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THE  
MORALIST;

OR,

AMUSING AND INTERESTING  
DIALOGUES.

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Printed by T. PLUMMER, }  
Seething-lane, Tower-street. }





*See these little busy Creatures how they toil they  
are not altogether labouring for themselves*



THE  
MORALIST;  
OR,  
AMUSING AND INTERESTING  
DIALOGUES,  
ON  
NATURAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS  
SUBJECTS,  
CALCULATED  
TO AFFORD RATIONAL AND IMPROVING  
ENTERTAINMENT  
TO THE  
INGENIOUS YOUTH.



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BY THE AUTHOR OF *HAMLAIN*,  
*&c. &c. &c.*

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1799.







# INTRODUCTION. INTRODUCTION

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**T**HE propensity too prevalent in the minds of youth to relinquish grave and serious subjects in favour of such as are of a lighter and more amusing cast, makes it a difficult thing for pious parents, guardians, and others who have the oversight of youth, to find such books to present them with as may afford them that amusement they seek with such avidity, without hazarding any injury to their tender minds.



It is still a greater difficulty to meet with such books, as, at the same time that they invite their attention to serious and important subjects, do, by a sprightly and suspensive style, allure them to a cheerful and unwearied perusal.

An attempt at something like this, is to be found in the following conversations—original in their style, and as much so in other respects as can be expected from subjects obvious and common to other writers; these, with the select pieces interspersed, I trust are such as may be put into the hands of youth, with a reasonable hope, that



they can scarcely begin without going through with them, nor read them through without receiving some impressions that may tend to their solid advantage. I believe in these conversations, the sprightliest turns cannot be charged with levity, nor the most solemn with dullness; one of them may appear too important for a place amongst the rest, but to the writer there seemed a propriety in throwing this subject in the youthful reader's way; in some such form as this, and he hopes that young people of good sense and solid judgment, will be able to extend and improve the hints contained therein.



If the perusal should happily induce one youth to pause at the entrance, or another to retreat before he has advanced so far as to be bewildered in the mazes of sophistry, it will be matter of pleasing reflection to him, who sincerely wishes that they may be preserved out of those paths of uncertain speculation, which it is awful only to *suppose* may terminate in misery that knows no end.



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# DIALOGUES.

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## DIALOGUE I.

CLEANTHUS.

**I**F it is a fair question, what do you meet with to amuse you in that book?

CLEMENTIUS.

I am reading some select scripture passages.

CLEANTHUS.

I ask your pardon, Clementius; you are then rather devoutly than amusingly employed, and I will retire, that I may not interrupt you.



## CLEMENTIUS.

By no means, Cleanthus. I am rather amusingly than devoutly employed; yet I hope innocently, if not profitably so.

## CLEANTHUS.

I hope I respect the scriptures with due reverence; yet I confess, the Bible is the last book I should think of having recourse to for amusement.

## CLEMENTIUS.

That may be, Cleanthus; but you shall, if you please, hear and judge for yourself. The passage I was just reading is selected from the Psalms, and is sublimely and elegantly descriptive of the omnipresence and omniscience of our great Creator; and I think nothing but prejudice can withhold the praise due to it.—The words are these:

“ Whither shall I go from thy spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?  
If I ascend up into heaven; thou art there:  
If I make my bed in hell; behold thou art there:  
If I take the wings of the morning,



and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right-hand shall hold me:

“If I say, surely the darknes shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me; the darknes hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darknes and the light are both alike to thee.”

## CLEANTHUS.

This, indeed, is a passage wonderfully grand and beautiful.

## CLEMENTIUS.

Yes, Cleanthus; and it may be worth while to compare it with something to the same import, written by him who is often stiled the divine Plato, who speaking of the utter impossibility that a guilty person should be concealed or protected from the vindictive notice of divine justice, has these remarkable words:

“Thou wilt never be overlooked or



neglected by it, though thou be so small that thou sinkest into the depths of the earth ; or so lofty that thou fleest up to heaven ; whether thou continuest here or goest to Hades, or be carried to a more remote and terrible place \*.”

## CLEANTHUS.

It should seem that the author of these words had the sacred passage in view ; but whether they are the original effusions of his own mind, or an imitation of the royal psalmist, it is obvious that they fall very far short of it.

## CLEMENTIUS.

I think so too, Cleanthus, and I recollect an observation of a very eminent classical scholar, who declared it as his opinion, that in comparing the old classical writings and the holy Bible together, he thought the eloquence of Greece and Rome never appeared with such disadvantage as when

\* Plato's Phædo, p. 167, 168 ; the same De Leg. 10 p. 124.



thus compared with the superior and diviner sublimity of the prophets and apostles.

CLEANTHUS.

The instance of the two passages but now read, seems to corroborate this idea.

CLEMENTIUS.

And it has often struck me, that if such a comparison was made with some of the most approved passages in modern writings, they would also suffer much by the competition ; but you now see what kind of amusement I am pursuing.

CLEANTHUS.

And am much pleased with it. What other scriptural beauties does your selection afford ?

CLEMENTIUS.

Many ; but as they may be too long to enter into at this time, I will select two or three short ones, and leave the subject for your own future pursuit at leisure.—Here



then is one, in which I very much admire the figurative and poetic manner in which David expresses his full confidence in God, and which seems to favour not unpleasantly of that time, which he spent in tending his father Jesse's sheep in the wilderness,

“ The Lord (says he) is my shepherd ;  
I shall not want :

He maketh me to lie down in green  
pastures :

He leadeth me beside the still waters.”

And then, by a sudden transition, passes to that spiritual care which is the subject of his grateful and eloquent acknowledgments in the remaining part of this delightful hymn :

“ Thou refreshest my soul : thou leadest me in the paths of righteousness for thy name's sake : yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me : Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies : thou anointest my head



with oil: my cup runneth over: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

CLEANTHUS.

This is, indeed, another beautiful specimen, and encreases my desire to hear more.

CLEMENTIUS.

Well, then, suppose I give you an instance of David's abilities in elegiac poetry.

CLEANTHUS.

Do so, Clementius.

CLEMENTIUS.

The scripture then informs us, that Saul and Jonathan his son, David's beloved friend, fell in an unsuccessful engagement with the Philistines, near Mount Gilboa. On hearing the sorrowful tidings of which, it is said, that David took up this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son.

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places:

How are the mighty fallen!



Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the  
streets of Askelon ;

Left the daughters of the Philistines re-  
joice ;

Left the daughters of the uncircumcised  
triumph.

Ye mountains of Gilboa let there be no  
dew,

Neither let there be rains upon you,

Nor fields of offering :

For there the shield of the mighty was  
vilely cast away :

The shield of Saul as though he had not  
been anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain,

From the fat of the mighty,

The bow of Jonathan turned not back, and

The sword of Saul returned not empty :

Saul and Jonathan were lovely, and plea-  
sant in their lives :

And in their deaths they were not divided :

They were swifter than eagles :

They were stronger than lions :

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,



Who clothed you in scarlet with other delights,

Who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel :

How are the mighty fallen !

In the midst of the battle, O ! Jonathan,

Thou wast slain in thine high places :

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan,

Very pleasant hast thou been unto me ;

Thy love to me was wonderful,

Passing the love of women :

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished !”

CLEANTHUS.

You really surprise me, Clementius, with these instances of scripture elegance and sublimity.

CLEMENTIUS.

Yes ; and have we not a right to the same remark, which is constantly applied to other translations, viz. that it is not possible, especially in poetry, to preserve or



fully attain to all the beauties of the original; and I can assure you, that to hear this elegiac poem pronounced in the original language, even to a person who does not understand a word of what he hears, there is conveyed, in the sound only, a plaintive dignity and mournful grandeur, that is wonderfully affecting.

CLEANTHUS.

It is reasonable to suppose we lose some portion of the beauties of these passages of scripture in the translating of them?

CLEMENTIUS.

I will recite to you two or three instances of grandeur and magnificence in the scripture exordiums (or, commencements of subjects) and then, if you still are inclined to pursue this species of entertainment, I will attend you cheerfully at another opportunity, either here or any where else that is convenient to you.

CLEANTHUS.

I am much obliged to you, Clementius,



and shall be happy to embrace the offer whenever it may be consistent with your own convenience.

CLEMENTIUS.

What think you then of to-morrow, a little earlier than the present time, and in this place?

CLEANTHUS.

It is perfectly agreeable, Clementius.

CLEMENTIUS.

Well, then before we part, I will, as I proposed, repeat a sacred exordium or two, and then dismiss the subject. Among these, I think the manner in which Moses commences his prophetic and historical song, is worth our notice.—It runs thus :

“ Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak,  
 And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth:  
 My doctrine shall drop as the rain ;  
 My speech shall distil as the dew :  
 As the small rain upon the tender herb,  
 And as the gentle shower upon the grass,  
 For I will publish the name of the Lord.



Ascribe ye greatness to our God :

He is the rock :

His work is perfect ; for all his ways are  
just :

A God of truth, and without iniquity,  
Just and right is he.”

In a manner something similar to this,  
Isaiah commences his justly admired pro-  
phesy.

“ Hear, O heavens, and give ear O  
earth, for the Lord hath spoken.”

The lamentations of the mournful prophet  
Jeremiah is another instance of beauty in  
this kind, which begins thus :

“ How doth the city sit solitary that was  
full of people ?

How doth she sit as a widow !

She that was great among the nations,

And princess among the provinces,

How is she become tributary ?

She weepeth sore in the night ;

Her tears are on her cheeks ;



Among all her lovers she hath none to  
comfort her ;

All her friends have dealt treacherously  
with her.”

I will add but one more, though there are many other that are worth your while to look out yourself ; and which will, in my opinion, reward your application. This is taken from the New Testament—it is the apostle Paul’s introduction to his Epistle to the Hebrews, in which he is labouring to establish the superiority and excellence of the evangelical dispensation above the prophetic which immediately preceded it.—He begins thus :

“ God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds.”

This is an exordium, which, besides its



elegance and dignity, contains much more than may occur to a superficial reader. I have now, Cleanthus, fully answered your question respecting the amusement I met with in this book, and if you continue in the same mind, we will renew the subject at the proposed time: I must now bid you adieu.

## CLEANTHUS.

Dear Clementius, I am extremely delighted with these specimens of scriptural beauties; I am much obliged to you, and will, for the present, bid you adieu. Remember your appointment.

## CLEMENTIUS.

I will remember.



## DIALOGUE II.

GEORGE AND ALMIRA.

ALMIRA.

LET us take a walk into the garden, it will be very pleasant after this soft and gentle shower.

GEORGE.

With all my heart, Almira; the air will be agreeably cooled, and the sweet odours of the flowers will now exhale more copiously—the verdure of the leaves, and the beautiful tints of Flora's pictures, will be greatly heightened and improved by its means.

ALMIRA.

