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Characteristics of men, manners, opinions, times

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T R E A T I S E I.

V I Z.

A

L E T T E R

C O N C E R N I N G

E N T H U S I A S M,

T O

My Lord * * * * *

—— *Ridentem dicere verum*
Quid vetat?

Hor. sat. 1.

THE A. T. F. I.

V. I. E.

LETTER

CONCERNING

ENTHUSIASM.

TO

M. Lord *****

— London, 18th Oct. 1844

Dear Sir,

I have the honor

P R E F A C E.

If the author of these united tracts had been any friend to Prefaces, he would probably have made his entrance after that manner, in one or other of the five treatises formerly published apart. But as to all prefatory or dedicatory discourse, he has told us his mind sufficiently in that treatise which he calls Soliloquy. Being satisfied, however, that there are many persons who esteem these introductory pieces as very essential in the constitution of a work; he has thought fit, in behalf of his honest printer, to substitute these lines under the title of a Preface; and to declare, "That, according to his best judgment and authority, these presents ought to pass, and be received, construed, and taken, as satisfactory in full, for all preliminary composition, dedication, direct or indirect application for favor to the public, or to any private patron,

P R E F A C E.

" or party whatsoever; nothing to the contrary
" appearing to him from the side of Truth, or
" Reason." Witness his hand, this 5th day of
December 1710.

A. A. C. A. N. A. E.
C. M. D. C. L. X. X. J.

A

L E T T E R.

My LORD,

Sept. 1707.

NOW, you are returned to..... and before the season comes which must engage you in the weightier matters of state; if you care to be entertained a while with a sort of idle thoughts, such as pretend only to amusement, and have no relation to business or affairs, you may cast your eye slightly on what you have before you; and if there be any thing inviting, you may read it over at your leisure.

It has been an established custom for poets; at the entrance of their work, to address themselves to some Muse; and this practice of the ancients has gained so much repute, that even in our days we find it almost constantly imitated. I cannot but fancy, however, that this imitation, which passes so currently with other judgments, must at some time or other have stuck a little with your Lordship, who is used to examine things by a better standard than that of fashion or the common taste. You must certainly have observed our poets under a remarkable constraint, when obliged to assume this character: and you

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B

have wondered, perhaps, why that air of enthusiasm which fits so gracefully with an ancient, should be so spiritless and awkward in a modern. But as to this doubt, your Lordship would have soon resolved yourself: and it could only serve to bring accross you a reflection you have often made, on many occasions besides, That truth is the most powerful thing in the world; since even fiction¹ itself must be governed by it, and can only please by its resemblance. The appearance of reality is necessary to make any passion agreeably represented: and to be able to move others, we must first be moved ourselves, or at least seem to be so, upon some probable grounds. Now, what possibility is there that a modern, who is known never to have worshipped Apollo, or owned any such deity as the Muses, should persuade us to enter into his pretended devotion, and move us by his feigned zeal in a religion out of date? But as for the ancients, it is known they derived both their religion and polity from the Muses' art. How natural therefore must it have appeared in any, but especially a poet of those times, to address himself in raptures of devotion to those acknowledged patronesses of wit and science? Here the poet might with probability feign an ecstasy, though he really felt none: and supposing it to have been mere affectation, it would look, however, like something natural, and could not fail of pleasing.

¹ Wit and hum. part 4. § 3. parag. 2.; and Misc. 5. chap. 1. parag. 39. in vol. 3.

But perhaps, my Lord, there was a further mystery in the case. Men, your Lordship knows, are wonderfully happy in a faculty of deceiving themselves, whenever they set heartily about it; and a very small foundation of any passion will serve us, not only to act it well, but even to work ourselves into it beyond our own reach. Thus, by a little affectation in love-matters, and with the help of a romance or novel, a boy of fifteen, or a grave man of fifty, may be sure to grow a very natural coxcomb, and feel the belle passion in good earnest. A man of tolerable good nature, who happens to be a little piqued, may, by improving his resentment, become a very fury for revenge. Even a good Christian, who would needs be over-good, and thinks he can never believe enough, may, by a small inclination well improved, extend his faith so largely, as to comprehend in it not only all scriptural and traditional miracles, but a solid system of old-wives-stories. Were it needful, I could put your Lordship in mind of an eminent, learned, and truly Christian prelate you once knew, who could have given you a full account of his belief in Fairies. And this, methinks, may serve to make appear, how far an ancient poet's faith might possibly have been raised, together with his imagination.

But we Christians, who have such ample faith ourselves, will allow nothing to poor Heathens. They must be infidels in every sense. We will not allow them to believe so much as their own

religion, which we cry is too absurd to have been credited by any besides the mere vulgar. But if a reverend Christian prelate may be so great a volunteer in faith, as, beyond the ordinary prescription of the catholic church, to believe in Fairies; why may not a Heathen poet, in the ordinary way of his religion, be allowed to believe in Muses? For these, your Lordship knows, were so many divine persons in the Heathen creed, and were essential in their system of theology. The goddesses had their temples and worship, the same as the other deities: and to disbelieve the holy nine, or their Apollo, was the same as to deny Jove himself; and must have been esteemed equally profane and atheistical by the generality of sober men. Now, what a mighty advantage must it have been to an ancient poet to be thus orthodox, and by the help of his education, and a good-will into the bargain, to work himself up to the belief of a divine presence and heavenly inspiration? It was never surely the business of poets in those days to call revelation in question, when it evidently made so well for their art. On the contrary, they could not fail to animate their faith as much as possible; when by a single act of it, well enforced, they could raise themselves into such angelical company.

How much the imagination of such a presence must exalt a genius, we may observe merely from the influence which an ordinary presence has over men. Our modern wits are more or

less raised by the opinion they have of their company, and the idea they form to themselves of the persons to whom they make their addresses. A common actor of the stage will inform us how much a full audience of the better sort exalts him above the common pitch. And you, my Lord, who are the noblest actor, and of the noblest part assigned to any mortal on this earthly stage, when you are acting for liberty and mankind; does not the public presence, that of your friends, and the well-wishers to your cause, add something to your thought and genius? Or is that sublime of reason, and that power of eloquence, which you discover in public, no more than what you are equally master of in private; and can command at any time, alone, or with indifferent company, or in any easy or cool hour? This indeed were more godlike; but ordinary humanity, I think, reaches not so high.

For my own part, my Lord, I have really so much need of some considerable presence or company to raise my thoughts on any occasion, that when alone, I must endeavour by strength of fancy to supply this want; and in default of a Muse, must inquire out some great man of a more than ordinary genius, whose imagined presence may inspire me with more than what I feel at ordinary hours. And thus, my Lord, have I chosen to address myself to your Lordship, though without subscribing my name; allowing you as a stranger the full liberty of reading no more than what you may have a fancy

for ; but reserving to myself the privilege of imagining you read all with particular notice, as a friend, and one whom I may justifiably treat with the intimacy and freedom which follows.

S E C T. II.

