

ТОМАС БАБИНГТОН МАКОЛЕЙ

MISCELLANEOUS
WRITINGS AND SPEECHES
— VOLUME 1

Томас Бабингтон Маколей

**Miscellaneous Writings
and Speeches — Volume 1**

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Baron Thomas Babington Macaulay Macaulay

Miscellaneous Writings

and Speeches — Volume 1

PREFACE

Lord Macaulay always looked forward to a publication of his miscellaneous works, either by himself or by those who should represent him after his death. And latterly he expressly reserved, whenever the arrangements as to copyright made it necessary, the right of such publication.

The collection which is now published comprehends some of the earliest and some of the latest works which he composed. He was born on 25th October, 1800; commenced residence at Trinity College, Cambridge, in October, 1818; was elected Craven University Scholar in 1821; graduated as B.A. in 1822; was elected fellow of the college in October, 1824; was called to the bar in February, 1826, when he joined the Northern Circuit; and was elected member for Calne in 1830. After this last event, he did not long continue to practise at the bar. He went to India in 1834, whence he returned in June, 1838. He was elected member for Edinburgh, in 1839, and lost this seat in July, 1847; and this (though he was afterwards again elected for that city in July, 1852, without being a candidate) may be considered as the last instance of his taking an active part in the contests of public life. These few dates are mentioned for the purpose of enabling the reader to assign the articles, now and previously published, to the principal periods into which the author's life may be divided.

The admirers of his later works will probably be interested by watching the gradual formation of his style, and will notice in his earlier productions, vigorous and clear as their language always was, the occurrence of faults against which he afterwards most anxiously guarded himself. A much greater interest will undoubtedly be felt in tracing the date and development of his opinions.

The articles published in Knight's Quarterly Magazine were composed during the author's residence at college, as B.A. It may be remarked that the first two of these exhibit the earnestness with which he already endeavoured to represent to himself and to others the scenes and persons of past times as in actual existence. Of the Dialogue between Milton and Cowley he spoke, many years after its publication, as that one of his works which he remembered with most satisfaction. The article on Mitford's Greece he did not himself value so highly as others thought it deserved. This article, at any rate, contains the first distinct enunciation of his views, as to the office of an historian, views afterwards more fully set forth in his Essay, upon History, in the Edinburgh Review. From the protest, in the last mentioned essay, against the conventional notions respecting the majesty of history might perhaps have been anticipated something like the third chapter of the History of England. It may be amusing to notice that in the article on Mitford, appears the first sketch of the New Zealander, afterwards filled up in a passage in the review of Mrs Austin's translation of Ranke, a passage which at one time was the subject of allusion, two or three times a week, in speeches and leading articles. In this, too, appear, perhaps for the first time, the author's views on the representative system. These he retained to the very last; they are brought forward repeatedly in the articles published in this collection and elsewhere, and in his speeches in parliament; and they coincide with the opinions expressed in the letter to an American correspondent, which was so often cited in the late debate on the Reform Bill.

Some explanation appears to be necessary as to the publication of the three articles "Mill on Government," "Westminster Reviewer's Defence of Mill" and "Utilitarian Theory of Government."

In 1828 Mr James Mill, the author of the History of British India, reprinted some essays which he had contributed to the Supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica; and among these was an Essay on Government. The method of inquiry and reasoning adopted in this essay appeared to Macaulay

to be essentially wrong. He entertained a very strong conviction that the only sound foundation for a theory of Government must be laid in careful and copious historical induction; and he believed that Mr Mill's work rested upon a vicious reasoning a priori. Upon this point he felt the more earnestly, owing to his own passion for historical research, and to his devout admiration of Bacon, whose works he was at that time studying with intense attention. There can, however, be little doubt that he was also provoked by the pretensions of some members of a sect which then commonly went by the name of Benthamites, or Utilitarians. This sect included many of his contemporaries, who had quitted Cambridge at about the same time with him. It had succeeded, in some measure, to the sect of the Byronians, whom he has described in the review of Moore's *Life of Lord Byron*, who discarded their neckcloths, and fixed little models of skulls on the sand-glasses by which they regulated the boiling of their eggs for breakfast. The members of these sects, and of many others that have succeeded, have probably long ago learned to smile at the temporary humours. But Macaulay, himself a sincere admirer of Bentham, was irritated by what he considered the unwarranted tone assumed by several of the class of Utilitarians. "We apprehend," he said, "that many of them are persons who, having read little or nothing, are delighted to be rescued from the sense of their own inferiority by some teacher who assures them that the studies which they have neglected are of no value, puts five or six phrases into their mouths, lends them an odd number of the *Westminster Review*, and in a month transforms them into philosophers;" and he spoke of them as "smatterers, whose attainments just suffice to elevate them from the insignificance of dunces to the dignity of bores, and to spread dismay among their pious aunts and grand mothers." The sect, of course, like other sects, comprehended some pretenders, and these the most arrogant and intolerant among its members. He, however, went so far as to apply the following language to the majority:—"As to the greater part of the sect, it is, we apprehend, of little consequence what they study or under whom. It would be more amusing, to be sure, and more reputable, if they would take up the old republican cant and declaim about Brutus and Timoleon, the duty of killing tyrants and the blessedness of dying for liberty. But, on the whole, they might have chosen worse. They may as well be Utilitarians as jockeys or dandies. And, though quibbling about self-interest and motives, and objects of desire, and the greatest happiness of the greatest number, is but a poor employment for a grown man, it certainly hurts the health less than hard drinking and the fortune less than high play; it is not much more laughable than phrenology, and is immeasurably more humane than cock-fighting."

Macaulay inserted in the *Edinburgh Review* of March, 1829, an article upon Mr Mill's Essay. He attacked the method with much vehemence; and, to the end of his life, he never saw any ground for believing that in this he had gone too far. But before long he felt that he had not spoken of the author of the Essay with the respect due to so eminent a man. In 1833, he described Mr Mill, during the debate on the India Bill of that year, as a "gentleman extremely well acquainted with the affairs of our Eastern Empire, a most valuable servant of the Company, and the author of a history of India, which, though certainly not free from faults, is, I think, on the whole, the greatest historical work which has appeared in our language since that of Gibbon."

Almost immediately upon the appearance of the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, an answer was published in the *Westminster Review*. It was untruly attributed, in the newspapers of the day, to Mr Bentham himself. Macaulay's answer to this appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, June, 1829. He wrote the answer under the belief that he was answering Mr Bentham, and was undeceived in time only to add the postscript. The author of the article in the *Westminster Review* had not perceived that the question raised was not as to the truth or falsehood of the result at which Mr Mill had arrived, but as to the soundness or unsoundness of the method which he pursued; a misunderstanding at which Macaulay, while he supposed the article to be the work of Mr Bentham, expressed much surprise. The controversy soon became principally a dispute as to the theory which was commonly known by the name of The Greatest Happiness Principle. Another article in the *Westminster Review* followed; and a surrejoinder by Macaulay in the *Edinburgh Review* of October, 1829. Macaulay was irritated

at what he conceived to be either extreme dullness or gross unfairness on the part of his unknown antagonist, and struck as hard as he could; and he struck very hard indeed.

The ethical question thus raised was afterwards discussed by Sir James Mackintosh, in the Dissertation contributed by him to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, page 284-313 (Whewell's Edition). Sir James Mackintosh notices the part taken in the controversy by Macaulay, in the following words: "A writer of consummate ability, who has failed in little but the respect due to the abilities and character of his opponents, has given too much countenance to the abuse and confusion of language exemplified in the well-known verse of Pope,

'Modes of self-love the Passions we may call.'

'We know,' says he, 'no universal proposition respecting human nature which is true but one—that men always act from self-interest.'" "It is manifest from the sequel, that the writer is not the dupe of the confusion; but many of his readers may be so. If, indeed, the word "self-interest" could with propriety be used for the gratification of every prevalent desire, he has clearly shown that this change in the signification of terms would be of no advantage to the doctrine which he controverts. It would make as many sorts of self-interest as there are appetites, and it is irreconcilably at variance with the system of association proposed by Mr Mill." "The admirable writer whose language has occasioned this illustration, who at an early age has mastered every species of composition, will doubtless hold fast to simplicity, which survives all the fashions of deviation from it, and which a man of genius so fertile has few temptations to for sake."