But tell me, George, why do the plants and flowers emit more liberally their grateful odours after a soft shower?



GEORGE.

And why should my Almira suppose me philosopher enough to answer such a question?

ALMIRA.

I did not know that my question required a philosopher to answer it, but be it so.

GEORGE.

I recollect reading something on this subject, which I will endeavour to give you as well as I can—the fact is supposed to be this: That all flowers, and leaves of aromatic plants have certain small globular vessels adhering to their surfaces, which contain this natural perfume; these vessels are composed of a substance sufficiently close to prevent this very subtle effluvia from escaping too suddenly, so that, by this means, it lingers longer in the air, and is not exhausted all at once, but keeps up a continual emission of these delightful odours. This is the general theory of the odiferous flavor of plants and flowers.



ALMIRA.

This seems very satisfactory as to the agreeable scent that proceeds from plants and flowers, but I do not yet perceive the reason why they perfume the air more powerfully after a shower.

GEORGE.

But I think, Almira, it will lead us to what we are seeking, if we consider that the hotter and drier the air is, the lighter it is; consequently, these fine particles will sooner ascend out of the reach of our smell, but the air, both before and after the rain, as well as during its continuance, is so heavy as to retard these particles in their ascent, and by this means the air is more abundantly charged with these delicate particles that escape when the air is lighter.

ALMIRA.

I am very well pleased with this account of the matter, and it also explains another circumstance which I have sometimes been



at a loss respecting; and that is, the scent of a flower, or aromatic leaf, is increased by touching, which, on this plan, must be owing to crushing these globules, and setting at liberty a greater quantity of this subtle vapour.

GEORGE.

Now, Almira, Who's the philosopher? I think I had more need to apply to you; I shall be careful in future how I expose myself by attempting to instruct you.

ALMIRA.

None of your jesting, or I shall propose another question to find you better employment.

GEORGE.

Perhaps there is no way of passing time that is more agreeable and improving than that of mutually proposing and answering questions, for it gains from others that knowledge which they may possess and we do not; it gives both parties an opportunity of refreshing their memories by put-



ting them on the recollecting of things which they once knew, and are liable to forget for want of practice; it calls forth the attention of the mind to subjects it has neglected, and by stimulating it to commendable researches, improves its energy; and lastly, it may often do us good in letting us down a few steps lower than the situation our vanity had raised us to, by shewing us how many things we are ignorant of, even among the most trifling and common occurrences in nature.

ALMIRA.

Your observations are very just, and I should like that this exercise should form a principal part of the amusement of our walks; and we can never be at a loss while there is a tree, a shrub, a leaf, an insect, or a grain of sand.

GEORGE.

Ah, Almira, there is none of these, not even the last and least you have mentioned, but contains inscrutable wonders.



If we were to reason from analogy, and begin with a tolerably sized pebble, and observing that it was covered with two or three external coats that differed in colour and texture from each other, as well as the internal substance differed from them; that there were here and there small corroded orifices, the habitations of insects: If we then proceeded downwards as long as our eyes would serve us on the occasion, and found things similar, we were then to conjecture, or infer by analogy, that the smallest grain of sand that we can observe, and some still smaller that the sight could not take cognizance of, had, in like manner, their little cavities, which afforded residence and shelter to animated matter, we should be apt to conclude that the reasoning of analogy was carried too far: But the matter is now put out of doubt, and such is the improvement of optical instruments, that a good microscope proves the fact by ocular demonstration. But the



formation of the parts of this *minute minutia*—its natural history—and the atom mountain whose cavern is its habitation, who shall tell!

## ALMIRA.

If, then, the smallest grain of sand be too much for the most acute philosopher to explore, how shall the human mind embrace and penetrate the mysteries of worlds on worlds in infinite perspective, and the vast space in which they move immeasurably distant from each other? Is it not then

“The fool that hath said in his heart there is no God?”

These things certainly agree in confirmation of this scriptural assertion,

“All thy works praise thee.”

## GEORGE.

These are just remarks, Almira; let us now turn our attention to the ornaments of the garden. What a beautiful variety is displayed in that assemblage of rich form



and colours! How beautiful that blushing rose appears enthroned, as it were, upon its mossy stem! and that fair lily that rears its head in such harmonious contrast! These, Almira, when presented by the flatterer's hand, though beautiful in themselves, are dangerous and infectious; but the more faithful moralist applies them as an antidote to the flatterer's bane,

“ Fair nymph,” he says, “ thyself survey  
 In this sweet offspring of a day,  
 That miracle of face must fail,  
 Thy charms are sweet; but charms are frail,  
 Swift as the short-lived flower they fly,  
 At morn they bloom, at ev'ning die;  
 Tho' sickness yet a while forbears,  
 Yet time destroys what sickness spares.”

ALMIRA.

These lines contain a needful caution, but I am inclined to think that personal vanity is not wholly confined to our sex: I think I have met with men who



have not been behind hand with the vainest of us in this respect.

GEORGE.

I grant it, Almira, and I also think it is more intolerable and disgusting, but we will consign each to time to effect their cure; if he should fail, death will infallibly succeed.

ALMIRA.

Well, we will leave them, and look with pleasure on these beauties that are perfect strangers to vanity. What an inexhaustible variety there is even in what we may call the floreal part of vegetation; I mean those plants in which the flower appears to be the most principal part. If we take the general form and size in the first place, in the next place the variety of films or petals, which compose the flower, what inexhaustible invention displays itself in such an almost infinite number of rich drawings, as the mere uncoloured outlines afford! When we add to this the astonish-



ing and rich variety of tints—the many curious circumstances in the curlings and indentings of the foliage that adorns the stems that support them, we seem to be lost in just astonishment at all these wonders of the vegetable tribe, and of which those distinguished by the name of flowers form but a very small part.

## GEORGE.

It is indeed wonderful, Almira; and which ever way we view the vegetable kingdom, as it is called, we must acknowledge it to be not only the original work, but the object of the conserving power and care of a being infinite in wisdom, unlimited in ability, and unbounded in his benevolence to man; for this their virtues clearly prove. Delightful to the sight and smell are the beauteous flowers; grateful to the taste, and very nutritive are the culinary plants; and thrice welcome to the sick, the faint, and wounded, are those which, from their salutary uses,



are called medicinal. When thus viewing the smaller and more minute parts of God's creation, we see the encouraging proofs of the tender regard and notice of the Supreme Being, in all these provisions for the workmanship of his hands ; and if David, in surveying the celestial wonders, exclaimed, " Lord, what is man !" seeming almost to intimate a doubt, whether the greatness of such a being could condescend so much as to look down upon the sons of men : When we find he has provided the smallest insect and worm with the means of attending to its wants and safety, we are led to hope, if he thus care for these, surely man is not beneath the notice of his maker !

## ALMIRA.

And how wonderful when we consider the simple secondary source of all these forms and colours is from waters !—for the earth perhaps contributes nothing but sta-



bility to the plant, and a reservoir to the water, where it may lodge so near the root as to be inhaled by its fibres, and thence through the stem transmitted to its extremities; that this operation should produce a regular mass, such as a turnip, or an apple, does not seem to astonish quite so much, but even this is knowledge out of our reach: But when we consider the delicate forms of some leaves, and the beautiful colouring of the flowers, all formed of this percolated moisture, we are indeed left in astonishment, and all terminates in this—to wonder and adore.

## GEORGE.

It was this consideration of God's providence that led the sweet singer of Israel to compose that beautiful hymn of praise, the 104th Psalm, which, if you please, we will now return to the house and read; we shall, perhaps, never relish its beauties more than at the close of employment like the present.



ALMIRA.

I approve very much of this propofal—  
let us return thither and find this pfalm.

GEORGE.

Here it is.

ALMIRA.

Read it if you please.

GEORGE.

There is one thing remarkable in David's songs of praise ; namely, that he almost always begins with ftirring up his foul to praise, in thefe words : “ Bles the Lord, O my foul ! ” and then proceeds—  
“ O Lord, my God, thou art very great :  
Thou art clothed with honour and majesty ;  
Thou covereft thyself with light as a garment :

Thou stretchest out the heavens as a curtain :

Thou makeft thy chambers in the deep ;  
The clouds are thy chariots,



And thou walkest upon the wings of the  
wind.

Thou makest thy angels spirits,  
And thy ministers a flaming fire.

Thou layedst the foundations of the earth,  
That it should not be removed for ever :

Thou coveredst it with the deep as a gar-  
ment :

The waters stood above the mountains :

At thy rebuke they fled :

They hastened away at the voice of thy  
thunder :

They rise up as mountains :

They sink down as vallies,

To the place thou hast founded for them :

Thou hast set a bound that they may not  
pass,

That they return not again to cover the  
earth :

Thou sendest the springs into the vallies,

Causing them to flow among the hills ;

These give drink to every beast of the field,

At these the wild asses quench their thirst ;



By these grow the spreading trees,  
The habitations of birds which sing upon  
their branches.

The hills are watered from thy \* chambers;  
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy  
works.

Thou causest grafs to grow for the cattle,  
And herb for the service of man,  
That he may bring forth food from the earth,  
And wine that maketh glad the heart,  
And oil that causeth his face to shine,  
And bread that strengtheneth man's heart.  
The trees of the Lord are full,  
The cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted;  
For there the birds make their nests,  
And the stork her house in the fir trees:  
The high hills are the refuge of the wild  
goats,  
And the rocks of the smaller beasts.

\* David is here consistent with himself, for he before called the deep, the chambers of God;—from these chambers, he says, the hills are watered, and the vallies by the streams which run from the mountains.



Thou appointest the moon for seasons ;  
The sun knoweth his going down ;  
Thou makest darkness, and it is night,  
Wherein all the beasts of the forest creep  
forth ;

The young lions roar after their prey,  
Even these seek their meat from thee ;  
The sun ariseth, and they return,  
And lay them down in their dens :  
Man goeth forth to his work,  
And to his labour, until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works !  
in wisdom hast thou made them all ! the  
earth is full of thy riches ! and so is this  
great and wide sea, wherein are things  
innumerable, both small and great.

There go the ships, and that Leviathan,  
Whom thou hast made to sport therein ;  
These all wait upon thee for their food,  
Which thou givest them in due season ;  
Thou givest them, and they gather,  
Thou openest thy hand, they are filled  
with good ;



Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ;  
Thou takest away their breath, and they  
return to dust :

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are  
created,

And thou renewest the face of the earth.

The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever!

The Lord shall rejoice in his works !

He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth !

He toucheth the hills, and they smoke !

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live,  
I will praise the Lord while I have my  
being ;

My meditation of him shall be sweet,

And I will rejoice in the Lord.

## ALMIRA.

This is truly beautiful ; and may all our  
observations on the wonders of creation  
end thus.



## DIALOGUE III.

MARIA AND LAVINIA.

MARIA.