IF the knowing well how to expose any infirmity or vice were a sufficient security for the virtue which is contrary, how excellent an age might we be presumed to live in! Never was there in our nation a time known, when folly and extravagance of every kind were more sharply inspected, or more wittily ridiculed. And one might hope at least from this good symptom, that our age was in no declining state; since whatever our distempers are, we stand so well affected to our remedies. To bear the being told of faults, is in private persons the best token of amendment. It is seldom that a public is thus disposed. For where jealousy of state, or the ill lives of the great people, or any other cause, is powerful enough to restrain the freedom of censure in any part, it in effect destroys the benefit of it in the whole. There can be no impartial and free censure of manners, where any peculiar custom or national opinion is set apart, and not only exempted from criticism, but even flattered with the highest art. It is only in a free

nation, such as ours, that imposture has no privilege; and that neither the credit of a court, the power of a nobility, nor the awfulness of a church, can give her protection, or hinder her from being arraigned in every shape and appearance. It is true, this liberty may seem to run too far. We may perhaps be said to make ill use of it. — So every one will say, when he himself is touched, and his opinion freely examined. But who shall be judge of what may be freely examined, and what may not? where liberty may be used, and where it may not? What remedy shall we prescribe to this in general? Can there be a better than from that liberty itself which is complained of? If men are vitious, petulant, or abusive, the magistrate may correct them; but if they reason ill, it is reason still must teach them to do better. Justness of thought and style, refinement in manners, good-breeding, and politeness of every kind, can come only from the trial and experience of what is best. Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing will soon be found. Whatever humor has got the start, if it be unnatural, it cannot hold: and the ridicule, if ill placed at first, will certainly fall at last where it deserves.

I have often wondered to see men of sense so mightily alarmed at the approach of any thing like ridicule on certain subjects; as if they mistrusted their own judgment. For what ridicule can lie against reason? Or how can any one of the least justness of thought, endure a ridicule

wrong placed? Nothing is more ridiculous than this itself. The vulgar, indeed, may swallow any fordid jest, any mere drollery or buffoonery; but it must be a finer and truer wit which takes with the men of sense and breeding. How comes it to pass, then, that we appear such cowards in reasoning, and are so afraid to stand the test of ridicule? — O! say we, the subjects are too grave. — Perhaps so. But let us see first whether they are really grave or no: for in the manner we may conceive them, they may peradventure be very grave and weighty in our imagination, but very ridiculous and impertinent in their own nature. Gravity is of the very essence of imposture. It does not only make us mistake other things, but is apt perpetually almost to mistake itself. For even in common behaviour, how hard is it for the grave character to keep long out of the limits of the formal one? We can never be too grave, if we can be assured we are really what we suppose. And we can never too much honor or revere any thing for grave, if we are assured the thing is grave, as we apprehend it. The main point is, to know always true gravity from the false. And this can only be, by carrying the rule constantly with us, and freely applying it not only to the things about us, but to ourselves. For if unhappily we lose the measure in ourselves, we shall soon lose it in every thing besides. Now, what rule or measure is there in the world, except in the considering of the real temper of things, to find which are

truly serious, and which ridiculous? And how can this be done, unless by applying the ridicule to see whether it will bear? But if we fear to apply this rule in any thing, what security can we have against the imposture of formality in all things? We have allowed ourselves to be formalists in one point; and the same formality may rule us as it pleases in all others.

It is not in every disposition that we are capacitated to judge of things. We must beforehand judge of our own temper, and accordingly of other things which fall under our judgment. But we must never more pretend to judge of things, or of our own temper in judging them, when we have given up our preliminary right of judgment; and, under a presumption of gravity, have allowed ourselves to be most ridiculous, and to admire profoundly the most ridiculous things in nature, at least for ought we know: for having resolved never to try, we can never be sure.

Ridiculum acri

Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res².

This, my Lord, I may safely aver, is so true in itself, and so well known for truth by the cunning formalists of the age, that they can better bear to have their impostures railed at, with all the bitterness and vehemence imaginable, than to have them touched ever so gently in this

¹ Wit and humor, part 1. § 1. parag. 2, 3. and § 5. parag. 2, 3.

² Hor. sat. 10. lib. 1.

other way. They know very well, that as modes and fashions, so opinions, though ever so ridiculous, are kept up by solemnity; and that those formal notions, which grew up probably in an ill mood, and have been conceived in sober sadness, are never to be removed but in a sober kind of chearfulness, and by a more easy and pleasant way of thought. There is a melancholy which accompanies all enthusiasm. Be it love or religion, (for there are enthusiasms in both), nothing can put a stop to the growing mischief of either, till the melancholy be removed, and the mind at liberty to hear what can be said against the ridiculousness of an extreme in either way.

It was heretofore the wisdom of some wise nations, to let people be fools as much as they pleased, and never to punish seriously what deserved only to be laughed at, and was, after all, best cured by that innocent remedy. There are certain humors in mankind, which, of necessity, must have vent. The human mind and body are both of them naturally subject to commotions, and as there are strange ferments in the blood, which in many bodies occasion an extraordinary discharge; so, in reason too, there are heterogeneous particles, which must be thrown off by fermentation. Should physicians endeavour absolutely to allay those ferments of the body, and strike in the humors which discover themselves in such eruptions, they might, instead of making a cure, bid fair perhaps to raise a plague, and turn a spring ague, or an autumn

furfeit, into an epidemical malignant fever. They are certainly as ill physicians in the body-politic, who would needs be tampering with these mental eruptions; and, under the specious pretence of healing this itch of superstition, and saving souls from the contagion of enthusiasm, should set all nature in an uproar, and turn a few innocent carbuncles into an inflammation and mortal gangrene.

We read in history³, that Pan, when he accompanied Bacchus in an expedition to the Indies, found means to strike a terror through a host of enemies, by the help of a small company, whose clamors he managed to good advantage among the echoing rocks and caverns of a woody vale. The hoarse bellowing of the caves, joined to the hideous aspect of such dark and desert places, raised such a horror in the enemy, that in this state their imagination helped them to hear voices, and doubtless to see forms too, which were more than human: whilst the uncertainty of what they feared made their fear yet greater, and spread it faster by implicit looks than any narration could convey it. And this was what in after-times men called a panic. The story indeed gives a good hint of the nature of this passion, which can hardly be without some mixture of enthusiasm, and horrors of a superstitious kind.

One may, with good reason, call every passion

³ Polyæni stratag. lib. 1. chap. 2.

panic which is raised in a multitude, and conveyed by aspect, or, as it were, by contact or sympathy. Thus, popular fury may be called panic, when the rage of the people, as we have sometimes known, has put them beyond themselves; especially where religion has had to do⁴. And in this state, their very looks are infectious. The fury flies from face to face; and the disease is no sooner seen than caught. They who, in a better situation of mind, have beheld a multitude under the power of this passion, have owned, that they saw in the countenances of men something more ghastly and terrible than at other times is expressed on the most passionate occasions. Such force has society⁵, in ill as well as in good passions; and so much stronger any affection is for being social and communicative.

