rules and maxims thereof; to know the sovereign good, and how to enjoy it; to suffer pain, and be easy under the violence of its attacks. To despise

this fatal necessity, which we may ascribe to the laws of nature, and continue to make our lives happy by the rules of prudence, are very difficult things: the strength of nature is not sufficient for it; it is from God alone we must hope and expect this high degree of perfection: he is the source of our joys; he is all we should desire,—he alone being able to satisfy us, because he is our supreme good.

TEXT.

It is, therefore, much better to join with the people in the fabulous notion they have of the gods, than to act, as some naturalists will have us, by the necessity of fate; for that thought imprints reverence, and a man hopes for success by his prayers: but, when we imagine a necessity in the action, it is the ready way to cast ourselves into despair.

Take great heed, then, not to imitate the vulgar, who rank Fortune among the gods: the unaccountableness of her conduct is altogether unworthy the character of divinity, which can do nothing but with exactness and order; neither must you believe that this shuttlecock has any thing to do with the event of things. The ignorant people have suffered themselves to be imposed upon in favour of its power, though they are not at the same time persuaded that she deals directly to men either the good or evil that befals them, but only that she furnishes the occasions of all those things that can produce such effects.

Use, then, all your endeavours to root out of your mind this thought, and be convinced that it is better to be unfortunate, without having trespassed against

prudence, than to gain the top of our wishes by an irregular conduct, to which nevertheless fortune has sometimes given success: it is much more glorious to owe to this same prudence the greatness and happiness of our actions, by reason it is a certain token they are the effect of her reflections and counsels.

REFLECTION.

This opinion of Epicurus is directly opposite to that of the Stoics, who would have God himself depend on destiny; pretending that he was, as it were, linked to second causes, and that there was such a concatenation of causes that it was not in his power to alter the event. How blind were these philosophers by their ridiculous pride, if every thing was so and so determined by an unalterable necessity! They have in vain bestowed so many encomiums on those extraordinary men who were the heroes of their sect.

Stilpo, that famous Stoic, whom Seneca so much admires, disdains the favour Demetrius offered him, of restoring him his estate after his taking Megara: he is unmoved amidst the glittering and fury of the swords, the plundering and massacre of his fellow-citizens: the forcing his daughters from his arms does not shake his constancy; the temples' being demolished, and the gods buried in their ruins, do not alter the peaceable state of his mind; the conquerors and the vanquished are all in a hurry and confusion, while he alone enjoys a profound satisfaction;—yet, according to the opinion of the Stoics, he does not deserve the praise Seneca gives him. Destiny, that compelled him to this action, was the author of this

haughty stubbornness; and, if another had truckled to this barbarous usage, he could not be justly blamed, because he was forced, by a hidden cause, to yield to the times.

Epicurus' sage is far above these haughty philosophers: he will not allow his actions to depend on an invisible constraint; he requires his will should be free, which is conformable to religion; he will have the wise man owe all to his own prudence; insomuch, that he prefers the unfortunate wise man to the rash and fool-hardy, though ever so happy.

TEXT.

Never cease, therefore, meditating on these things; spend the day, and night too, in the contemplation of all that relates to them, whether you be alone, or with any of your profession: it is the ready means to sleep quietly, to exercise calmly all your faculties, and to live like a god among mortals. He may be said to be more than man that enjoys, during his life, the same blessings that make the happiness of the Deity.

REFLECTION.

This letter, which is an admirable compendium of all that can contribute to the happiness of life, ends after the same manner as it begins. Epicurus looks upon meditation to be the best mistress to practice: practice without meditation is dangerous, because it is destitute of prudence. It is, then, this fine virtue that he will have us acquire by the means of reflection: she stops the temerity of the philosophers; she

subdues our rebellious passions; she discovers to the will, that she is sovereign mistress of her actions; she takes from Fortune all her power: in fine, she shews us how to live well, that we may die well; and, having taught us the practice of all the virtues, by the guidance of faith, she leads us, without fear or apprehension, to the sleep of the just, which places us among the angels in heaven.

DIOGENES LAERTIUS

RELATES HERE SEVERAL

SENTIMENTS OF EPICURUS AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

TEXT.

I DO not here assert that Epicurus, in many places of his writings, and particularly in his Grand Epitome, rejects entirely the art of divination; but he assures us, that it is a mere chimera, and that, had it any foundation in truth, man would not have it in his power freely. This is what he advances, although there are in the body of his works a great many other things, where he speaks concerning the conduct we ought to hold for the regulating the happiness of life.

REFLECTION.

Cicero laughs at the Stoics, for their holding it possible to penetrate into the future, when at the

same time they acknowledged a certain infallible necessity in things; which is what Epicurus maintains to be false and absurd. He will not admit of destiny, nor that it is possible to know things certainly before their arrival; because he looks upon them not to be determined and fixed, and that they may as well happen one way as the other, according to circumstances, occasion, and the conduct of men, by virtue of their liberty of free-will.

This is also what religion teaches us. Besides, in the opinion of the Roman orator, the foreknowledge of any event is of no utility; nay, it is dangerous: for, supposing there was any thing of truth in it, he that should have it foretold him, at the age of fifteen, that he should be burnt alive in his old age, would pass all the moments of his life in cruel anxieties.

TEXT.

He differs very much from the Cyreneans concerning the nature of pleasure; for those philosophers will not allow it to consist in indolency and privation of pain, but will have it take its birth according as the senses shall be affected.

On the contrary, Epicurus requires that the mind and body should be, as it were, co-partners therein: he explains his opinion in his book concerning the choosing or avoiding things, in that relating to life and our manners, and in the epistle he writes to the philosophers of Mitylene. Diogenes, in his Epitects, and Metrodorus, in his Timocrates, agree upon this head.

The pleasure we receive, say they, is two-fold,—the one proceeds from repose, the other from motion; and Epicurus, in his writings relating to those things we should make our choice, expressly says, that those pleasures that are of the first kind are the calm and tranquillity of mind; and that mirth and joy are of the character of those that are to be found in action.

REFLECTION.

It is not without reason that Gerson compares those that place the sovereign good of life in voluptuousness, and those pleasures that gratify the senses, to those filthy animals that delight to wallow in the mud and mire: "They are," says this doctor, "unworthy the name of philosophers, since they could imagine that what made the pleasure of brutes could constitute the felicity of man."

Aristodemus, the tyrant of Cuma, was so charmed with this infamous opinion, that he published an edict, whereby he obliged all his subjects to devote themselves entirely to the beastly pleasures of lasciviousness. Epicurus, whose sentiments are unmixed and always pure, is very opposite to those of Aristippus and his followers, who believed life could not be agreeable if it was not passed among those pleasures that delight the body.

He will have our happiness consist in indolency and tranquillity: not that he means by tranquillity a sort of lazy idleness; but he intends thereby a fixed determination of the mind to do nothing but what shall be conformable to the rules of prudence; an unshaken firmness against the attacks of fortune; and

a contempt of all those things that might alter its reflections; and that, constantly meditating, it shall delight itself with its speculations, and anticipate those pleasures it expects hereafter.

Seneca sufficiently expresses the opinion of our philosopher: Epicurus, says he, of whom we often judge amiss, will not have pleasure consist in action, but in that unalterable character we imprint in our mind by the help of reason.

TEXT.

He does not agree neither with the Cyreneans, who hold that the pains of the body are much more sensible to us than those of the mind: the reason they back their opinion with is, that we punish delinquents with bodily torments, as being the severest and most rigorous. But Epicurus proves, that the tortures of the mind are far beyond them: the body suffers but during the time of its affliction; whereas, the mind suffers not only under the present evil, but is also tortured with the remembrance of what is past, as well as with the apprehension of what is to come; which makes this philosopher prefer the pleasures of the intellectual part to all the voluptuous delights of the body.

REFLECTION.

It is no great wonder that Aristippus and his followers, who have established the felicity of life in the pleasures of our senses, should maintain that the afflictions and pains of the body exceed those of the mind. Epicurus is of a quite contrary opinion. In

effect, nothing that the body endures can be compared with the tortures of the mind. An unforeseen thrust of a sword is hardly felt; whereas, if received in cool blood, and with a premeditated expectation, it would be much more sensible, because thought, which is a property of the mind, would make us reflect on all the dismal consequences of the wound; viz.—the pain of the incision, of the probing, of a fever, and the other attendants of the evil. A man, who is going to be executed, would not undergo so much if he were to suffer in the dungeon; but the preparations for his execution, as well as the nature thereof, being present to his mind, augment his fear. This intellectual part is in this more unhappy than the body; its ailings are more numerous, more dangerous, and more violent: nothing can come up to the disturbance and uneasiness it undergoes, from envy, ambition, love, jealousy, vain-glory, contempt, extreme poverty, and the loss of dignity and estate, which, for the most part, are the causes of its despair.

TEXT.

He proves, that pleasure is the scope and end of all; because the beasts no sooner perceive the light, than (without the help of reason, and by mere instinct of nature,) they seek pleasure, and decline pain; and it is a thing so natural to men, from the very moment of their birth, to shun affliction, that even Hercules himself, when he felt the raging pains of the fire that consumed him, could not forbear

shedding tears, and filled the Eubæan hills and valleys with his cries and lamentations.

REFLECTION.

This reasoning of Epicurus is a sort of consequence of the opinion he advances in his physics, concerning the infallibility of the senses, in that differing from the mind, which he pretends may err. As brutes have not the use of reason, and that they judge of things according as they appear to their senses, our philosopher will have us have recourse to them touching the nature of the good that ought to be in the inquest after pleasure, as well as concerning the nature of evil in the declining pain; since they eagerly seek after the one, and carefully avoid the other.

TEXT.

He believes that the virtues have nothing in them that can make them desirable, with reference to themselves; and that they are so only from the pleasure that results from the acquisition thereof: as the art of physic is only useful by the health it procures. Diogenes says the same in his Epitects. Epicurus adds, that virtue only is inseparable from pleasure; that all the other things that accompany it are mere accidents, that vanish away.

REFLECTION.

The sovereign good refers to nothing, and may be said to be independent: on the contrary, all things unite to it, as to their centre, and this true centre is to be found only in the knowledge how to live agree-

ably. The Stoics, who will seek no-where for it but in the nature of virtue, have suffered themselves to be dazzled by the vanity of a name, and never knew what nature required.

Epicurus was far more knowing than these philosophers, and, however they may cry up their sentiments, those fine virtues would have nothing in them to make them the object of our desires, if their effects did not lead to pleasure. We value navigation for the utility we receive from it; music, for its harmony; and the art of fortification, for the security and safety it affords.

Wisdom, which contributes very much to the happiness of life, would not be so much sought after, were it not for pleasure, which is the final end of its precepts. We are very eager in our pursuit after it; we do all we can to acquire it, because it banishes that sadness which makes us timorous, and quiets our agitations and disturbance: it lays the fury of our passions, and gives our mind that rest to which pleasure is always annexed; and it may be easily perceived, notwithstanding the malicious construction the Stoics have put upon the term pleasure, which Epicurus makes use of, that it is a thing inseparable from virtue, and may be properly called the soul thereof.

We are not, therefore, to love wisdom for its own sake, but for the pleasure we receive in the practice of its counsels. The same may be said of temperance: it deserves our esteem, for it causes inward peace, and teaches the just medium we ought to keep in the choice or rejection of things; and,

when once its precepts are conformable to reason, it knows how to bound our desires, and prevent our being insatiable.

Magnanimity has nothing in it, of itself, which can render it desirable :—would it not be ridiculous to undergo hazards, to expose oneself to dangers, and perform great actions, with the simple view barely of so doing? Mutius Scævola burnt his hand for the pleasure of frightening Porsenna, and obliging him to a peace. Buris and Spertis, citizens of Sparta, exposed themselves to the vengeance of Xerxes, king of Persia, (whose messengers the Spartans had killed, contrary to the law of nations,) but for the pleasure of appeasing by their death the anger of that prince, and so save their country from ruin.

These actions are considered as leading to glory and honour, and bestowing that precious and charming thing—a good reputation; or to some other design, that still procures the pleasure our philosopher speaks of. Moreover, this virtue is valuable for the elevated station it places the mind in, which makes it above misfortunes,—nay, even face death itself, with an intrepidity that has nothing in it of rashness or brutality, as being the effect of reflection and the pleasure we propose. But, to speak like a Christian, there is nothing but the divine wisdom, which is God, that is desirable of itself: it is the blessed enjoyment of Him that makes our supreme felicity; it is to the possession of this felicity that man should refer all things; and he ought to omit nothing that can procure the fruition of this transcendant good.

Let us put the last hand to this work, and to the life of this philosopher, and let us here add the opinions he held for certain: and may the end of our labour be the beginning of blessedness.

THE MAXIMS OF EPICURUS.

MAXIM I.

That Being, who is happy and immortal, is noways solicitous or uneasy on any account, neither does he torment or teaze others: anger is unworthy his greatness, and beneficence cannot form the character of his majesty; for all these things are the property of weakness. He says, in another place, that the gods are imperceivable to our senses; that the mind alone enjoys the advantage of knowing them; that they do not exist by a certain solidity, nor by a distinction of numbers; but that their form is like that of men, by reason of the perpetual flux of images that affect the mind by the quality of their nature.

REFLECTION.

"The moment," says Socrates, "that man busies himself in the search after the Divine Nature, and that weak reason is his guide to the knowledge of

this truth, he is in a dangerous state: he may be said to walk in the dark, and all his motions bear a proportion to this error.

It was Epicurus' misfortune to endeavour to penetrate into that which has ever been too immense for weak reason; and accordingly he miscarried in the attempt,—but policy obliged him to disguise his sentiments: for, as Cicero very well observes, if the Deity is weak and impotent, or neglects the assistance of mankind, to what purpose do we build temples to it? It is of no benefit to invoke it, or pay homage to it: and, if divine worship were once abolished, what would become of the public faith? Civil society would be destroyed, and justice, which is the most excellent of virtues, would be banished out of the world.

This orator pretends that Epicurus spoke equivocally, and leaves it doubtful, whether he said there is something happy and immortal, or whether he meant that what enjoyed a perfect felicity had the advantage of being eternal. It was, in all likelihood, on the score of this passage in our philosopher, that Diogenes Laertius, in his Life, extols his piety and worship of the gods. But, suppose Epicurus spake sincerely in this maxim, which he did not, it would be at best but a Pagan piety, which would be an impiety in our religion. The definition he gives of an immortal and happy being, is an outward expression that contains a dangerous sense; for it is destroying the belief of a God to deprive him of the government of nature, and, under the pretence of thinking nothing of him

but what is great and august, making an idol of an intelligent Being.

God chastises in his anger; he is appeased and reconciled without weakness; he acts without discomposing his rest; he is immutable, though he changes all things; he is always seeking, though he wants nothing: we are the work of his power; we subsist by his goodness, and we should cease to be the moment his providence forsook us.

MAXIM II.

Death is nothing, in reference to us. What has undergone a dissolution has no sense; and this privation of sense makes us just nothing at all.

REFLECTION.

This maxim of Epicurus is a consequence of his opinion touching the mortality of the soul: he believed that death effected its dissolution, as well as that of the body; from whence he inferred that that hour ought not to alarm us, since there was nothing to fear hereafter; and that it was, as Lucretius says, but a returning to eternal sleep.

This sentiment is very contrary to the Christian religion, which inspires more advantageous thoughts in reference to our soul: it tells us, that our soul is immortal, and that we ought to hope and expect all things from God, who is the author of nature: it is on him our life depends, it is by him we shall revive

at the resurrection: we ought to pay him a continual worship, because we are to be with him, and that he is to make our eternal felicity.

But, if we may be allowed to say something in favour of our philosopher, we must do him this justice, that he did not advance this maxim to promote voluptuousness, like those material souls who say, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow will put an end to our pleasures; all will terminate with it, and there is nothing afterwards that can cause either hope or fear. On the contrary, he taught and practised sobriety, and opposed with sound reasons a luxurious intemperance.