**H**OW awfully tremendous was the last night's storm, my dear Lavinia!

LAVINIA.

Dreadful indeed, Maria. I tremble still at the recollection of its horrors; I still fancy that I hear the loud peals of thunder; I seem still to see the vivid flashes, that appeared to make darkness itself visible by contrast.

MARIA.

The sky still retains tokens of this furious contest of jarring elements, in the wild disorder of the agitated clouds; but the wind is now abated, and the light of day, tho' clouded, is more gratefully welcomed, after the lingering darkness of this



terrific night, than the brightest summer morn has ever yet been, after a night of calm and sweet repose.

## LAVINIA.

But what, Maria, must they have seen and felt, who have been exposed to all the terrors of the storm upon the foaming deep. These often come into my mind when I hear the boisterous winds, and I cannot help sympathizing with them in their distresses; and in thinking of them I recollect these descriptive lines of the Psalmist:

“ They that go down to the sea in ships,  
That do business in mighty waters,  
These see the works of the Lord,  
And view his wonders in the deep;  
For he commandeth the stormy winds,  
And they lift up the waves thereof;  
They mount up to the heaven,  
They sink down again to the depths;  
Their soul is melted because of trouble:  
They reel to and fro,



They stagger like a drunken man,  
And are at their wit's end :

Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble  
And he bringeth them out of their distresses ;  
He maketh the storm a calm,  
So that the troubled waves are still :

Then they rejoice because they be quiet,  
And are brought to their desired haven.

O that men would therefore praise the  
Lord for his goodness, and his wonderful  
works to the children of men !”

MARIA.

These are beautiful lines indeed, and  
very descriptive ; but I often think, Lavi-  
nia, why should our merciful Creator per-  
mit these fierce, and frequently destructive  
tempests, which often do much damage,  
both by sea and land.

LAVINIA.

Perhaps, Maria, I cannot answer you  
better than by another quere: “ Shall not  
the Lord of all the earth do right ?” That  
is as much as to say, Can any thing be



wrong that the Almighty himself does, or permits in the course of nature? And he that gave to man his life and being, shall he not recall his own gift where and how he pleases;—whether he choose to call by sudden death, by quick or slow disease, or it pleases him to summons us by the more awful means of the tempestuous storm?

## MARIA.

It is true, Lavinia, we have no right to question, but adore; and perhaps if we could in this see into the whole plan of providence, we should have to admire divine goodness, when awfully clothed in the wintry storms, as much as when more pleasingly arrayed in all the splendor of his summer glories.

## LAVINIA.

It is for want, Maria, of being able thus to view things, that we presume to call in question the ways of the Most High. But the storm is not always fatal to the mariner, as David observes,



they cry in their distress unto the Lord; and he stills the tempest, and brings them to their desired port. The number of vessels that perish in the storm is few in comparison of those that happily survive the tempest: But can we wonder when, after such delivery from danger, they no longer remember their tears and vows, but return again to blasphemy and forgetfulness of Him, who heard, and pitied their distress, that he should at length cease to deliver.

## LAVINIA.

When we thus view things, we may rather wonder at the forbearance of the Almighty, in that he does not oftener array himself in the awful tempest, and causing his lightning to go before him, plead with ungrateful man in the voice of thunder; but we are not to consider the storms and tempests as judgments unmixed with mercy, for the air, like the water, if it remain too long in a stagnant state, grows putrid and malignant: But how



clear and pure is the running stream!—it is so with the air; if it were not sometimes violently agitated with the winds and lightning too, it would soon contract some pestilential influence, that in a few days would produce more dismal effects than the storms of many years all put together. It is not, then, for poor creatures like us, so limited in our knowledge, to arraign the wisdom and goodness of our great creator; but reverently to adore him, who, in the midst of judgment remembers mercy,

MARIA.

This is the best conclusion we can come to, respecting things so much out of our reach.

We will now, Lavinia, if you please, just step across the moor, and see how our poor little cottagers fare; poor things! no doubt, they have been sadly terrified with this dismal storm. And they may, perhaps, have sustained some damages, which we can



easily assist them to repair ; though they themselves could never surmount them.— We will go, Lavinia, I just think I see the little innocents running to meet us with their astonish'd countenances.

LAVINIA.

But if any thing shall have happened to poor William ! if his anxiety to gather and secure his little flock, his whole dependence, should have led him far from home, and he have fallen beneath the storm, how can we bear to see his distressed widow and his orphan lambs.

MARIA.

We will hope for the best ; but if it even should be so, there is more occasion for some friendly assistance and consolation.

LAVINIA.

We will proceed then. Ah ! that fallen fence seems to forbode no good ; but we will not anticipate trouble.

MARIA.

There is Keeper begins to bark ; we



shall soon have some of the family out.—  
Ah! here is Hannah herself, poor woman  
she seems agitated.

HANNAH.

Oh! Miss Lavinia! Oh! Miss Maria!  
such a night!

LAVINIA.

*O!* Yes, Hannah, it has been a dismal night  
indeed, but how is William, is he well?

HANNAH.

O yes! I think—I hope—I—yes—God  
be praised—I will go and——

MARIA.

You seem fluttered, Hannah; endeavour  
to compose yourself, you have been alarm-  
ed, I see.

HANNAH.

Your ladyships will excuse me; I hard-  
ly know what I say or do; and I can hard-  
ly believe my own eyes; I scarcely know  
whether I am awake or dreaming.

SALLY.

Yes, mother, it is, indeed, my dear



father ; he is indeed in the bed ; don't you know I helped you to pull off his wet coat.

HANNAH.

O yes, my dear, I remember.

LAVINIA.

Then, I suppose, poor William has been out in all this storm.

HANNAH.

He has, Miss Lavinia, been out all this dismal night ; I did not set my eyes on him till day break this morning ; I thought I should never see my dear William again.

MARIA.

You see, Hannah, God is very good to us ; we should be very thankful to him for all his mercies.

HANNAH.

Yes, Miss Maria, he is, indeed, very good ; what should have become of me and these dear children, if William had been dead indeed.



LAVINIA.

God would have given you friends, Hannah; I hope you would not have wanted.

HANNAH.

I hope not, Miss Lavinia; but then the loss of my dear William! I think I never should have got over that.—I thought it would have broke my heart last night, when I look'd at his little favourite, and thought how he used to stretch out his little hands, and seem as if he would spring off my knees to meet his father, as soon as he heard his step within the porch.—Ah! thought I, your dear little heart will never beat again at the sound of your father's feet; he will never more dandle you upon his knee: And then I thought my very heart would break, it was so full.

MARIA.

We rejoice with you Hannah, that it is not so: Pray how happened it that William was out all night.



HANNAH.

He went out early in the afternoon to gather the sheep together, to fold them near home, as the sky looked very threatening; but whether any thing had frightened them, or how it was I cannot tell, but they had got a good deal further from home than William expected, and it was near dark before he found them; and he hardly got them well together before the tempest came on, and it grew so dark that he was quite at a loss which way to move, and the night set in so black and dismal, that he was obliged to content himself with the best shelter he could find, and you may easily guess what a night he must have had.

LAVINIA.

Poor man, a dismal night indeed! where are the other children?

HANNAH.

Little William is in the cradle, the other two are not up yet; for they were



so disturbed in the night that they got but little sleep : and here is poor Sarah had need to be in bed too, for she has been up with me all night ; indeed I don't know what I should have done, if it had not been for Sarah's company.

MARIA.

Well, Hannah, it is well it has ended thus comfortably : we see the storm has done you some damage ; but don't be discouraged, as long as you have got your dear William safe at home. But we will look in again to-morrow, and see if we can be of any service to you.

HANNAH.

Your ladyships are very good indeed.

LAVINIA.

Remember us to William : Good bye, Hannah, good bye, Sarah.

HANNAH.

Good bye, your ladyships, and God bless you both.



LAVINIA.

What distress this poor woman must have been in, through such a night of suspense and terror.

MARIA.

A dismal situation indeed ! and William, poor man, must have suffered much. The rich and affluent know little of the dangers and fatigues the labouring part of society undergo in procuring the necessaries of life. We eat our meat without knowing, or thinking of the shepherd's toils : We enjoy the luxuries of distant climates, and never once reflect upon the seaman's danger.



## DIALOGUE IV.

CLEMENTIUS AND CLEANTHUS.

CLEMENTIUS.

**W**ELL, Cleanthus, you are true to your assignation ; who would have thought Cleanthus would have been so eager for amusement from the sacred writings.

CLEANTHUS.

Ah ! you are pleased to jest with me ; but I am not ashamed to confess myself a convert to this kind of entertainment.

CLEMENTIUS.

We have had an instance or two in poetry ; suppose we see if we can find any thing that is worthy of regard for elegance and dignity in prose.

CLEANTHUS.

Any thing, Clementius, that you think proper.



## CLEMENTIUS.

We will, then, turn to Paul's defence of himself before Felix; against the illiberal charges of Tertullus the orator: but to relish the beauty of the defence, we must read the charge, which runs thus:

“ Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence; we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness; notwithstanding that I may not be further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldst hear us, of thy clemency, a few words:

“ For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the heresy of the Nazarenes: who also hath gone about to profane the Temple; whom we took, and would have judged according to our law; but the chief captain, Lyfias, came upon us, and with



great violence took him away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee to be examined of these matters. And the Jews also assented, saying these things were so."

Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned him to speak, answered :

" Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been for many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself :—

" It is then but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship ; but they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, nor stirring up the people ; neither in the synagogue nor in the city ; nor can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me : But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets, having



this hope towards God (which they themselves also allow) that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; and herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and man. Now after many years I came to bring alms unto my nation, and offerings, from Asia, on which account certain Jews found me in the temple, purified, and without multitude or tumult; who ought to have been before thee, and object, if they had any thing against me; or else, let them that are here say, if they have found any evil doing in me while I stood before the council, except it be, that standing among them, I cried out in these words: 'Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.'

## CLEANTHUS.

There is a great deal of dignity and firmness, I think, in the Apostle's defence, as well as clearness and eloquence.



## CLEMENTIUS.

There is indeed; and what I much admire is the close and unequivocal manner in which the Apostle replies distinctly to each charge; acknowledging facts, but repelling falsehood and slander.

The charges are these;

1. That he was a pestilent fellow.
2. A mover or stirrer up of sedition among all the Jews.
3. A ringleader of the heresy of the Nazarenes.
4. And a profaner of the temple.

The first charge:—his whole defence is a continued refutation.

To the second he replies, by declaring that he came up to Jerusalem to worship; and that so far from stirring up the people to sedition, that they did not even find him disputing with any man; and challenges them to prove either charge.

To the third charge, of being a ring-



leader in the *Heresy* of the Nazarenes, he boldly avows the fact of being a Christian; and replies, in words full of dignity and eloquence:

“ But this I confess unto thee, that after the way, which they call *Heresy*, so worship I the God of my fathers; believing all things that are written in the law, and in the prophets.”