Thus, my Lord, there are many panics in mankind, besides merely that of fear. And thus is religion also panic, when enthusiasm of any kind gets up; as oft, on melancholy occasions, it will: for vapors naturally rise; and in bad times especially, when the spirits of men are low; as either in public calamities, or during the unwholesomeness of air or diet, or when convulsions happen in nature, storms, earthquakes, or other amazing prodigies: at this season the panic must needs run

⁴ *Infra*, § 6 parag. 2.; and Misc. 2. chap. 2. parag. 5. in the notes, in vol. 3.

⁵ Wit and humor, part 3. § 2. parag. 1.; Inquiry concerning virtue, book 2. part 2. § 1. parag. 3. 13. &c. 41. &c. in vol. 2.

high, and the magistrate of necessity give way to it. For, to apply a serious remedy, and bring the sword, or fasces, as a cure, must make the case more melancholy, and increase the very cause of the distemper. To forbid men's natural fears, and to endeavour the overpowering them by other fears, must needs be a most unnatural method. The magistrate, if he be any artist, should have a gentler hand; and, instead of caustics, incisions, and amputations, should be using the softest balms; and with a kind sympathy, entering into the concern of the people, and taking, as it were, their passion upon him, should, when he has footed and satisfied it, endeavour, by chearful ways, to divert and heal it.

This was ancient policy: and hence, as a notable author * of our nation expresses it, it is necessary a people should have a public leading in religion. For to deny the magistrate a worship, or take away a national church, is as mere enthusiasm as the notion which sets up persecution. For why should there not be public walks as well as private gardens? why not public libraries as well as private education and home-tutors? But to prescribe bounds to fancy and speculation, to regulate men's apprehensions, and religious beliefs or fears, to suppress by violence the natural passion of enthusiasm, or to endeavour to ascertain it, or reduce it to one species, or bring it under any one modification, is in truth no better sense, nor

* Harrington.

deserves a better character, than what the comedian² declares of the like project in the affair of love —

— *Nihil plus agas*

Quam si des operam ut cum ratione insanias.

Not only the visionaries and enthusiasts of all kinds were tolerated, your Lordship knows, by the ancients; but, on the other side, philosophy had as free a course, and was permitted as a balance against superstition: and whilst some sects, such as the Pythagorean and latter Platonic, joined in with the superstition and enthusiasm of the times, the Epicurean, the Academic, and others, were allowed to use all the force of wit and raillery against it. And thus matters were happily balanced. Reason had fair play; learning and science flourished. Wonderful was the harmony and temper which arose from all these contraries. Thus superstition and enthusiasm were mildly treated; and being let alone, they never raged to that degree as to occasion bloodshed, wars, persecutions, and devastations in the world. But a new sort of policy, which extends itself to another world, and considers the future lives and happiness of men rather than the present, has made us leap the bounds of natural humanity; and, out of a supernatural charity, has taught us the way of plaguing one another most devoutly. It has raised

² Ter. Eun. act. 1. sc. 1.

an antipathy * which no temporal interest could ever do; and entailed upon us a mutual hatred to all eternity: and now uniformity in opinion (a hopeful project!) is looked on as the only expedient against this evil. The saving of souls is now the heroic passion of exalted spirits; and is become in a manner the chief care of the magistrate, and the very end of government itself.

If magistracy should vouchsafe to interpose thus much in other sciences, I am afraid we should have as bad logic, as bad mathematics, and in every kind as bad philosophy; as we often have divinity in countries where a precise orthodoxy is settled by law. It is a hard matter for a government to settle wit. If it does but keep us sober and honest, it is likely we shall have as much ability in our spiritual as in our temporal affairs: and, if we can but be trusted, we shall have wit enough to save ourselves, when no prejudice lies in the way. But if honesty and wit be insufficient for this saving work, it is in vain for the magistrate to meddle with it; since, if he be ever so virtuous or wise, he may be as soon mistaken as another man. I am sure the only way to save men's sense; or preserve wit at all in the world, is to give liberty to wit. Now, wit can never have its liberty, where the freedom of raillery is taken away: for against serious extravagancies, and splenetic humors, there is no other remedy than this.

* Misc. 2. chap. 1. parag. 35, 36, 37. &c. and chap. 2. parag. 25, 26. &c. in vol. 3.

We have indeed full power over all other modifications of spleen. We may treat other enthusiasms as we please. We may ridicule love or gallantry, or knight-errantry, to the utmost; and we find, that, in these latter days of wit, the humor of this kind, which was once so prevalent, is pretty well declined. The crusades, the rescuing of holy lands, and such devout gallantries, are in less request than formerly. But if something of this militant religion, something of this soul-rescuing spirit, and saint-errantry, prevails still, we need not wonder, when we consider in how solemn a manner we treat this distemper, and how preposterously we go about to cure enthusiasm.

I can hardly forbear fancying, that if we had a sort of inquisition, or formal court of judicature, with grave officers and judges, erected to restrain poetical licence, and in general to suppress that fancy and humor of versification; but in particular that most extravagant passion of love, as it is set out by poets, in its Heathenish dress of Venus and Cupids: if the poets, as ringleaders and teachers of this heresy, were, under grievous penalties, forbid to enchant the people by their vein of rhyming; and if the people, on the other side, were, under proportionable penalties, forbid to hearken to any such charm, or lend their attention to any love-tale, so much as in a play, a novel, or a ballad; we might perhaps see a new Arcadia arising out of this heavy persecution: old people and young would be seized with a versifying spirit: we should

should have field-conventicles of lovers and poets: forests would be filled with romantic shepherds and shepherdesses; and rocks resound with echoes of hymns and praises offered to the powers of love. We might indeed have a fair chance, by this management, to bring back the whole train of Heathen gods; and set our cold northern island, burning with as many altars to Venus and Apollo, as were formerly in Cyprus, Delos, or any of those warmer Grecian climates.

S E C T. III.

BUT, my Lord, you may perhaps wonder, that having been drawn into such a serious subject as religion, I should forget myself so far as to give way to raillery and humor. I must own, my Lord, it is not merely through chance that this has happened. To say truth, I hardly care so much as to think on this subject, much less to write on it, without endeavouring to put myself in as good humor as is possible. People indeed who can endure no middle temper, but are all air and humor, know little of the doubts and scruples of religion, and are safe from any immediate influence of devout melancholy or enthusiasm; which requires more deliberation and thoughtful practice to fix itself in a temper, and grow habitual. But be the habit what it will, to be delivered of it at so sad a cost as inconsiderateness or madness,

is what I would never wish to be my lot. I had rather stand all adventures with religion, than endeavour to get rid of the thoughts of it by diversion. All I contend for, is to think of it in a right humor: and that this goes more than half way towards thinking rightly of it, is what I shall endeavour to demonstrate.