When Macaulay selected for publication certain articles of the *Edinburgh Review*, he resolved not to publish any of the three essays in question; for which he assigned the following reason:—

"The author has been strongly urged to insert three papers on the Utilitarian Philosophy, which, when they first appeared, attracted some notice, but which are not in the American editions. He has however determined to omit these papers, not because he is disposed to retract a single doctrine which they contain, but because he is unwilling to offer what might be regarded as an affront to the memory of one from whose opinions he still widely dissents, but to whose talents and virtues he admits that he formerly did not do justice. Serious as are the faults of the *Essay on Government*, a critic, while noticing those faults, should have abstained from using contemptuous language respecting the historian of British India. It ought to be known that Mr Mill had the generosity, not only to forgive, but to forget the unbecoming acrimony with which he had been assailed, and was, when his valuable life closed, on terms of cordial friendship with his assailant."

Under these circumstances, considerable doubt has been felt as to the propriety of republishing the three *Essays* in the present collection. But it has been determined, not without much hesitation, that they should appear. It is felt that no disrespect is shown to the memory of Mr Mill, when the publication is accompanied by so full an apology for the tone adopted towards him; and Mr Mill himself would have been the last to wish for the suppression of opinions on the ground that they were in express antagonism to his own. The grave has now closed upon the assailant as well as the assailed. On the other hand, it cannot but be desirable that opinions which the author retained to the last, on important questions in politics and morals, should be before the public.

Some of the poems now collected have already appeared in print; others are supplied by the recollection of friends. The first two are published on account of their having been composed in the author's childhood. In the poems, as well as in the prose works, will be occasionally found thoughts and expressions which have afterwards been adopted in later productions.

No alteration whatever has been made from the form in which the author left the several articles, with the exception of some changes in punctuation, and the correction of one or two obvious misprints.

T.F.E. London, June 1860.

**MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS OF LORD MACAULAY.
CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNIGHT'S
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE.
FRAGMENTS OF A ROMAN TALE. (June 1823.)**

It was an hour after noon. Ligarius was returning from the Campus Martius. He strolled through one of the streets which led to the Forum, settling his gown, and calculating the odds on the gladiators who were to fence at the approaching Saturnalia. While thus occupied, he overtook Flaminius, who, with a heavy step and a melancholy face, was sauntering in the same direction. The light-hearted young man plucked him by the sleeve.

"Good-day, Flaminius. Are you to be of Catiline's party this evening?"

"Not I."

"Why so? Your little Tarentine girl will break her heart."

"No matter. Catiline has the best cooks and the finest wine in Rome. There are charming women at his parties. But the twelve-line board and the dice-box pay for all. The Gods confound me if I did not lose two millions of sesterces last night. My villa at Tibur, and all the statues that my father the praetor brought from Ephesus, must go to the auctioneer. That is a high price, you will acknowledge, even for Phoenicopters, Chian, and Callinice."

"High indeed, by Pollux."

"And that is not the worst. I saw several of the leading senators this morning. Strange things are whispered in the higher political circles."

"The Gods confound the political circles. I have hated the name of politician ever since Sylla's proscription, when I was within a moment of having my throat cut by a politician, who took me for another politician. While there is a cask of Falernian in Campania, or a girl in the Suburra, I shall be too well employed to think on the subject."

"You will do well," said Flaminius gravely, "to bestow some little consideration upon it at present. Otherwise, I fear, you will soon renew your acquaintance with politicians, in a manner quite as unpleasant as that to which you allude."

"Averting Gods! what do you mean?"

"I will tell you. There are rumours of conspiracy. The order of things established by Lucius Sylla has excited the disgust of the people, and of a large party of the nobles. Some violent convulsion is expected."

"What is that to me? I suppose that they will hardly proscribe the vintners and gladiators, or pass a law compelling every citizen to take a wife."

"You do not understand. Catiline is supposed to be the author of the revolutionary schemes. You must have heard bold opinions at his table repeatedly."

"I never listen to any opinions upon such subjects, bold or timid."

"Look to it. Your name has been mentioned."

"Mine! good Gods! I call Heaven to witness that I never so much as mentioned Senate, Consul, or Comitia, in Catiline's house."

"Nobody suspects you of any participation in the inmost counsels of the party. But our great men surmise that you are among those whom he has bribed so high with beauty, or entangled so deeply in distress, that they are no longer their own masters. I shall never set foot within his threshold again. I have been solemnly warned by men who understand public affairs; and I advise you to be cautious."

The friends had now turned into the Forum, which was thronged with the gay and elegant youth of Rome. "I can tell you more," continued Flaminius; "somebody was remarking to the Consul yesterday how loosely a certain acquaintance of ours tied his girdle. 'Let him look to himself,' said Cicero, 'or the state may find a tighter girdle for his neck.'"

"Good Gods! who is it? You cannot surely mean"—

"There he is."

Flaminius pointed to a man who was pacing up and down the Forum at a little distance from them. He was in the prime of manhood. His personal advantages were extremely striking, and were displayed with an extravagant but not ungraceful foppery. His gown waved in loose folds; his long dark curls were dressed with exquisite art, and shone and steamed with odours; his step and gesture exhibited an elegant and commanding figure in every posture of polite languor. But his countenance formed a singular contrast to the general appearance of his person. The high and imperial brow, the keen aquiline features, the compressed mouth; the penetrating eye, indicated the highest degree of ability and decision. He seemed absorbed in intense meditation. With eyes fixed on the ground, and lips working in thought, he sauntered round the area, apparently unconscious how many of the young gallants of Rome were envying the taste of his dress, and the ease of his fashionable stagger.

"Good Heaven!" said Ligarius, "Caius Caesar is as unlikely to be in a plot as I am."

"Not at all."

"He does nothing but game; feast, intrigue, read Greek, and write verses."

"You know nothing of Caesar. Though he rarely addresses the Senate, he is considered as the finest speaker there, after the Consul. His influence with the multitude is immense. He will serve his rivals in public life as he served me last night at Catiline's. We were playing at the twelve lines. (Duodecim scripta, a game of mixed chance and skill, which seems to have been very fashionable in the higher circles of Rome. The famous lawyer Mucius was renowned for his skill in it.—"Cic. Orat." i. 50.)—Immense stakes. He laughed all the time, chatted with Valeria over his shoulder, kissed her hand between every two moves, and scarcely looked at the board. I thought that I had him. All at once I found my counters driven into the corner. Not a piece to move, by Hercules. It cost me two millions of sesterces. All the Gods and Goddesses confound him for it!"

"As to Valeria," said Ligarius, "I forgot to ask whether you have heard the news."

"Not a word. What?"

"I was told at the baths to-day that Caesar escorted the lady home. Unfortunately old Quintus Lutatius had come back from his villa in Campania, in a whim of jealousy. He was not expected for three days. There was a fine tumult. The old fool called for his sword and his slaves, cursed his wife, and swore that he would cut Caesar's throat."

"And Caesar?"

"He laughed, quoted Anacreon, trussed his gown round his left arm, closed with Quintus, flung him down, twisted his sword out of his hand, burst through the attendants, ran a freed-man through the shoulder, and was in the street in an instant."

"Well done! Here he comes. Good-day, Caius."

Caesar lifted his head at the salutation. His air of deep abstraction vanished; and he extended a hand to each of the friends.

"How are you after your last night's exploit?"

"As well as possible," said Caesar, laughing.

"In truth we should rather ask how Quintus Lutatius is."

"He, I understand, is as well as can be expected of a man with a faithless spouse and a broken head. His freed-man is most seriously hurt. Poor fellow! he shall have half of whatever I win to-night. Flaminius, you shall have your revenge at Catiline's."

"You are very kind. I do not intend to be at Catiline's till I wish to part with my town-house. My villa is gone already."

"Not at Catiline's, base spirit! You are not of his mind, my gallant Ligarius. Dice, Chian, and the loveliest Greek singing girl that was ever seen. Think of that, Ligarius. By Venus, she almost made me adore her, by telling me that I talked Greek with the most Attic accent that she had heard in Italy."

"I doubt she will not say the same of me," replied Ligarius. "I am just as able to decipher an obelisk as to read a line of Homer."

"You barbarous Scythian, who had the care of your education?"