MAXIM III.

The most delightful thing in pleasure is privation of pain; for, wherever that is found, there can be neither evil nor sadness.

REFLECTION.

Isocrates warns us to be very distrustful of calumny; for, admitting it to be false, they to whom the truth is not known judge according to the character that is given of you. It is what happened to our philosopher, who, having declared so plainly in his writings that the pleasure he placed the happiness of life in was not to be found among those that gratify the passions, was looked upon, nevertheless, through the malice of the Stoics, to be a man who

had refined all sorts of debauchery; although he meant no other pleasure than what proceeds from privation of pain.

MAXIM IV.

If the body be attacked with a violent pain, the evil soon has an end: if, on the contrary, the pain be languishing, and of long duration, it is sensible, beyond all doubt, of some pleasure therefrom. Thus, most chronical distempers have intervals, that afford us more satisfaction and ease than the distempers we labour under cause pain.

REFLECTION.

Torquatus, one of Epicurus' sect, says, in Cicero, that great torments are soon at an end, because they operate the dissolution of the compound; whereas, if they are moderate, they have intervals of ease. In effect, a person who is afflicted with an ague suffers during the cold fit; but, when that is over, there follows a sort of rest that is refreshing; and nothing can come up to the pleasure we feel in quenching a thirst we have endured some time.

Besides, the Wise-man shall, in Seneca's opinion, be able to exercise his virtue, though bed-ridden: he shall meditate on the means by which to bear his distemper with patience and moderation, and not suffer the pains he endures to transport him beyond his temper; he must take care of committing any thing in that

state unworthy his profession, and then the thoughts of his having got the better of his torments will afford him some delight in his fortitude.

MAXIM V.

It is impossible to pass our life delightfully without prudence, honesty, humanity, and justice. He that practises these excellent virtues, cannot but live pleasantly; insomuch, that the man who is so wretched as to be neither honest, prudent, humane, nor just, is deprived of all that might otherwise make his life happy.

REFLECTION.

What a charming picture is here of the interior of our philosopher! what a curious model to form our lives by! How blessed is his state, who cultivates the pleasures which accompany prudence, honesty, humanity, and justice! We must endeavour to live comfortably; but, in order to do that, our mind must govern and hold the reins of all the motions the soul communicates to the body, and our reason must be backed and supported by prudence. We ought to be convinced, that all pleasures are dangerous without honesty: at the same time, we should be so just as to do, by the habit that we have acquired of justice, all that the laws compel us to do through fear. Then it is that, by the help of these excellent qualities, and in a full fruition of the pleasures they

afford, we expect the end of our course with firmness and constancy; because prudence, honesty, humanity, and justice, are inseparable from a happy life, and that there can be no complete felicity without the practice of these virtues.

Thus, Phocion enjoyed the comfort and pleasure of a man truly wise: he had learned, under Plato and Xenocrates, the maxim of our philosopher, by which means he was inaccessible to the violence of the passions, and in no-wise to be corrupted by money, refusing with indignation what Alexander offered him. His continence was worthy admiration, as well as were his moderation and justice; his clemency was such, as made him kindly entertain in his house the very man who had put out one of his eyes with an arrow; whereby he sufficiently declared the calm state of his mind, and his actions were so many testimonials of his prudence.

He always advised peace, though he shewed himself a hero in time of war. Being accused of treason, although innocent, he spoke in the behalf of his friends, and neglected justifying himself: he even paid the executioner for the poison, and appeared as well pleased at his death as he had been contented and easy during his life.

MAXIM VI.

Several have imagined that regal power and command might make them sure of friends, wherefore they have spared nothing to raise themselves to this

dignity: they looked upon it as a station firm and secure, and out of the reach of all attempts. And it must be confessed, that, if thereby they attained to that desirable tranquillity and security of life, they were in possession of that supreme good Nature teaches: but, if, on the contrary, they have always lived in distraction and anxiety, as it seldom, if ever, happens otherwise, they have then miscarried in that main good so conformable to Nature.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus (who elsewhere* forbids the Wise-man to meddle with the administration of government) here sets forth the error of the greatest part of mankind, who, considering the many dangers that attend life, flatter themselves they can shun them all, if they can raise themselves above the rest. How weak is this way of reasoning! Honours and dignity are inseparable from solicitude and care: we are continually in apprehension and fear of losing them; the fickleness of fortune, or envy, that declared enemy of grandeur, is ever threatening us.

Aman, who in a manner ruled that vast empire of the Assyrians, saw at last his unjust pride punished with the shame of an infamous execution. Sejanus, that intimate favourite of Tiberius, having practised all that the wildest ambition can execute most criminally, found at length that the greatest honours are attended with the greatest misfortunes. But it is

* See MAXIM xiv, page 58.

more imprudent still to hope for safety from those we have enslaved.

Andronicus Comnenus, violating all the laws of nature, put to death his cousin Alexis, to whom the empire of right belonged, that he might thereby ascend the throne. He thought severe means the most effectual to confirm him there; but all in vain, for he could not decline the common fate of usurpers. Those whom he had enslaved, revolted: Isaacus Angelus, who was declared emperor, seized the tyrant, and caused one of his eyes to be put out, leaving him the other to be a spectator of his calamities. He was afterwards (to render his ambition more ridiculous) set upon an ass, with his face towards its tail, which was put in his hand instead of a sceptre, and, in lieu of a diadem, he had a crown made of onions: in this condition he was led through the streets of Constantinople; and, having suffered the most cruel indignities, was at last delivered up to the people, who pleased themselves with tearing to pieces this victim of their just fury.

This high station affords us partisans and flatterers, but no friends: our guards themselves ought to be distrusted. "If the face," says one of the ancients, "can disguise the anxious agitations of the soul, we are not for that less happy; since we pass our life in continual fears and alarms, and are always in danger of being the sacrifice of those we hold in slavery: it is, therefore, no better than seeking for safety and quiet in the midst of tumult and confusion.

MAXIM VII.

No pleasure is an evil in itself: that is only to be esteemed such which is followed by a greater mortification and uneasiness than the satisfaction of its enjoyment amounted to. If it could sum itself up entirely, and that it included in its duration the most consummate delight, it would be always without disquiet; and this union of all that is charming would be as complete as any-thing nature does in the most accomplished of its works: then there would be no difference in pleasures, and they might be partaken of without distinction or choice.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus pretends, that things are neither good nor evil of themselves; and that we ought to seek them, or fly from them, only by reason of their consequences and effects. Thus, prudence is desirable, because it regulates our life; temperance, because it establishes quiet in us, and procures health; and magnanimity and justice, for their respective utilities: so pleasure is nothing in itself; but, if it be of the same character with that which we feel when we triumph over our passions, then it is most excellent: as, on the contrary, if it be sought after in lewdness and debauchery, it is an evil of the greatest magnitude.

MAXIM VIII.

If what delights men in lascivious pleasures could at the same time root out of their minds the terror they conceive of those things that are above them,—the fear of the gods, and the alarms which the thought of death causes; and that they could therein find the secret of desiring what is necessary for a good life; I should be in the wrong to find fault with them, since they would enjoy the most consummate and perfect pleasure, and nothing would be able in the least to disturb their tranquillity.

REFLECTION.

It is without reason that Cicero so furiously inveighs against Epicurus on this maxim: but the defence of the Stoics, rather than of the truth, is the real cause of his transport. When our philosopher says, he would forgive those who plunge themselves into pleasure, provided they could there find tranquillity of mind and health of body, it must be looked upon as a mere supposition he makes, which is very well known to be impossible, according to his moral; since the happiness as well as security of life, as he before declares it, are no-where to be found without prudence, honesty, humanity, and justice.

We see Nero, amidst the criminal inventions of a thousand different pleasures, fill Rome with slaughter, to secure his life: and Heliogabalus, who had, in a manner, drained nature to satiate his dissolute and vicious inclinations,—who made nothing of

spending sixty thousand crowns at a meal,—who lay in a chamber of gold,—was, notwithstanding, in continual apprehension and fear: death was so terrible to him, that the soldiers who killed him found him in a house of easement, where he had hid himself in hopes to shun it.

There can be no content, satisfaction, nor ease of mind, where there is an unbridled loose given to the passions; and our philosopher spoke after this manner only to inspire the greater aversion and abhorrence of effeminate pleasures, and to make us betake ourselves to better courses, by means of contemplation.

He will have us consider those vast motions that are performed over our heads, as being natural effects: moreover, he requires we should penetrate into the cause of all extraordinary products; to the end, that, being no longer in ignorance, we may have no apprehension of death, nor of any of those things that commonly startle man. And it is most certain that he who abandons himself to the pleasures of love, as Epicurus well observes, is thereby rendered incapable of speculating and gaining an insight into the knowledge of nature, because this passion weakens the mind, and, loading us with all sorts of distempers, hastens upon us all the infirmities of old age.

There is, perhaps, one part of this maxim that our philosopher mistakes for a good, viz.—not to dread the gods, which must be owned to be altogether impolitic; for, although they were but men, the community and vulgar sort were bridled and kept in

awe thereby. But, as for Christian wisdom, it can never be perfect without a religious fear of the Deity.

MAXIM IX.

If what we behold as miraculous in the heavens did not terrify us,—if we could reflect enough to overcome the fear of death, because it in no-wise concerns us,—if, in fine, our knowledge went so far as to find out the true end of all the evils and good things,—the study of physical speculations would be altogether useless and unnecessary. It is a thing impossible, that he who trembles at the sight of the prodigies of nature, and is startled at all the events of life, should be ever exempt from fear: he must consider the vast extent of things, and penetrate into it; he must cure his mind of the ridiculous impressions of fables,—for, without the discovery and knowledge of nature, there can be no taste of true pleasure.

REFLECTION.

Our philosopher here differs very much from Socrates, who despised the knowledge of nature, and would have us busy ourselves with no other study than that of morals; because he held the knowledge of natural things to be of no utility towards the reformation of our vicious inclinations, and that what passed in the heavens did not belong to our enquiry.

Epicurus, on the contrary, will have us pry and search into the secrets of Physic, not for its own sake, but because it enlightens the mind, discusses and examines the causes and the end of all, makes us despise death, and supplies us with remedies against fear; which are certain and sure means to live and die peaceably.

Justin gives us an instance of the truth of this maxim, in the person of Epaminondas, who, being dangerously wounded, was carried out of the battle: when he came to himself, he knew he must die, but shewed no more concern at the approach of death than he had expressed in the fury of the action. The first thing he asked was, whether his buckler was safe? which, it seems, was the only thing he feared the loss of: when he understood it was, he ordered it to be brought to him, and kissed it, as the witness of his glory and labours. Then, being informed the Thebans had got the victory, "I am satisfied," says he; and with those words expired, ending his life, which he had so often exposed for his country, with a congratulation on the success of its arms.

The true cause of so many glorious actions, and so fine a death, was without doubt the great progress he had made in philosophy. It was the subject of admiration, that he, who had been brought up in arms, should be so great a proficient in the sciences: it was by their means he had gained such a contempt for riches, as not to leave wherewith to be buried; and it was by the help of his attainments that he was always intrepid, and that he never swerved from the precepts of wisdom; insomuch, that it

might be said, he was not a less honest and virtuous man than a great captain.

"He that will," says Seneca, "be void of fear and despise fortune, that will look upon its promises as mere chimeræ, receive its attacks without disturbance, and, in fine, pass his life happily and quietly, —ought never to discontinue the study of philosophy: she only can so satisfy his mind as to make him covet nothing, and remain unshaken in the station in which she has placed him.

MAXIM X.

It is of little use not to be afraid of men, if we still doubt how things are transacted in the heavens, upon the earth, and in the vast immensity of the great whole. What quiet or rest can he have who is not armed in himself against all that can terrify or discompose his interior?

REFLECTION.

Lucretius expresses admirably well Epicurus' thought: "It is in vain," says he, "that man labours incessantly to heap up wealth; that he looks upon nobility as the centre of his vanity; and that he exposes his life to gratify his ambition: nay, the glory of commanding is useless to his felicity." In effect, what can be hoped from these advantages, if our passions rage and disturb us,—if the thoughts of death seize us,—if fortune divert itself with the credulity and foolery of our hopes,—and if, at the

same time that we make the world tremble by the strength of our power, we want in ourselves firmness and constancy of mind?

Mecænas was not contented, though the favourite of Augustus: the fear of death racked him so cruelly, that, as Seneca relates, he wished to live always, though it were in pain and torment. Xerxes, in a manner, dispeopled the world to punish Greece: his expedition proved, nevertheless, unsuccessful; and his numberless army could not protect him from the disgrace he received through his want of courage.

Epicurus holds, that it is not sufficient to be secure in reference to men, but that we must be so likewise with reference to any inward agitations that may disquiet us and render us unhappy. A citadel well guarded, and a numerous army, may sometimes protect us from the storms that the seditious fury and treason of the people may raise; but these are only weak and ineffectual remedies against what persecutes us inwardly. A clap of thunder, a dream, a sudden fear, shall make a prince tremble, though surrounded with his guards: an unruly passion shall devour him in his palace; and he who commands others is unhappy enough not to be his own master.

We should, therefore, seek for this help from philosophy, which the generality make their pride to be ignorant of, though at the same time true glory can only fall to the share of the learned; and that the unaccountable rise of an ignorant man, who has no other merit than the favour of fortune, ought to be his shame.

MAXIM XI.

The quiet and safety that are found in solitude and retirement from the world, may be equally enjoyed by us, though in it, provided that we keep strictly to the medium of temperance, and confine our desires to what Nature exacts for its preservation, which is common and easily to be procured. In effect, whatever she counts most delicious and exquisite is common and limited; but, if we listen to the wanton appetites opinion creates, when it is deceived by false appearances, our luxury shall be insatiable, and nothing shall be able to satisfy it.

REFLECTION.

It is certain that retirement contributes very much to the happiness of life, because it is almost a sure means to meditate with success. Wherefore, Dioclesian, having swayed the empire with all the glory of a conqueror, not finding therein the tranquillity he desired, preferred, to the ambition of reigning, the quiet of his mind, and esteemed himself more happy in a little country-house, where he employed himself in cultivating the earth, than he had been in magnificent palaces: and, notwithstanding he was afterwards solicited to re-assume the government, he never would quit that way of living.

In effect, the mind there exercises its faculties more freely, and the body is not so liable to be discomposed; the passions do not find matter to provoke their fury or weakness; and we are out of danger of being moved by the flattering ideas of objects.

But, in Epicurus' opinion, there is a more heroic way to the felicity of this world; which is, to remain amongst its commotions and disturbances, without partaking of them,—to be in a shipwreck, without perishing; it is to be firm against the softness of pleasures; it is, in fine, to have plenty, and yet be contented with little, since nature would not be loaded with superfluous delicacies, and requires only what is necessary.

MAXIM XII.

The Wise-man can never have but a moderate fortune; but, if he is not considerable by the advantages that depend on it, the greatness of his mind and the excellency of his counsels are sufficient to distinguish him from the rest of mankind: these are the chief springs of the most remarkable events of life.

REFLECTION.

The Wise-man is seldom Fortune's favourite: her bounties are generally the lot of mean souls, and he is above that despicable condition. What is not a man forced to do to catch the time when she is in the humour? A minute procures her whole influence, and the next loses all her favour; and sometimes it is the labour of a man's life to fix this unaccountable being, unless it be to his destruction.

She delights in giving us vain hopes, and, when we think we are sure of them, she takes pleasure in

disappointing us; she flatters us, only to be more vexatious. It is an unhappy thing to be her slave; she challenges all our vigilance and care, and is jealous if all our time is not sacrificed to her capriciousness.

The Wise-man, who is acquainted with her conduct and inconstancy, seeks his quiet in contemplation; for, as Fortune does not act with discretion, and that one must be amongst the crowd of her devotees to hope for any thing from her, she does not pry into a corner to seek a person worthy of her favours: on the contrary, she avoids merit as much as she can, and loads with her bounties whom she pleases.