To the fourth, viz. the prophanation of the temple, he replies, by declaring that he went up to the temple to present alms and offerings; that the Jews indeed found him there, but purified, and without multitude or noise; and then notices the absence of those who ought to have been there, to prove their charges if they could do it.

But as these were not present to prove the charges brought against him, with respect to his conduct in the temple, he calls upon those who are present, to declare what his behaviour was before the council, and say if they have any thing to charge



him with, except preaching to them the resurrection of the dead.

## CLEANTHUS.

This is very pleasing; I have admired the general firmness and eloquence of this defence, but never observed so much of its consistency and propriety, with respect to the charges before; but I think your extract varies a little from all the translations I have seen.

## CLEMENTIUS.

A little; but not more than the original and the context warrant.

There is an unnecessary departure from the original in translating the same word; by the word sect in the charge, and heresy in the reply; which spoils the beauty arising from the consistency of the defence.

There is also a little obscurity in the wording and pointing of the latter part of the defence, which is here corrected, consistently with the 6th verse of the preceding



chapter, to which it alludes, and in which the Apostle quotes his own words.

Paul's re-examination before King Agrippa, in the presence of Festus and other great persons of the court, will, I doubt not, please you in the perusal, which you will find in the 26th chapter of the Acts, and can turn to at your leisure.

In this chapter he gives a concise history of his life, and his miraculous conversion; he brings Agrippa to acknowledge himself almost persuaded to be a Christian; and finally obtains the declaration of his innocence from the mouths of his judges.

There are two passages in this defence that are eminently deserving of admiration.

While pleading his cause, with impressive eloquence, his judges were differently affected: Festus cries out with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad."

Him he answers in this grand reply:

"I am not mad, most noble Festus, but



Speak the words of truth and soberness; and the King himself knoweth these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hid from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.”

On this the King exclaims, in a manner very different from that of Festus:

“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”

Paul answers him in a way which evinces, that Christian heroism, and true politeness, are by no means incompatible.

“I would to God (says he) that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

## CLEANTHUS.

I am much delighted with these scriptural beauties.



## CLEMENTIUS.

I hope by this time you are satisfied, Cleanthus, that a rational and improving entertainment is to be found in the perusal of the sacred writings; and I can assure you, for your encouragement to so commendable an employment, that you will find an ample recompence for your labour, not only in the poetical and prophetic parts of the Bible, but in the legal, historical, evangelical, and epistolary writings of the old and new testament.

## CLEANTHUS.

I am ready, from the examples you have produced, to believe it is so, and that I have missed many of these beauties by reading too superficially: if I have any doubt, it is in respect of the legal and moral part; I cannot so readily conceive how these can admit of beauty or sublimity.

## CLEMENTIUS.

Every subject, Cleanthus, has its own peculiar beauties. The beauty of moral



or preceptive writings I apprehend consists in this, that they be as concise as is consistent with clearness, and as explicit as is consistent with conciseness; that the language be impressive, and that elegance should keep pace with simplicity.

I think I do not hazard a well-founded contradiction in asserting, that the decalogue is an instance of beauty in this kind of writing.

The moral obligation of which is confirmed by Christ himself in these words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." And in reply to the lawyer, who asked of him which was the greatest command, he said,

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and great command; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."



An elegant epitome indeed, which is yet so simple, that “he that runs may read;” for undoubtedly all is comprised in love to God our creator, and love to man, our brother by creation.

The man of little education, with common sense, can read and understand this:

Or if it be his misfortune that he cannot read, if he do but hear another read it, it is so concise and clear, that he can understand and easily remember it.

## CLEANTHUS.

There is no relative duty that is not comprised in this comprehensive injunction,

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:”—or

“Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.”

## CLEMENTIUS.

*Justice*—may safely be committed to such rules as these.

*Charity*—can never fail.

*Truth*.—By these rules falshood is inadmissible.



*Humility.*—Do we love meekness and affability in the conduct of others towards us? we must then, by these precepts, refrain from a proud insulting carriage to them.

And with respect to personal virtue, He who loves God above every thing, will not be wanting in this respect.

He who loves God will bear with *fortitude* every thing that may befall him in this life, knowing that it cannot happen without divine permission.

And he whose love produces a filial fear, will be *prudent* in foreseeing evil, and endeavour to avoid it.

And lastly, *Intemperance*, which is the immoderate desire, or love of temporal and visible enjoyments, cannot obtain a place where the love of God has taken up the whole heart and affections.

Thus I think it is plain, that love to God and man embraces every personal and relative virtue.



But these virtues are also distinctly treated of, and forcibly recommended in various parts of the old and new testament.

But these as I have already said, will well reward your own application, my dear Cleanthus; I will now recommend you to make this search for yourself, and bid you an affectionate adieu.

CLEANTHUS.

Adieu, my dear Clementius.



## DIALOGUE V.

HENRY AND MARIA.

MARIA.

WHAT is that little black lump like a stone, which you seem to admire so much.

HENRY.

It is a magnet or loadstone; and like many other of the most valuable productions of nature, has but a mean appearance.

MARIA.

Describe to me, if you please Henry, some of these properties which induce you to give it a place amongst the chief work of nature.

HENRY.

I will endeavour to answer your request as well as I am able, tho' I must confess my own knowledge of its qualities and uses to be very limited; but this is certain, that to this natural production we are indebted for our communication with the



most remote parts of the globe, without which they would in all probability have remained unknown to us.

MARIA.

How is it possible that a stone like this could be conducive to such important discoveries?

HENRY.

I will tell you, Maria; you know that the loadstone has the property of attracting iron to itself; it has also another property of communicating this attraction to a piece of iron or steel that is rubbed with it.

Another singular quality of the loadstone is this: that if it be suspended by a string, one of its ends (called on that account its poles) always points to the North; and if a needle, or piece of iron rod be touched with the magnet, and suspended, it will also point to the North; this it is that furnishes the navigator with the means of knowing at all times what course he is steering; for upon an upright



wire that passes through a card, upon which is marked the four principle points of the horizon, *viz.* N. E. W. and S. and the intermediate points to the number of thirty-two; a moveable steel pointer is fixed so as to vibrate freely towards any part of this card, which is called a compass. This needle being rubbed with a magnet, points to the N. by which means the mariner can fix his compass, so that every point falling in its right place, that is corresponding with the real situation of these points on the horizon, the seaman can with certainty direct his course, and venture into the immense ocean, without seeing land for months together; a thing the ancient navigators, for want of such a safe-guide, durst not attempt.

MARIA.

Who could think to look at it, that it was endowed by the great Creator with such wonderful properties!



HENRY.

It is indeed wonderful ; but it is (generally speaking) so, that the most valuable gifts of our beneficent Parent are offered to us in a homely garb : This is no doubt intended to convey to us some wholesome admonition.

But to return to the magnet, if you break it into smaller pieces, and continue as often as you please to break these still smaller, every piece will contain a northern and southern pole ; that is, one end will point to the north, and this end has an attractive faculty, the other point or southern pole has a repelling property.

Again, if two pieces of load-stone be placed with the same poles towards each other, that is both north or both south, they will repulse or fly from each other ; but if the opposite poles be placed together, that is a north and south pole, they will then attract each other.



MARIA.

I am much pleased with this account of the magnet: Pray has it any other peculiarities?

HENRY.

It possibly possesses many that mankind is as yet unacquainted with; but I do not recollect any other, except that this attraction is not hindered by the intervention of bodies that might be expected to prevent its effect; for example, if you were to lay a needle in a stone faucer, and move a loadstone gently against the bottom of the faucer, it would exert its attractive influence through the faucer, and occasion the needle to move in the same direction; and if water were poured into the faucer till it is full, and the needle was stuck into a piece of paper, to make it float upon the water, the effect would be the same; on moving the magnet against the bottom of the faucer, the paper with the needle attached to it,



would follow the course of the magnet in every direction.

MARIA.

This is truly admirable ; Is this the only substance possessed of this attractive virtue ?

HENRY.

Something like this is indeed observed in amber, which when rubbed till it is warm, will attract straws and some other substances ; but this attractive power is of little consequence.

MARIA.

But the amber is a much more shewy substance.

HENRY.

Yes ; let us see if this does not afford us a lesson of instruction : every thing that powerfully attracts the mind may be called its magnet, and what it directs to, its polar star ; now virtue and vice have always been figuratively represented to us under the forms of two females ; the one homely and severe in her first approach, so that she



seems rather forbidding than inviting; the other gay and sprightly, and quite attractive. Now which ever of these the mind gives the preference to, will become its magnet; if we wisely make choice of virtue, notwithstanding her unalluring first appearance, we shall find her to be a most agreeable and profitable companion, for God is her pole star, and to him she constantly directs us through all the storms, the clouds, and mists of life's precarious voyage.

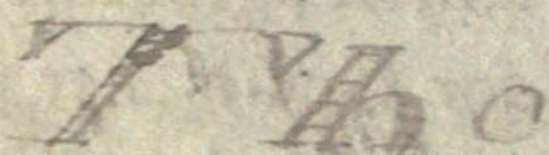
But if vice or intemperate pleasure possess our choice, straws and trifles, the vanities and baubles of life, are the unworthy objects of her attraction, with which she beguiles us of a solid and lasting pleasure.

MARIA.

I thank you Henry, for this interesting observation, and I will endeavour to re-



member the magnet, and acknowledge the goodness, power, and wisdom of him who made it, and conferred upon it such mysterious powers; and virtue shall henceforth be my magnet, that shall draw and direct my mind to him.





## DIALOGUE VI.

MELIBŒUS AND AMELIA.

MELIBŒUS.

SEE these little pretty busy creatures, how they toil, they are not altogether labouring for themselves; the benevolence of our great and good parent is such, that the prudent instinct which impels them to these indefatigable labours has connected human advantage and pleasure closely with them.

AMELIA.

'Tis a pity that we oftener meet his kindness than he receives the aspirations of our praise, though his bounties are unmerited, and claim them every moment: for to him we owe the conservation of our lives with all the pleasures and accommodations, that nature in all her operations is charged with toward us.



MELIBŒUS.

How intent they seem upon their business ; how they bustle past each other, some returning with their loads and others having deposited them, don't stop to loiter, but are off again ; they may well be called busy bees.

AMELIA.

See how some of their little thighs are loaded with yellow balls that are rolled up, and stuck to them—Ah ! there is one fallen off.

MELIBŒUS.

Some of them will find it and gather it up again ; they suffer no waste among them.

AMELIA.

What is that substance, Melibius, they hang upon their thighs ?

MELIBŒUS.