Good Humor is not only the best security against enthusiasm, but the best foundation of piety and true religion: for if right thoughts and worthy apprehensions of the Supreme Being are fundamental to all true worship and adoration, it is more than probable, that we shall never miscarry in this respect, except through ill humor only. Nothing beside ill humor, either natural or forced, can bring a man to think seriously that the world is governed by any devilish or malicious power. I very much question whether any thing, besides ill humor, can be the cause of Atheism. For there are so many arguments to persuade a man in humor, that, in the main, all things are kindly and well disposed, that one would think it impossible for him to be so far out of conceit with affairs, as to imagine they all ran at adventures; and that the world, as venerable and wise a face as it carried, had neither sense nor meaning in it. This, however, I am persuaded of, that nothing beside ill humor can give us dreadful or ill thoughts of a supreme manager. Nothing can persuade us of fullness or founess in such a being, beside the actual forefeeling of somewhat of this kind within ourselves: and if we are afraid

of bringing good humor into religion, or thinking with freedom and pleasantness on such a subject as God, it is because we conceive the subject so like ourselves, and can hardly have a notion of majesty and greatness, without stateliness and moroseness accompanying it.

This, however, is the just reverse of that character, which we own to be most divinely good, when we see it, as we sometimes do, in men of highest power among us. If they pass for truly good, we dare treat them freely, and are sure they will not be displeased with this liberty. They are doubly gainers by this goodness of theirs. For the more they are searched into, and familiarly examined, the more their worth appears; and the discoverer, charmed with his success, esteems and loves more than ever, when he has proved this additional bounty in his superior, and reflects on that candor and generosity he has experienced. Your Lordship knows more perhaps of this mystery than any one. How else should you have been so beloved in power, and out of power so adhered to, and still more beloved?

Thank Heaven! there are even in our own age some such examples. In former ages there have been many such. We have known mighty princes, and even emperors of the world who could bear unconcernedly, not only the free censure of their actions, but the most spiteful reproaches and calumnies, even to their faces. Some perhaps may wish there had never been

such examples found in Heathens ; but more especially , that the occasion had never been given by Christians. It was more the misfortune indeed of mankind in general , than of Christians in particular , that some of the earlier Roman emperors were such monsters of tyranny , and began a persecution , not on religious men merely , but on all who were suspected of worth or virtue. What could have been a higher honor or advantage to Christianity , than to be persecuted by a Nero ? But better princes , who came after , were persuaded to remit these severe courses. It is true , the magistrate might possibly have been surprised with the newness of a notion , which he might pretend , perhaps , did not only destroy the sacredness of his power , but treated him and all men as profane , impious , and damned , who entered not into certain particular modes of worship ; of which there had been formerly so many thousand instituted , all of them compatible and sociable till that time. However , such was the wisdom of some succeeding ministries , that the edge of persecution was much abated ; and even that prince ¹ , who was esteemed the greatest enemy of the Christian sect , and who himself had been educated in it , was a great restrainer of persecution , and would allow of nothing further than a resumption of church-lands and public schools , without any attempt on the goods or persons even of those who branded the state-

¹ Misc. 2. ch. 2. parag. 31, 32. in the notes , in vol. 3.

religion, and made a merit of affronting the public worship.

It is well we have the authority of a sacred author in our religion, to assure us, that the spirit of love ² and humanity is above that of martyrs. Otherwise, one might be a little scandalized, perhaps, at the history of many of our primitive confessors and martyrs, even according to our own accounts. There is hardly now in the world so good a Christian, (if this be indeed the mark of a good one), who, if he happened to live at Constantinople, or elsewhere under the protection of the Turks, would think it fitting or decent to give any disturbance to their Mosque-worship. And as good Protestants, my Lord, as you and I are, we would consider him as little better than a rank enthusiast, who, out of hatred to the Romish idolatry, should, in time of high mass, (where mass perhaps was by law established), interrupt the priest with clamors, or fall foul on his images and relics.

There are some, it seems, of our good brethren, the French Protestants, lately come among us, who are mightily taken with this primitive way. They have set afoot the spirit of martyrdom to a wonder in their own country; and they long to be trying it here, if we will give them leave, and afford them the occasion: that is to say, if we will only do them the favor to hang or imprison them; if we will only be so obliging as to break

² 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

their bones for them , after their country-fashion , blow up their zeal , and stir afresh the coals of persecution. But no such grace can they hitherto obtain of us. So hard-hearted we are , that , notwithstanding their own mob are willing to bestow kind blows upon them , and fairly stone them now and then in the open street ; though the priests of their own nation would gladly give them their desired discipline , and are earnest to light their probationary fires for them , we Englishmen , who are masters in our own country , will not suffer the enthusiasts to be thus used. Nor can we be supposed to act thus in envy to their phoenix-*sect* , which it seems has risen out of the flames , and would willingly grow to be a new church by the same manner of propagation as the old one , whose seed was truly said to be from the blood of the martyrs.

But how barbarous still , and more than Heathenishly cruel , are we tolerating Englishmen ! For , not contented to deny these prophesying enthusiasts the honor of a persecution , we have delivered them over to the cruellest contempt in the world. I am told for certain , that they are at this very time ¹ the subject of a choice droll or puppet-show at Bartholomew-fair. There , doubtless , their strange voices and involuntary agitations are admirably well acted , by the motion of wires and inspiration of pipes. For the bodies of the prophets , in their state of prophecy , being

¹ *Viz.* anno 1707.

not in their own power, but (as they say themselves) mere passive organs, actuated by an exterior force, have nothing natural, or resembling real life, in any of their sounds or motions: so that how awkwardly soever a puppet-show may imitate other actions, it must needs represent this passion to the life. And whilst Bartholomew-fair is in possession of this privilege, I dare stand security to our national church, that no sect of enthusiasts, no new venders of prophecy or miracles, shall ever get the start, or put her to the trouble of trying her strength with them, in any case.

Happy it was for us, that when Popery had got possession, Smithfield was used in a more tragical way. Many of our first reformers, it is feared, were little better than enthusiasts: and God knows, whether a warmth of this kind did not considerably help us in throwing off that spiritual tyranny. So that had not the priests, as is usual, preferred the love of blood to all other passions, they might, in a merrier way, perhaps have evaded the greatest force of our reforming spirit. I never heard that the ancient Heathens were so well advised in their ill purpose of suppressing the Christian religion in its first rise, as to make use, at any time, of this Bartholomew-fair method. But this I am persuaded of, that, had the truth of the gospel been any way surmountable, they would have bid much fairer for the silencing it, if they had chose to bring our primitive founders upon the stage in a pleasanter way than that of bear-skins and pitch-barrels.

The Jews were naturally a very cloudy people, and could endure little raillery in any thing^{*}; much less in what belonged to any religious doctrines or opinions. Religion was looked upon with a fullen eye; and hanging was the only remedy they could prescribe for any thing which looked like setting up a new revelation. The sovereign argument was, Crucify, Crucify. But, with all their malice and inveteracy to our Saviour, and his apostles after him, had they but taken the fancy to act such puppet-shows in his contempt, as at this hour the Papists are acting in his honor; I am apt to think they might possibly have done our religion more harm than by all their other ways of severity.