Wherefore our philosopher asserts, that he that is endowed with the solid advantages of wisdom, despises those that are to be hoped for from her injustice; being fully satisfied with the interior pleasures which the study of philosophy affords, by the excellency of which he excels the rest of his age in his notions, and by the strength of whose arguments, and the exactness of whose counsels, he easily reduces them into practice.

Aristides was so poor that the public was at the charge of clothing him when he went to command the army of the Athenians; and yet he was one of the greatest captains Greece ever produced: he beat the Persians at Marathon; he drove away Xerxes, who designed the utter ruin of his country; and was surnamed the Just.

I have followed Vitruvius' thought in the explication of this maxim; though some are of opinion that

Epicurus' meaning is best explained by Seneca, who says, that the wise man should be satisfied with little: but I think the first interpretation most probable, because the wise man, being for the most part disgraced by fortune, is recompensed (as our philosopher well observes) with the gifts of the mind. It is certain that, without exclaiming against her inconstancy, he is always contented with a mediocrity, according to the precepts of philosophy.

MAXIM XIII.

The just is, of all mankind, he that lives freest from trouble and disorder; whereas, the unjust, on the contrary, is always disturbed and perplexed.

REFLECTION.

"The just," says Solomon, "is not subject to inconstancy: he is ever the same, he never sullies the beauty of his character; he is both man and immortal at the same time."—"How blest is the just!" says Themistius: "he is not inferior to Jupiter in power; he not only commands men, but the very elements; it is he that is the cause of their fruitful effects; and it is through his means, and for his sake, that their utility answers the expectation of men."

He is of an undaunted courage, and void of fear. Thus, Ceselius the lawyer could never be prevailed on to register the cruel acts of the Triumviri: the

threats of those three persecutors of mankind could not shake his constancy.

Caracalla having desired Papinianus to justify before the senate the murder of his brother, which had been perpetrated by his order, this eminent man, who was looked upon as the very refuge of the law, refused his eloquence to the injustice of this prince, and chose rather to die than cowardly obey him and betray his duty; which would have rendered his life unhappy.

The just man is not blinded with ambition. Atalus, being declared regent after the death of his brother Eumenes, never would suffer his own children to be educated as if they had a right to the empire, notwithstanding the pressing instances of Stratonice, who was widow to the deceased king, and whom Atalus had afterwards married: on the contrary, he resigned the sceptre to his pupil, as soon as he had attained the age that was required to govern.

The just man condemns himself, rather than be tormented with the thought of having acted contrary to justice. Charondas, one of the Athenian legislators, having made a law by which he forbade anybody to appear armed in the public assemblies, chancing to be at one of them, in his return from the country, without having laid by his sword, killed himself upon the spot, to ratify the law he had made, and to confirm it by the punishment he inflicted on himself.

In fine, the just man is always happy: it was what made the Emperor Nerva, after a strict examination of his life, declare, he did not find himself conscious

of any-thing that could hinder him from living without fear, though he should abdicate the dignity of emperor. It was usual among the Persians rather to disobey the prince than act any-thing that was unjust: nay, the kings themselves made them take an oath to this effect, when they entered upon any office or employment.

It is with great reason that our philosopher promises the just man an unalterable tranquillity, and assures us, at the same time, that the unjust is ever unhappy, because every thing terrifies him, and he is in continual fears and distrust.

Dionysius, the tyrant, entrenched his house; nobody was suffered to enter his chamber, which was always well guarded: notwithstanding this, he was not free from fear: his wives, his brother, nay, his own son, were not suffered to approach him without being searched whether they had any arms about them, under their clothes. All this precaution could not, however, make him easy. He caused his hair to be singed off with live coals, not daring to trust them to make use of scissars, lest they should attempt his life. He was always restless and uneasy, notwithstanding all this care, and trembled at his own imaginary fears.—What a picture is here of an unjust man!

MAXIM XIV.

The pleasure of the body, which is nothing else than the seeking to avoid that pain which attends the

want of something nature requires, is incapable of increase or augmentation: it is only diversified according as circumstances are different. But the pleasure the mind proposes, as the end of its felicity, depends entirely on the manner how we cure ourselves of those chimerical notions, and whatever has any affinity with them, by reason they disturb the mind.

REFLECTION.

Our philosopher does not imitate the Stoics: he does not make use of invectives to repel their calumnies, neither does he maliciously interpret their sentiments: he is contented, without naming them, to declare, in several places of his writings, that his opinion concerning the nature of good is misinterpreted and disingenuously explained; and, it being a thing of consequence and moment, he frequently repeats what he means by the word pleasure.

It is, says he, the tranquillity of the mind; it is the contemplation of all that passes in the universe; it is to check the fury of the passions; it is, in fine, the knowing how to cure ourselves of false impressions, which, being for the most part nothing but fables, are most commonly the source of all our fears.

Man would be happy,—it is in his power to be so; and nevertheless he rambles from the way that leads to that state, at the very moment he labours to attain it: for, the felicity of life consisting in that unshaken firmness and constancy we have armed ourselves with against all events, he, on the contrary, is sur-

prised at the smallest things; his reflections disturb him, and he is perplexed in his enquiries; and, sinking under the burthen of his misfortunes, he passes his life miserably in imaginary fears and alarms.

MAXIM XV.

If it were possible for man to live for ever, the pleasure he would receive therefrom would not be greater than what he might experience during the limited space of his life, if he could sufficiently refine his reason to know the true scope and end thereof.

REFLECTION.

Pleasure, according to Epicurus, consists in the being void of fear, without disturbance, and free from pain. Philosophy teaches us the means to avoid these things: she places us in that secure state that is the very bliss of life, and so completes its felicity; so that, were that to be much longer, this would not be more perfect, because nothing can go beyond the calm of the mind and the health of the body,—these two things being the constituents of pleasure.

Seneca is of this opinion: "When once," says this philosopher, "I have discharged the duty I owe to myself, that my mind is so fixed and settled that no event whatever can ruffle or disturb it, and that it is duly informed wherein consists the happiness of man, I make no difference between a day and an age."

MAXIM XVI.

Nature has prescribed bounds to the pleasures of the body; we lose all the sweetness thereof when we wish it were everlasting: but the mind reforms this error, and reasons with exactness on the scope and end the pleasure of the body ought to have, as well as concerning what is to cause its last dissolution.

It shews us that the desire of an unlimited pleasure is ridiculous, and, by so doing, renders our life perfectly happy; insomuch, that man, being satisfied with his manner of living, has no need, for its felicity, of infinity of time: nay, he is not deprived of pleasure, though he perceives that his mortal condition leads him insensibly to the grave, since he there finds what happily finishes his course.

REFLECTION I.

Epicurus shews, in this maxim, that the unhappiness of man proceeds from his being insatiable: he rebels against Nature, which is content with little; and, far from following the dictates she inspires, he hears her counsels with contempt, and flatters himself that he knows better than she how he ought to lead his life. If he obtains what he desires, he soon grows weary of it; he is never contented, because he is always upon the search; he fancies for his felicity what causes his unhappiness; he will enrich nature by overlading it; he thinks there can be no pleasure but in excess; and, when he plunged himself therein to gratify his avidity, he is more unhappy than

before, because that very excess is but temporary,—whereas, he would have it everlasting.

Seneca has well digested our philosopher's notion. "What enemy," says he, "has been more cruel towards the objects of his hatred, than irregular and unwarrantable pleasures are to those who abandon themselves to their criminal effects?" It is with the greatest justice they are persecuted by the fury thereof, which must needs be infinite when these pleasures go beyond the bounds prescribed by Nature, who has a certain medium, beyond which to force her is to use violence to her. But whatever luxury and debauchery require, is without bounds. The necessary is measured by its utility; whereas, what is superfluous can have no moderation.

REFLECTION II.

The latter part of this maxim is a consequence of the sentiments of our philosopher: he will have us constantly meditating how to live well, and how to die well: he looks upon these two things to be inseparable, because they constitute the happiness of life. To live well, according to him, is to keep in subjection the violence of the passions; and to die well, is to have foreseen this last end, and be prepared against its alarms.

He says, in several places, that life is pleasant and delightful when we pass it in contemplation, and make a good use of its reflections, and enjoy the excellency of their practice. Death is also a good thing, when we behold its approach without fear; but we ought not to desire it, says our philosopher, ac-

cording to Seneca: we should neither be too fond of life, nor too much out of conceit with it, and we ought not to leave it by a rash and precipitate resolution. A wise and magnanimous man may upon occasion retire from the world, but it is unworthy of him that his departure should look like a flight.

MAXIM XVII.

He that has discovered after what manner Nature has limited all things relating to life, must needs know the means to get rid of that uneasiness the body feels when it wants any thing, and must have found out the happy secret of rightly ordering the whole course of his life so that he has no occasion to seek his felicity in those things, the acquisition whereof is full of uncertainty and danger.

REFLECTION.

While Nature is our guide, we know how to confine ourselves to what she requires; we are sensible what is requisite to preserve the body free from pain; we know, in fine, what is necessary for that sort of life that is without disturbance or fear.

"Happy is he," says Seneca, "who applies the activity of his mind to good: it is then he may be said to emancipate himself from the tyrannical power of fortune; he is moderate in prosperity; adversity cannot affect him so as to shake his constancy, and he beholds, without concern, what astonishes other people. To him alone it belongs to despise, by the

strength of his reason, what may be his ruin, and to prefer an exact medium to all that is excessive; because the one is useful for the comfort of life, and excess, as it is superfluous, can have only dangerous consequences.

MAXIM XVIII.

There are two sorts of pleasures,—those that Nature inspires, and those that are superfluous; there are others, which, though natural, are nevertheless of no utility; and there are some that are not conformable to the bent of Nature, and which she no way requires: these serve only to gratify the whimsical chimeras opinion raises.

Those Epicurus esteems natural and necessary to banish pain,* as it happens when we drink, being very dry. He calls those natural unnecessary ones that only serve to diversify pleasure, and that are not requisite to drive away pain: of this kind is delicious fare. There are others, again, neither natural nor necessary,—as crowns of flowers and statues.

Those pleasures which are natural cause no uneasiness, provided there be moderation in the case: if they go beyond the bounds prescribed to pleasure, they are forced in their end, but we hope to find something agreeable in that excess; which vain expectation proceeds from the foolish opinion of men.

* Diogenes speaks.

REFLECTION.

This maxim is admirably described by Lucretius. "Epicurus," says he, "knew very well the art of fixing our desires by the precepts of wisdom, and banishing whatever creates our fears: he has shewn us where to find the sovereign good, and how to enjoy it; he condemns the insatiable avidity of man, and has made him sensible that the occupation of his whole life was nothing else than the fruitless labour of the Danaids."

Moderation is always the character of our philosopher: she is, according to him, the very source of felicity, and the only means to want nothing: in fine, Wisdom teaches us how to restrain our passions; she shews us that certain medium, whose bounds must not be passed if we consult the satisfaction of the mind or body, and makes us know that the chief utility of life consists in the *nequid nimis*.

MAXIM XIX.

Of all the things Wisdom supplies us with for a happy life, there is none more considerable than that of a true friend. He that is strongly persuaded that there is nothing in life more solid than friendship, knows how to fortify his mind against the fear that is caused by the duration or eternity of pain.

REFLECTION.

A true friend is so charming a thing, that Scipio would never leave the forum till he had gained the

friendship of somebody. Solomon assures us, that he is a constant protector, who never forsakes our interest,—that, in our absence, opposes the enemies of our fortune or merit,—that parries the strokes of those who envy or calumniate us. It is, says this wise king, such a treasure, as far exceeds whatever we can imagine. Gold and silver, which make men violate those things that are most holy, have not power enough to alter his fidelity: he therefore concludes, that a faithful friend is an infallible remedy against all misfortunes, and that by his means one may in a manner become immortal.

It is this perfect friendship that Epicurus believed none capable of but the Wise-man: he maintained, that he alone could know its delicacy, and that his whole application was necessary to acquit himself duly thereof. He shews, in several places, the value he had for this commerce, which he thought none but philosophers could carry on with discretion: and he adds here, that nothing can so much contribute to make life happy as this mutual union, of whose wonderful effects there have been heretofore several instances, that posterity has looked upon as inimitable, through the corruption of that noble cause that gave them birth.

How ravishing is the consolation of a true friend! —it is an invincible succour against fortune; it is an impenetrable buckler against the darts of infidelity: he suffers with pleasure for what he loves; nay, encounters death itself to preserve its life. But such a friend is now-a-days sought for in vain. This is well observed by the oracle of wise men;—

"Man," says he, "shall loudly declare it has been all in vain, the indefatigable pains I have taken to make myself friends: adversity has made me sensible I was imposed upon, and that all the promises that were made me were never intended to be executed, if occasion required. The oaths that were taken to cement our union were so many perjuries; experience has taught me they were only wind:—is it without cause that I afflict myself, and die almost with grief?"

MAXIM XX.

Common right is nothing else than that utility which has been acknowledged, by universal consent, to be the cause of that justice men have observed one towards another. It is by the help thereof that, without offending others, or being offended themselves, they lived free from insult; because in all their desires they had Nature for their guide.

REFLECTION.

The Stoics, as Cicero reports, pretended that Nature had inspired men with that common right which maintained their union, and established civil society by the equity of its laws. Cujas, the famous lawyer, was of their opinion. But Epicurus, as Lucretius well observes, had an idea that the primitive men, being the product of the earth, were likewise tainted with the rusticity of their first mo-

ther, and that they lived after a beast-like manner, without method or order, and without any partition of the wealth of the world; from whence it happened that the strongest always overcame the weakest, and that all things were in such confusion that mankind had nothing to expect but utter ruin and destruction, had not they who had a clearer sight than others made it their business to improve the rest, and made them know that it was of the last consequence to make laws, which, by their own nature, and of themselves, could redress their evils.

They afterwards shewed (as Plato relates, treating of the origin of justice,) that the vengeance that was usually taken, was the cause of fresh outrage; and that it was therefore necessary to constitute such laws as might restrain the one from offending, and the other from being offended. This was also Epicurus' sentiment, as Lucretius reports it, which is agreeable to his system concerning the fortuitous birth of men: he looked upon it as a thing impossible, that Nature should give them so perfect an idea of that mutual justice which the laws enforce, because she was rough and unpolished in them, and they followed entirely their inclination and temper, which learning had not yet refined: and as our philosopher was convinced (as Seneca informs us) that there was a sort of wise men, who owed all their wisdom to their natural principles and composition, so it happened in this first constitution of the world, which afforded some who saw the indispensible necessity of prescribing to men a regular way of living, and at the same time making them sensible of the

necessity there was to submit to certain laws, the infringing whereof should be capital.

If justice and equity were by Nature imprinted in man's soul, has not Epicurus reason to enquire of the Stoics, how it came to pass that more than natural reason was requisite in the first institution of laws, and that the primitive legislators were obliged to have recourse to divine power to make their laws be received with applause?

Numa Pompilius prevailed with the Romans to submit to his decrees and ordinances, by first persuading them that he conversed familiarly with the goddess Egeria, for whom they had a particular veneration. Licurgus made the same use of the oracle of Apollo, to gain credit with the Athenians; and Zaleucus gave what laws he pleased to the Locrians, because he had the address to make them believe that Minerva frequently appeared to him, and instructed him how to reform and polish them. The Hebrews also received, without a murmur, the two tables of laws, which Moses received twice from God: and Mahomet pretended to have passed into the highest heavens, in one night, on the back of a beautiful ass, called Al Borak, and to have received the laws contained in the Koran at different times from the hands of the angel Gabriel; also of his having conversed with Abraham, Moses, and Christ, which his followers implicitly believed.*

* How easily have people, in all ages and countries, been persuaded to lend their belief to supernatural and invisible affairs: but what will most of all astonish posterity is, to know that, in the

MAXIM XXI.