That is the fine meal which we see sprinkled about the internal parts of the flowers, and when kneaded and moulded



by the bees constitutes their waxen cells, in which they deposit their food and young: in every hive there is one bee larger than the rest, and longer bodied in proportion, but having no occasion to go abroad, except once in it's life, it's wings are smaller than the rest: this bee is a female, and from her superiority in size and beauty, and the respect paid her, she is called the queen; beside her and the working bees, there are some larger bees in the hives which are males, these like the queen bee do not quit the hive, and are called drones: after the season for breeding the working bees expel them, and even kill them at the mouth of the hive, and then take them up and flying a little distance from the hive, drop them there; for they dont like nuisances about the hive, neither on the inside, nor at it's entrance.

## AMELIA.

This is wonderful; but you said that the queen goes out but once in her life;



pray on what extraordinary occasion is this? is it to visit some other potentate? and the respect you say the other bees pay her; is it, that they marshal themselves, and attend her in grand procession on this extraordinary visit?

MELIBŒUS.

You make me smile, Amelia.

AMELIA.

Well, what is it then? it is certainly on no trifling occasion; for trifling seems to be no part of their character.

MELIBŒUS.

This is a just and amiable compliment to the bees; but, I am afraid, as much cannot be said of mankind: but I will explain this matter. At the season of the year when the young bees are arrived at maturity, the hive being too full to accommodate them conveniently, they begin to think of emigrating to some suitable place where they can form a fresh colony; commence their labours, and provide for the



wants of winter; but in order to keep up the species, it is wisely ordered, that this rising generation of bees has it's infant queen likewise, as well as it's due proportion of males; and till she is quite able to endure and undertake the flight, the bees will not stir: during this waiting, and probably for want of room, the bees that are about to emigrate, or swarm, as the country people call it, gather about the mouth of the hive, and clinging to each other, hang there in a large cluster like a bunch of grapes: this they do for several days, till the young queen comes out: they then rise like a cloud, and move in a close body, through the air to some convenient hollow tree, or other place, which, in all probability, has been previously looked out for; and if their queen is not able to complete the distance at one flight, she sits on some branch of a tree or convenient place, and the rest gather round her and wait her leisure.



AMELIA.

This is admirable indeed! but does this not appear a defect in nature, that the leader of the colony is so poorly equipped for flying.

MELIBŒUS.

I think not, Amelia; it is not necessary that they should remove to a very great distance, or if it is, this seems another instance in which the convenience of man is graciously regarded in the works of divine wisdom and omnipotence; for by the queen's inability to fly far at once, those who cultivate and raise stocks of bees can follow and come up with these emigrating colonies, which are to encrease their stock; but if their queen could fly as well as themselves, they would soon be out of sight, and the beekeeper would thus be deprived of the means of encreasing his stock.

AMELIA.

This reason is very satisfactory, and like



every discovery we make in natural causes, demands of man the tribute of praise and thankfulness.

MELIBŒUS.

We will draw back this slide, Almira, and look through the window of this hive, if you please.

ALMIRA.

I am fond of these little creatures, and admire their skill, prudence, and industry ; but I am fearful of coming near the hive.

MELIBŒUS.

You need not be afraid, Amelia, for if our fears do not prompt us to strike at them, and so provoke them to self defence, they will not meddle with us ; you may safely venture.

AMELIA.

This is, indeed a pretty insight into this laboratory of wax and honey ; but it is like looking into some crowded manufactory of which we have no knowledge ; all



are in motion ; but we know not what any of them are about. It is still amusing, and as one of those many wonders of creation which display the wisdom and bounty of our great and good creator, is an instructive sight.

MELIBŒUS.

Observe the exact regularity of every cell ; it is a perfect hexagon.

AMELIA.

I do observe it with pleasure, and the beautiful whiteness of the wax which composes it ; but some of them appear solid.

MELIBŒUS.

They are not solid, Amelia ; but having received their deposit, the mouths of them are carefully sealed up : But it is not all honey that is deposited in these waxen cells ; some of them are the receptacles of the young bees, which proceed from the eggs in the form of little worms ; in this state the working bees feed them with their trunks ; after this the worm remains ap-



parently dead for fifteen days, closed up in its cell ; in this state it is called nympha ; at the expiration of this time it bursts open its tomb, and comes forth a young bee.

## AMELIA.

These are all wonderful circumstances indeed : How far is it supposed these little labourers may travel from home in search of their treasure.

## MELIBŒUS.

It is supposed that they sometimes go as much as ten or twelve miles from home ; and this has been calculated from the distance which domestic bees have been observed from any place where there were hives. Also experiments have been made by curious people, who had leisure for it, by dusting the bees with flour, some at their exit out of the hive, and others in very remote fields ; and the result of these experiments has led to this conclusion.



AMELIA.

Well, perhaps we shall only disturb them ; let us close the shutter again, and take a walk into some other part of the garden, and we shall, perhaps, find some of them busily employed among the flowers ; you can, perhaps, inform me, Melibœus, of the process as we inspect it.

MELIBŒUS.

We need not go far ; and I will do the best I can to assist you in discovering their mode of working ; but as you have a little timidity about you, we will go from the vicinity of the hive to a more distant part of the garden.

AMELIA.

I thank you, Melibœus.

MELIBŒUS.

Now you see we have not long to wait ; here is one, and there is another ; they do not stop long at a flower, and some they pass over, being, no doubt, endowed with a keen sense of smelling, which enables



them to fix at once upon the flowers which will reward their application ; so that they lose no time in fruitless essays on flowers which have been previously deprived of their sweets by some of their fellow labourers.

AMELIA.

This is still wonderful ; but proceed.

MELIBŒUS.

The bees have, as you observe, two of those kind of horns which adorn the heads of most flying insects : these are for the defence of the eyes, and to admonish them of danger. Besides fangs and claws, which they use in their work, they have a long and supple trunk, which they can let down and draw up into its case at pleasure ; this you may observe, by looking closely at that bee, is very pliable. See how it turns aside the petals of the flowers, and inserts this tube into the bottom of the cup, where this delicate sweet is lodged, which it sucks up



through the tube into the bag in its body, from which it is afterwards poured into the waxen cells we have been viewing.

AMELIA.

I am much delighted with this account, and I think I shall often watch this pretty insect with attention hereafter. But what means does it make use of in collecting the wax.

MELIBŒUS.

If you recollect, Amelia, I pointed out to your notice some at the hives whose little thighs were laden with yellow balls, one of which fell off at the entrance.

AMELIA.

I recollect it now you mention it.

MELIBŒUS.

Such indefatigable labourers are these admirable insects, and such œconomists of time, that even while they are collecting their honey, they are not inattentive to these waxy particles, which must form its receptacle. Observe, Amelia, that bee has



got a little yellowness about his thigh, and if, with a quick eye, you follow him from flower to flower, amongst these blossoms, you will see his little feet are busily employed. If you notice well you will find it has six feet; with the two first it collects and rolls up these mealy particles, and with the middle feet passes it to a hollow place, like a spoon on each thigh, which being hairy, helps the little balls to adhere; but sometimes, when too large, they fall from their legs in their passage home; but this does not often happen.

## AMELIA.

I see now this little ball accumulates fast. Well, what innocent entertainment has this wonderful insect afforded us. Is it possible thus to trace the works of nature, and not look through nature up to nature's God?

## MELIBŒUS.

If we did not see so many instances of the daily neglect and criminal contempt



of the works of God in the creation, we could scarce believe it.

AMELIA.

I thank you kindly for your attention to my enquiries.

MELIBŒUS.

I think it is now time for us to return to our companions in the house ; perhaps we shall excite their curiosity so much as to induce them to join us in this amusement at another time.

AMELIA.

If you please we will return.



## DIALOGUE VII.

CHARLOTTE, EMMA, AND HENRY.

CHARLOTTE.

WE seem to be very dull all of a sudden, and as silent as if we had exhausted every topic of discourse.

EMMA.

We are so indeed ; let us see—can we recollect none of our neighbour's failings to amuse ourselves with, and set off our own virtues.

CHARLOTTE.

Fye, Emma, that is too ill-natured a satire, and I am sure you would be the last person seriously to propose, or join in such a conversation.

EMMA.

Well, to be serious, what shall we fix on for amusing and improving conversation?



HENRY.

Certainly we need not hesitate long, for I am sure here are in this room more objects than we have time to attend to, perhaps any one may afford a subject sufficient for our present leisure.

CHARLOTTE.

Very good, Henry, and since your discernment is so quick, we will take the liberty of calling upon you to name the subject.

HENRY.

With all my heart ; but perhaps it will be with me as with other people who have a great variety to choose from ; they are longer in fixing, and often take the worst.

CHARLOTTE.

We will not hurry you, Henry, only let the subject be a *nice* one.

HENRY.

It shall : And not to detain you longer in suspense, I will propose to you that *nice* beaver riding-hat of Charlotte's.



EMMA.

A pretty subject for entertainment or improving conversation, truly.

HENRY.

I really thought so; and that was my reason for naming it.

CHARLOTTE.

Are you serious in this matter, Henry.

HENRY.

I am serious.

EMMA.

Then we must beg you to be so obliging as to take it in hand yourself, for whatever it may be to you, it will, we fear, be but a barren theme in our hands.

HENRY.

Is it not laying rather too much on one to find you a subject, and then take it upon myself: but however, to shew my willingness to comply with your desires, I will try what I can do with it: But I believe I must take the liberty of passing over the hat itself, to a very interesting



subject attached to it ; not that I conceive the hat itself so barren as not to be capable of affording us something worthy of our notice ; we might consider the various changes and processes it has passed through, before it attained its present state of elegance and usefulness ; and its silken lining might lead us to enquire into the particulars of the reptile that produced this beautiful substance. Thus the hat itself might lead us to very agreeable and instructive investigation : but that which struck me, on casting my eyes upon this object was, some entertaining particulars in the natural history of the beaver, whose soft fur furnishes our hatters with the finest materials for this manufacture. But as there are those in company who are better versed in natural history than myself, and who possess a better recollection, I should be glad to transfer the subject to abler hands ; perhaps Charlotte, who I know is a proficient in those studies, will be so obliging as to undertake it.



## CHARLOTTE.

I am no friend to ceremony, Henry, nor spending our time in compliments; but believing it is now in very good hands, I think I may, in behalf of myself and the company, request the favour of your proceeding

## HENRY.

At your request I will, without further ceremony, relate what I can recollect of this useful animal's history.

It is then an inhabitant of the northern parts of America, particularly Canada, from whence vast numbers of their skins are imported for the hatters use. It is a very social and sagacious animal. The beavers display their social turn in building their habitations, so as to accommodate a considerable number in the same building, associating to the number of ten or twelve in one family: Their sagacity and activity is wonderfully displayed in the



contrivance and construction of their habitations. If a person, who had never heard or read of the beaver's industry and manner of building, were shewn their edifices, he would be ready to conclude them to be the work of the most skilful architect, every thing is so wonderful in the works of these amphibious animals. The regularity of the plan; the size; the solidity, and the admirable contrivance of their buildings, cannot fail exciting astonishment in those who view them.