I believe our great and learned apostle found less advantage from the easy treatment of his Athenian antagonists, than from the surly and cursed spirit of the most persecuting Jewish cities[†]. He made less improvement of the candor and civility of his Roman judges, than of the zeal of the synagogue, and vehemence of his national priests. Though when I consider this apostle as

^{*} Our author having been censured for this and some following passages concerning the *Jews*, the reader is referred to the notes and citations in Misc. 2. c. 1. parag. 29, 30, 31, 32. c. 3. parag. 38, 39. in vol. 3. See also Advice to an author, part 3. § 1. parag. 4, 5. in this volume.

[†] What advantage he made of his sufferings, and how pathetically his *bonds* and *stripes* were set to view, and often pleaded by him, to raise his character, and advance the interest of Christianity, any one who reads his epistles, and is well acquainted with his manner and style, may easily observe.

appearing either before the witty Athenians, or before a Roman court of judicature, in the presence of their great men and ladies, and see how handsomely he accommodates himself to the apprehensions and temper of those politer people, I do not find that he declines the way of wit or good humor; but, without suspicion of his cause, is willing generously to commit it to this proof, and try it against the sharpness of any ridicule which might be offered.

But though the Jews were never pleased to try their wit or malice this way against our Saviour or his apostles; the irreligious part of the Heathens had tried it long before, against the best doctrines and best characters of men which had ever arisen amongst them. Nor did this prove in the end any injury, but on the contrary the highest advantage to those very characters and doctrines, which, having stood the proof, were found so solid and just. The divinest man who had ever appeared in the Heathen world, was, in the height of witty times, and by the wittiest of all poets, most abominably ridiculed, in a whole comedy writ and acted on purpose. But so far was this from sinking his reputation, or suppressing his philosophy, that they each increased the more for it; and he apparently grew to be more the envy of other teachers. He was not only contented to be ridiculed, but, that he might help the poet as much as possible, he presented himself openly in the theatre, that his real figure (which was no advantageous one) might be compared with that which the

witty poet had brought as his representative on the stage. Such was his good humor ! Nor could there be in the world a greater testimony of the invincible goodness of the man , or a greater demonstration , that there was no imposture either in his character or opinions. For that imposture should dare sustain the encounter of a grave enemy , is no wonder. A solemn attack , she knows , is not of such danger to her. There is nothing she abhors or dreads like pleasantness and good humor.

S E C T. IV.

IN short , my Lord , the melancholy way of treating religion , is that which , according to my apprehension , renders it so tragical , and is the occasion of its acting in reality such dismal tragedies in the world. And my notion is , that , provided we treat religion with good manners , we can never use too much good humor , or examine it with too much freedom and familiarity. For if it be genuine and sincere , it will not only stand the proof , but thrive and gain advantage from hence : if it be spurious , or mixed with any imposture , it will be detected and exposed.

The melancholy way in which we have been taught religion , makes us unapt to think of it in good humor. It is in adversity chiefly , or in ill health , under affliction , or disturbance of mind ,

or difcomposure of temper, that we have recourse to it; though, in reality, we are never so unfit to think of it, as at such a heavy and dark hour. We can never be fit to contemplate any thing above us, when we are in no condition to look into ourselves, and calmly examine the temper of our own mind and passions. For then it is, we see wrath, and fury, and revenge, and terrors in the Deity; when we are full of disturbances and fears within, and have, by sufferance and anxiety, lost so much of the natural calm and easiness of our temper.

We must not only be in ordinary good humor, but in the best of humors, and in the sweetest, kindest disposition of our lives, to understand well what true goodness is, and what those attributes imply, which we ascribe with such applause and honor to the Deity. We shall then be able to see best, whether those forms of justice, those degrees of punishment, that temper of resentment, and those measures of offence and indignation, which we vulgarly suppose in God, are suitable to those original ideas of goodness, which the same Divine Being, or nature under him, has implanted in us, and which we must necessarily presuppose, in order to give him praise or honor in any kind. This, my Lord, is the security against all superstition: To remember, that there is nothing in God but what is godlike; and that he is either not at all, or truly and perfectly good. But when we are afraid to use our reason freely, even on that very question, "Whether he really be, or

"not?" we then actually presume him bad, and flatly contradict that pretended character of goodness and greatness; whilst we discover this mistrust of his temper, and fear his anger and resentment, in the case of this freedom of Inquiry.

We have a notable instance of this freedom in one of our sacred authors. As patient as Job is said to be, it cannot be denied, that he makes bold enough with God, and takes his providence roundly to task. His friends, indeed, plead hard with him, and use all arguments, right or wrong, to patch up objections, and set the affairs of providence upon an equal foot. They make a merit of saying all the good they can of God, at the very stretch of their reason, and sometimes quite beyond it. But this, in Job's opinion, is flattering God, accepting of God's person, and even mocking him¹. And no wonder. For what merit can there be, in believing God, or his providence, upon frivolous and weak grounds? What virtue in assuming an opinion contrary to the appearance of things, and resolving to hear nothing which may be said against it? Excellent character of the God of truth! that he should be offended at us, for having refused to put the lie upon our understandings, as much as in us lay, and be satisfied with us for having believed at a venture, and against our reason, what might have been the greatest falshood in the world, for any thing we could bring as a proof or evidence to the contrary!

¹ Chap. xiii. 7, 8, 9, & 10.

It is impossible, that any besides an ill-natured man can wish against the being of a God : for this is wishing against the public ; and even against one's private good too , if rightly understood. But if a man has not any such ill-will to stifle his belief , he must have surely an unhappy opinion of God , and believe him not so good by far as he knows himself to be , if he imagines , that an impartial use of his reason , in any matter of speculation whatsoever , can make him run any risk hereafter ; and that a mean denial of his reason , and an affectation of belief , in any point too hard for his understanding , can entitle him to any favor in another world. This is being sycophants in religion , mere parasites of devotion. It is using God as the crafty beggars use those they address to , when they are ignorant of their quality². The novices amongst them may innocently come out , perhaps , with a Good Sir , or a Good forsooth ! But with the old stagers , no matter whom they meet in a coach , it is always Good your Honor ! or Good your Lordship ! or your Ladyship ! For , if there should be really a lord in the case , we should be undone (say they) for want of giving the title : but if the party should be no lord , there would be no offence , it would not be ill taken.

And thus it is in religion. We are highly concerned how to beg right , and think all depends upon hitting the title , and making a good guess.

² Misc. 2. chap. 3. parag. 53, 54. in vol. 2.

It is the most beggarly refuge imaginable, which is so mightily cried up, and stands as a great maxim with many able men, "That they should strive
" to have faith, and believe to the utmost: because if, after all, there be nothing in the matter, there will be no harm in being thus deceived;
" but if there be any thing, it will be fatal for them not to have believed to the full." But they are so far mistaken, that whilst they have this thought, it is certain they can never believe, either to their satisfaction and happiness in this world, or with any advantage or recommendation to another. For besides that our reason, which knows the cheat, will never rest thoroughly satisfied on such a bottom, but turn us often adrift, and toss us in a sea of doubt and perplexity; we cannot but actually grow worse in our religion, and entertain a worse opinion still of a supreme Deity, whilst our belief is founded on so injurious a thought of him.