"An old fool,—a Greek pedant,—a Stoic. He told me that pain was no evil, and flogged me as if he thought so. At last one day, in the middle of a lecture, I set fire to his enormous filthy beard, singed his face, and sent him roaring out of the house. There ended my studies. From that time to this I have had as little to do with Greece as the wine that your poor old friend Lutatius calls his delicious Samian."

"Well done, Ligarius. I hate a Stoic. I wish Marcus Cato had a beard that you might singe it for him. The fool talked his two hours in the Senate yesterday, without changing a muscle of his face. He looked as savage and as motionless as the mask in which Roscius acted Alecto. I detest everything connected with him."

"Except his sister, Servilia."

"True. She is a lovely woman."

"They say that you have told her so, Caius"

"So I have."

"And that she was not angry."

"What woman is?"

"Aye—but they say"—

"No matter what they say. Common fame lies like a Greek rhetorician. You might know so much, Ligarius, without reading the philosophers. But come, I will introduce you to little dark-eyed Zoe."

"I tell you I can speak no Greek."

"More shame for you. It is high time that you should begin. You will never have such a charming instructress. Of what was your father thinking when he sent for an old Stoic with a long beard to teach you? There is no language-mistress like a handsome woman. When I was at Athens, I learnt more Greek from a pretty flower-girl in the Peiraeus than from all the Portico and the Academy. She was no Stoic, Heaven knows. But come along to Zoe. I will be your interpreter. Woo her in honest Latin, and I will turn it into elegant Greek between the throws of dice. I can make love and mind my game at once, as Flaminius can tell you."

"Well, then, to be plain, Caesar, Flaminius has been talking to me about plots, and suspicions, and politicians. I never plagued myself with such things since Sylla's and Marius's days; and then I never could see much difference between the parties. All that I am sure of is, that those who meddle with such affairs are generally stabbed or strangled. And, though I like Greek wine and handsome women, I do not wish to risk my neck for them. Now, tell me as a friend, Caius—is there no danger?"

"Danger!" repeated Caesar, with a short, fierce, disdainful laugh: "what danger do you apprehend?"

"That you should best know," said Flaminius; "you are far more intimate with Catiline than I. But I advise you to be cautious. The leading men entertain strong suspicions."

Caesar drew up his figure from its ordinary state of graceful relaxation into an attitude of commanding dignity, and replied in a voice of which the deep and impassioned melody formed a strange contrast to the humorous and affected tone of his ordinary conversation. "Let them suspect. They suspect because they know what they have deserved. What have they done for Rome?—What for mankind? Ask the citizens—ask the provinces. Have they had any other object than to perpetuate their own exclusive power, and to keep us under the yoke of an oligarchical tyranny, which unites in

itself the worst evils of every other system, and combines more than Athenian turbulence with more than Persian despotism?"

"Good Gods! Caesar. It is not safe for you to speak, or for us to listen to, such things, at such a crisis."

"Judge for yourselves what you will hear. I will judge for myself what I will speak. I was not twenty years old when I defied Lucius Sylla, surrounded by the spears of legionaries and the daggers of assassins. Do you suppose that I stand in awe of his paltry successors, who have inherited a power which they never could have acquired; who would imitate his proscriptions, though they have never equalled his conquests?"

"Pompey is almost as little to be trifled with as Sylla. I heard a consular senator say that, in consequence of the present alarming state of affairs, he would probably be recalled from the command assigned to him by the Manilian law."

"Let him come,—the pupil of Sylla's butcheries,—the gleaner of Lucullus's trophies,—the thief-taker of the Senate."

"For Heaven's sake, Caius!—if you knew what the Consul said"—

"Something about himself, no doubt. Pity that such talents should be coupled with such cowardice and coxcombry. He is the finest speaker living,—infinitely superior to what Hortensius was, in his best days;—a charming companion, except when he tells over for the twentieth time all the jokes that he made at Verres's trial. But he is the despicable tool of a despicable party."

"Your language, Caius, convinces me that the reports which have been circulated are not without foundation. I will venture to prophesy that within a few months the republic will pass through a whole Odyssey of strange adventures."

"I believe so; an Odyssey, of which Pompey will be the Polyphemus, and Cicero the Siren. I would have the state imitate Ulysses: show no mercy to the former; but contrive, if it can be done, to listen to the enchanting voice of the other, without being seduced by it to destruction."

"But whom can your party produce as rivals to these two famous leaders?"

"Time will show. I would hope that there may arise a man, whose genius to conquer, to conciliate, and to govern, may unite in one cause an oppressed and divided people;—may do all that Sylla should have done, and exhibit the magnificent spectacle of a great nation directed by a great mind."

"And where is such a man to be found?"

"Perhaps where you would least expect to find him. Perhaps he may be one whose powers have hitherto been concealed in domestic or literary retirement. Perhaps he may be one, who, while waiting for some adequate excitement, for some worthy opportunity, squanders on trifles a genius before which may yet be humbled the sword of Pompey and the gown of Cicero. Perhaps he may now be disputing with a sophist; perhaps prattling with a mistress; perhaps" and, as he spoke, he turned away, and resumed his lounge, "strolling in the Forum."

It was almost midnight. The party had separated. Catiline and Cethegus were still conferring in the supper-room, which was, as usual, the highest apartment of the house. It formed a cupola, from which windows opened on the flat roof that surrounded it. To this terrace Zoe had retired. With eyes dimmed with fond and melancholy tears, she leaned over the balustrade, to catch the last glimpse of the departing form of Caesar, as it grew more and more indistinct in the moonlight. Had he any thought of her? Any love for her? He, the favourite of the high-born beauties of Rome, the most splendid, the most graceful, the most eloquent of its nobles? It could not be. His voice had, indeed, been touchingly soft whenever he addressed her. There had been a fascinating tenderness even in the vivacity of his look and conversation. But such were always the manners of Caesar towards women. He had wreathed a sprig of myrtle in her hair as she was singing. She took it from her dark ringlets, and kissed it, and wept over it, and thought of the sweet legends of her own dear Greece,—of youths and girls, who, pining away in hopeless love, had been transformed into flowers by the compassion

of the Gods; and she wished to become a flower, which Caesar might sometimes touch, though he should touch it only to weave a crown for some prouder and happier mistress.

She was roused from her musings by the loud step and voice of Cethegus, who was pacing furiously up and down the supper-room.

"May all the Gods confound me, if Caesar be not the deepest traitor, or the most miserable idiot, that ever intermeddled with a plot!"

Zoe shuddered. She drew nearer to the window. She stood concealed from observation by the curtain of fine network which hung over the aperture, to exclude the annoying insects of the climate.

"And you too!" continued Cethegus, turning fiercely on his accomplice; "you to take his part against me!—you, who proposed the scheme yourself!"

"My dear Caius Cethegus, you will not understand me. I proposed the scheme; and I will join in executing it. But policy is as necessary to our plans as boldness. I did not wish to startle Caesar—to lose his co-operation—perhaps to send him off with an information against us to Cicero and Catulus. He was so indignant at your suggestion that all my dissimulation was scarcely sufficient to prevent a total rupture."

"Indignant! The Gods confound him!—He prated about humanity, and generosity, and moderation. By Hercules, I have not heard such a lecture since I was with Xenochares at Rhodes."

"Caesar is made up of inconsistencies. He has boundless ambition, unquestioned courage, admirable sagacity. Yet I have frequently observed in him a womanish weakness at the sight of pain. I remember that once one of his slaves was taken ill while carrying his litter. He alighted, put the fellow in his place and walked home in a fall of snow. I wonder that you could be so ill-advised as to talk to him of massacre, and pillage, and conflagration. You might have foreseen that such propositions would disgust a man of his temper."

"I do not know. I have not your self-command, Lucius. I hate such conspirators. What is the use of them? We must have blood—blood,—hacking and tearing work—bloody work!"

"Do not grind your teeth, my dear Caius; and lay down the carving-knife. By Hercules, you have cut up all the stuffing of the couch."

"No matter; we shall have couches enough soon,—and down to stuff them with,—and purple to cover them,—and pretty women to loll on them,—unless this fool, and such as he, spoil our plans. I had something else to say. The essenced fop wishes to seduce Zoe from me."

"Impossible! You misconstrue the ordinary gallantries which he is in the habit of paying to every handsome face."

"Curse on his ordinary gallantries, and his verses, and his compliments, and his sprigs of myrtle! If Caesar should dare—by Hercules, I will tear him to pieces in the middle of the Forum."