In choosing their situation they always pitch upon a place where they can be well supplied with provisions, and near a rivulet, in order to be supplied with a reservoir of water to bath in. They begin their works by constructing a bank of such a height as is necessary to keep the water on a level with the first floor of their houses: the materials which compose this bank are wood and clay: The pieces of timber which are as thick as a man's arm, and



some much thicker, which the beavers separate from the trees with wonderful readiness, by means of their teeth only ; one end of these they fix in the ground, placing them very near each other, and interweaving them with stout but pliable twigs : they afterwards line this both within and on the outside with clay, with which they so completely fill up the intervals between the timbers and wicker work, so as to make this fence water proof ; and if the clay is not immediately upon the spot, some fetch it from the nearest place which affords it ; in this work their tails, which are broad, serve them in the place of hods, or barrows, by drawing the clay upon them to their works.

EMMA.

How wonderful this is ; it approaches so near to the actions of reasonable creatures, that it seems hardly credible of any animal.



HENRY.

If this was related of some scarce animal, in a very remote part of the world, where the means of ascertaining its truth was more difficult to attain, it might remain a questionable part of natural history; but the fact is corroborated by so many testimonies, and the means of disproving it, if false, is so easy, that there is no room left to doubt it; as it has never been contradicted by any traveller, or the people who trade to these parts for skins.

But I was telling you that the beavers made use of their long broad tails to draw their plaister upon; they also make use of them as trowels to smoothen it, after laying it on with their fore feet.

When they have in this manner completed the bank to their watering place, they apply themselves to the formation of their houses: In this also they display much contrivance and skill. These are either round or oval, and raised three sto-



ries high ; the bottom story is upon a level with the bath, and generally full of water. These houses are built in a very solid manner, close to the edge of their bath ; the bottom story has two doors, one of which communicates with the bath, by the other they carry away whatever might dirty their upper apartments. They build their houses in stories, as a provision against the inconvenience which would occur from the rising of the rivulet after rain : The walls of their habitations are composed much as the enclosure of their bath, viz. of different sized timbers, well filled with clay : the thickness of these walls is as much as two feet ; the building is arched in the inside ; they take a great deal of pains also with the walls, for they first trim off all irregularities occasioned by the ends of pieces of timber sticking out ! this they perform with their teeth, which are very strong and sharp ; they then make a



composition of clay and dry herbs, which they mix well together, and with it they plaster their building both within and without, to this they give the finishing stroke by smoothing it with their tails. Their habitations are proportioned to the number of it's inhabitants; four yards long, and about three yards wide, is adapted to the reception of eight or ten beavers; if the number be greater they enlarge the building proportionally.

I think I have now given you all I recollect on this subject.

EMMA.

We are much obliged to you Henry, this is certainly another wonderful instance of the wisdom of God in the works of creation, and the liberal manner in which he has bestowed instinct, where he has withheld reason! every research into the works of nature, ought to lead us up to nature's God; and as Young says of him, whose attention is directed to the studies



of the motions and laws of the heavenly bodies : that “ an undevout astronomer is mad ” the same may be as justly applied to the student in natural history, whether the largest animal in the creation, or the smallest animalcula that can be rendered visible by microscopical assistance, be the subject he is attending to, the wonders he meets with, must excite this, or similar language :

Manifold are thy works, O Lord ! in wisdom hast thou made them all.

MARIA.

I was thinking of availing myself of a hint that Henry dropt, when speaking of the object that has thus far in good hands afforded us entertainmeht, he mentioned the silkworm. I should like to be informed of such particulars as are most remarkable in this little spinster's history.

EMMA.

Perhaps Henry can oblige us in this also.



HENRY.

I think that will scarcely be fair, and as I know Charlotte has been for some time in the habit of keeping these little spinsters, as Maria pleasantly calls them, she will be so good as oblige us in this.

CHARLOTTE.

I would very willingly contribute my share to the present entertainment, but I doubt my own ability to recollect or describe accurately the particulars which relate to this admirable reptile: but I will do my best, and if I should not succeed, you will kindly accept the will for the deed.

The silk worm is a species of caterpillar which proceeds from eggs, of which the females lay from twenty to sixty each; they are deposited upon sheets of paper, which are laid for that purpose, and to which they adhere very closely; they remain through the winter, and come out earlier or later in the spring, in proportion



to it's warmth and forwardness; and it is so exceeding small at its first coming out, that one can hardly see it; it is of a black colour. As soon as the eggs begin to be hatched by the sun, I supply them with a fresh-gathered mulberry-leaf, or if the season is backward, so that the mulberry-tree is not in leaf, I give them a lettuce-leaf, with which I continue to feed them, renewing it every day, and encreasing the quantity as the worm encreases in size.

MARIA.

I thought they would not have eaten any thing but mulberry-leaves.

CHARLOTTE.

Oh, yes, they will do very well in the first stages of their existence with lettuce-leaves, but when the mulberry-leaves begin to come out, I leave the use of lettuce, and supply them with these, after which they will not take to the lettuce-leaves again.

The little black worm soon falls to eat-



ing, and after a few days, changes to a whitish colour, and it's coat becomes wrinkled and of a dirty or dull appearance; it casts this coat and appears whiter and cleaner, and is by this time considerably encreased in size; after a few days more it ceases to eat, and falls asleep, during which time it's head is erected, and it continues motionless for about two days; it then begins to work and writhe itself about till it has disengaged itself from it's old skin, which wrinkles up and is cast off. From being almost invisible, it is now about half an inch long: In about the space of three weeks or a month, he appears in three dresses; they now, as they encrease in size, eat very heartily, and the number which I generally keep being between three and four hundred, will consume a large handful of mulberry-leaves every day, except the hard fibres, so that the leaves appear like skeletons; the dead leaves and filth I take from them every day,



or rather take them from it; for I have two trays lined with paper, and when I want to clean them I spread the empty tray with fresh leaves, and picking up my worms remove them from the dead and refuse leaves to the new ones, upon which they begin with avidity; I then cleanse the other tray with a brush or feather, and it is ready for their reception the next day.

EMMA.

This is very pretty: but you must have a deal of trouble with such a number, and another thing I admire; how you can endure to touch them.

CHARLOTTE.

At first I confess I felt a little difficulty, but use, and observing that they were really very clean, harmless creatures, soon overcame this difficulty; as to the trouble, it must be owned they take up a great deal of time, and are only fit to be cultivated by those whose time is not particularly demanded to any other purpose, and the



keeping of silk-worms, can at best, be only considered as an amusement in this country : but I am digressing from the account I was giving you of their progress : the silk-worm then, having attained to a tolerable size, perhaps about an inch long, falls asleep, and casts it's coat as before, it then begins eating again, with so good an appetite, that, half a dozen will consume a very large mulberry leaf in a few hours, they continue feeding thus, some authors tell us a few days ; but I can say, from observation, some weeks, and then a day or two, before they begin spinning, they fall off their feeding, and at last entirely renounce their food ; and creeping to the angular parts of the tray, indicate their preparation for spinning, by tossing their heads about from side to side, and fixing a few scattered threads, I then put them, as they are thus ready for it, into small paper cones which I have in readiness ; and after crawling round the cone,



or fixing themselves by their hind feet, and stretching themselves out to feel the opposite sides, they begin to fix their fine silken thread to different parts of their cone, at first in a straggling manner, and gradually fix those threads closer and closer, till they commence it's egg shaped receptacle, which is very neatly formed, and as compact as a piece of silk paper, and so firm that it can hardly be torn asunder.

Here this admirable creature undergoes it's most curious metamorphose, for it before only cast off it's skin ; but now it assumes a form so entirely different from it's former one, that it would be impossible to credit the change, if we had not ascertained it.

From a crawling worm, about an inch and an half long, it is gathered up into less than half the length, and enclosed in a brown husky substance, from which in due time, it emerges in the form of a moth,



but not exactly similar to any we know : these moths, being put into the tray spread with clean paper, flutter about for several days, deposit their eggs on the paper, and after a continuance in this state of about a fortnight, in which they eat nothing, they die, leaving an ample supply of eggs for the conservation of their kind ; these I preserve carefully through the winter, and keep them from the sun till I have reason to expect a supply of mulberry leaves, and then I place them in the tray, and leave them to the sun to quicken.

MARIA.

This is indeed a very curious account of this little creature ; but how, Charlotte, do you come at the silk.

CHARLOTTE.

These little silken egg shaped receptacles, are called cocoons ; if the weather is warm the moths will come to maturity, burst their shell, and eat their way through the silk in about two weeks ; but



if it is a cold season, they are a good deal longer.

This must be prevented by exposing them to the heat of an oven, or scalding water; but thinking this may put them to suffering, I endeavour to wind the silk off before they eat through it;—for the cocoon is spoiled for winding when it is eaten through, because every time we come to the aperture, the thread terminates, which makes so many ends, and such short lengths, that the silk is not worth the trouble of winding; but by winding it off before, we have very few ends, for it is all but one thread on the cocoon, and winds off in very considerable lengths, but now and then a thread snaps.

MARIA.

What method do you take Charlotte, in winding.

CHARLOTTE,

I first strip off the more straggled and loose



ilk, till I come to the close texture of the cocoon ; this is a soft flue, resembling cotton, and is to be laid by itself to be spun in the manner of cotton wool ; I then put three or four cocoons at once into a basin of warm water, in which a little gum is dissolved, and having found an end to each, gently wind them into a reel, which I have on purpose ; when I have wound them so near the bottom that the cocoon is broken into, I take the chrysalises, and put them into a little drawer, three parts full of bran, where they remain till they have attained to maturity, and then they come out, in the state of moths, the same as those which eat their way out of the cocoons.

MARIA.

This is a very entertaining account indeed, I think I should like to keep some myself.

CHARLOTTE.

I will readily set you forward ; but one



thing to be considered is; it is in vain to begin unless a person has a mulberry tree high at hand, and indeed it should be in one's own garden, for it is disagreeable to trouble other people daily for such a quantity of leaves as is necessary to support any considerable number of worms.

EMMA.

What is the original colour of the filk?

CHARLOTTE.

It has two colours, viz. a very delicate white, (which, however, I believe is not allowed to be a colour) and yellow from a light straw, to a deep orange, the filks look very beautiful when wound and made into hanks.

MARIA.

What quantity may be the produce of a hundred worms?

CHARLOTTE.