To love the public, to study universal good, and to promote the interest of the whole world, as far as lies within our power, is surely the height of goodness, and makes that temper which we call divine. In this temper, my Lord, (for surely you should know it well), it is natural for us to wish that others should partake with us, by being convinced of the sincerity of our example. It is natural for us to wish our merit should be known; particularly, if it be our fortune to have served a nation as a good minister; or, as some prince or father of a country, to have rendered happy a

considerable part of mankind under our care. But if it happened, that of this number there should be some so ignorantly bred, and of so remote a province, as to have lain out of the hearing of our name and actions; or hearing of them, should be so puzzled with odd and contrary stories, told up and down concerning us, that they knew not what to think, whether there were really in the world any such person as ourself: should we not, in good truth, be ridiculous, to take offence at this? And should we not pass for extravagantly morose and ill-humored, if, instead of treating matter in raillery, we should think in earnest of revenging ourselves on the offending parties, who, out of their rustic ignorance, ill judgment, or incredulity, had detracted from our renown?

How shall we say then? Does it really deserve praise to be thus concerned about it? Is the doing good for glory's sake so divine a thing? or, is it not diviner, to do good even where it may be thought inglorious, even to the ungrateful, and to those who are wholly insensible of the good they receive? How comes it then, that what is so divine in us, should lose its character in the Divine Being? and that, according as the Deity is represented to us, he should more resemble the weak, womanish, and impotent part of our nature¹, than the generous, manly, and divine?

¹ Advice to an author, part 3. § 3. parag. 4. in this volume; and Misc. 5. chap. 3. parag. 19. in vol. 3.

S E C T. V.

ONE would think, my Lord, it were in reality, no hard thing to know our own weaknesses at first sight, and distinguish the features of human frailty, with which we are so well acquainted. One would think it were easy to understand, that provocation, and offence, anger, revenge, jealousy in point of honor or power, love of fame, glory, and the like, belong only to limited beings, and are necessarily excluded a being which is perfect and universal. But if we have never settled with ourselves any notion of what is morally excellent; or if we cannot trust to that reason which tells us, that nothing beside what is so, can have place in the Deity; we can neither trust to any thing which others relate of him, or which he himself reveals to us. We must be satisfied before hand that he is good, and cannot deceive us. Without this, there can be no real religious faith, or confidence. Now, if there be really something previous to revelation, some antecedent demonstration of reason, to assure us that God is, and withal, that he is so good as not to deceive us; the same reason, if we will trust to it, will demonstrate to us, that God is so good as to exceed the very best of us in goodness. And after this manner, we can have no dread or suspicion to render us uneasy: for it is malice only, and not goodness, which can make us afraid.

There

There is an odd way of reasoning, but in certain distempers of mind very sovereign to those who can apply it; and it is this: "There can be no malice but where interests are opposed. A universal being can have no interest opposite, and therefore can have no malice." If there be a general mind, It can have no particular interest: but the general good, or good of the whole, and its own private good, must of necessity be one and the same. It can intend nothing besides, nor aim at any thing beyond, nor be provoked to any thing contrary. So that we have only to consider, whether there be really such a thing as a Mind which has relation to the whole, or not. For if unhappily there be no mind, we may comfort ourselves, however, that nature has no malice. If there be really a Mind, we may rest satisfied, that it is the best-natured one in the world. The last case, one would imagine, should be the most comfortable; and the notion of a common parent less frightful than that of forlorn nature, and a fatherless world. Though, as religion stands amongst us, there are many good people who would have less fear in being thus exposed; and would be easier perhaps in their minds, if they were assured they had only mere chance to trust to. For no body trembles to think there should be no God, but rather that there should be one. This, however, would be otherwise, if Deity were thought as kindly of as humanity; and we could be persuaded to believe, that if there really was a

God, the highest goodness must of necessity belong to him, without any of those defects of passion¹, those meannesses and imperfections which we acknowledge such in ourselves, which, as good men, we endeavour all we can to be superior to, and which we find we every day conquer, as we grow better.

Methinks, my Lord, it would be well for us, if, before we ascended into the higher regions of divinity², we would vouchsafe to descend a little into ourselves, and bestow some poor thoughts upon plain honest morals. When we had once looked into ourselves, and distinguished well the nature of our own affections, we should probably be fitter judges of the divineness of a character, and discern better what affections were suitable or unsuitable to a perfect being. We might then understand how to love and praise, when we had acquired some consistent notion of what was laudable or lovely; otherwise we might chance to do God little honor, when we intended him the most. For it is hard to imagine what honor can arise to the Deity, from the praises of creatures

¹ For my own part, says honest *Plutarch*, I had rather men should say of me, "That there neither is, nor ever was such a one as *Plutarch*;" than they should say, "There was a *Plutarch*, an unsteady, changeable, easily provokable, and revengeful man." *Ἀνθρώπος ἀβέβαιος, ἐμετέωρος, ἐνχερής πρὸς ὀργήν, μικρόλυπος*, "See *Plutarch* de superstitione. See Misc. 2. chap. 3. parag. 54. in vol. 3.

² Misc. 2. chap. 1. parag. 14. and Misc. 4. chap. 1. parag. 28, 29, 30. in the notes, in vol. 3.

who are unable to discern what is praise-worthy or excellent in their own kind.

If a musician were cried up to the skies by a certain set of people who had no ear in music, he would surely be put to the blush; and could hardly, with a good countenance, accept the benevolence of his auditors, till they had acquired a more competent apprehension of him, and could, by their own senses, find out something really good in his performance. Till this were brought about, there would be little glory in the case; and the musician, though ever so vain, would have little reason to be contented.

They who affect praise the most, had rather not be taken notice of, than be impertinently applauded. I know not how it comes about, that he who is ever said to do good the most disinterestedly, should be thought desirous of being praised so lavishly, and be supposed to set so high a rate upon so cheap and low a thing, as ignorant commendation and forced applause.

It is not the same with goodness as with other qualities, which we may understand very well, and yet not possess. We may have an excellent ear in music, without being able to perform in any kind; we may judge well of poetry, without being poets, or possessing the least of a poetic vein: but we can have no tolerable notion of goodness, without being tolerably good. So that if the praise of a divine being be so great a part of his worship, we should, methinks, learn goodness, were it for nothing else than that we might

learn, in some tolerable manner, how to praise. For the praise of goodness from an unsound, hollow heart, must certainly make the greatest dissonance in the world.

S E C T. VI.

Other reasons, my Lord, there are, why this plain home-spun philosophy, of looking into ourselves, may do us wondrous service, in rectifying our errors in religion. For there is a sort of enthusiasm of second hand. And when men find no original commotions in themselves, no prepossessing panic which bewitches them, they are apt still, by the testimony of others, to be imposed on, and led credulously into the belief of many false miracles. And this habit may make them variable, and of a very inconstant faith, easy to be carried away with every wind of doctrine, and addicted to every upstart sect or superstition. But the knowledge of our passions in their very seeds, the measuring well the growth and progress of enthusiasm, and the judging rightly of its natural force, and what command it has over our very senses¹, may teach us to oppose more successfully those delusions which come armed with the specious pretext of moral certainty, and matter of fact.

