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In Four Volumes

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N^o 183. *Saturday, September 29.*

Ἰδμεν ψάδεια πολλά λεγέειν ἐπιμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
Ἰδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐδέλωμεν, ἀλυσία μυθήσασι.

Hef.

FABLES were the first pieces of wit that made their appearance in the world, and have been still highly valued, not only in times of the greatest simplicity, but among the most polite Ages of mankind. *Jotham's* Fable of the trees is the oldest that is extant, and as beautiful as any which have been made since that time. *Nathan's* Fable of the poor man and his lamb is likewise more ancient than any that is extant, besides the above-mentioned, and had so good an effect, as to convey instruction to the ear of a King without offending it, and to bring the man after God's own heart to a right sense of his guilt and his duty. We find *Æsop* in the most distant Ages of *Greece*; and if we look into the very beginning of the Common-wealth of *Rome*, we see a mutiny among the common people appeas'd by a Fable of the belly and the limbs, which was indeed very proper to gain the attention of an incens'd rabble, at a time when perhaps they would have torn to pieces any man who had preach'd the same doctrine to them in an open and direct manner. As Fables took their birth in the very infancy of learning, they never flourish'd more than when learning was at its greatest height. To justify this assertion, I shall put my reader in mind of *Horace*, the greatest Wit and Critic in the Augustan Age; and of *Boileau*, the most correct Poet among the moderns: not to mention *la Fontaine*, who by this way of writing is come more into vogue than any other Author of our times.

The Fables I have here mentioned are rais'd altogether upon brutes and vegetables, with some of our own species mixt among them, when the moral hath so required. But besides this kind of Fable, there is another in which the Actors are Passions, Virtues, Vices, and other imaginary persons of the like nature. Some of the ancient Critics will have it, that the *Iliad* and *Odyssy* of *Homer* are Fables of this nature; and that the

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several

several names of gods and heroes are nothing else but the affections of the mind in a visible shape and character. Thus they tell us, that *Achilles*, in the first *Iliad*, represents Anger, or the irascible part of human nature. That upon drawing his sword against his Superior in a full assembly, *Pallas* is only another name for Reason, which checks and advises him upon that occasion; and at her first appearance touches him upon the head, that part of the man being looked upon as the seat of Reason. And thus of the rest of the poem. As for the *Odyssey*, I think it is plain that *Horace* considered it as one of these allegorical Fables, by the Moral which he has given us of several parts of it. The greatest *Italian* Wits have applied themselves to the writing of this latter kind of Fables: As *Spenser's Fairy-Queen* is one continued series of them from the beginning to the end of that admirable work. If we look into the finest Prose-authors of antiquity, such as *Cicero*, *Plato*, *Xenophon*, and many others, we shall find that this was likewise their favourite kind of Fable. I shall only further observe upon it, that the first of this sort that made any considerable figure in the world, was that of *Hercules* meeting with Pleasure and Virtue; which was invented by *Prodicus*, who lived before *Socrates*, and in the first dawnings of philosophy. He used to travel through *Greece* by vertue of this Fable, which procured him a kind reception in all the market towns, where he never failed telling it as soon as he had gathered an audience about him.

After this short preface, which I have made up of such materials as my memory does at present suggest to me, before I present my Reader with a Fable of this kind, which I design as the entertainment of the present paper, I must in a few words open the occasion of it.

In the account which *Plato* gives us of the conversation and behaviour of *Socrates*, the morning he was to die, he tells the following circumstance.

When *Socrates* his fetters were knocked off (as was usual to be done on the day that the condemned person was to be executed) being seated in the midst of his disciples, and laying one of his legs over the other, in a very unconcerned posture, he began to rub it where it had been galled by the iron; and whether it was to shew the indifference with which he entertained the thoughts of his approaching death, or (after his usual manner) to take every occasion of philosophizing upon some useful subject, he observed the pleasure of that sensation which now arose in those very parts of his leg, that just before had been so much pained by the fetter. Upon this he reflected on the nature of pleasure and pain in general,

general, and how constantly they succeed one another. To this he added, That if a man of a good genius for a Fable, were to represent the nature of pleasure and pain in that way of writing, he would probably join them together after such a manner, that it would be impossible for the one to come into any place without being followed by the other.

It is possible, that if *Plato* had thought it proper at such a time to describe *Socrates* launching out into a discourse which was not of a piece with the business of the day, he would have enlarged upon this hint, and have drawn it out into some beautiful Allegory or Fable. But since he has not done it, I shall attempt to write one my self in the spirit of that divine Author.

There were two families, which from the beginning of the world were as opposite to each other as Light and Darknes. The one of them lived in Heaven, and the other in Hell. The youngest descendant of the first family was Pleasure, who was the daughter of Happiness, who was the child of Virtue, who was the offspring of the Gods. These, as I said before, had their habitation in Heaven. The youngest of the opposite family was Pain, who was the son of Misery, who was the child of Vice, who was the offspring of the Furies. The habitation of this race of Beings was in Hell.

The middle station of nature between these two opposite extremes was the earth, which was inhabited by creatures of a middle kind, neither so virtuous as the one, nor so vicious as the other, but partaking of the good and bad qualities of these two opposite families. Jupiter considering that this species, commonly called Man, was too virtuous to be miserable, and too vicious to be happy; that he might make a distinction between the Good and the Bad, ordered the two youngest of the above-mentioned families, Pleasure who was the daughter of Happiness, and Pain who was the son of Misery, to meet one another upon this part of nature which lay in the half way between them, having promised to settle it upon both, provided they could agree upon the division of it, so as to share mankind between them.

Pleasure and Pain were no sooner met in their new habitation, but they immediately agreed upon this point, that Pleasure should take possession of the virtuous, and Pain of the vicious part of that species which was given up to them. But upon examining to which of them any individual they met with belonged, they found each of them had a

right to him; for that, contrary to what they had seen in their old places of residence, there was no person so vicious who had not some Good in him, nor any person so virtuous who had not in him some Evil. The truth of it is, they generally found upon search, that in the most vicious man Pleasure might lay claim to an hundredth part, and that in the most virtuous man Pain might come in for at least two thirds. This they saw would occasion endless disputes between them, unless they could come to some accommodation. To this end there was a marriage proposed between them, and at length concluded: by this means it is that we find Pleasure and Pain are such constant yoke-fellows, and that they either make their visits together, or are never far asunder. If Pain comes into an heart, he is quickly followed by Pleasure; and if Pleasure enters, you may be sure Pain is not far off.

But notwithstanding this marriage was very convenient for the two parties, it did not seem to answer the intention of Jupiter in sending them among mankind. To remedy therefore this inconvenience, it was stipulated between them by article, and confirm'd by the consent of each family, that notwithstanding they here possessed the species indifferently; upon the death of every single person, if he was found to have in him a certain proportion of Evil, he should be dispatched into the infernal regions by a passport from Pain, there to dwell with Misery, Vice and the Furies. Or on the contrary, if he had in him a certain proportion of Good, he should be dispatched into heaven by a passport from Pleasure, there to dwell with Happiness, Virtue and the Gods.

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Monday, October 1.

 ----- *Opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum.* Hor.

WHEN a man has discovered a new vein of humour, it often carries him much further than he expected from it. My correspondents take the hint I give them, and pursue it into Speculations which I never thought of at my first starting it. This has been the fate of my paper on the match of Grinning, which has already produced a second paper on parallel subjects, and brought me the