We are neither just nor unjust to brutes, whose fierce nature will not suffer them to abide with man without attacking him, and consequently without being attacked by him: the case is the same with those nations, with whom we cannot settle such an alliance as is requisite for a mutual safety.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus looked upon Nature as the surest guide for the happiness of life; and, although he had a due regard to man for the excellency of his reason, he considered, at the same time, the unhappiness into which his false notions had cast him: insomuch, that he seemed to be prepossessed in favour of brutes, on the score of their easy way of living, since he would have us, in imitation of them, make ourselves happy by seeking pleasure and avoiding pain; —which they do by natural instinct.

Our philosopher, therefore, pretends, that those brutes who live inoffensively amongst us deserve a

present enlightened age, and in England too, an ignorant old woman should have nearly 50,000 believers in her new doctrines of salvation, and of having had intercourse with invisible and superior powers,—of being miraculously impregnated, as a virgin, with a second Shiloh!!! Who, after this violent outrage on common sense, —after this unexampled range of credulity in the midst of an intelligent part of mankind,—can with propriety condemn or ridicule the poor uneducated Catholic or Mahommedan, who receives from his earliest childhood,—nay, even at his mother's breast,—the tales and fables which priestcraft invites him to believe and profess?—EDITOR.

gentle and, as it were, a just usage from us; whereas, those we find to be destructive and pernicious to us may be destroyed without injustice.

This opinion has had its followers. The fidelity of dogs and other animals has been frequently experienced, and posterity has been careful to preserve the memory thereof in several instances. Plutarch tells a story of one Cæranus, of the island Paros, who, having bought some dolphins that were fresh taken, flung them immediately into the sea again: a little time after, a small boat, in which he chanced to be, sunk, and one of these dolphins carried him safe to the shore. He adds something still more surprising, that the same man having died, as they were burning his corpse, those fish were observed to continue their gratitude, appearing near the bank, as if they assisted at his funeral.

Alexander the Great, who had conquered so many kings, thought he did an act of justice when he built Bucephala in memory of his horse, that would never suffer any-body else to get upon his back, and had carried him in most of his battles, and died of the wounds he received in one.

MAXIM XXII.

Justice is nothing in itself: mankind, united in society, discovered the utility and advantage of agreeing among themselves to observe certain conditions for their living inoffensively one towards another.

REFLECTION.

Aristippus, as Diogenes Laertius relates, did not allow of any natural right: he would have it, that laws and customs made the just or unjust. Aristotle assures us, that some philosophers have held that opinion, and that for this reason, that what Nature ordained was fixed and unalterable; whereas, the laws were liable to change. He says in another place, that those who maintain that there is any thing naturally just or unjust, exclusive of society, rather speak at random than prove their opinion.

One would think that Epicurus here supposes, there are some people altogether so wild and brutish as to live without any order or rule, which is not very probable: there are none to be found who have not some laws by which to govern themselves; they are, therefore, at least just with respect to themselves. The men-eaters, the cannibals, and other nations lately discovered, have among them a sort of justice which they religiously observe one towards another. It is impossible for four or five persons, how wild soever or brutish they may be, to hold any commerce with each other, without learning from time and experience that there are some points to be agreed upon, in order to their peaceable and quiet living, and to prevent mischief; from whence it follows, by a natural consequence, that Epicurus was much in the right when he asserted, that it was society which first discovered the utility of laws.

MAXIM XXIII.

Injustice is not in itself an evil, because what is unjust in one country is just in another: it is only so far an evil, as it holds us in perpetual fear by the remorse of a disturbed conscience, which makes us apprehend that our crimes may come to the knowledge of those who have power to punish them.

REFLECTION.

This maxim has afforded, to the enemies of Epicurus, matter on which to exercise their envy, but without reason,—since injustice, generally speaking, is nothing; and that the distinction between what is just and unjust, in his opinion, owes its rise and establishment to the division of wealth. Moreover, Aristotle says, that what was not yet observed was in itself indifferent; but when, by a general consent, such conditions and regulations were agreed to, it became a necessity to observe them, or undergo the consequent penalty: and is it not very plain that the difference of place causes the variety of laws,

It was not reckoned a crime, in Persia, to marry one's sister,—it is now almost universally considered one. Theft was allowed in Sparta, when at the same time it was punishable every-where else.

There are things that are capital in some places, though lawful in others. That which made the first man's crime was in itself indifferent; it was the interdiction that rendered it criminal.

What our philosopher advances here is a consequence of what he before asserted, that prudence

and the other virtues were excellent only by their effects: neither is injustice evil in itself, but only by what attends it: one is tortured by the fear of punishment, if the crime be known; and the conscience is racked with remorse, if it be hid. Epicurus would have it, that right depended entirely on the benefit men received by the observation thereof, and that legislators, in determining it, had still a regard to the climate, to the temper of the inhabitants, and their inclinations. He, therefore, argued after this manner:—Whoever is guilty of such a crime, is only so by reason of the law; and that same law does not exist in another country, and there, by consequence, it would be none: and suppose it were, he would then go further, and have recourse to Nature, which, in the opinion of some philosophers, says Plato, inspires that whatever we are able to do, is an injury. He would, therefore, only be afraid that his crime should be detected: and this fear, says Epicurus, if there were no other reason, ought to be sufficient to deter him from it.

No conclusion can be drawn from this to the prejudice of our philosopher,—since, in one of his maxims, he has made the eulogium of the just man; who, he says, is always prudent, magnanimous, and wise, and by consequence quiet and undisturbed: whereas, the unjust passes his life in continual disorder.

Plutarch, though a professed enemy of the Epicureans, nevertheless owns that Epicurus did all that lay in his power to give a horror of vice, and insinuate that it was the most desirable thing in the world to

have a peaceable conscience. In fine, Seneca quotes a sentence of his that quite overthrows all that the envious can allege against him. "We ought," says our philosopher, quoted by the Stoic, "always to propose to ourselves, though alone, somebody whose life may serve us for an example, keeping him continually before our eyes, and live just as we would if he beheld all our actions and read all our thoughts.

MAXIM XXIV.

It is impossible that he who has violated, though ever so privately, the laws established to prevent either our doing or receiving hurt, should be sure his crime will not come to light; for, although he has not been detected in a thousand occasions, he may with reason fear he shall be so before he dies.

REFLECTION.

Epicurus, who knew perfectly well the corruption of mankind, was sensible that the first obstacle to the commission of crimes, is the fear of punishment that ensues; and that, when men abandoned themselves to evil courses, it was still with hopes it should not be known. But that is folly, as our philosopher excellently observes; for the criminal is persecuted by the knowledge he himself has of it; he carries his uneasiness along with him wherever he goes, and sooner or later he is discovered.

The truth is known at the long-run. Children in the cradle have called for the punishment of the

guilty; nay, the very elements have sometimes turned informers of crimes. The murderers of Ibicus were discovered by cranes:—that lyric poet, having been assassinated in a wood, called those birds, which chanced to fly by when the fact was committing, to be witnesses of his death. Some time after, one of the murderers standing in one of the public places of the town, and seeing some cranes fly by, called to his companions, and bade them behold the instruments of Ibicus' vengeance: the magistrate, being informed of this saying, caused them to be apprehended and punished; and they all confessed the fact when put upon the rack.

The pains of the mind, the tortures of a disturbed conscience, far exceed those of the most cruel torments the body can undergo; the truth whereof has been often confirmed by criminals, who have voluntarily delivered themselves up to justice, preferring public punishment to their inward disquiet.

But, if it were possible for a man to be so hardened in vice as to have no remorse nor concern after the commission of it, and that his power was such in this world as to set him above the fear of punishment, though his crimes were known, how will he answer for them to the Almighty, whose knowledge nothing can escape, and who leaves nothing unpunished, either here or hereafter? His criminal obstinacy will then be changed into despair, his power utterly abolished, and eternity itself shall not be able to find an end to his torments.

MAXIM XXV.

Whatever experience teaches us to be useful and beneficial in reference to the community, ought to be esteemed just, provided it be so contrived that every one may find an advantage in it; from whence it is manifest that, whoever makes a law by which no benefit accrues in the prosecution thereof, does that which is unjust in its nature.

REFLECTION.

"Our ancestors," says Cicero, "had no other view in their making of laws than the public good; and, if it happened that, upon experience thereof, they were found detrimental, they immediately abrogated them."

Laws were not made because they were just in themselves, but on the score of the utility the public received from the observance of them; so that it plainly appears that the legislator ought to consider a great many things when he prescribes laws. They may be good on certain occasions, but bad on others: not but sudden changes are usually attended with ill consequences; for the people being used to the laws already established, all innovation is suspected by them. Zaleucus, for this reason, said, that they who offered to make new laws, ought to propose them with a rope about their neck; because, if the legislative assembly found any advantage in the change, they might go off clear; but if, on the contrary, the commonwealth received any prejudice thereby, every body might lay his hand to the rope, that the oppressor might perish immediately.

MAXIM XXVI.

If a law be sometimes made without any present utility, provided that it afterwards proves beneficial to the republic, it shall still be esteemed just; but more particularly by those who make a general estimate of things, and who take no delight to confound matters by a frivolous discourse.

REFLECTION.

A state, in the making of laws, should chiefly consider their utility: however, it may sometimes happen that they may not altogether answer the legislator's design; yet they shall be just, if they are beneficial. For example,—the prince ordains that corn be transported into foreign countries; it may prove either useful or prejudicial: there is utility in it, if by that means money be brought into the kingdom; on the other side, it is pernicious, if a famine be caused thereby: but that shall not hinder this law from being thought just during the utility thereof.

MAXIM XXVII.

He who, by the counsel of prudence, shall undertake to seek support in those things that are foreign to us, shall find their acquisition easy and advantageous: but he shall not trifle away his time in the search of those that are impossible; nay, he shall neglect a great many of those that are attainable,

and absolutely reject all those whose possession is not necessary.

REFLECTION.

Although this passage be corrupted in the Greek, and that all the translators have found it intricate, yet the sense I give it seems probable enough, because Epicurus has said heretofore, that it is in vain a man seeks for safety in things that are not useful to him, and which can never contribute any-wise to his tranquillity; and that, admitting he were sheltered from fear, envy, and the malice of men, that would not be sufficient to make him happy, if he be not cured of his groundless fright, and have not suppressed his passions.

Our philosopher means, then, that he who governs himself according to the rules of prudence, may seek to strengthen himself against the power of men, as being necessary for him to do so. Thus we see Pericles, the Athenian general, possessed himself of the government, that by means thereof he might be able to oppose his enemies, Cimon and Thucydides: but, as he had learned the precepts of wisdom under Zeno and Xenocrates, he did not become the tyrant of his country; neither was he elated on the score of nine victories he had obtained; and, notwithstanding he had raised himself above the rest, he does not on that account swerve from the rules of justice.

Epicurus says afterwards, that the same prudence makes us sensible there are some things absolutely unattainable, and therefore we ought to lay aside all thoughts about them. There are a great many others

which the wise man ought to decline, though he might compass the acquisition of them, viz.—honours, riches, statues, and the like: but there are some again that he ought entirely to reject, as being superfluous, and busy himself only with those that are unavoidably necessary, which are only those that nature exacts for its preservation and the happiness of life.

MAXIM XXVIII.

Those who have been fortunate enough to live with men of the same temper and opinion, have found a security in their society: this reciprocal disposition of humour and mind has proved a sure pledge of their union, and has made the sum of their felicity. They have had so strict a friendship for one another, that they were ready, without any reluctance, to lay their lives down for each other, if either of them was sentenced to die.

REFLECTION.

This passage is altogether faulty in the Greek; nevertheless, I flatter myself I have hit upon Epicurus' thought in my translation. This philosopher having shown that the difference of tempers and constitutions were the cause of the difference of the minds; and, since civil society was composed of men differently inclined,—some being prudent, others rash,—some choleric and furious, others again peaceable and timorous, and some likewise ambitious and

aspiring,—and a great many other different characters, which made it impossible to expect so perfect an union amongst them that nothing should be able to ruffle or disturb their mutual quiet,—it became necessary that certain laws should be agreed upon, that might restrain and curb the violence and ambition of the haughty and turbulent, and secure, to the mild and gentle, safety and tranquillity.

He, therefore, extols the happiness of those who, either by nature or by the precepts of wisdom, have found themselves disposed to an harmonious sympathy, and who have observed that certain medium which could fix their tempers and unite their minds, by which means they found out the secret of living peaceably and agreeably.

They have always been cautious of offending one another; have followed the rules prescribed by prudence and justice; they have shewn an indulgence for their faults, have loved one another with sincerity, and have esteemed it an heroic act to die for those of their society.

THE END OF EPICURUS' MORALS.

An Essay

IN VINDICATION OF

EPICURUS AND HIS DOCTRINE.

WRITTEN BY MONS. ST. EVREMONT;

AND

TRANSLATED BY MR. JOHNSON.

Our modern philosophers are very industrious to lessen the reputation of Epicurus. They explode his doctrine, not only as unworthy of a philosopher, but as dangerous to the state; imagining that a man must necessarily be vicious as soon as he becomes one of his disciples. They take all occasions to brand his opinions as opposite to good manners, and load his name with infamy and reproach: yet some amongst the Stoics, who were his greatest enemies, have not used him so roughly; their praises agree not with the modern aspersions; they have attacked, but not vilified him; and the writings they have left us still speak, in several passages, the great veneration and esteem they had for him.

Whence, then, proceeds this mighty difference; and why are we no longer of opinion with the philosophers of antiquity? The reason is plain,—we do not act like them: we make no enquiry, we do not sift matters, we only adhere to what is told us, without instructing ourselves in the true nature of things: we esteem those best which have the greatest

number of approvers, and do not follow reason, but only the resemblance of it. We hug our errors, because they are justified by those of other men; we believe, rather than judge, and are so unjust that we defend, against reason, the spurious opinions which have been handed down to us. Through this infirmity hath Epicurus fallen under a general misrepresentation; and ignorant men, who know not his worth, have endeavoured to strike him out of the list of philosophers: they have condemned him unknown, and banished him unheard; they never enquired into the merits of his cause, and seem to be afraid, lest, in making his defence, they should become converts to the superior excellence of his divine precepts.

The first and only reasonable pretence that men had to slight his doctrine was the lives of some vicious wretches, who, abusing the name of this great man, gave their vices the inscription of his virtue; and thus, fathering their defects upon the principles of his philosophy, lessened the reputation of his sect. Multitudes flocked to places where they understood that pleasure was commended; but the misfortune was, they neither apprehended that pleasure, nor understood the praises bestowed upon it: they remained satisfied with the name in general, not doubting, under the authority of so great a man, to screen their debaucheries and palliate the lewdness of their lives; so that, instead of profiting in his school, and correcting their loose inclinations by the good instructions and virtuous example of that philosopher, they even lost that which could only be left them—the shame of tripping, and proceeded so far

as to extol actions at which they blushed before, and to glory in those vices which they had formerly concealed. In short, following the bent of their own vicious appetites, they publicly, and without shame, indulged themselves in the pleasure they brought along with them, and not in that which their great master inculcated upon them. However, the world —judging by appearances, and seeing persons, who styled themselves philosophers, so extremely dissolute as to make a public profession of their failings, and cite Epicurus in countenancing their impurity, laziness, gluttony, and drunkenness,—made no difficulty to pronounce this philosopher's doctrine most pernicious and scandalous, and to compare his disciples to the vilest animal in nature. *Epicuri de grege porcum*, was a sarcastic expression of a poet, reflecting upon the followers of Epicurus, and representing them as persons wallowing like swine in all manner of sensuality, and more than beastly pleasures. The zeal of our philosopher's adversaries hath so confounded his opinion with the errors of his disciples, that it is highly criminal, with the generality of mankind, to attempt his vindication; though the greatest of his enemies fix no greater crime upon him than what he hath in common with the rest of the philosophers. Nay, even Christianity itself suffers under the like misfortune, and is disgraced by the scandalous lives of base pretending hypocritical professors of its doctrines.