¹ Mil. 2. ch. 1. parag. 15, 16. and ch. 2. parag. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. in vol. 3.

The new prophesying sect I made mention of above, pretend, it seems, among many other miracles, to have had a most signal one, acted premeditately, and with warning, before many hundreds of people, who actually give testimony to the truth of it. But I would only ask, whether there were present, among those hundreds, any one person, who having never been of their sect, or addicted to their way, will give the same testimony with them? I must not be contented to ask, Whether such a one had been wholly free of that particular enthusiasm? but, Whether, before that time, he was esteemed of so sound a judgment, and clear a head, as to be wholly free of melancholy, and in all likelihood incapable of all enthusiasm besides? For otherwise the panic may have been caught; the evidence of the senses lost, as in a dream; and the imagination so inflamed, as in a moment to have burnt up every particle of judgment and reason. The combustible matters lie prepared within, and ready to take fire at a spark; but chiefly in a multitude seized with the same spirit². No wonder if the blaze rises so of a sudden; when innumerable eyes glow with the passion, and heaving breasts are laboring with inspiration; when not the aspect only, but the very breath and exhalations of men, are infectious, and the inspiring disease imparts itself by insensible transpiration. I am not a divine good enough to resolve, what spirit that was, which proved so

² Misc. 2. ch. 2. parag. 5. in the notes, in vol 3.

catching among the ancient prophets, that even the profane Saul was taken by it³. But I learn from holy scripture, that there was the evil⁴, as well as the good spirit of prophecy. And I find by present experience, as well as by all histories, sacred and profane, that the operation of this spirit is every where the same, as to the bodily organs.

A gentleman who has writ lately in defence of revived prophecy, and has since fallen himself into the prophetic ecstasies, tells, "That the ancient prophets had the spirit of God upon them under ecstasy, with divers strange gestures of body denominating them madmen, (or enthusiasts); as appears evidently, says he, in the instances of Balaam, Saul, David, Ezekiel, Daniel, &c." And he proceeds to justify this by the practice of the apostolic times, and by the regulation which the apostle⁵ himself applies to these seemingly irregular gifts, so frequent and ordinary (as our author pretends) in the primitive church, on the first rise and spreading of Christianity. But I leave it to him to make the resemblance as well as he can between his own and the apostolic way. I only know, that the symptoms he describes, and which himself (poor gentleman!) labors under, are as Heathenish as he can possibly pretend them to be Christian. And when I saw him lately under

³ See 1 Sam. x.

⁴ See 1 Kings xxii. 20. &c. 2 Chron. xviii. 19. &c.; and Misc. 2. chap. 3. parag. 38. in vol. 3.

⁵ 1 Cor. xiv.

an agitation, (as they call it), uttering prophecy in a pompous Latin style, of which, out of his ecstasy, it seems, he is wholly incapable; it brought into my mind the Latin poet's description of the Sybil, whose agonies were so perfectly like these.

* — *Subito non vultus, non color unus,
Non comæ mansere comæ; sed pectus anhelum,
Et rabie fera corda tument; majorque videri,
Nec mortale sonans, afflata est numine quando
Jam proprio Deï—*

And again presently after:

— — *Immanis in antro
Bacchatur vates, magnum si pectore possit
Excussisse Deum: tanto magis ille fatigat
Os rabidum, fera corda domans, FINGITQUE PREMENDO.*

Which is the very style of our experienced author.
“ For the inspired (says he) undergo a probation,
“ wherein the spirit, by frequent agitations, forms
“ the organs, ordinarily for a month or two before utterance.”

The Roman historian, speaking of a most horrible enthusiasm which broke out in Rome long before his days, describes this spirit of prophecy; “ Viros velut mente capta, cum jactatione fanatica corporis vaticinari.” Liv. 39. The detestable things which are further related of these enthusiasts,

* Virg. Æn. lib. 6.

I would not willingly transcribe: but the senate's mild decree in so execrable a case, I cannot omit copying; being satisfied, that though your Lordship has read it before now, you can read it again and again with admiration: "In reliquum deinde", says Livy, "S. C. cautum est, &c. Si quis tale "sacrum solenne & necessarium duceret, nec sine "religione & piaculo se id omittere posse; apud "Prætorem Urbanum profiteretur: Prætor senatum "consuleret. Si ei permissum esset, cum in senatu "centum non minus essent, ita id sacrum faceret; "dum ne plus quinque sacrificio interessent, neu "qua pecunia communis, neu quis magister sacro-
rum, aut sacerdos esset."

So necessary it is to give way to this distemper of enthusiasm, that even that philosopher who bent the whole force of his philosophy against superstition, appears to have left room for visionary fancy, and to have indirectly tolerated enthusiasm. For it is hard to imagine, that one who had so little religious faith as Epicurus, should have so vulgar a credulity, as to believe those accounts of armies and castles in the air, and such visionary phænomena. Yet he allows them; and then thinks to solve them by his effluvia, and aerial looking-glasses, and I know not what other stuff: which his Latin poet, however, sets off beautifully, as he does all.

¹ — *Rerum simulacra vagari,*

Muta, modis multis, in cunctas undique partes

² Lucret. lib. 4.

*Tenuia, quæ facile inter se junguntur in auris,
Obvia cum veniunt, ut aranea bractæaque auri.*

* * * * *

*Centauros itaque, et Scyllarum membra videmus,
Cerbereasque canum facies, simulacraque eorum
Quorum morte obita tellus amplectitur ossa;
Omne genus quoniam passim simulacra feruntur,
Partim sponte sua quæ sunt aere in ipso;
Partim quæ variis ab rebus cumque recedunt.*

It was a sign this philosopher believed there was a good stock of visionary spirit originally in human nature. He was so satisfied that men were inclined to see visions, that rather than they should go without, he chose to make them to their hand. Notwithstanding he denied the principles of religion to be natural*, he was forced tacitly to allow there was a wondrous disposition in mankind towards supernatural objects; and that if these ideas were vain, they were yet in a manner innate, or such as men were really born to, and could hardly by any means avoid. From which concession, a divine, methinks, might raise a good argument against him, for the truth as well as the usefulness of religion. But so it is: whether the matter of apparition be true or false, the symptoms are the same, and the passion of equal force in the person who is vision-struck. The Lymphatici of the Latins were the Nympholepti.

* Wit and hum. part 3. § 3. parag. 4. in this vol.

of the Greeks. They were persons said to have seen some species of divinity, as either some rural deity, or nymph, which threw them into such transports as overcame their reason. The ecstasies expressed themselves outwardly in quakings, tremblings, tossings of the head and limbs, agitations, and (as Livy calls them) fanatical throws or convulsions, extemporary prayer, prophecy, singing, and the like. All nations have their Lymphatics of some kind or another; and all churches, Heathen as well as Christian, have had their complaints against fanaticism.