"Trust his destruction to me. We must use his talents and influence—thrust him upon every danger—make him our instrument while we are contending—our peace-offering to the Senate if we fail—our first victim if we succeed."

"Hark! what noise was that?"

"Somebody in the terrace—lend me your dagger."

Catiline rushed to the window. Zoe was standing in the shade. He stepped out. She darted into the room—passed like a flash of lightning by the startled Cethegus—flew down the stairs—through the court—through the vestibule—through the street. Steps, voices, lights, came fast and confusedly behind her; but with the speed of love and terror she gained upon her pursuers. She fled through the wilderness of unknown and dusky streets, till she found herself, breathless and exhausted, in the midst of a crowd of gallants, who, with chaplets on their heads and torches in their hands, were reeling from the portico of a stately mansion.

The foremost of the throng was a youth whose slender figure and beautiful countenance seemed hardly consistent with his sex. But the feminine delicacy of his features rendered more frightful the mingled sensuality and ferocity of their expression. The libertine audacity of his stare, and the

grotesque foppery of his apparel, seemed to indicate at least a partial insanity. Flinging one arm round Zoe, and tearing away her veil with the other, he disclosed to the gaze of his thronging companions the regular features and large dark eyes which characterise Athenian beauty.

"Clodius has all the luck to-night," cried Ligarius.

"Not so, by Hercules," said Marcus Coelius; "the girl is fairly our common prize: we will fling dice for her. The Venus (Venus was the Roman term for the highest throw of the dice.) throw, as it ought to do, shall decide."

"Let me go—let me go, for Heaven's sake," cried Zoe, struggling with Clodius.

"What a charming Greek accent she has! Come into the house, my little Athenian nightingale."

"Oh! what will become of me? If you have mothers—if you have sisters"—

"Clodius has a sister," muttered Ligarius, "or he is much belied."

"By Heaven, she is weeping," said Clodius.

"If she were not evidently a Greek," said Coelius, "I should take her for a vestal virgin."

"And if she were a vestal virgin," cried Clodius fiercely, "it should not deter me. This way;—no struggling—no screaming."

"Struggling! screaming!" exclaimed a gay and commanding voice; "You are making very ungente love, Clodius."

The whole party started. Caesar had mingled with them unperceived.

The sound of his voice thrilled through the very heart of Zoe. With a convulsive effort she burst from the grasp of her insolent admirer, flung herself at the feet of Caesar, and clasped his knees. The moon shone full on her agitated and imploring face: her lips moved; but she uttered no sound. He gazed at her for an instant—raised her—clasped her to his bosom. "Fear nothing, my sweet Zoe." Then, with folded arms, and a smile of placid defiance, he placed himself between her and Clodius.

Clodius staggered forward, flushed with wine and rage, and uttering alternately a curse and a hiccup.

"By Pollux, this passes a jest. Caesar, how dare you insult me thus?"

"A jest! I am as serious as a Jew on the Sabbath. Insult you; for such a pair of eyes I would insult the whole consular bench, or I should be as insensible as King Psammis's mummy."

"Good Gods, Caesar!" said Marcus Coelius, interposing; "you cannot think it worth while to get into a brawl for a little Greek girl!"

"Why not? The Greek girls have used me as well as those of Rome. Besides, the whole reputation of my gallantry is at stake. Give up such a lovely woman to that drunken boy! My character would be gone for ever. No more perfumed tablets, full of vows and raptures. No more toying with fingers at the circus. No more evening walks along the Tiber. No more hiding in chests or jumping from windows. I, the favoured suitor of half the white stoles in Rome, could never again aspire above a freed-woman. You a man of gallantry, and think of such a thing! For shame, my dear Coelius! Do not let Clodia hear of it."

While Caesar spoke he had been engaged in keeping Clodius at arm's-length. The rage of the frantic libertine increased as the struggle continued. "Stand back, as you value your life," he cried; "I will pass."

"Not this way, sweet Clodius. I have too much regard for you to suffer you to make love at such disadvantage. You smell too much of Falernian at present. Would you stifle your mistress? By Hercules, you are fit to kiss nobody now, except old Piso, when he is tumbling home in the morning from the vintners."

Clodius plunged his hand into his bosom and drew a little dagger, the faithful companion of many desperate adventures.

"Oh, Gods! he will be murdered!" cried Zoe.

The whole throng of revellers was in agitation. The street fluctuated with torches and lifted hands. It was but for a moment. Caesar watched with a steady eye the descending hand of Clodius,

arrested the blow, seized his antagonist by the throat, and flung him against one of the pillars of the portico with such violence, that he rolled, stunned and senseless, on the ground.

"He is killed," cried several voices.

"Fair self-defence, by Hercules!" said Marcus Coelius. "Bear witness, you all saw him draw his dagger."

"He is not dead—he breathes," said Ligarius. "Carry him into the house; he is dreadfully bruised."

The rest of the party retired with Clodius. Coelius turned to Caesar.

"By all the Gods, Caius! you have won your lady fairly. A splendid victory! You deserve a triumph."

"What a madman Clodius has become!"

"Intolerable. But come and sup with me on the Nones. You have no objection to meet the Consul?"

"Cicero? None at all. We need not talk politics. Our old dispute about Plato and Epicurus will furnish us with plenty of conversation. So reckon upon me, my dear Marcus, and farewell."

Caesar and Zoe turned away. As soon as they were beyond hearing, she began in great agitation:

—
"Caesar, you are in danger. I know all. I overheard Catiline and Cethegus. You are engaged in a project which must lead to certain destruction."

"My beautiful Zoe, I live only for glory and pleasure. For these I have never hesitated to hazard an existence which they alone render valuable to me. In the present case, I can assure you that our scheme presents the fairest hopes of success."

"So much the worse. You do not know—you do not understand me. I speak not of open peril, but of secret treachery. Catiline hates you;—Cethegus hates you;—your destruction is resolved. If you survive the contest, you perish in the first hour of victory. They detest you for your moderation; they are eager for blood and plunder. I have risked my life to bring you this warning; but that is of little moment. Farewell!—Be happy."

Caesar stopped her. "Do you fly from my thanks, dear Zoe?"

"I wish not for your thanks, but for your safety;—I desire not to defraud Valeria or Servilia of one caress, extorted from gratitude or pity. Be my feelings what they may, I have learnt in a fearful school to endure and to suppress them. I have been taught to abase a proud spirit to the claps and hisses of the vulgar;—to smile on suitors who united the insults of a despicable pride to the endearments of a loathsome fondness;—to affect sprightliness with an aching head, and eyes from which tears were ready to gush;—to feign love with curses on my lips, and madness in my brain. Who feels for me any esteem,—any tenderness? Who will shed a tear over the nameless grave which will soon shelter from cruelty and scorn the broken heart of the poor Athenian girl? But you, who alone have addressed her in her degradation with a voice of kindness and respect, farewell. Sometimes think of me,—not with sorrow;—no; I could bear your ingratitude, but not your distress. Yet, if it will not pain you too much, in distant days, when your lofty hopes and destinies are accomplished,—on the evening of some mighty victory,—in the chariot of some magnificent triumph,—think on one who loved you with that exceeding love which only the miserable can feel. Think that, wherever her exhausted frame may have sunk beneath the sensibilities of a tortured spirit,—in whatever hovel or whatever vault she may have closed her eyes,—whatever strange scenes of horror and pollution may have surrounded her dying bed, your shape was the last that swam before her sight—your voice the last sound that was ringing in her ears. Yet turn your face to me, Caesar. Let me carry away one last look of those features, and then "—He turned round. He looked at her. He hid his face on her bosom, and burst into tears. With sobs long and loud, and convulsive as those of a terrified child, he poured forth on her bosom the tribute of impetuous and uncontrollable emotion. He raised his head; but he in vain struggled to restore composure to the brow which had confronted the frown of Sylla, and the lips

which had rivalled the eloquence of Cicero. He several times attempted to speak, but in vain; and his voice still faltered with tenderness, when, after a pause of several minutes, he thus addressed her:

"My own dear Zoe, your love has been bestowed on one who, if he cannot merit, can at least appreciate and adore you. Beings of similar loveliness, and similar devotedness of affection, mingled, in all my boyish dreams of greatness, with visions of curule chairs and ivory cars, marshalled legions and laurelled fasces. Such I have endeavoured to find in the world; and, in their stead, I have met with selfishness, with vanity, with frivolity, with falsehood. The life which you have preserved is a boon less valuable than the affection "—

"Oh! Caesar," interrupted the blushing Zoe, "think only on your own security at present. If you feel as you speak,—but you are only mocking me,—or perhaps your compassion "—

"By Heaven!—by every oath that is binding "—

"Alas! alas! Caesar, were not all the same oaths sworn yesterday to Valeria? But I will trust you, at least so far as to partake your present dangers. Flight may be necessary:—form your plans. Be they what they may, there is one who, in exile, in poverty, in peril, asks only to wander, to beg, to die with you."