Thus unreasonably do ignorant pretenders treat Epicurus, and set his morals in a very bad light; but the wiser and more judicious sort, who (sepa-

rating themselves from that multitude, which hath ever been an enemy to wise men, and which, upon a groundless opinion, condemned the divine Socrates, though approved of by the gods,) have taken a nearer and more perfect view of our philosopher's life and doctrine, not giving credit to common fame, or taking things upon trust, but, searching to the bottom, have, upon the result of their enquiry, given large and honourable testimonies of his exalted virtue and sublime precepts. They have fully proved his pleasure to be as severe as the Stoic's virtue,—that, though his title be soft and delicate, his precepts are difficult,—and that, to be debauched like Epicurus, a man must be as sober as Zeno.

And certainly it is very ridiculous and inconsistent to suppose that our philosopher should propagate lewdness, or instruct his disciples in the practice of vice, if we consider that his friends and chief followers were rulers in the Grecian cities; that his reverence for the gods, love to his country, piety to his parents, liberality to his countrymen, and gentleness to his slaves, were so remarkably eminent, that his country, to reward such exemplary virtue, erected statues to his honour. His modesty kept him from engaging in affairs of state; and his temperance was so great, that his ordinary diet was nothing but bread and water.

However, apprehending that the title he bestowed upon his doctrine might be made use of to countenance the sensual inclinations of some, and that others might thereby be induced to calumniate his pleasure,—as if he had foreseen the unjust censure

of succeeding ages, and the vicious lives of his pretended followers,—this great man hath anticipated the objections of the world with a sufficient justification of his pleasure, and fully explained the same to be sober and severe. He banished from his garden, where he philosophised with his friends, all such as abused the name of pleasure, and considered vice as the sovereign good of man and tranquillity of life. For proof whereof, I will produce you one of his letters written to Menetæus, in which he speaks thus:

"Notwithstanding that we assert pleasure to be the end of man, we do not mean vile and infamous pleasure,—such as proceeds from taste and gluttony. This is not an unlikely opinion of persons that are ignorant of, or oppose, our precepts; they wrest them to an ill sense, and we separate ourselves from their company."

Thus, you see how careful he was to defend himself against ignorance and misconstruction, which he foresaw were the only two things capable to prejudice the world against him. His life, though innocent, sober, and discreet, hath not, however, been free from invectives and detraction, which have been sufficiently answered and refuted by learned and judicious writers, who have taken the pains to write our philosopher's life; in which they have not failed, with clearness of judgment and sound reason, to vindicate his reputation against the trifling cavils of weak and partial enemies. But, as it is not my design to entertain you with a detail of his actions, but to defend his pleasure, I shall refer you to Diogenes Laertius, Gassendus, and others, for the

relation of his life; and philosophise with you awhile upon the nature of that which hath so many enemies, and enquire whether it be such as will exclude those who defend and follow it out of the rank of good and wise men.

Epicurus placeth the felicity of man in pleasure, and esteemeth that life happiest which is attended with an indolence of body and tranquillity of mind. And wherein can a wise man better place his happiness than in a serene and undisturbed mind? All the motions of our soul centre in pleasure, and those who condemn it must consequently condemn Nature, and accuse her of faults in all her works; for this wise mother hath mingled delight with all our actions, and, by an admirable piece of wisdom, hath so ordered it, that, as those things which are most necessary are the meanest, so they are the most pleasing: and certainly, had she not found out this innocent invention, the world had perished long ago, and man, who is the noblest part thereof, neglecting his own preservation, had left it a prey to wild beasts. Who would trouble himself with eating, did not pleasure as well as necessity invite him to it? Who would endure that sleep should benumb his senses, take from him the use of reason, and make him exchange life with the image of death,—did not the sweetness of her poppies allure him, and make the remedy as charming as it is shameful? So necessary is pleasure to us, that the indigence of our nature contributes to it.

Pleasure is so interwoven in our nature, that she stands not in need of an advocate; and so prevalent

are the charms of her beauty, that, when she appears, all opposition falls before her; and, when absent, she is the object of our desires. The Stoics vainly endeavour to enslave the body to the tyranny of the soul; the Peripatetics wrangle much about what they do not understand, and are great lovers of wealth; the Academics are proud, conceited, and vain-glorious pretenders to universal knowledge and wisdom: but it is Epicurus alone that hath found out that sovereign good which is the perfection of a happy life, and those only that follow his steps are rich, powerful, and wise, and at once enjoy whatever is desirable.

The true felicity of life, and the government of our passions, from the disorder of which none can absolutely and at all times defend themselves, hath been the subject upon which philosophers have chiefly employed their studies, and is that part of moral philosophy which hath been oftenest enquired into, —yet no one point of the whole circle of philosophy hath been treated of with greater ostentation, and to less satisfaction. Some have taken great pains to describe the passions to us, and to discover their causes and effects, but never instructed us how to regulate and govern them: they were very careful to let us know our disease, but unskilful or negligent in applying remedies for its cure. Others, of less judgment but greater zeal, have confounded them with vices, and made no difference between the motions of the sensitive appetite and the misgovernment of the will; so that, according to them, a man cannot be passionate without being criminal. Their

discourses, which should have been instructions to virtue, were only so many invectives against vice; and, hurried by a mistaken zeal, they made the distemper greater than it was, and the cure less practicable. Others, again, vainly puffed up with pride, have pretended to stifle passion, and to raise men to the condition of angels: they have not feared to debase their gods, that they might exalt their wise man, and have oftentimes made him happier than their Jupiter: they have given him the upper-hand of fortune and destiny, and made his happiness to depend entirely upon his own free-will. They represent pain and pleasure as imaginary distractions; that passions are the sickness of the soul; and that a man must renounce his liberty, if he obey such insolent masters. Thus, they have framed a wise man only in idea; and, whilst they have endeavoured to make him equal or superior to the gods, they have made him less than man.

Thus did these vain pretenders to wisdom busy themselves in a blind and eager pursuit after happiness; but the more haste they made in a wrong way, the more labour and pains they took to be further from their journey's end: and, though wisdom and happiness were the sole aim and drift of every one of them, yet they all took a different way to attain the desired end; and notwithstanding, amongst such different opinions, one only could be in the right, each of them pretended to be that only one which could give access to virtue, and put its followers into the right way, passing by the rest as leading them astray and from the mark. In this, however, they

unanimously agreed,—to explode the doctrine of Epicurus, and to represent his pleasure as voluptuousness, his philosophy as vanity, and his precepts such as plunged men into all manner of dissoluteness: but, upon a due enquiry into the matter, we shall evidently find that these heavy censures of Epicurus proceeded more from pride and ignorance than from knowledge and sound judgment.

The Stoics and all other philosophers agree with Epicurus in this,—that the true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations, to understand our duty towards God and man, to enjoy the present without any anxious dependance upon the future, not to amuse ourselves either with hopes or fears, to curb and restrain our unruly appetites, to rest satisfied with what we have, which is abundantly sufficient—for he that is content wants nothing. He that can look death in the face and bid it welcome; he that can open his door to poverty, and bridle his appetites,—he is the man, they all agree, whom Providence hath established in the possession of consummate happiness. The difference between them is this:—the Stoics and the other philosophers deny the passions, and rank them among things which are not *in rerum Natura;* Epicurus, on the other hand, asserts them to be necessary to the soul, that they are seeds of virtue, and that joy must perfect that felicity which desire hath begun. Their happiness is purely speculative; but that of Epicurus is practical.

But as there is no beauty without some moles, no crystal without some specks,—neither is Epicurus

without his imperfections, which (though, as a Christian, it is not my design to justify,) are, however, easily pardonable if we consider the dark time he lived in, when there was scarce any religion but idolatry, more gods* than nations, and no other light by which to steer his course than the lamp of nature. He seems rather to be honoured for coming so near to the knowledge of the true God, than condemned for coming no nearer,—rather to be admired for having such agreeable conceptions of some of the divine attributes, than reproached for not comprehending them all;† especially if we compare his notions relating to the gods with those of the elder Grecian philosophers and poets, as well as the common and received opinions of those days.

Who can blame our philosopher, who, swayed by the highest reason, traced Nature in her primitive innocence, and not only taught but practised virtue with so much excellence, as few in these days, (to our shame be it spoken,) though we enjoy the sunshine of the Gospel, can equal? The bounds which Nature have prescribed are those of justice and equity. Avarice came not from Nature; she hath concealed gold in the lowest bowels of the earth, and we have torn it from thence. Nature was not the cause of ambition, which torments us: she brought us into the world, and with equality sends us out of it; we only differ from one another inasmuch as we corrupt her. We all equally enjoy liberty and the

* Imposed upon the people by priestcraft.

† A thing utterly impossible by any human being.

sun: servitude was introduced by violence, and the first kings were tyrants. Is it Nature, think you, which incites to luxury? The poets themselves, who have foisted defects into the very heavens, to screen their own follies with celestial examples,—make Jupiter wicked, that they might be so themselves,—dared not own such a thought. In their description of the golden age, they tell you that acorns were then men's food, that rivers quenched their thirst, that they dwelt in caves, that they had no clothes to defend them against the injuries of the weather, and that they followed nature in all their actions. I readily grant that there never was such a constitution of human affairs, and that mankind were never reduced to such a level with brutes. The poets have, indeed, carried the fiction too far, but their design was to instruct us that excess proceedeth not from Nature; she doth not prompt or encourage us to it; experience plainly teacheth that the necessities of nature may be plentifully satisfied with slender and easily-provided fare. Hear how the incomparable Mr. Cowley, our English Pindar, expresses himself on the occasion.

When Epicurus to the world had taught,
  That pleasure was the chiefest good,
(And was, perhaps, i' th' right, if rightly understood,)
  His life he to his doctrine brought,
And in a garden's shade that sovereign pleasure sought.
  Whoever a true Epicure would be,
  May there find cheap and virtuous luxury.
  Vitellius' table, which did hold
  As many creatures as the ark of old,—

That fiscal table, to which, ev'ry day,
All countries did a constant tribute pay,
  Could nothing more delicious afford
Than Nature's liberality,
Help'd with a little art and industry,
  Allows the meanest gard'ner's board.
The wanton taste no fish or fowl can choose,
From which the grape or melon she would lose,
Though all th' inhabitants of sea and air
Be listed in the glutton's bill of fare:
Yet still the fruits of earth we see
Plac'd the third story high in all her luxury.

COWLEY'S "*Garden*," *to J. Evelyn, esq.*

In short, it is we that abuse the gifts of Heaven, and the advantages it confers upon us, since those things without which nature cannot subsist are very compendious, and may be obtained with great ease, without the violation of justice, liberality, or tranquillity. How, then, doth Nature require that a man should abstain from those things which are submitted to him, and over which she hath made him lord? No; we ought rather to use them, provided we use them according to nature. We must so use things as that we may be without them; we must be their masters, and not their slaves; we must not be impatient for them, nor dejected at their loss; enjoy them peaceably as occasion offers, and not pursue them with disquiet and fatigue.

There is no condition of life but may become a wise man. A philosopher is not to be blamed for dwelling in a palace, but in not having the power to be contented with a cottage: I shall not be scandalised at seeing him in his robes, if he have not the ambition of a king. Let Aristippus possess the

riches of Crœsus; what matter?—he will throw them away when they incommode him. Let Plato be at the table of the tyrant Dionysius; yet, in the midst of that abundance of delicacies, he will feed only on olives. The possession of goods is not to be condemned, but our slavery and subjection to them: it is not poverty that will make us wise; it may take from us, indeed, the opportunity of committing some faults; but there are others which it cannot remedy. The cynic's rags contribute not the least to tranquillity or moderation: ambition dwelt with Diogenes in his tub, and there it was he had the insolence to insult Alexander, the haughtiest of all mankind.

Undoubtedly, there is more difficulty to follow Nature in affluence than in necessity: the spurs which our delights make use of to try our moderation are much more keen than those which adversity employs for that purpose; but the greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it, and the loss of false joys secures to us a much better possession of real ones. We are not sensible of a felicity which costs us nothing, and for which we are indebted to chance; it must be given us by wisdom and prudence, if we would have a true relish of it, and pain must sometimes usher us to pleasure. Suppose a man should enter the lists at the Olympic games, with a design to try his strength and skill: if no-body encountered him, he might possibly be crowned; but, nevertheless, that would not render him victorious. Skilful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests. If Penelope's chastity had not been tried, the envious world would have said, she only wanted

corrupters. Wherefore, let us not fly the world, nor fly the court; let us not sculk in deserts, from whence philosophy brought primitive mankind; let us possess riches, and refuse not the administration of public offices: if we are wise, we may enjoy these things without any danger to our ease and tranquillity; we may sail happily amidst these rocks, and view all with an unconcerned eye. If we be stript of them by our not looking back, we may testify our contempt, and that we were not wedded to them. It is shameful for a wise man to be weaker than those desires, which, as they are unnatural, so are they vain and unnecessary only in opinion. This is Epicurus' pleasure,—this is what he calls living according to nature,—this is his doctrine, and these are his sentiments.

Consider, then, whether this opinion deserves to be ill treated, and see whether we have reason to despise it; whether this pleasure panders for debauchery and excess, and whether any thing can be more sober or chaste. If you ask Epicurus what it is to live pleasantly, he will answer you, that it consists not in a fondness for worldly concerns, but in resisting corrupt affections and inclinations, contemning honour, getting the mastery of fortune,—and, in a word, possessing an absolute peace and tranquillity of mind. To this point are all his precepts levelled,—in this you meet with pleasure,—and in this, indeed, we ought to seek it, not in the satisfaction of the senses, nor in giving a loose to our appetites. This pleasure is too pure to depend upon the body, it depends on the intellectual part; reason is its mistress, reason is its rule; the senses are only its ministers.

Besides, whatever delights we may hope for by indulging the palate in the pleasures of the sight, in music or perfumes, if we do not receive them with a serene mind we are deceived,—we fall under the delusion of a false joy, and take the shadow of pleasure for the real substance. We will burn, if you please, the most costly perfumes; we will closet ourselves up with Venus; we will pamper ourselves with nectar and ambrosia, and enjoy the utmost pleasure the poets have imagined; yet all will prove bitter if our minds be disquieted, and, in spite of these delights, sorrow will appear manifestly upon our brows.