A very small quantity indeed; it may be said of these little creatures and the bees,



that they verify the proverb, "Many hands make light work;" for if we consider the bee how it flies from flower to flower over a whole garden to fill it's little bag, which contains but one drop of honey—that it has then, perhaps, two or three miles to fly to deposit this single drop, we cannot help wondering, when we consider, that in a commercial way, some tons in a year are transferred from one part of the world to another. So these little spinsters (for we cannot find a better name for them) produce so little, that one would really wonder where such a vast number of packages of filk could be supplied from; but when any article becomes a subject of commercial notice, and engages the attention of people in general in those countries that are adapted to it's culture, it is astonishing what quantities may be collected even of filk and honey, in which each single labourer can contribute so small a portion; but to give you the



best satisfaction I can on the subject, the produce of silk from six hundred worms turned the scale against a middling sized silk handkerchief\*: This may, perhaps give us some little idea of the business.

HENRY.

There is one thing remarkable with respect to silk, which is this, and it may, perhaps, abate a little of the confidence, with which vanity may plead, that silk was ordained for splendor in dress; it is indeed, beautiful, like all other works of the creator, whether mediate or immediate; but the beneficence of our great Parent displays itself in the nature of the substance presented to man for his cloathing in the different climates of the world. In these colder climates, our sheep produce the wool, which is so warm and comfortable a covering when manufactured; but silk is

\* This is the result of an actual experiment made this present year 1799, which, on account of it's coldness, has not been perhaps the most favourable.



produced in the hotter climates, where it seems best adapted for it's lightness and coolness, besides which, it has the peculiar property of repelling the electric fluid, and so becoming an antidote to lightening, to which the hotter climates are more subject than the colder ones, and in a more alarming degree; so that it seems intended by our kind Creator as a light and protecting covering to the inhabitants of those countries which are best adapted to it's produce, rather than an aid to vanity, and luxury in drefs: but, perhaps, this would not be relished in every company.

MARIA.

We are much obliged to you, Henry, as we are also to Charlotte, for the amusing and entertaining account she has given us. We have now made Henry's words good, and pretty well exhausted the leisure, which seemed to appear at one time a burden.

EMMA.

Yes; thanks to Charlotte's nice hat and filken lining.



## DIALOGUE VIII.

LUCINDA AND CLARA.

CLARA.

**H**ERE is a beauteous night Lucinda—  
The moon indeed, now reigns full orb'd,  
And shadowy sets off the face of things.

LUCINDA.

So sang he, who once like us could  
view it's silver splendour; who once  
could see and sweetly tell the beauties of  
the reddening morn; the moontide glory,  
and the farewell tints of the retiring sun.

CLARA.

Yes Lucinda, and as pathetically he  
describes in mournful eloquence, his own  
sensations on the afflictive occasion.

LUCINDA.

Can you, my dear, repeat those lines of



our immortal bard, in which he alludes to his loss of sight.

CLARA.

I think they are these, as nearly as I can remember.

In his address to light he says.

Thee I revisit safe,  
 And feel thy sov'riegn vital lamp : but thou  
 Revisit'ft not these eyes, that rowl in vain  
 To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn ;  
 So thick a *Drop serene* hath quench'd their orbs,  
 Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more  
 Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt,  
 Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,  
 Smit with the love of sacred song : but chief  
 Thee SION, and the flowry brooks beneath,  
 That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,  
 Nightly I visit : nor sometimes forget  
 Those other two, equal'd with me in fate,  
 (So were I equalled with them in renown!)  
 Blind THAMYRIS, and blind MÆONIDES  
 And TIRESIAS, and PHINEUS Prophets old  
 Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move  
 Harmonious numbers ; as the wakeful bird



Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid  
Tunes her nocturnal note.

Here I think, Lucinda, comes the most  
pathetic lines.

Thus with the year  
Seasons return, but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,  
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine :  
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
Surrounds me ; from the chearful ways of men  
Cut off ; and for the book of knowledge fair  
Presented with a universal blank  
Of nature's works, to me expung'd and ras'd,  
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out !

And then very resignedly implores a  
better light.

So much the rather thou cœlestial light,  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her pow'rs  
Irradiate ; there plant eyes ; all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse ; that I may see and tell  
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

LUCINDA.

Poor man, how applicable to him are  
these lines of another eminent Poet.



Of joys that are pass'd, never to return,  
How painful the remembrance !

CLARA.

Yes Lucinda, and how strong an incitement ought this to be to us, not to overlook the most valuable blessings, because we are in the daily possession of them.

“ The perfect enjoyment of our mental and bodily faculties, health, freedom from pain ; habitation, food and raiment, society and friends, all these we possess, almost without noticing that they are enjoyments ; but when taught their real value, by a temporary suspension or a total loss, we then find that these are blessings indeed, for which we are debtors every moment, to him, who in beneficence bestows, in mercy continues, and in justice suspends ; or totally withdraw them.

LUCINDA.

These remarks are just indeed ; and I hope, my dear Clara, we shall profit by



them. But to return to the subject we began with: This large and splendid orb which seems to make the night rival the day; what think you, Clara, of the idea some entertain, that this and all those twinkling stars are habitable worlds?

CLARA.

What! Lucinda, can such as we think on subjects, respecting which, the learned themselves are divided? It has, indeed, been the opinion of some, when considering the innumerable multitude of shining orbs, and systems placed far beyond the reach of human sight, as well as their magnitudes, which are demonstrated to be many times larger than this globe; that the earth, which is but as a speck in the whole universe, cannot be the only peopled globe amongst such an infinity; and they seem more fully confirmed in their opinion, by the appearance of this beautiful orb we are now admiring, the light and dark parts



of which seem to answer to the divisions of land and water on this globe, which, supposing the moon to be peopled, must have just the same appearance to it's inhabitants, that the moon has to us; the earth and other opaque substances reflecting the sun's rays, and so appearing luminous; and the water by absorbing them, appearing dark; and these appearances, similar to land and water, are said to be still more striking, when viewed by means of a good telescope

## LUCINDA.

Well, my dear Clara, however plausible this may appear, it is still but conjecture, that leaves us where we were: we may, perhaps, with more propriety and benefit, terminate our admiration of these lucid wonders that thus bespangle the azure dome of heaven, by referring to the language of the sacred poet—

“The heavens,” says he, “declare the glory of God; and



The firmament sheweth his handy-work.  
Day unto day uttereth speech,  
And night unto night sheweth knowledge.  
There is no speech nor language  
Where their voice is not heard. Their  
line is gone out  
Through all the earth, and their words to  
the end of the world.  
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the  
sun,  
Which is as a bridegroom coming out of  
his chamber,  
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.  
His going forth is from the end of the hea-  
ven,  
And his circuit unto the end of it :  
And there is nothing hid from the heat  
thereof."

Having in these verses shewn how the  
book of nature directs us to nature's God,  
he next turns his praises to a higher



theme, even the more explicit traits of the divine Being in his sacred word. But as this psalm is beautifully verified by your favourite poet, I will thank you, Clara, to repeat it to me.

CLARA.

I will, with pleasure, my dear Lucinda—

“ Great God, the heav’ns well-order’d  
frame

Declares the glories of thy name ;

There thy rich works of wonders shine ;

A thousand starry beauties there,

A thousand radiant marks appear,

Of boundless power and skill divine.

“ From night to day, from day to night,

The dawning and the dying light,

Lectures of heav’nly wisdom read ;

With silent eloquence they raise

Our thoughts to our Creator’s praise,

And neither sound nor language need.



“ Yet their divine instructions run  
Far as the journies of the sun,  
And ev’ry nation knows their voice :  
The sun like some young bridegroom  
drest,  
Breaks from the chambers of the east,  
Rolls round, and makes the earth re-  
joice.

“ Where’er he spreads his beams abroad,  
He smiles and speaks his maker God ;  
All nature joins to shew thy praise.  
Thus God in ev’ry creature shines :  
Fair is the book of nature’s lines,  
But fairer is thy book of grace.

“ I love the volumes of thy word ;  
What light and joy those leaves afford  
To souls benighted and distrest !  
Thy precepts guide my doubtful way,  
Thy fear forbids my feet to stray,  
Thy promise leads my heart to rest.



“ From the discov’ries of thy law,  
The perfect rules of life I draw ;  
These are my study and delight ;  
Not honey so invites the taste,  
Nor gold that hath the furnace past,  
Appears so pleasing to the sight.

“ Thy threatnings wake my slumb’ring  
eyes,  
And warn me where my danger lies :  
But ’tis thy blessed gospel, Lord,  
That makes my guilty conscience clean,  
Converts my soul, subdues my sin,  
And gives a free but large reward.

“ Who knows the errors of his thoughts ?  
My God, forgive my secret faults,  
And from presumptuous sins restrain :  
Accept my poor attempts of praise,  
That I have read thy book of Grace,  
And book of nature not in vain.”



## LUCINDA.

This is a delightful version indeed, I thank you, my dear Clara; and now, I hope we may retire to rest, with minds as serene as this calm night, whose beauties have afforded us this pleasant conference.



## DIALOGUE VII.

PHILALETHES AND URBANUS.

URBANUS.

WHAT are you doing, Philalethes?

PHILALETHES.

Weighing, Urbanus.

URBANUS.

You may be weighing, indeed, by your attentive looks, but you seem to be employed upon invisible statics, for I see neither scales nor weights, nor the subject of your experiment.

PHILALETHES.

You judge rightly, Urbanus; my statics are indeed invisible, but they are not less



important on that account. I am endeavouring to weigh the philosophy of the new school against the Christian religion.

URBANUS.

A strange kind of competition truly, what could be your inducement to it.

PHILALETHES.

I will tell you Urbanus; I was led to it by the share I lately took in a conference with some of my young acquaintances, who had been perusing some modern publications, the sentiments of which they opposed to what they were pleased to call the absurdities of the Bible: In my attempts to vindicate the truth and divinity of the sacred page, I was overborn with ridicule, and the charge of weakness and credulity. My mind was engaged in serious, and I think I may add painful, recollection of the sentiments that had been advanced by my associates, when I felt an inclination to



weigh the merits of this new science ; but I was conscious of my own inability, and dreaded the consequence of being caught in the web of sophistry and becoming the victim of infidelity ; while thus hesitating, the thought occurred that I might with safety and innocence leave the more minute investigation of this matter to those whose age and talents made them qualified for such an undertaking, and content myself with admitting, for the sake of argument, that all they had advanced was true, that Christianity was devised and propagated by craft and interest ; that the new school doctrine was the result of the clear unprejudiced efforts of strong unclouded reason, that had burst asunder the bands and fetters of superstition ; all which was their boast, and having provisionally admitted this, to weigh each by it's effect on the conduct of our lives, and see which scale would preponderate on the



side of human happiness. This was the matter I was weighing, Urbanus, when you first accosted me.