"My Zoe, I do not anticipate any such necessity. To renounce the conspiracy without renouncing the principles on which it was originally undertaken,—to elude the vengeance of the Senate without losing the confidence of the people,—is, indeed, an arduous, but not an impossible, task. I owe it to myself and to my country to make the attempt. There is still ample time for consideration. At present I am too happy in love to think of ambition or danger."

They had reached the door of a stately palace. Caesar struck it. It was instantly opened by a slave. Zoe found herself in a magnificent hall, surrounded by pillars of green marble, between which were ranged the statues of the long line of Julian nobles.

"Call Endymion," said Caesar.

The confidential freed-man made his appearance, not without a slight smile, which his patron's good nature emboldened him to hazard, at perceiving the beautiful Athenian.

"Arm my slaves, Endymion; there are reasons for precaution. Let them relieve each other on guard during the night. Zoe, my love, my preserver, why are your cheeks so pale? Let me kiss some bloom into them. How you tremble! Endymion, a flask of Samian and some fruit. Bring them to my apartments. This way, my sweet Zoe."

ON THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE. (June 1823.)

This is the age of societies. There is scarcely one Englishman in ten who has not belonged to some association for distributing books, or for prosecuting them; for sending invalids to the hospital, or beggars to the treadmill; for giving plate to the rich, or blankets to the poor. To be the most absurd institution among so many institutions is no small distinction; it seems, however, to belong indisputably to the Royal Society of Literature. At the first establishment of that ridiculous academy, every sensible man predicted that, in spite of regal patronage and episcopal management, it would do nothing, or do harm. And it will scarcely be denied that those expectations have hitherto been fulfilled.

I do not attack the founders of the association. Their characters are respectable; their motives, I am willing to believe, were laudable. But I feel, and it is the duty of every literary man to feel, a strong jealousy of their proceedings. Their society can be innocent only while it continues to be despicable. Should they ever possess the power to encourage merit, they must also possess the power to depress it. Which power will be more frequently exercised, let every one who has studied literary history, let every one who has studied human nature, declare.

Envy and faction insinuate themselves into all communities. They often disturb the peace, and pervert the decisions, of benevolent and scientific associations. But it is in literary academies that they exert the most extensive and pernicious influence. In the first place, the principles of literary criticism, though equally fixed with those on which the chemist and the surgeon proceed, are by no means equally recognised. Men are rarely able to assign a reason for their approbation or dislike on questions of taste; and therefore they willingly submit to any guide who boldly asserts his claim to superior discernment. It is more difficult to ascertain and establish the merits of a poem than the powers of a machine or the benefits of a new remedy. Hence it is in literature, that quackery is most easily puffed, and excellence most easily decried.

In some degree this argument applies to academies of the fine arts; and it is fully confirmed by all that I have ever heard of that institution which annually disfigures the walls of Somerset House with an acre of spoiled canvas. But a literary tribunal is incomparably more dangerous. Other societies, at least, have no tendency to call forth any opinions on those subjects which most agitate and inflame the minds of men. The sceptic and the zealot, the revolutionist and the placeman, meet on common ground in a gallery of paintings or a laboratory of science. They can praise or censure without reference to the differences which exist between them. In a literary body this can never be the case. Literature is, and always must be, inseparably blended with politics and theology; it is the great engine which moves the feelings of a people on the most momentous questions. It is, therefore, impossible that any society can be formed so impartial as to consider the literary character of an individual abstracted from the opinions which his writings inculcate. It is not to be hoped, perhaps it is not to be wished, that the feelings of the man should be so completely forgotten in the duties of the academician. The consequences are evident. The honours and censures of this Star Chamber of the Muses will be awarded according to the prejudices of the particular sect or faction which may at the time predominate. Whigs would canvass against a Southey, Tories against a Byron. Those who might at first protest against such conduct as unjust would soon adopt it on the plea of retaliation; and the general good of literature, for which the society was professedly instituted, would be forgotten in the stronger claims of political and religious partiality.

Yet even this is not the worst. Should the institution ever acquire any influence, it will afford most pernicious facilities to every malignant coward who may desire to blast a reputation which he envies. It will furnish a secure ambuscade, behind which the Maroons of literature may take a certain

and deadly aim. The editorial WE has often been fatal to rising genius; though all the world knows that it is only a form of speech, very often employed by a single needy blockhead. The academic WE would have a far greater and more ruinous influence. Numbers, while they increase the effect, would diminish the shame, of injustice. The advantages of an open and those of an anonymous attack would be combined; and the authority of avowal would be united to the security of concealment. The serpents in Virgil, after they had destroyed Laocoon, found an asylum from the vengeance of the enraged people behind the shield of the statue of Minerva. And, in the same manner, everything that is grovelling and venomous, everything that can hiss, and everything that can sting, would take sanctuary in the recesses of this new temple of wisdom.

The French academy was, of all such associations, the most widely and the most justly celebrated. It was founded by the greatest of ministers: it was patronised by successive kings; it numbered in its lists most of the eminent French writers. Yet what benefit has literature derived from its labours? What is its history but an uninterrupted record of servile compliances—of paltry artifices—of deadly quarrels—of perfidious friendships? Whether governed by the Court, by the Sorbonne, or by the Philosophers, it was always equally powerful for evil, and equally impotent for good. I might speak of the attacks by which it attempted to depress the rising fame of Corneille; I might speak of the reluctance with which it gave its tardy confirmation to the applauses which the whole civilised world had bestowed on the genius of Voltaire. I might prove by overwhelming evidence that, to the latest period of its existence, even under the superintendence of the all-accomplished D'Alembert, it continued to be a scene of the fiercest animosities and the basest intrigues. I might cite Piron's epigrams, and Marmontel's memoirs, and Montesquieu's letters. But I hasten on to another topic.

One of the modes by which our Society proposes to encourage merit is the distribution of prizes. The munificence of the king has enabled it to offer an annual premium of a hundred guineas for the best essay in prose, and another of fifty guineas for the best poem, which may be transmitted to it. This is very laughable. In the first place the judges may err. Those imperfections of human intellect to which, as the articles of the Church tell us, even general councils are subject, may possibly be found even in the Royal Society of Literature. The French academy, as I have already said, was the most illustrious assembly of the kind, and numbered among its associates men much more distinguished than ever will assemble at Mr Hatchard's to rummage the box of the English Society. Yet this famous body gave a poetical prize, for which Voltaire was a candidate, to a fellow who wrote some verses about THE FROZEN AND THE BURNING POLE.

Yet, granting that the prizes were always awarded to the best composition, that composition, I say without hesitation, will always be bad. A prize poem is like a prize sheep. The object of the competitor for the agricultural premium is to produce an animal fit, not to be eaten, but to be weighed. Accordingly he pampers his victim into morbid and unnatural fatness; and, when it is in such a state that it would be sent away in disgust from any table, he offers it to the judges. The object of the poetical candidate, in like manner, is to produce, not a good poem, but a poem of that exact degree of frigidity or bombast which may appear to his censors to be correct or sublime. Compositions thus constructed will always be worthless. The few excellences which they may contain will have an exotic aspect and flavour. In general, prize sheep are good for nothing but to make tallow candles, and prize poems are good for nothing but to light them.

The first subject proposed by the Society to the poets of England was Dartmoor. I thought that they intended a covert sarcasm at their own projects. Their institution was a literary Dartmoor scheme;—a plan for forcing into cultivation the waste lands of intellect,—for raising poetical produce, by means of bounties, from soil too meagre to have yielded any returns in the natural course of things. The plan for the cultivation of Dartmoor has, I hear, been abandoned. I hope that this may be an omen of the fate of the Society.