I will give you one instance to prove this assertion, and demonstrate to you how incapable that man is of pleasure, whose mind is discomposed. You have read, no doubt, of that feast which Tigellinus made for Nero, and may remember that great debauch, the noise of which hath lasted to our age. It seems to have been the utmost effort of prodigality, art, and luxury, which succeeding ages have not been able to rival, much less exceed. Agrippa's pond was the place pitched upon for this extravagant repast; it was made upon a stately bark, which, being drawn by a great many others, seemed insensibly to move. All the barges were adorned with gold, and inlaid with ivory; the rowers were so many lovely youths, habited like cupids. The taste knew no fowl which it was not furnished with at that entertainment; the ocean provided it with fish, and the provinces of the empire with diversity of flesh: in short, every thing was there in plenty and perfection. I omit those

infamous houses erected on the banks, which were stocked with women of the best quality, and naked courtezans. The night itself contributed to the pleasure of his debauch; its shades were dissipated by an infinity of lights, and its silence agreeably disturbed by the harmonious concert of several kinds of music. Would you know what delight Nero took in all these things, and whether he departed satisfied from this entertainment? Consider only that he carried with him thither the memory of his crimes, and the sting of a bad conscience, and you will readily conclude that he had no real satisfaction throughout the whole entertainment; that he there felt the penitential whip; and that, though he appeared outwardly gay and brisk, yet he was inwardly tormented with horror and despair. If he had any joy, it was that of the Menades; he was obliged to his drunkenness for that little pleasure he enjoyed, and his happiness increased with the diminution of his reason. I conclude his whole retinue were under the same circumstances; for, I conceive, neither Seneca, nor Thraseus Pætus, nor Bareus Soranus, were of the number of the guests. They lived according to nature, amidst the corruption of a most profligate and degenerate age, and were consequently improper company for such a crew of debauchees. Doubtless, such only were present as endeared themselves to his conversation by a congruity of manners, such as spurred him on in his crimes, and pimped to his lusts. Before such he had no opportunity to blush, where an eager desire to excel each other in vice had stifled all manner of shame. Certainly, such vile wretches

were far from being happy: there was no finding a sound man in the whole company; pleasure could get no admittance into those breasts which lewdness had so entirely possessed. They were entirely governed by those passions which destroy the tranquillity of the mind, and, by consequence, were not in a condition to relish that pleasure we so much approve. Had our philosopher been present at this debauch, he would have declared the truth before Nero, and in the face of the whole world; he would not have feared death, which he held indifferent, but would have boldly expressed his mind after the following manner:

"Unhappy prince! how wretchedly are you deceived in believing pleasure is to be found in these excesses!—it is as far distant from them as you are from life's truest happiness. You drag your misery along with you in all places, wheresoever you go; and, do what you will, you cannot hide yourself one moment from your conscience. Cover your table with meats yet more delicious than those it now abounds with; add the richest wines of Greece and Italy, or the whole world; nay, heap up all that luxury and lust can think of and invent,—yet you will find nothing in all these things to afford you satisfaction; for, though your body be satiated, your mind will still be in search after pleasure. These are not the things which render life happy: it is Prudence alone which directs you to the sovereign good; it is she only that will teach you to regulate your desires according to nature; and in this rule it is that you will meet with what you cannot find in your disorders: if any thing be wanting, turn your eyes

towards that common mother, and she will give you easily wherewith to be content. Are you thirsty?—she hath every-where placed rivers and springs where you may quench your thirst: hungry?—places where you will find fruits to live on. If you are not satisfied with these things, you will never be satisfied with all your excesses. Consult your hunger and your thirst, they will find delights for you in the simplicity of nature, and bread and water will serve you instead of the best dish upon earth you can call to mind, when you are in necessity: but now you are not, so you give no time to your stomach to digest your meat; your intemperance daily contracts crudities, and accelerates the hour of that death which terrifies you with such dismal apprehensions. Thus, you make feasts which afford you no pleasure, because you strain nature, forcing it to obey your desires. But know this, your desires interfere with your nature, and the errors of your mind darken the light of your reason; wherefore, flatter not yourself with tasting pleasure, as you fondly imagine. There is nothing bounded but in nature; whatever is repugnant to nature is infinite, and consequently above us. Ambitious subjects aspire to crowns; if they became kings, they would aim at being sole monarchs of the earth; if monarchs, they would wish for incense and sacrifices: and the fable of the giants informs us, that the earth hath dared to contend with heaven for its dominion. It is the same with other evil appetites; none can be happy but he that knows how to govern them, and, as it belongs only to a wise man to undertake that province, so it only belongs to him

to sway the universe. He only can extract pleasure out of all these things; he alone useth delights soberly, and possesseth them in their true perfection. For your part, you dishonour the race of Augustus, and are the infamy of mankind, over whom the anger of the gods hath given you the command: but, do what you please, you will always be miserable; your grief will harrass you at all times, and in all places; you will never steal one moment from your conscience; and, in the midst of all your good cheer, you will drink no wine but what shall represent to you the blood of those innocents which your cruelty hath shed on one base pretence or other."

Thus would Epicurus have delivered himself; thus would he have justified his philosophy, and thus reproved that emperor's most abominable vice and folly. But, as it is impossible that the mind should truly relish pleasure, if the body, her companion, labour under any affliction, Epicurus, or rather truth itself, teaches that privation of corporeal pain is a very necessary composition in that supreme good or felicity of life which pleasure doth produce; and, in truth, there is so close an alliance between the body and the mind, that their pleasures and their sufferings are inseparable. The mind cannot be entirely happy whilst pain afflicts the body; neither can the body retain its vigor, if the mind be afflicted and disturbed. Hence, it evidently appears that the sum of all pleasure consists only in the removal of pain, or in that state which follows upon that removal; for, wherever pleasure is, there can be nothing of anxiety or pain; and, consequently, it must be a great pleasure not to

be in pain. Let the Stoics boast as much as they please of the insensibility of their sect, and that rigorous virtue which mocks pain, one fit of sickness will fully convince them that their bodies do not centre with their opinion, and that their discourses, though most eloquent and sublime, are neither agreeable to truth nor human nature.

It will not be amiss to illustrate this assertion with a suitable example; and the same shall not be taken from the crowd of pretending philosophers. I will make use of a name the Stoics themselves shall not scruple to admit, and pitch upon a person whose virtues they never doubted of: Hercules shall bear witness to the truth of what I assert; that Hercules whose labours have gained him a seat amongst the gods, and rendered him so glorious to men that the poets have always made choice of him as a perfect instance of the force and power of wisdom. We will take a view of this hero dying, and consider him in the last actions of his life. This invincible man's exit, we expect, should be like his entrance, illustrious in performing something worthy of his character; that he should say nothing which would sully his noble actions, or seem unworthy of his former virtue. But, alas! we are deceived: the strength of his pain overcomes his courage; his constancy yields to the heat of that poison which devours him; he does not only complain,—he weeps, he cries, he howls; and it is with the utmost effects of rage and despair that he quits this life to take his place among the gods. Let not the Stoics then talk any longer of their insensibility, nor pretend that a wise man may be happy in

the midst of tortures; neither let them despise pain, to which, after so many victories, Hercules himself was forced to yield.

But, if the Stoics, in favour of this their darling hero, reject the authority of poets and the consent of theatres, as representing Hercules contrary to the truth,—Possidonius, master to Cicero, and by him styled the greatest of the Stoics, will serve as an illustrious example to prove the truth of my assertion. Here we shall see a main pillar of the (στόα) porch staggered, and, by consequence, the whole fabric ready to fall. Pompey the Great, understanding that this famous philosopher lay grievously tormented with the gout, made him a visit, to see whether so great a master was able to bear that pain with the same ease, when afflicted, as he contemned and despised, by his florid harangues, when in health. The philosopher was surprised at the presence of so noble and unexpected a guest; and, judging that the true cause of his coming was something more than a friendly visit, he bore the violence of his pain with the utmost uneasiness; and, though the extreme agony thereof made the sweat trickle from him in abundance, yet, obstinately resolving not to contradict his former doctrine, either by words or groans, before so great a witness, in the midst of his pain he cries out, "I never will own you to be an evil:" by which expression he only confirmed his noble guest in his former opinion,—that the doctrine of the Stoics consisted more in haughty and vain-glorious expressions, than a right conformity to truth and reason. Cicero comes in as a full proof of this wise man's weakness

and inconsistency: "I have seen," says he, "Possidonius, the greatest of the Stoics, have as little power to undergo the pains of the gout as my host Nicomachus;" a person whom Tully accounted an ordinary sort of fellow.

As I have given an instance of Hercules in his last moments, that I may fully dispatch this point, I will examine that grand question of the Stoics. What think you of Hercules and Theseus, whose lives were one continued series of glorious labours, which if they had not undertaken, the earth had been overrun with monsters and injustice? By which question, it is undeniably evident that the Stoics are nothing more than vain ignorant pretenders and blind guides, who lead their admirers on in a wild-goose chace, from which they have heaped nothing but confusion, and made themselves ridiculous to all ages: for, had they understood the matter aright, or had they not been blinded with pride and arrogance, they would readily have perceived that the actions of these brave men were so many shining proofs of the truth and excellency of the Epicurean doctrine; for as much as all their great and glorious labours were undertaken and performed by them in order to obtain that pleasure which our philosopher, with so much reason, affirms to be the sovereign good and true felicity of life. Nature hath dispersed pleasure through all her actions; she useth it as a motive and assistance to us, in doing every thing that is good and commendable; and its recompence when done, according to that received and approved axiom—Virtue is its own reward. Man's life is full of misery,

and, were not our passions to be sweetened with pleasure, they would end in grief or despair; we should be pressed to death under the load of our misfortunes; and, losing all hope of conquering our enemies, we should likewise lose the desire of resisting them. To heighten our courage, therefore, this wise mother solicits us by pleasure, and, proposing that to us as a full recompense of all our labours, encourageth us to despise difficulties and banish fear; for, though the mind of man be naturally ambitious, yet would she not attempt to obtain virtue and subdue vice, were there not as much pleasure as glory in the action; or, to speak more properly, were there not an inward, excellent, and inexpressible pleasure attending every such glorious attempt.

The pleasure which our philosopher recommends is the enjoyment of a real pleasing good,—such as fills the soul with content, swallows up desire in fruition, and banisheth sorrow and fear; so that he excludes from thence all those false delights which spring from indulgence, or end in sorrow; for, as they are desired with so much anxiety as far exceeds the pleasure they promise, they are such enemies likewise to our peace, that it is impossible to taste of them without disordering our nature: they wound at once both our soul and body,—they weaken the one, and corrupt the other; they are worse remedies than the evils they would cure; they are constantly attended with repentance, sorrow, and shame, and dare not appear to public view,—for, being conscious that they lessen our reputation, they seek the shade, and court solitude and silence; they would blush,

were they forced to discover themselves, and confusion would so overwhelm them that all their joy would be turned into bitterness and mourning. The solid pleasures are those of the mind; and man cannot enjoy peace and tranquillity, unless his noblest part be composed and happy. The knowledge of truth and practice of virtue ought to be his chief delight; he must remember that the body is the soul's slave, and that, in choice of pleasures, it is reasonable that the sovereign have the preference. Those which the soul relisheth are the truest; and, if any man be of another opinion, we may conclude him void of reason, sense, and understanding. The pleasures of the senses are limited, whereas those of the soul have no bounds; the pleasures of the body are strangers, those of the soul are natural; the former may be taken from us without great difficulty, but death itself cannot deprive us of the latter, which, though it rob us of our riches, cannot rob us of our virtues. The pleasures of the body are transitory and dangerous; but the tranquillity of the mind produceth true and solid content, and is a permanent and essential good.

Now, though we do esteem pleasure as a real good, and pain a real evil, yet we do not affirm that we ought always to pursue the one and avoid the other; for it may be convenient for us, at times, to suffer pain, that we may afterwards enjoy more abundant and satisfactory pleasure; and to abstain from some pleasures, lest they draw upon us more grievous pain,—for some things there are, which, though they yield some pleasure, yet are they of such

a nature as to occasion pains much greater than themselves. It was this maxim that made Regulus put himself again into the hands of his enraged enemies, where the cruelties of his tormentors were less painful to him than his remorse would have been, had he broke his faith and promise. It was this maxim that made Fabricius despise the offered treasures of the King of Epirus, whereby he lost also those evil desires which attend the possession of riches, and preserved to himself that repose of mind which is the chief of pleasures and supreme good. To this maxim may be referred all those great deeds and commendable actions done by the heroes of former ages. You will find that, if they at any time embraced pain, it was to avoid a much greater; or, if they refused some pleasures, it was, by such abstinence, to obtain others much more solid and satisfactory: for to what other motive can we ascribe those their illustrious actions. They would not have turned their backs upon riches, embraced poverty, or hunted after enemies, difficulties, and pain, had they not found therein that pleasure which is the only solid good and perfection of a happy life. Hercules and Theseus had never done such great things for mankind, had they not taken pleasure in doing good, though it were attended with pain and labour. Regulus had never returned to Carthage, had he not rightly considered that breach of faith would have tormented his mind with more exquisite and durable pains than any his body could endure. Neither had Fabricius rejected the royal offer of Pyrrhus, had not wisdom convinced him that there

was more pleasure in an honest undefiled poverty, than was consistent with such riches as were to be gained by sacrificing his honour to the enemy of his country.

These great men, it is true, were not, as we can find, the professed disciples of Epicurus; but it is sufficient that whatsoever is praiseworthy in their examples is to be found in the doctrine of our philosopher; and the world may know that it was not virtue alone which was the motive to their glorious actions,—or, at least, what they called virtue ought more rightly to be called pleasure. And yet out of our wise man's school have proceeded spirits truly heroic, who, in the midst of a corrupt age, have performed actions as highly honourable as any we have or can mention. Under the reign of Nero, the world admired as much the death of Petronius as that of Seneca. The emperor's tutor gained no glory by dying, which was not equally bestowed upon the arbiter of his pleasures; and the general opinion was that the Stoic, who had always preached up a contempt of life, did not quit it more generously, or with a braver resolution, than Petronius, who had courted all its pleasures.

I will not omit, therefore, for the honour of Epicurus, to give you a short account of the life and death of this his great disciple, who, without offence, may be ranked amongst the bravest and most illustrious of men. Petronius became a courtier under the reign of the Emperor Claudius, where, following the methods of the court, he became insensibly luxurious; though, at the same time, it was observed that

he took no delight in the brutal pleasures of love, like Mesalina, nor in those of the table and drunkenness, like Claudius; only, in a gallant and delicate manner, took a relish of both, rather to gratify his curiosity than indulge his senses. In this manner, he employed a part of the day in sleeping, and dedicated the night to business and pleasure. His house was the rendezvous of the better sort of people at Rome, with whom he spent his time agreeably, and in the most charming pleasures,—not like a prodigal or debauchee, but like a nice and learned artist in the science of voluptuousness. Having thus passed away his youth in a life of softness and tranquillity, he resolved to convince those that doubted of his abilities that he was capable of the weightiest affairs in government: for, putting a stop to his pleasures, he accepted the office of proconsul of Bithynia; went into that province, where he discharged all the duties of his place with applause; and, having finished his employment, upon his return to Rome, was, by the Emperor Nero, in recompense of his services, made consul. This new dignity gave him a ready access to the emperor, who at first honoured him with his esteem, and afterwards with his friendship, in acknowledgment of the sumptuous entertainments he sometimes gave that prince, to refresh him when fatigued with the toil of state affairs. The consulate of Petronius being expired, without quitting the court, he re-assumed his first manner of living; and, whether it proceeded from his own inclination or a desire to please Nero, he soon became a confidant of the emperor, who could find

nothing agreeable to his humour but what was approved by Petronius. Thus, being possessed of the authority of deciding what might be acceptable, he gained the surname of Arbiter, as master and comptroller in those affairs. Nero, in the first part of his reign, acted like a prudent wise prince, and applied himself with care to the management of the state: however, Petronius observed that he was naturally inclined to lust and sensuality, and therefore, like an able politician, being in possession of his prince's mind, he seasoned it with honest delights, and procured him all the innocent charms imaginable, in order to remove the thought of seeking after others, which would have been more irregular and of worse consequence to the commonwealth. Things continued in this posture while the emperor kept himself within the bounds of moderation; and so long Petronius acted cheerfully under him, as intendant of his pleasures.