One would think the ancients imagined this disease had some relation to that which they called hydrophoby. Whether the ancient Lymphatics had any way like that of biting, to communicate the rage of their distemper, I cannot so positively determine. But certain fanatics there have been since the time of the ancients, who have had a most prosperous faculty of communicating the appetite of the teeth. For since first the snappish spirit got up in religion, all sects have been at it, as the saying is, tooth and nail; and are never better pleased, than in worrying one another without mercy.

So far indeed the innocent kind of fanaticism extends itself, that when the party is struck by the apparition, there follows always an itch of imparting it, and kindling the same fire in other breasts. For thus poets are fanatics too. And thus Horace either is, or feigns himself lymphatic, and

shows what an effect the vision of the nymphs and Bacchus had on him.

⁹ *Bacebum in remotis carmina rupibus
Vidi docentem, credite posteri,
NYMPHASque discentes — — —
Evæ! recenti mens trepidat metu,
Plenoque Bacchi pectore turbidum*

²⁰ LYMPHATUR — — — — — 25
Heinsius reads.

No poet (as I ventured to say at first to your Lordship) can do any thing great in his own way, without the imagination or supposition of a divine presence, which may raise him to some degree of this passion we are speaking of. Even the cold Lucretius ¹¹ makes use of inspiration, when he writes against it; and is forced to raise an apparition of nature, in a divine form, to animate and conduct him in his very work of degrading nature, and despoiling her of all her seeming wisdom and divinity.

²² *Alma VENUS, cæli subter labentia signa
Quæ mare navigerum, quæ terras frugiferentis*

⁹ Od. 19. lib. 2.

¹⁰ So again, sat. 5. lib. 1. ver. 97. *Gnatia lymphis Iratis exstructa*: where Horace wittily treats the people of Gnatia as lymphatics and enthusiasts, for believing a miracle of their priests: *Credat Judeas Apella*. Hor. *ibid.* See Heinsius and Torrentius; and the quotation in the following notes, ὑπὸ τῶν Νυμφῶν, etc.

¹¹ Miscell. 2. chap. 1. parag. 6. in vol. 3.

¹² Lucret. lib. 1.

Concelebras — —

*Quæ quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas,
Nec sine te quidquam dias in luminis oras
Exoritur, neque fit letum neque amabile quidquam:
Te sociam studio scribundis versibus esse,
Quos ego de rerum natura pangere conor*
MEMMIADÆ nostro.

SECT. VII.

THE only thing, my Lord, I would infer from all this, is, that Enthusiasm is wonderfully powerful and extensive; that it is a matter of nice judgment, and the hardest thing in the world to know fully and distinctly; since even Atheism^x is not exempt from it: for, as some have well remarked, there have been enthusiastical Atheists. Nor can divine inspiration, by its outward marks, be easily distinguished from it. For inspiration is a real feeling of the divine presence, and enthusiasm a false one. But the passion they raise is much alike. For when the mind is taken up in vision, and fixes its view either on any real object, or mere spectre of divinity; when it sees, or thinks it sees any thing prodigious, and more than human; its horror, delight, confusion, fear, admiration, or whatever passion belongs to it, or is uppermost on this occasion, will have something vast, immane,

^x Misc. 2. ch. 2. parag. 2. in vol. 3.

and (as painters say) beyond life. And this is what gave occasion to the name of fanaticism, as it was used by the ancients in its original sense, for an apparition transporting the mind.

Something there will be of extravagance and fury, when the ideas or images received are too big for the narrow human vessel to contain. So that inspiration may be justly called divine Enthusiasm: for the word itself signifies divine presence, and was made use of by the philosopher whom the earliest Christian fathers called divine, to express whatever was sublime in human passions². This was the spirit he allotted to heroes, statesmen, poets, orators, musicians, and even philosophers themselves. Nor can we, of our own accord, forbear ascribing to a noble Enthusiasm³, whatever is greatly performed by any of these. So that almost all of us know something of this principle.

² "Αρ' οἶσθ' ὅτι ὑπὸ τῶν Νυμφῶν ἐκ προνοίας σαθῶς ἐνθουσιάζω.
— Τοσαῦτα μὲν σοι καὶ ἔτι πλείω ἔχω μανίας γιννομένης ἀπὸ θεῶν λέγειν καλὰ ἔργα, etc. Phædr. Καὶ τὰς πολιτικὰς ἐκ ἡκίστα τέτων φαίμεν ἀνθρώπους τε εἶναι καὶ ἐνθουσιάζειν. Meno. "Εγὼν οὐ αὖ καὶ περὶ τῶν ποιητῶν ἐν ὀλίγῳ τῶτο ὅτι ἐσφίρα ποιῶν, ἀλλὰ φύσει τινὶ καὶ ἐνθουσιάζοντες ὥσπερ οἱ θεομάντις καὶ χρησμοῶδοι. Apol. In particular as to philosophers, Plutarch tells us, it was the complaint of some of the four old Romans, when learning first came to them from Greece, that their youth grew enthusiastic with philosophy. For, speaking of one of the philosophers of the Athenian embassy, he says, "Ερωτα δεινὸν ἐμβέβληκε τοῖς νέοις ὕψ' ἢ τῶν ἄλλων ἡδονῶν καὶ διατρεβῶν ἐκπέσοντες ἐνθουσιῶσι περὶ φιλοσοφίαν. Plut. in vit. Cat. Major.

³ Of this passion, in the nobler and higher sense, see more, Inq. concern. virtue, book 1. part 3. § 3. parag. 4. from the end, and Rhaps. part 3. § 2. parag. 6, 7. &c. in vol. 2.; and Misc. 2. ch. 1. parag. 3, 7, 8, 9, 14. in vol. 3.

But to know it as we should do, and discern it in its several kinds, both in ourselves and others; this is the great work, and by this means alone we can hope to avoid delusion. For to judge the spirits whether they are of God, we must antecedently judge our own spirit; whether it be of reason and sound sense; whether it be fit to judge at all, by being sedate, cool, and impartial; free of every biasing passion, every giddy vapor, or melancholy fume. This is the first knowledge and previous judgment: "To understand ourselves, and know what spirit we are of." Afterwards we may judge the spirit in others, consider what their personal merit is, and prove the validity of their testimony by the solidity of their brain. By this means we may prepare ourselves with some antidote against Enthusiasm. And this is what I have dared affirm, is best performed by keeping to Good Humor. For otherwise the remedy itself may turn to the disease.

And now, my Lord, having, after all, in some measure justified Enthusiasm, and owned the word; if I appear extravagant, in addressing to you after the manner I have done, you must allow me to plead an impulse. You must suppose me (as with truth you may) most passionately yours; and with that kindness which is natural to you on other occasions, you must tolerate your enthusiastic friend, who, excepting only in the case of this over-forward zeal, must ever appear, with the highest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's, &c.