In truth, this seems by no means improbable. They have been offering for several years the rewards which the king placed at their disposal, and have not, as far as I can learn, been able to find

in their box one composition which they have deemed worthy of publication. At least no publication has taken place. The associates may perhaps be astonished at this. But I will attempt to explain it, after the manner of ancient times, by means of an apologue.

About four hundred years after the Deluge, King Gomer Chephoraod reigned in Babylon. He united all the characteristics of an excellent sovereign. He made good laws, won great battles, and white-washed long streets. He was, in consequence, idolised by his people, and panegyrised by many poets and orators. A book was then a sermons undertaking. Neither paper nor any similar material had been invented. Authors were therefore under the necessity of inscribing their compositions on massive bricks. Some of these Babylonian records are still preserved in European museums; but the language in which they are written has never been deciphered. Gomer Chephoraod was so popular that the clay of all the plains round the Euphrates could scarcely furnish brick-kilns enough for his eulogists. It is recorded in particular that Pharonezzar, the Assyrian Pindar, published a bridge and four walls in his praise.

One day the king was going in state from his palace to the temple of Belus. During this procession it was lawful for any Babylonian to offer any petition or suggestion to his sovereign. As the chariot passed before a vintner's shop, a large company, apparently half-drunk, sallied forth into the street, and one of them thus addressed the king:

"Gomer Chephoraod, live for ever! It appears to thy servants that of all the productions of the earth good wine is the best, and bad wine is the worst. Good wine makes the heart cheerful, the eyes bright, the speech ready. Bad wine confuses the head, disorders the stomach, makes us quarrelsome at night, and sick the next morning. Now therefore let my lord the king take order that thy servants may drink good wine.

"And how is this to be done?" said the good-natured prince.

"O King," said his monitor, "this is most easy. Let the king make a decree, and seal it with his royal signet: and let it be proclaimed that the king will give ten she-asses, and ten slaves, and ten changes of raiment, every year, unto the man who shall make ten measures of the best wine. And whosoever wishes for the she-asses, and the slaves, and the raiment, let him send the ten measures of wine to thy servants, and we will drink thereof and judge. So shall there be much good wine in Assyria."

The project pleased Gomer Chephoraod. "Be it so," said he. The people shouted. The petitioners prostrated themselves in gratitude. The same night heralds were despatched to bear the intelligence to the remotest districts of Assyria.

After a due interval the wines began to come in; and the examiners assembled to adjudge the prize. The first vessel was unsealed. Its odour was such that the judges, without tasting it, pronounced unanimous condemnation. The next was opened: it had a villainous taste of clay. The third was sour and vapid. They proceeded from one cask of execrable liquor to another, till at length, in absolute nausea, they gave up the investigation.

The next morning they all assembled at the gate of the king, with pale faces and aching heads. They owned that they could not recommend any competitor as worthy of the rewards. They swore that the wine was little better than poison, and entreated permission to resign the office of deciding between such detestable potions.

"In the name of Belus, how can this have happened?" said the king.

Merolchazzar, the high-priest, muttered something about the anger of the Gods at the toleration shown to a sect of impious heretics who ate pigeons broiled, "whereas," said he, "our religion commands us to eat them roasted. Now therefore, O King," continued this respectable divine, "give command to thy men of war, and let them smite the disobedient people with the sword, them, and their wives, and their children, and let their houses, and their flocks, and their herds, be given to thy servants the priests. Then shall the land yield its increase, and the fruits of the earth shall be no more blasted by the vengeance of Heaven."

"Nay," said the king, "the ground lies under no general curse from Heaven. The season has been singularly good. The wine which thou didst thyself drink at the banquet a few nights ago, O venerable Merolchazzar, was of this year's vintage. Dost thou not remember how thou didst praise it? It was the same night that thou wast inspired by Belus and didst reel to and fro, and discourse sacred mysteries. These things are too hard for me. I comprehend them not. The only wine which is bad is that which is sent to my judges. Who can expound this to us?"

The king scratched his head. Upon which all the courtiers scratched their heads.

He then ordered proclamation to be made that a purple robe and a golden chain should be given to the man who could solve this difficulty.

An old philosopher, who had been observed to smile rather disdainfully when the prize had first been instituted, came forward and spoke thus:—

"Gomer Chephoraod, live for ever! Marvel not at that which has happened. It was no miracle, but a natural event. How could it be otherwise? It is true that much good wine has been made this year. But who would send it in for thy rewards? Thou knowest Ascobaruch who hath the great vineyards in the north, and Cohahiroth who sendeth wine every year from the south over the Persian Gulf. Their wines are so delicious that ten measures thereof are sold for an hundred talents of silver. Thinkest thou that they will exchange them for thy slaves and thine asses? What would thy prize profit any who have vineyards in rich soils?"

"Who then," said one of the judges, "are the wretches who sent us this poison?"

"Blame them not," said the sage, "seeing that you have been the authors of the evil. They are men whose lands are poor, and have never yielded them any returns equal to the prizes which the king proposed. Wherefore, knowing that the lords of the fruitful vineyards would not enter into competition with them they planted vines, some on rocks, and some in light sandy soil, and some in deep clay. Hence their wines are bad. For no culture or reward will make barren land bear good vines. Know therefore, assuredly, that your prizes have increased the quantity of bad but not of good wine."

There was a long silence. At length the king spoke. "Give him the purple robe and the chain of gold. Throw the wines into the Euphrates; and proclaim that the Royal Society of Wines is dissolved."

SCENES FROM "ATHENIAN REVELS." (January 1824.)

A DRAMA

I.

SCENE—A Street in Athens.

Enter CALLIDEMUS and SPEUSIPPUS;

CALLIDEMUS. So, you young reprobate! You must be a man of wit, forsooth, and a man of quality! You must spend as if you were as rich as Nicias, and prate as if you were as wise as Pericles! You must dangle after sophists and pretty women! And I must pay for all! I must sup on thyme and onions, while you are swallowing thrushes and hares! I must drink water, that you may play the cottabus (This game consisted in projecting wine out of cups; it was a diversion extremely fashionable at Athenian entertainments.) with Chian wine! I must wander about as ragged as Pauson (Pauson was an Athenian painter, whose name was synonymous with beggary. See Aristophanes; Plutus, 602. From his poverty, I am inclined to suppose that he painted historical pictures.), that you may be as fine as Alcibiades! I must lie on bare boards, with a stone (See Aristophanes; Plutus, 542.) for my pillow, and a rotten mat for my coverlid, by the light of a wretched winking lamp, while you are marching in state, with as many torches as one sees at the feast of Ceres, to thunder with your hatchet (See Theocritus; Idyll ii. 128.) at the doors of half the Ionian ladies in Peiraeus. (This was the most disreputable part of Athens. See Aristophanes: Pax, 165.)

SPEUSIPPUS. Why, thou unreasonable old man! Thou most shameless of fathers!—

CALLIDEMUS. Ungrateful wretch; dare you talk so? Are you not afraid of the thunders of Jupiter?

SPEUSIPPUS. Jupiter thunder! nonsense! Anaxagoras says, that thunder is only an explosion produced by—

CALLIDEMUS. He does! Would that it had fallen on his head for his pains!

SPEUSIPPUS. Nay; talk rationally.

CALLIDEMUS. Rationally! You audacious young sophist! I will talk rationally. Do you know that I am your father? What quibble can you make upon that?

SPEUSIPPUS. Do I know that you are my father? Let us take the question to pieces, as Melesigenes would say. First, then, we must inquire what is knowledge? Secondly, what is a father? Now, knowledge, as Socrates said the other day to Theaetetus (See Plato's Theaetetus.)—

CALLIDEMUS. Socrates! what! the ragged flat-nosed old dotard, who walks about all day barefoot, and filches cloaks, and dissects gnats, and shoes (See Aristophanes; Nubes, 150.) fleas with wax?

SPEUSIPPUS. All fiction! All trumped up by Aristophanes!

CALLIDEMUS. By Pallas, if he is in the habit of putting shoes on his fleas, he is kinder to them than to himself. But listen to me, boy; if you go on in this way, you will be ruined. There is an argument for you. Go to your Socrates and your Melesigenes, and tell them to refute that. Ruined! Do you hear?