But the emperor, some time after, complying with his nature, changed his conduct, not only in respect to the public affairs of the empire, but in relation also to his more private and domestic affairs, to his sports and recreations. He listened to others rather than to Petronius; and, insensibly plunging himself into debauchery, he abandoned himself to his passions, and became as monstrous in his pleasures as before he had been nice and delicate. The high advancement of Petronius drew upon him the envy of all those who courted the prince's favour; and, of all others, Tigellinus, captain of the Petrorian guards, was a most dangerous rival. This man, from an

obscure birth, had in a short time, by his corrupt manners, gained an absolute sway over the emperor's temper; and, as he knew his blind-side perfectly well, he set himself seriously to bring about the ruin of his competitor, and by such means as very much endangered the ruin of the empire. The curious artful pleasures invented by Petronius were of a more refined nature than the gross debaucheries of Tigellinus; who, foreseeing that the credit Petronius thereby gained with the emperor would always be an obstacle to his designs, endeavoured, therefore, to possess himself entirely of the prince's heart, and engage him in the foulest brutalities: for Nero no sooner hearkened to the persuasions of Tigellinus, but he signalised his power by the deaths of Sylla and Rubellius Plautus, persons dreaded by them for their eminent virtues, and in great esteem and favour with the people. Thus, proceeding from one degree of infamy to another, he arrived at last to such an excess, that all manner of crimes were perpetrated by him. Our ancient favourite, thus supplanted in his employment by the artifices of a new one, and highly disgusted at the horrible actions he had seen, gave way to his successor, withdrew from court, indulged himself in the pleasures of a retired life, and then wrote that incomparable satyr, in which he so exactly represents the nature and character of Nero, and, under feigned names of lewd and vicious persons, exposed the vices of that infamous prince and court. Whilst Petronius thus lived in a retired tranquillity, Tigellinus laboured with all his power to destroy him, and to establish his own fortune upon

the ruin of his rival; for he greatly feared that, if Petronius were once re-instated in his master's favour, he might, by the means of honest pleasures, have restored Nero to himself, to the great blessing of all honest men, and the confusion of Tigellinus and others, his most flagitious panders. Knowing, therefore, that the prince was naturally inclined to cruelty, he insinuates that Petronius was too familiar with Stevinus not to be concerned in Piso's conspiracy; and, having suborned one of Petronius's slaves to swear against his master, to deprive him of all means to justify himself, he sends the greatest part of his domestics to prison. Nero was well enough pleased to find an opportunity of parting with a man who was become a check to his affairs; for the vicious cannot endure the presence of such whose sight reproaches them with their abominable practices. He readily received the accusation against Petronius, and ordered him to be apprehended at Cumes, when the emperor made a voyage thither, and Petronius should be one of the company: but, as it required time to deliberate whether they ought to put a man of his figure to death without clear proof of the crimes he stood charged with,—Petronius perceiving that his life was a burthen to his prince, and that he only wanted some colourable pretext to take it away, that he might no longer be the sport of slaves and villains, he resolved to die. However, that he might not give himself a precipitate death, he opened his veins, then closed them again, that he might have time to converse with his friends, who came to see him in his last moments; which he spent not in

discourses on the immortality of the soul, and those celebrated axioms which the pride of philosophers had invented to acquire glory and a vain opinion of constancy, but with the recital of curious pieces of poetry: and, to convince the spectators that he did not die, but only cease to live, he continued his ordinary functions,—took a particular account of the behaviour of his domestics, punished some, and rewarded others,—sate as usual at his table, and slept very quietly; insomuch, that he rather seemed a man in perfect health than one that was dying. At length, perceiving the time draw near of shaking off mortality, after using a little exercise, he fell into a calm and gentle slumber; so that his death, though violent, appeared to his friends as if it had been natural. Thus fell the great, the voluptuous Petronius, a sacrifice to the ingratitude of Nero and the ambition of Tigellinus. Boast no more, then, of the divine Socrates, and that constancy and firmness of mind wherewith he drank the poison,—Petronius yields not to him in the least particular: nay, Petronius may claim the advantage of having quitted a life infinitely more delicious than that of the Greek philosopher, with the same serenity of mind, and the same equality of countenance.

But there remains one objection still against Epicurus: his asserting the lawfulness and expediency of self-murder. This is certainly a very heavy charge; but it is plain, that in this, as in all others, his enemies have had more regard to the weight than the truth of the crime they charge him with, not considering that, at the same time, the

weight of the objection lay fuller upon themselves. Self-murder is undoubtedly a very heinous and abominable crime, if we consider it either as Christians or philosophers: it is a violation of the law of nature, and expressly repugnant to the law of God. That we may not, therefore, seem to justify that in our philosopher, which God, the church,—nay, moral philosophy itself,—so highly condemns, let us compare the doctrine and practice of Epicurus with the doctrine and practice of those who so vehemently exclaim against him; and, if I cannot fully clear him in this point, I shall at least prove that he was not single in his opinion, and that his enemies were much more guilty herein than himself. "Every man ought," says Epicurus, "to make it his care so to live that life may not be a burthen to him, and not to be willing to part with life till either Nature or some intolerable case call upon him to surrender it; and, in that case, we are to weigh seriously whether it be more commendable for us to stay till death come to us, or to go and meet it: for, though it be an evil indeed for us to live in necessity, yet there is no necessity for us to live in necessity,—since Nature hath been so kind to give us though but one door into the world, yet many doors out of it. But, although there be some cases so extreme that, in respect of them, we are to hasten and fly to the sanctuary of death, yet we are not to attempt any thing in that kind but when it may be done opportunely and commendably." Thus, you see in what limited sense our philosopher delivered this doctrine:—it is not to be pursued, unless some

intolerable case require it; nor then neither, except it may be done opportunely and commendably. And what is this intolerable case, which may justify a man voluntarily to leap over the battlements of life? Do his precepts any where shew it? No. Poverty it cannot be; for wise and bountiful Nature hath so provided against that, that those things which are necessary are easy to be procured; whereas, those things which are unnecessary are hard to come by. "If you live according to nature, you shall never be poor; if according to opinion, you shall never be rich: nature desires little,—opinion is never satisfied." Neither can it be when any pain whatsoever afflicts the body. "No pain is both intolerable and perpetual;" for if it be long, it must be light, and if great, short: it is either determined of itself, and succeeded, if not by an absolute indolence, yet by a very great mitigation; or it is determined by death, in which there can be no pain. Neither can it be when the mind is loaded or oppressed; for "discontent of mind is not grounded upon Nature, but upon mere opinion of evil; and it is reason alone which makes life happy and pleasant, by expelling all such false conceits or opinions as may any way disturb the mind." Why, then, doth Epicurus so highly extol that person, who, when some intolerable case calls upon him to surrender his life, leaps over the battlements of life bravely? To this I answer, our philosopher was of a modest, humble temper and disposition,—not positive and dogmatical, as his enemies generally were; and, therefore, though he had fully answered all the arguments which have ever

yet been made use of to justify that abominable crime, and had plainly demonstrated that it was ridiculous for a man, out of weariness of life, to fly to death as a sanctuary, when his own imprudence and irregular course of life are the only causes of that weariness. But, as our philosopher would not positively determine but that such extreme cases might at some time or other happen, for which philosophy could find no other or more proper remedy than death,—then, and then only, he encourages to dispatch, and leap over the battlements of life bravely: for neither is it fit for him who thinks of flight to sleep; nor are we to despair of a happy exit, even from the greatest difficulties, in case we neither hasten before our time, nor let it slip when it comes. And the practice of Epicurus fully evinces that he was very careful not to hasten before his time; for he endured the tormenting pains of the stone, and other most acute diseases, for many years together, with a most admirable patience and invincible courage, and waited till extreme old age gently put out his lamp of life.

On the contrary, if we enquire into the doctrine and practice of other philosophers, we shall soon find that the Stoics not only approved of it, but strictly enjoined men to embrace death voluntarily, and from their own hands. The doctrine you have from Cicero, who, in his treatise De Legibus, implicitly commends it in these words: "I judge that man worthy of condemnation who kills himself, if he do it neither by order of state, nor compelled by any intolerable or inevitable chance of fortune, nor

oppressed by any ignominy of a poor and miserable life;" and, in his Second Tusculan Question, he expressly enjoins it in these words:—"That rule ought to be observed in life which prevails in the Grecian feasts: either let a man drink, or let him leave the company; because a man should drink with the same freedom as others do, or go away, lest, being sober, he should be abused by his drunken companions: so, if you cannot bear the injuries of fortune, you ought to avoid them by flight." Agreeable hereunto was their practice: for thus Zeno, father of the Stoics, a man of the most spotless character of any of the philosophers, having by a fall bruised one of his fingers, interpreted it as a summons to the grave, went presently home and hanged himself, and was therefore, by Diogenes Laertius, honoured with this eulogy:—"A most happy man, who, safe, sound, and without disease, departed this life." Thus Demosthenes, to prevent being beholden to any one but himself either for his life or death, drank poison out of that quill which had given him immortality long before. Thus also Democles, to prevent his pollution by the unnatural heat of a lustful Greek tyrant, who attempted to force him, leaped into a copper of scalding water; and thus Cleanthes, Chrysippus, and Empedocles, brake open the gates of death, and forced their passage into another world. To these we may add the memorable examples of that prince of Roman wisdom (as Lactantius calls him), Cato, who, with his own hands and sword, opened a flood-gate in his bowels to let his life flow out, having the night before prepared

himself to fall bravely, by reading Plato's Discourse on the Immortality of the Soul; and of the famous Cleombrotus, who, upon no other inducement than Plato's reasons in the same Discourse, threw himself from a precipice, as if he went instantly to experience the truth of what he had so lately read.

From all that hath been said, we may at length conclude that Epicurus was a person of a sublime wit and profound judgment,—a great master of temperance, sobriety, continence, fortitude, and all other virtues,—no patron of impiety, gluttony, drunkenness, luxury, or any other intemperance; that he was the greatest of all philosophers; that the doctrine which he taught was of all others the most conducible to a happy life, and such as none besides himself ever taught by the pure light of Nature. Nay, though Epicurus and his doctrine have been exploded and rejected, through the ignorance of some and the malice of others, I will not be afraid to say, that good and pious Christians are the truest Epicureans: they only have a right notion of that undeniable truth which he so strenuously inculcates, viz.—that all felicity consists in pleasure; they only know, that to exercise oneself, to have a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man, is a practice full of pleasure in this life, and will be rewarded with inexpressible and eternal joys in the world to come. Whereas, on the other hand, the consciousness of an ill-spent life is a constant and inseparable tormentor, which perpetually haunts and afflicts the guilty in this world, and will be a never-dying, ever-gnawing worm of misery to them in the

next. In short, if we do not, with Epicurus, place our happiness in pleasure, and run that race which is set before us with cheerfulness, it will be vain for us to expect to hear, at the last day, that joyful salutation of our great Captain and Saviour,—" Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

A BRIEF, BUT CORRECT SKETCH

OF

THE LIFE OF ISOCRATES.

Isocrates, a celebrated orator and moralist, was the son of Theodorus, a rich musical instrument maker at Athens. He was taught in the schools of Gorgias and Prodicas; but his oratorical abilities were never displayed in public, and he was prevented by an unconquerable timidity from speaking in the popular assemblies. He opened a school of eloquence at Athens, where he distinguished himself by the number, the character, and the fame of his pupils, and by the immense riches which he amassed. He was intimate with Philip of Macedon, with whom he regularly corresponded; and to his familiarity with that monarch the Athenians were indebted for some of the few peaceful years which they passed. The aspiring ambition of Philip, however, displeased Isocrates; and the defeat of the Athenians at Cheronæa had such an effect upon his spirits, that he did not survive the disgrace of his country, but died, after he had been four days without taking any aliment, in the ninety-ninth year of his age, about 338 years before Christ.

Isocrates has always been much admired for the sweetness and graceful simplicity of his style, for the harmony of his expressions, and the dignity of his language. The remains of his orations extant inspire the world with the highest veneration for his abilities as a moralist, an orator, and, above all, as a man. His merit, however, is lessened by those who accuse him of plagiarism from the works of Thucydides, Lysias, and others, seen particularly in his panegyric. He was so studious of correctness, that his lines are sometimes poetry. The severe conduct of the Athenians against Socrates highly displeased him, and, in spite of all the undeserved unpopularity of that great philosopher, he put on mourning the day of his death. About thirty-one of his Orations are extant. Isocrates was honoured, after death, with a brazen statue, by Timotheus, one of his pupils, and Aphareus, his adopted son. The best editions of Isocrates are that of Battie, 2 vols. 8vo. Cantab. 1729, and that of Auger, 3 vols. 8vo. Paris 1782.—Plut. de 10 Orat. &c.—Cic. Orat. 20 de Inv. 2, c. 126. in Brut. c. 15. de Orat. 2, c. 6.—Quintil. 2, &c.—Paterc. 1. c. 16.*

* In the former edition of Isocrates, translated by Digby, there was no Life of him given by the translator, but which the editor of the present conceived necessary to prefix to the work of so great and good a character.

THE MORALS OF ISOCRATES,

IN HIS

ADVICE TO DEMONICUS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK, BY MR. DIGBY.

We are going, Demonicus, to discourse of things that will afford us an opportunity of distinguishing between good and bad men, in reference to their sentiments. There is a world of difference between them, even in their conversation and behaviour; for the one has only a regard to his friends when he is with them, the other loves them at ever so remote a distance: the friendship of the one is destroyed in a little time, the other seems to be permanent and lasting; as it is natural then to think that they who are in pursuit of virtue and honour will take for their patterns the virtuous, rather than the wicked. I present you with this discourse as a distinguishing token of our mutual friendship, and a clear demonstration of the familiarity I had with Hipponicus; for children are not only entitled to their paternal estate, but also to the friendship and intimacy of their parent's acquaintance.

Now I have the comfort to see not only Fortune willing to favour our design, but opportunity likewise to declare itself for us. For you seem desirous of

instruction, and I make profession of instructing; you are in pursuit of wisdom and philosophy, and I take upon me to guide and direct in those studies.

They who write to their friends exhortatory discourses, discharge a very good office and do a very good deed; but that, notwithstanding, is not the chief task of philosophy: for they who inform youth not only how to attain to a powerful and persuading style, but how to correct their lives and manners, are by so much the more useful to their disciples than the others,—that those teach them only how to speak, while these inform them how to live. We, therefore, not finding any real occasion for the first part, and having chiefly in view the latter, shall take upon us only to advise you in reference to those things, to the prosecution of which youth ought to be spurred up and excited, and those which they ought chiefly to decline and shun; and at the same time to prescribe what persons they ought to pitch upon for their conversation, and how they ought to dispose and economise their life: for they alone who have followed this track have been able truly to attain to virtue, than which there is not a more estimable nor equally valuable good. As for beauty, it is either destroyed with time or impaired by sickness; and for wealth, it is more subservient to wickedness than honesty and virtue, for it not only promotes idleness, but enables youth to pursue their pleasures; and though strength, governed by wisdom, is a blessing of great use, yet without that it is more pernicious than beneficial; and, as it may be said to be an ornament to wrestlers and other practitioners in that kind, so it

may be said to hinder and obstruct the improvement of the mind: whereas, virtue alone, if it has taken due rooting and increase in our hearts, does accompany us even in our old age, is more profitable to us than riches, and more advantageous than birth and nobility,—for she alone makes that possible to her followers which all others find impossible; they undergoing with fortitude what appears terrible to the multitude, ranking laziness among those things we ought to blame, and labour and industry among those we ought to praise. This we may plainly learn from the mighty labours of Hercules, and from the great achievements of Theseus. The known virtue of these great men has stamped such a noble character upon their performances, that time itself can never impair it. If you do but reflect on your father's way of living, you will find in that a noble and domestic instance of the truth of what I say; for he neither neglected virtue nor passed his days in idleness and sloth, but inured his body to labour and his mind to undergo perils and dangers: he had neither an inordinate nor unseasonable love for wealth, but enjoyed the present good as being mortal, and took care at the same time of his substance, as if he had been immortal. He did not live after a sneaking, niggardly manner, but honourably and magnificently, and was bountiful to his friends, perferring those that were diligent and serviceable to him even to his relations by blood. He was of opinion that, in contracting a familiar friendship, nature was to be considered preferably to law, morality before lineage, and a judicious choice before necessity. It would

be an endless work to relate all his actions, and we shall account for them exactly at another time.

We have here given you a copy of Hipponicus' natural disposition, which you ought to take for a rule in the regulating of your life, making his practice your law, and endeavouring to be a zealous emulator of your father's virtue.

It would be a shameful thing that painters should be able to come up to the perfectional beauties of animals, and that children should not make it their business to imitate the distinguishing virtues of their parents. Be convinced, therefore, that no Athlete ought to prepare himself more against the encounter he is to have with his adversary, than you to strive to come up to a par with your father in his excellent study and endeavours. Now, it is impossible you should execute this, unless your mind is filled with due preparatory instructions; for, as the strength of the body is increased by proportionable labour, so the soul is fortified by proper and virtuous discourses.