## URBANUS.

It is an important essay, but I cannot immediately conceive how you will effect it; but I am impatient to hear the result, yet I think it is right to make one remark before I request you to oblige me with a further account of your procedure in this interesting business. I observe you make use of the expressions new school and new philosophy, which terms, the votaries also of the anti-Christian philosophy affect, but with what propriety, I cannot discern; for setting aside the consideration of truth and falsehood—merit or demerit, opinions that have been propagated frequently before, and have as often gradually sunk into obscurity, whatever may be their intrinsic merit, have at least no claim to novelty;



nor can new vamping them confer the credit of discovery on the person who has taken so much pains to re-usher them handsomely, no more than the age in which they are once more introduced under the advantages of new and elegant dresses, can lay claim to superior illumination; or on their account assume the splendid epithet of "this enlightened age;" but I prevent you, Philalethes, from acquainting me to what test you have brought these subjects, in order to determine your opinion.

PHILALETHES.

I have, Urbanus, as well as I was able, endeavoured, as I have hinted before, to examine what are their probable effects on our lives, and what each system may contribute towards that fortitude which the mind seems to stand in need of, when we must pass the impervious mist that parts this mode of existence from the next, which can best still and calm our anxious



thoughts, whilst trembling on the brink from which we soon must plunge into. Can reason or religion best assure me what, if not assure, which can beguile me best, and make the transit easiest? These are matters I am weighing with solitude, Urbanus.

## URBANUS.

You seem, Philalethes, to have discovered the truest test by which to determine your own choice; but I will not interrupt you, pray go on.

## PHILALETHES.

Well, then, Urbanus, I consider in the first place, with regard merely to this life, that both the philosopher and Christian agree in this, that virtue is man's truest happiness; that he has propensities to restrain and discipline to make him an *harmless* member of society; that he has virtu-



ous dispositions to cultivate, to make him an *amiable* and *useful* member of it.

The question then is, does the philosophic code, if any settled one there be, or reason's dictates, present us a moral system more sublime and pure, or more concise and clear, than that which graces the sacred and evangelic page?

Truth, justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude, meekness, charity, I don't affect a methodical arrangement, nor complete recollection of all the amiable qualities that compose the lovely train of virtue; but I ask, are these no where to be found but in the fane of reason and philosophy? No where recommended to our choice and care with equal energy, or such appropriate arguments, as those we meet with in the philosophic page? Or are they not rather to be found in the sacred volume, with that superiority of style, conciseness, clearness, and perspicuity, that even vanity it-



self cannot claim a competition with?— Here the balance seems to me, to turn in favour of the scripture.

## URBANUS.

I am of the same judgment, Philalethes ; and I think an enquirer of taste and discernment, tempered with a moderate share of impartiality and candour, must, on comparing the diffuse and speculative cast of modern treatises on morality with the clear simplicity of the scriptures, acknowledge the decided superiority of the latter. Let him examine what he finds on the following subjects in the sacred writers, and decide impartially : — Truth — Temperance — Prudence — Fortitude — Justice — Meekness — Charity \*.

I think the conclusion must unavoidably be, that philosophy has nothing new to of-

\* See Dialogue IV. p. 56.



fer us in practical morality ; no scriptural deficiency of rules for our government in the conduct of our lives is made up to us by her aid. She has nothing then to present us with but speculations, and those as destitute of proof, as the revelation she despises.

PHILALETHES.

I thank you, Urbanus, for this reasonable remark, and think with you, the Christian rules for our conduct are at least, as full and clear, as sublime and elegant, and in every respect, as adequate to the end proposed, as any of the best productions of the most enlightened modern reasoners.

Other considerations that weigh with me are these—What danger do we run? what fatal consequences can result from a belief in the Christian doctrine?—Does philosophy possess a greater stimulus to acts



of virtue, or does it keep a tighter curb on our irregular passions and vicious inclinations? The Christian's hope and confidence in the reward of present peace of mind and future bliss, are quick and animating motives to the continual practice of every virtue; and his firm belief in the veracity of future punishment, operates as a strong restraint from licentious indulgencies.—

Can the cold incitements of philosophic motives, built on the fitness, the propriety, the decency of things, prevail, where the full belief in joy unutterable and eternal, or grief and misery that have no end, shall fail to move? It is unreasonable to suppose that this can be. And the man, whom the consoling promises, or the alarming threatenings of the gospel cannot influence, can hardly be expected to yield to the weaker motives of the reasonableness of things, for he proves himself to be one of those, over whom reason has no controul.



If then, in proportion as our motives and incitements are stronger and more powerful, our ardour in pursuit of them will be more steady and persevering, and so ultimately more successful. In this point of view the Christian must be the greatest proficient in virtue, and consequently the happiest character, even though his hopes, that go beyond the grave, should prove a mere deception. For admitting that the moral precepts of the sacred page, and those which reason dictates to our mind, or the philosopher prescribes, are equally clear, intelligible, and just; yet the motives that operate on the mind of the Christian are much stronger: and though we may think we discover something to weaken their credibility, yet we cannot possibly disprove their veracity, therefore, there is a danger of the most fatal consequence in rejecting them, if true; but there can be neither disadvantage nor danger in accepting them,



if even false, since their object is virtue—to which they allure us by the most attractive considerations, and their aversion is vice and irregularity, from which they endeavour to restrain us, by exhibiting their tendency in the most alarming point of view.

Having thus weighed Christianity and philosophy by their probable effects on our lives, in an impartial balance, I am satisfied that wisdom and prudence turn the scale in favour of Christianity.

## URBANUS.

I am also perfectly satisfied with the result of this essay, Philalethes; but I understood you meant to carry the experiment to it's ultimum, by following the philosopher and the Christian to the end of life's vista; to where the impervious mist excludes the human sight from the least glimpse that can inform what lies beyond



the irremeable pass. — I should be glad to attend you to the result of this enquiry.

## PHILALETHES.

I have this in view, Urbanus ; and I shall be glad, not only of your company, but kind assistance. Here then, we will admit, for the sake of experiment, that the Christian's views are false and visionary ; yet let us see how they operate at the close of life ; what are the immediate feelings of his mind ? what does he derive from retrospect, and what from prospect ? These we can, in part, gather from the well-attested instances that have frequently occurred in the conduct of the dying Christian, and let us contrast this with the conduct and expectation of the philosopher, as well as we are able, to come at a knowledge of it ; and if on the supposition that the Christian's faith is vain and without foundation, they shall still be found at least in equili-



brio ; will not prudence still determine in favour of that, against which, if veracity should be included in the essay, the other would indeed be found miserably wanting, and deplorably defective. But what have been the well-attested sentiments and expressions of the dying Christian? — Have not his retrospective glances often excited words like these — “ I have endeavoured, in the course of my life, to love and serve God, and I have now the comfortable evidence of his gracious acceptance of my poor efforts ; I find nothing now but peace, I have nothing to do but die, my heart is full of joy, and though the pains preceding death are great, I feel that divine support that endues me with patience and resignation, and I look forward with inexpressible delight to that moment that shall set my imprisoned spirit free ; for I have no doubt but it will ascend to him who gave it, and enter into everlasting joy ; for



I know that my redeemer liveth." Thus have the dying words of the departing faint poured healing balm into the wounded bosoms of his surrounding and surviving friends.

## URBANUS.

I have known such instances confirmed by those, of whose veracity I have not the shadow of a doubt but it may be objected that these are delusive dreams.

## PHILALETHES.

Admit them to be so, Urbanus; yet, in the midst of those pains which necessarily precede our dissolution, and some degree of anxious solicitude, which certainly a rational mind must feel, respecting its approaching change, whether there is, or is not a vital or immortal part that shall survive this struggle; certainly that which can impart patience, peace, and even comfort in the midst of all, and an hope that sur-



mounts all anxiety and doubt, and enables us to look forward with joyful expectation, is a dream most ardently to be longed for; and those who witness such a close as this, may well exclaim, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his."

Admitting then, that this is all a dream, and death is an *eternal sleep*, how cheering is the hope, that this bright vision may also be a *co-eternal dream*. But say, this sleep is quite unconscious of pleasing or of painful dreams, the Christian still is right; in knowing nothing, he knows no disappointment. How did his pleasing hopes and fond expectation triumph over pain and fear and doubt, and filled his mind with peace and joy, and rapturous hope, that made his dying moments the happiest of his life. This fond dream has had the happiest effects—it has faithfully attended him through the dreary vale of death, and



safely lodged him in a land of forgetfulness and ignorance, alike unconscious of past, present, or to come.

## URBANUS.

I own this is very conclusive, Philalethes, in the Christian's favour, even upon the philosopher's own plan; but can we not be introduced to the chamber of the dying sage—can we not be admitted there in the expiring moments of this master of reason?

## PHILALETHES.

We, perhaps, may; but it is not difficult for imagination itself to do us this piece of service, let us then take this method of introduction: what then does imagination figure to us, what picture can it present to us of him, who, admitting his life to have been blameless, derives no advantage in death from such a retrospect? prospect he has none—heavenly support or



comfort is all delusion, long since chased by reason from his enlightened mind; all the merit then, of the philosopher's creed lies here—it is not calculated to inspire sentiments of fear in death: a consolation as chill as the cold hand of death that has seized him. Without an hope, or fear, or any thing to look to for comfort in this trying crisis, he lies and bears with all the patience he can muster, each struggle of nature, that damps with a cold sweat, his dying brow, and all his hope centers in speedy dissolution. This, I believe, Urbanus, is a fair picture of each in death: thus, even upon the unequal terms of a supposition, that the Christian's creed is false, and the philosopher's is true, still it appears that prudence and happiness are on the Christian's side through life and death.

URBANUS.

Yes, Philalethes; but if we admit, and I have heard instances of this related by those,



of whose veracity I have no room to doubt, and who I also have no doubt were superior to the paltry expedient of fabrications, to support their own opinion, by traducing that which opposed it: if we admit that some doubt may arise, something like conviction may flash across the mind, and whisper that reason has been deceived, and that the gospel still is true.

How dreadful then must be the painful doubt, the anxious fear, and trembling that attends each solicitous enquiry into the nature of what is next to follow; oh! how would the poor distressed soul now prize one single line, on which it could place the Christian's confidence in revelation—a confidence, or if you please, a dream of present consolation, and future joy, from which, even the excruciating pains of fire itself cannot awaken him. Oh! for one sentence, on which he could fix a confidence like this—that could, indeed, assure him



that death was an eternal sleep, he might then indulge himself in the ignoble hope that all would soon be over, and himself erased from the list of beings; but he is not sure of this. Dreadful uncertainty indeed! and too painful a subject to dwell upon.—Adieu, my dear Philalethes.

## PHILALETHES.

Dear Urbanus, adieu; and may we both remember that happiness and safety in life and death, are on the side of religion; may the recollection of the result of this essay timely warn us to imitate the cautious adder, and turn a deaf ear to the voice of the sophistical charmer, charm be he never so wisely!

*FINIS.*



ERRATA.

Dialogue III. p. 35, dele Lavinia over the line; then dele  
Maria and infert Lavinia.

If any other error should have escaped notice, the reader  
will be kind enough to correct the same.

Thomas Lindell  
Sept 1800









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