SPEUSIPPUS. Ruined!

CALLIDEMUS. Ay, by Jupiter! Is such a show as you make to be supported on nothing? During all the last war, I made not an obol from my farm; the Peloponnesian locusts came almost as regularly as the Pleiades;—corn burnt;—olives stripped;—fruit trees cut down;—wells stopped up;—and, just when peace came, and I hoped that all would turn out well, you must begin to spend as if you had all the mines of Thasus at command.

SPEUSIPPUS. Now, by Neptune, who delights in horses—

CALLIDEMUS. If Neptune delights in horses, he does not resemble me. You must ride at the Panathenaea on a horse fit for the great king: four acres of my best vines went for that folly. You must retrench, or you will have nothing to eat. Does not Anaxagoras mention, among his other discoveries, that when a man has nothing to eat he dies?

SPEUSIPPUS. You are deceived. My friends—

CALLIDEMUS. Oh, yes! your friends will notice you, doubtless, when you are squeezing through the crowd, on a winter's day, to warm yourself at the fire of the baths;—or when you are fighting with beggars and beggars' dogs for the scraps of a sacrifice;—or when you are glad to earn three wretched obols (The stipend of an Athenian jurymen.) by listening all day to lying speeches and crying children.

SPEUSIPPUS. There are other means of support.

CALLIDEMUS. What! I suppose you will wander from house to house, like that wretched buffoon Philippus (Xenophon; Convivium.), and beg everybody who has asked a supper-party to be so kind as to feed you and laugh at you; or you will turn sycophant; you will get a bunch of grapes, or a pair of shoes, now and then, by frightening some rich coward with a mock prosecution. Well! that is a task for which your studies under the sophists may have fitted you.

SPEUSIPPUS. You are wide of the mark.

CALLIDEMUS. Then what, in the name of Juno, is your scheme? Do you intend to join Orestes (A celebrated highwayman of Attica. See Aristophanes; Aves, 711; and in several other passages.), and rob on the highway? Take care; beware of the eleven (The police officers of Athens.); beware of the hemlock. It may be very pleasant to live at other people's expense; but not very pleasant, I should think, to hear the pestle give its last bang against the mortar, when the cold dose is ready. Pah!—

SPEUSIPPUS. Hemlock? Orestes! folly!—I aim at nobler objects. What say you to politics, —the general assembly?

CALLIDEMUS. You an orator!—oh no! no! Cleon was worth twenty such fools as you. You have succeeded, I grant, to his impudence, for which, if there be justice in Tartarus, he is now soaking up to the eyes in his own tanpickle. But the Paphlagonian had parts.

SPEUSIPPUS. And you mean to imply—

CALLIDEMUS. Not I. You are a Pericles in embryo, doubtless. Well: and when are you to make your first speech? O Pallas!

SPEUSIPPUS. I thought of speaking, the other day, on the Sicilian expedition; but Nicias (See Thucydides, vi. 8.) got up before me.

CALLIDEMUS. Nicias, poor honest man, might just as well have sate still; his speaking did but little good. The loss of your oration is, doubtless, an irreparable public calamity.

SPEUSIPPUS. Why, not so; I intend to introduce it at the next assembly; it will suit any subject.

CALLIDEMUS. That is to say, it will suit none. But pray, if it be not too presumptuous a request, indulge me with a specimen.

SPEUSIPPUS. Well; suppose the agora crowded;—an important subject under discussion;—an ambassador from Argos, or from the great king;—the tributes from the islands;—an impeachment;—in short, anything you please. The crier makes proclamation.—"Any citizen above fifty years old may speak—any citizen not disqualified may speak." Then I rise:—a great murmur of curiosity while I am mounting the stand.

CALLIDEMUS. Of curiosity! yes, and of something else too. You will infallibly be dragged down by main force, like poor Glaucon (See Xenophon Memorabilia, iii.) last year.

SPEUSIPPUS. Never fear. I shall begin in this style: "When I consider, Athenians, the importance of our city;—when I consider the extent of its power, the wisdom of its laws, the elegance of its decorations;—when I consider by what names and by what exploits its annals are adorned; when

I think on Harmodius and Aristogiton, on Themistocles and Miltiades, on Cimon and Pericles;—when I contemplate our pre-eminence in arts and letters;—when I observe so many flourishing states and islands compelled to own the dominion, and purchase the protection of the City of the Violet Crown" (A favourite epithet of Athens. See Aristophanes; *Acharn.* 637.)—

CALLIDEMUS. I shall choke with rage. Oh, all ye gods and goddesses, what sacrilege, what perjury have I ever committed, that I should be singled out from among all the citizens of Athens to be the father of this fool?

SPEUSIPPUS. What now? By Bacchus, old man, I would not advise you to give way to such fits of passion in the streets. If Aristophanes were to see you, you would infallibly be in a comedy next spring.

CALLIDEMUS. You have more reason to fear Aristophanes than any fool living. Oh, that he could but hear you trying to imitate the slang of Straton (See Aristophanes; *Equites*, 1375.) and the lisp of Alcibiades! (See Aristophanes; *Vespae*, 44.) You would be an inexhaustible subject. You would console him for the loss of Cleon.

SPEUSIPPUS. No, no. I may perhaps figure at the dramatic representations before long; but in a very different way.

CALLIDEMUS. What do you mean?

SPEUSIPPUS. What say you to a tragedy?

CALLIDEMUS. A tragedy of yours?

SPEUSIPPUS. Even so.

CALLIDEMUS. Oh Hercules! Oh Bacchus! This is too much. Here is an universal genius; sophist,—orator,—poet. To what a three-headed monster have I given birth! a perfect Cerberus of intellect! And pray what may your piece be about? Or will your tragedy, like your speech, serve equally for any subject?

SPEUSIPPUS. I thought of several plots;—Oedipus,—Eteocles and Polynices,—the war of Troy,—the murder of Agamemnon.

CALLIDEMUS. And what have you chosen?

SPEUSIPPUS. You know there is a law which permits any modern poet to retouch a play of Aeschylus, and bring it forward as his own composition. And, as there is an absurd prejudice, among the vulgar, in favour of his extravagant pieces, I have selected one of them, and altered it.

CALLIDEMUS. Which of them?

SPEUSIPPUS. Oh! that mass of barbarous absurdities, the Prometheus. But I have framed it anew upon the model of Euripides. By Bacchus, I shall make Sophocles and Agathon look about them. You would not know the play again.

CALLIDEMUS. By Jupiter, I believe not.

SPEUSIPPUS. I have omitted the whole of the absurd dialogue between Vulcan and Strength, at the beginning.

CALLIDEMUS. That may be, on the whole, an improvement. The play will then open with that grand soliloquy of Prometheus, when he is chained to the rock.

"Oh! ye eternal heavens! ye rushing winds! Ye fountains of great streams! Ye ocean waves, That in ten thousand sparkling dimples wreath Your azure smiles! All-generating earth! All-seeing sun! On you, on you, I call." (See Aeschylus; *Prometheus*, 88.)

Well, I allow that will be striking; I did not think you capable of that idea. Why do you laugh?

SPEUSIPPUS. Do you seriously suppose that one who has studied the plays of that great man, Euripides, would ever begin a tragedy in such a ranting style?

CALLIDEMUS. What, does not your play open with the speech of Prometheus?

SPEUSIPPUS. No doubt.

CALLIDEMUS. Then what, in the name of Bacchus, do you make him say?

SPEUSIPPUS. You shall hear; and, if it be not in the very style of Euripides, call me a fool.

CALLIDEMUS. That is a liberty which I shall venture to take, whether it be or no. But go on.
SPEUSIPPUS. Prometheus begins thus:—

"Coelus begat Saturn and Briareus
Cottus and Creius and Iapetus,
Gyges and Hyperion, Phoebe, Tethys,
Thea and Rhea and Mnemosyne.
Then Saturn wedded Rhea, and begat
Pluto and Neptune, Jupiter and Juno."

CALLIDEMUS. Very beautiful, and very natural; and, as you say, very like Euripides.

SPEUSIPPUS. You are sneering. Really, father, you do not understand these things. You had not those advantages in your youth—

CALLIDEMUS. Which I have been fool enough to let you have. No; in my early days, lying had not been dignified into a science, nor politics degraded into a trade. I wrestled, and read Homer's battles, instead of dressing my hair, and reciting lectures in verse out of Euripides. But I have some notion of what a play should be; I have seen Phrynichus, and lived with Aeschylus. I saw the representation of the Persians.