Wherefore, I shall endeavour, in a succinct and short manner, to lay before you the means by which you may, at the same time, not only attain to the most consummate virtue, but likewise gain the general applause of all mankind. Let this, then, be your first rule,—not only to venerate the gods by sacrifice and worship, but to observe religiously your oaths; for, as that implies a plentiful estate, this is a testimonial of real honour and virtue.

Be careful, then, constantly to pay your duty to God in private, but never omit it in the public worship; by which means you will show yourself to

venerate the gods, at the same time to have a due regard to the laws.

Let your carriage and behaviour to your parents be such as you would wish your children should be towards you.

Exercise your body not to improve your strength, but so far forth as tends to the procuration of your health. You may propose to come up to this, if you moderate your labour so that you still are capable of doing more.

Neither applaud an impertinent laughter, nor close in with a rash discourse; for the one is foolish, and the other madness.

Never think that that can be spoken with decency which modesty is ashamed to act. Do not affect a demure or severe look, but always have a presence of mind: for by the one you will appear self-conceited, by the other always wise.

Esteem that most to become you which is decent, modest, just, and temperate; for in these chiefly consists the morality of youth. Never consent to do a shameful act by the hopes you may conceive that it may never be known; for, though you conceal it from others, you will still be conscious of it to yourself.

Love God, and honour your parents.*

Have a modest and due respect for your friends, but be obedient to the laws.

* This precept is agreeable to the law of nature and of reason, and such as Christ inculcated above three hundred years after Isocrates.—EDITOR.

Pursue those pleasures only that are accompanied with honour and glory; for that pleasure which has virtue for its companion is a valuable good,—whereas, without it, it is a detestable evil.

Be careful to avoid the occasions of being aspersed in your reputation, though you know they are lies you are charged with; for, as a great many will be ignorant of the truth as to fact, so they will be liable to be imposed upon by rumour and report.

In all you do, imagine every-body will know it; for, admit you could keep it a mystery for a while, it will be at last unfolded and made public.

You will gain a confirmed reputation, if you are known to avoid those actions you censure and blame in others.

If you are a lover of learning, you will acquire great knowledge.

Those things you have attained the knowledge of must be retained by practice, and at the same time you must take care to inform yourself of those things of which you are ignorant.

It would be as great a shame not to learn an useful discourse, as not to receive a good present which your friends should make you.

Spend your leisure hours in hearing good discourses: by so doing, you will learn, with ease and facility, what has cost others a great deal of labour and pains to find out.

Set a greater value on the having received many instructive and useful lessons, than on the possessing great store of wealth: for the one is a fleeting, perishable, and transitory good; the other is durable,—

nay, everlasting. Among all the things this world affords us, the possession and enjoyment of wisdom is alone immortal.

Do not think much to take a long journey, to hear those who make profession to teach useful and profitable things: for it would be a shameful and foul reflection, that merchants should undertake such tedious voyages by sea for the lucre only of increasing their wealth, and that youth should repine at a little land-journey to refine their notions and cultivate their mind.

As to your behaviour, be affable and easy of access, and let your language be courteous and civil: the one requires you should take notice of those you meet; the other, that you should speak obligingly to them. But be sure to carry it handsomely to all in general, though you converse familiarly but with the best; by which procedure you will disoblige nobody, and be certain of the esteem and friendship of men of merit.

Let not your visits be too frequent to the same persons, nor your discourse too long on the same subjects; for there is a satiety of all things.

Enure yourself to voluntary labour, that you may be the better able to undergo what necessity shall lay upon you.

Take special care to govern and suppress whatever can be the least blemish to a handsome mind,—as sordid gain, anger, voluptuousness, and grief.

You will compass this, if you esteem that the greatest gain which procures you a good reputation, rather than that which augments your wealth: you

will conquer anger, if you behave yourself towards offenders as you would have others behave themselves to you when you transgress :* and you will bid fair to get the better of pleasure, if you frequently reflect how shameful it is to have the command over your servants, and at the same time be a slave to your passions; and you will master affliction, if you seriously look into other men's misfortunes, and at the same time consider that the condition of man renders you liable to the same.

Be no less exact in keeping the secrets entrusted to you, than you would be faithful in reference to deposits of the greatest value; for a good and virtuous man's morals should gain him more confidence and credit than any oath.

As you ought to distrust the vicious, so you ought to believe the virtuous. Never reveal your secrets to any, except it is as much their interest to keep them as it is yours that they should be kept. If an oath be tendered you, take it on two accounts,—either to clear yourself from any crime laid to your charge, or else to free your friends from danger: but never, for the sake of riches, swear by any god, although you might do it with a safe conscience; for, by so doing, you will be thought perjured by some, while others think you avaricious.

Never contract a friendship with any-body till you have first examined how he behaved himself to his former friends; for you will have good reason to hope that he will be the same to you as he was to

* Vide 24th Moral of Confucius; Matt. vii. 12; Luke vi. 31.

them. Take sufficient time before you profess yourself a friend; but, that once done, endeavour to be always such: for it is equally shameful to have no friends at all, and to change them often.

Do not try your friends to your prejudice, and yet at the same time take care to know their disposition towards you. You will easily do this if you put on necessity when you really do not want, and communicate things to them as secrets that in fact are not so; by which means you will be sure to receive no damage from their infidelity, if they are false; and, if they are faithful, you will thereby discover their integrity.

You may make a trial of your friends in the misfortunes that attend life, and by their sharing in your dangers; for, as we try gold by the fire, so we distinguish our friends by adversity.

You will discharge yourself best of your duty to your friends, if you do not wait till they apply to you; but freely, and of your own accord, relieve and assist them when occasion requires.

Think it as dishonourable to be outdone by your friends in good offices, as to be overcome and worsted by the malice and evil practices of your enemies.

Do not reckon them only to be your friends who grieve at your misfortunes, but likewise those who do not envy your prosperity; for a great many will express concern when their friends are afflicted, who shall look with an invidious eye on the liberalities of an indulgent fortune.

Speak kindly of your absent friends to those

that are present, that they may not think you are unmindful of themselves when they are absent.

Be decent in your apparel, but not foppish. Now, he that keeps up to decency may be splendid in his apparel; whereas, the fop shall be extravagant and whimsical.

Do not covet a superfluity of riches, but the enjoyment of a competency. Entertain a mean opinion of those who are continually heaping up wealth, and yet know not how to make use of what they have; for it fares with these men just as it does with those that possess a fine horse, without having the skill to ride him.

Endeavour to acquire wealth, that it may be useful to you, as well as possessed by you. Now, it is useful to those who relish the fruition thereof; whereas, it is barely a possession to those who know not how to make a right use of it.

Set a due value on the riches you are master of, for two reasons: the one, that you may be able to pay a large fine if it be requisite; the other, that you may have wherewith to relieve a friend in distress. As for the other regards of life, love them with moderation, and not excess.

Be contented with what you have, and seek at the same time to make the best improvement of it you can.

Never upbraid any one with his misfortunes, for fortune is common to all, and nobody can see into futurity.

Do all the good you can to virtuous and good men; for a good office done to a man of worth and merit is a noble treasure.

If you oblige unworthy men, you will be requited as they are who feed other people's dogs; and, as these bark as well at those that feed them as at strangers, so those are apt to injure as well their benefactors as their enemies. Be as much averse to flatterers as to sycophants and impostors; for both the one and the other are equally pernicious if believed.

If you admit for friends those that gratify and encourage your wickedness, you will dishearten any one from incurring your displeasure on the score of virtue.

Let your behaviour towards them that approach you be familiar and obliging, and not stiff: they are very different personages; for the haughty carriage of the one can hardly be borne with even by their own domestics, while the other's engaging way is pleasing to every body. Now, you will show yourself courteous, and win the good will of every one, if you are not captious, quarrelsome, and hard to be pleased by those you converse with: in order to which, you must not oppose too roughly those whom passion and anger shall hurry away, though at the same time they are altogether in the wrong; but, on the contrary, give way to their transports, and when they are calm take an opportunity to remind them of their error. Never put on a serious and grave countenance when the jest is going round, nor affect levity and airiness where gravity is required; for whatever is ill-timed and unseasonable is vexatious. Above all things, take care not to do a good office after an ungraceful manner, as a great many do, who,

at the same time that they serve their friends, do it disagreeably and disgustfully. Avoid wrangling, because it is odious; and shun censoriousness, because it is provoking.

Have a special care how you associate with men of the bottle; but be sure, if occasion makes you fall into such company, to withdraw before the liquor gets the better of you: for he whose mind is overpowered with wine is like the chariot whose driver is cast out of the box; this going at random for want of the hand to guide it, and the other running all manner of risks and dangers for want of thought.

Have greatness of soul enough to relish immortality, and at the same time moderation enough to enjoy the transitory blessings Heaven has bestowed upon you.

Make a right estimate of the advantage education has over ignorance. They who are possessed of the one turn all to their advantage, while the others are generally mortified and afflicted; it frequently happening that they suffer, in fact, for what they have indiscreetly uttered.

Speak well of those you desire to make your friends before them you are sure will tell it to them again; for commendation is the beginning of friendship, whereas slander and backbiting is the source of hatred and enmity.

In point of counsel and deliberation, take examples of the past for the future; for what is dark and mysterious becomes plain and easy by what has already happened.

Take time to deliberate and advise, but lose no time in executing your resolutions. It belongs to Heaven to prosper our undertakings; but it is our business to consider what we do.

Those things you are ashamed to speak of with reference to yourself, and at the same time would be glad to advise with friends about, relate them as if they concerned others, and not you; by which means you will know the sentiments of those you consult, without discovering yourself.

When you have a mind to advise with any one concerning your private affairs, examine well first how he has managed his own: for he that has been faulty in the administration of his own concerns will never be able to advise well with reference to those of others. You will be most excited to consult and advise, if you seriously look into the miscarriages of temerity and rashness; for we then take the greatest care of our health, when the pains and tortures of our infirmities are fresh in our memory.

Imitate the manners of good princes, and practise their studies. Now, you shall seem to copy and emulate them, that you may improve your reputation with the public, and confirm the prince's good disposition towards you.

Be obedient to the laws of just princes, but look upon their manners to be more powerful than their laws: for, as he that lives under a democracy must observe the people, so it behoves him who lives in a monarchical government to admire the moral virtues of the prince. If you are placed in power, take care to make use of no ill men in the administration

thereof; for whatever they do amiss will be ascribed to you.

Do not make it your business to acquire vast riches in public employments; but take care to discharge them with so much integrity, that, when you leave them, you may do it with honour and reputation: for the esteem and favour of the public is much more valuable than wealth.

Neither be present at any evil action, nor protect any that shall be guilty thereof; for you will be thought yourself to act what you defend and patronise in others.

Procure to yourself as much power and interest as you can, and at the same time be contented to live upon the level with others, that you may appear to love and practise justice, not through want of power, but for the sake of decency and equity.

Prefer a just and honourable poverty to ill-gotten riches: for probity and justice are by so much preferable to wealth, that this is only of use to us while we live, while those do us honour even after our death; besides, the wicked may participate of that, while none but the virtuous can partake of these.

Do not rival those who thrive through wickedness, but rather approve and imitate them that suffer for the sake of justice; for the just have this advantage, at least, over the wicked, if no other,—that they exceed them in good hopes and expectancy.

Have a necessary regard to all that relates to the support of life, but cultivate your mind as much as you can; for a handsome mind is a noble thing, though shut up in a human body.

Enure your body to labour, and your mind to wisdom,—that by the one you may be able to execute your resolutions, and by the other determine what you ought to do for your advantage and interest.

Consider seriously with yourself to whomsoever you are to speak; for it is the fault of a great many to let their tongue out-run their thoughts.

Imprint this maxim deeply in your mind,—that there is nothing certain in this human and mortal state; by which means you will shun being transported with prosperity, and being dejected in adversity.

There are two seasonable times to speak, either on those subjects you know perfectly well, or on those that necessity puts upon you: now, it is in the latter that it is better to speak than be silent; in the other, it is better to be silent than talk.

It is allowable to be pleased with good fortune, and to be moderately grieved at afflictions; but never manifest yourself either in the one or the other: for it is preposterous and ridiculous that we should take the utmost care not to increase our riches, and at the same time expose our mind.

Be more cautious in avoiding any thing that is blameful and faulty, than of dangers and perils: for, as the wicked ought to be afraid of death, so the virtuous and good ought to fear doing any thing that is dishonourable.

Use your utmost endeavour to live securely; but, if you are at any time obliged to hazard your person, then seek no other safety during the war than what is consistent with honour and glory, and not that which

is attended with shame and infamy: for destiny has decreed that all men should die, but to die well is the particular privilege of the virtuous and good.

Do not wonder if a great deal of what I have said to you does not suit your age; for I am not insensible of that myself. But I chose, at one and the same time, to give you my advice concerning your present behaviour, and leave you precepts and directions to guide you hereafter. You will easily discover the utility of these things; but you will find it a difficult matter to meet with a faithful counsellor that shall advise you with tenderness and good will: therefore, that you may not be necessitated to have recourse to others, but may here find, as in a magazine, what you have occasion for, I thought it convenient to omit nothing that I was able to instruct you in. I shall give God a great many thanks if I am not deceived in the hopes I have conceived of you. As it is the common practice of most to delight rather in that food which gratifies their palate, than in that which is wholesome and salutary, so they seek the conversation of those friends that are co-partners in their vice, rather than of those who remind them of their faults: but I no-wise doubt but you have resolved to do quite otherwise. I ground my judgment on your diligence and labour in your other studies; for it is reasonable to believe that he that enjoins himself the practice of what is most commendable and best, will courteously receive from others their exhortations to virtue. It will be a mighty incentive to your prosecuting what is virtuous and honourable, if you duly consider that the

pleasure arising therefrom is genuine and unmixed. Sloth, idleness, and luxury, are followed close at the heels by vexations and trouble; whereas, a laborious and strict adherence to virtue, and a temperate, sober, and well-regulated life, render our pleasures more solid and sincere: those afford us at first some sort of satisfaction, which is afterwards succeeded by grief and sorrow; while the difficulties and uneasiness that accompany this is ever attended with delight. Now, in all our actions, when they are past, we are not so deeply affected with their beginning as we are sensibly touched with their conclusion and ending; for, generally speaking, the greatest part of the actions of our life are not transacted so much for their own sake as for the ensuing consequences thereof. Consider with yourself, that the vicious and wicked are capable of doing any thing, and stick at nothing, they having laid that as the ground and foundation of their way of living; but the honest and good cannot swerve from the rules of virtue, but they will immediately be censured, and find a great many reprovers. We are not, for the most part, so much incensed against transgressors and offenders, as we are against those that pretend to a more than ordinary virtue, and yet differ in nothing from the vulgar: and this with all the justice imaginable; for, since we, with reason, blame those that are unfaithful in their word and are given to lying, shall we scruple to condemn those who, through the whole course of their lives, have, under a specious appearance, practised nothing but vice? We may justly say of such a cast of men, that they are not only injurious to themselves,

but also that they are traitors to Fortune,—she having liberally bestowed upon them riches, honour, and friends, when, at the same time, they show themselves unworthy of her favours. If it be no crime for mortals to guess at the thoughts of the gods, I think they notify to us, by familiar examples, how differently they are disposed towards the wicked and the good: for Jupiter, having well weighed the actions of both Hercules and Tantalus, (as the mythologists tell us, and as it is generally believed, made the one immortal for his virtue, and adjudged the other to the greatest tortures. Now, they that look into these examples ought thereby to be spurred up to the practice of what is virtuous, and not be contented with what we have said, but likewise learn the best things the poets have expressed, and read whatever the wise and learned have written that is of any use: for, as we see the bee settle upon every flower, in order to extract from it the virtue and quintessence thereof, so ought they to do who covet to be informed and instructed: they must leave nothing unattempted, but gather from all parts what is for their use; for, with all this care, they will find it difficult and hard enough to overcome the viciousness of nature.

THE END.

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M/JAN