SPEUSIPPUS. A wretched play; it may amuse the fools who row the triremes; but it is utterly unworthy to be read by any man of taste.

CALLIDEMUS. If you had seen it acted;—the whole theatre frantic with joy, stamping, shouting, laughing, crying. There was Cynaegirus, the brother of Aeschylus, who lost both his arms at Marathon, beating the stumps against his sides with rapture. When the crowd remarked him—But where are you going?

SPEUSIPPUS. To sup with Alcibiades; he sails with the expedition for Sicily in a few days; this is his farewell entertainment.

CALLIDEMUS. So much the better; I should say, so much the worse. That cursed Sicilian expedition! And you were one of the young fools (See Thucydides, vi. 13.) who stood clapping and shouting while he was gulling the rabble, and who drowned poor Nicias's voice with your uproar. Look to it; a day of reckoning will come. As to Alcibiades himself—

SPEUSIPPUS. What can you say against him? His enemies themselves acknowledge his merit.

CALLIDEMUS. They acknowledge that he is clever, and handsome, and that he was crowned at the Olympic games. And what other merits do his friends claim for him? A precious assembly you will meet at his house, no doubt.

SPEUSIPPUS. The first men in Athens, probably.

CALLIDEMUS. Whom do you mean by the first men in Athens?

SPEUSIPPUS. Callicles. (Callicles plays a conspicuous part in the Gorgias of Plato.)

CALLIDEMUS. A sacrilegious, impious, unfeeling ruffian!

SPEUSIPPUS. Hippomachus.

CALLIDEMUS. A fool, who can talk of nothing but his travels through Persia and Egypt. Go, go. The gods forbid that I should detain you from such choice society!

[Exeunt severally.]

II.

SCENE—A Hall in the house of ALCIBIADES.

ALCIBIADES, SPEUSIPPUS, CALLICLES, HIPPOMACHUS,
CHARICLEA, and others, seated round a table feasting.

ALCIBIADES. Bring larger cups. This shall be our gayest revel. It is probably the last—for some of us at least.

SPEUSIPPUS. At all events, it will be long before you taste such wine again, Alcibiades.

CALLICLES. Nay, there is excellent wine in Sicily. When I was there with Eurymedon's squadron, I had many a long carouse. You never saw finer grapes than those of Aetna.

HIPPOMACHUS. The Greeks do not understand the art of making wine. Your Persian is the man. So rich, so fragrant, so sparkling! I will tell you what the Satrap of Caria said to me about that when I supped with him.

ALCIBIADES. Nay, sweet Hippomachus; not a word to-night about satraps, or the great king, or the walls of Babylon, or the Pyramids, or the mummies. Chariclea, why do you look so sad?

CHARICLEA. Can I be cheerful when you are going to leave me, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES. My life, my sweet soul, it is but for a short time. In a year we conquer Sicily. In another, we humble Carthage. (See Thucydides, vi. 90.) I will bring back such robes, such necklaces, elephants' teeth by thousands, ay, and the elephants themselves, if you wish to see them. Nay, smile, my Chariclea, or I shall talk nonsense to no purpose.

HIPPOMACHUS. The largest elephant that I ever saw was in the grounds of Teribazus, near Susa. I wish that I had measured him.

ALCIBIADES. I wish that he had trod upon you. Come, come, Chariclea, we shall soon return, and then—

CHARICLEA. Yes; then indeed.

ALCIBIADES.

Yes, then—

Then for revels; then for dances,
Tender whispers, melting glances.
Peasants, pluck your richest fruits:
Minstrels, sound your sweetest flutes:
Come in laughing crowds to greet us,
Dark-eyed daughters of Miletus;
Bring the myrtles, bring the dice,
Floods of Chian, hills of spice.

SPEUSIPPUS. Whose lines are those, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES. My own. Think you, because I do not shut myself up to meditate, and drink water, and eat herbs, that I cannot write verses? By Apollo, if I did not spend my days in politics, and my nights in revelry, I should have made Sophocles tremble. But now I never go beyond a little song like this, and never invoke any Muse but Chariclea. But come, Speusippus, sing. You are a professed poet. Let us have some of your verses.

SPEUSIPPUS. My verses! How can you talk so? I a professed poet!

ALCIBIADES. Oh, content you, sweet Speusippus. We all know your designs upon the tragic honours. Come, sing. A chorus of your new play.

SPEUSIPPUS. Nay, nay—

HIPPOMACHUS. When a guest who is asked to sing at a Persian banquet refuses—

SPEUSIPPUS. In the name of Bacchus—

ALCIBIADES. I am absolute. Sing.

SPEUSIPPUS. Well, then, I will sing you a chorus, which, I think, is a tolerable imitation of Euripides.

CHARICLEA. Of Euripides?—Not a word.

ALCIBIADES. Why so, sweet Chariclea?

CHARICLEA. Would you have me betray my sex? Would you have me forget his Phaedras and Sthenoboeas? No if I ever suffer any lines of that woman-hater, or his imitators, to be sung in my presence, may I sell herbs (The mother of Euripides was a herb-woman. This was a favourite topic of Aristophanes.) like his mother, and wear rags like his Telephus. (The hero of one of the lost plays of Euripides, who appears to have been brought upon the stage in the garb of a beggar. See Aristophanes; *Acharn.* 430; and in other places.)

ALCIBIADES. Then, sweet Chariclea, since you have silenced Speusippus, you shall sing yourself.

CHARICLEA. What shall I sing?

ALCIBIADES. Nay, choose for yourself.

CHARICLEA. Then I will sing an old Ionian hymn, which is chanted every spring at the feast of Venus, near Miletus. I used to sing it in my own country when I was a child; and—ah, Alcibiades!

ALCIBIADES. Dear Chariclea, you shall sing something else. This distresses you.

CHARICLEA. No hand me the lyre:—no matter. You will hear the song to disadvantage. But if it were sung as I have heard it sung:—if this were a beautiful morning in spring, and if we were standing on a woody promontory, with the sea, and the white sails, and the blue Cyclades beneath us,—and the portico of a temple peeping through the trees on a huge peak above our heads,—and thousands of people, with myrtles in their hands, thronging up the winding path, their gay dresses and garlands disappearing and emerging by turns as they passed round the angles of the rock,—then perhaps—

ALCIBIADES. Now, by Venus herself, sweet lady, where you are we shall lack neither sun, nor flowers, nor spring, nor temple, nor goddess.

CHARICLEA. (Sings.)

Let this sunny hour be given,
Venus, unto love and mirth:
Smiles like thine are in the heaven;
Bloom like thine is on the earth;
And the tinkling of the fountains,
And the murmurs of the sea,
And the echoes from the mountains,
Speak of youth, and hope, and thee.

By whate'er of soft expression
Thou hast taught to lovers' eyes,
Faint denial, slow confession,
Glowing cheeks and stifled sighs;
By the pleasure and the pain,
By the follies and the wiles,
Pouting fondness, sweet disdain,
Happy tears and mournful smiles;

Come with music floating o'er thee;
Come with violets springing round:
Let the Graces dance before thee,
All their golden zones unbound;
Now in sport their faces hiding,

Now, with slender fingers fair,
From their laughing eyes dividing
The long curls of rose-crowned hair.

ALCIBIADES. Sweetly sung; but mournfully, Chariclea; for which I would chide you, but that I am sad myself. More wine there. I wish to all the gods that I had fairly sailed from Athens.

CHARICLEA. And from me, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES. Yes, from you, dear lady. The days which immediately precede separation are the most melancholy of our lives.

CHARICLEA. Except those which immediately follow it.

ALCIBIADES. No; when I cease to see you, other objects may compel my attention; but can I be near you without thinking how lovely you are, and how soon I must leave you?

HIPPOMACHUS. Ay; travelling soon puts such thoughts out of men's heads.

CALLICLES. A battle is the best remedy for them.

CHARICLEA. A battle, I should think, might supply their place with others as unpleasant.

CALLICLES. No. The preparations are rather disagreeable to a novice. But as soon as the fighting begins, by Jupiter, it is a noble time;—men trampling,—shields clashing,—spears breaking,—and the poean roaring louder than all.

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